





Even today, the GJMM is of the view that three-tier panchayat elections should be held in the Hills

ROSHAN GIRI, LEADER, GORKHA JAN MUKTI MORCHA (BIMAL GURUNG CAMP)  
AFTER MEETING PANCHAYAT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER SUBRATA MUKHERJEE

# Delhi govt clears action plan to deal with Covid 3rd wave

DDMA okays a colour-coded plan under which curbs'll be imposed as per severity of virus situation

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

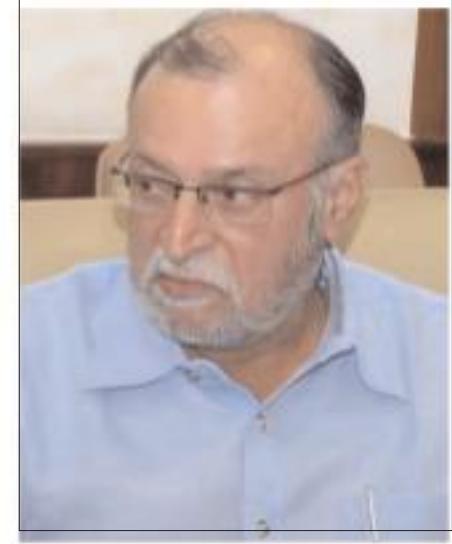
To deal with a possible third wave of coronavirus in the national capital, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) today approved a colour-coded response action plan under which restrictions will be enforced in the city in accordance with the severity of the Covid situation.

At a DDMA meeting chaired by Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal, experts stressed on having 12,000 ICU beds, sufficient oxygen, drugs and ambulances to deal with another surge in Covid cases in Delhi.

Those who attended the meeting included chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, deputy CM

Manish Sisodia, health minister Satyendar Jain, Niti Ayog member V K Paul, ICMR director general Balram Bhargava, AIIMS director Randeep Guleria, Delhi Police commissioner Balaji Srivastava, and officials of central and state governments.

The 'Graded Response Action Plan' was passed in the DDMA meeting today. No doubts will remain about when the lockdown will be imposed or when it will open. Discussion was also held



about the Delta plus variant. We have to stop this variant from spreading in Delhi, for which the government is taking all necessary steps," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

After detailed deliberations and presentations made by the health department and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) decision was taken to notify the Graded Response Action Plan that will objectively and transparently ensure an institutional and automatic response with regards to enforcement measures, lockdowns and unlock based on criteria such as test positivity rate and quantum of cases," an expert present at the meeting said.

Concerns arising out of new Covid variants like Delta Plus and LAMBDA were discussed at length and measures like vaccination, genome sequencing, test-

ing, tracking and surveillance were suggested as the most effective steps to mitigate their spread, other experts said.

People travelling in large numbers to tourist destinations and violating Covid-related guidelines were also flagged as an area of concern, they said.

The colour codes based on positivity rate (on two consecutive days), cumulative number of new cases (over a week) and average oxygenated-bed occupancy (for a week) will designate four levels of alerts, officials said.

According to the draft action plan, shops and establishments of essential goods and services will be allowed to open during all the four levels of alerts.

The 'Yellow' (Level-1) alert will be sounded when the positivity rate crosses 0.5 per cent or new Covid cases

increase to 1,500 or oxygenated bed occupancy reaches 500.

The corresponding response will involve allowing construction, manufacturing activities and the opening of shops and establishments of essential goods.

However, shops and establishments of non-essential goods and services, and malls will open based on odd-even formula, from 10 am to 8 pm. Only one weekly market per zone with 50 per cent vendors will be allowed to open, the draft plan stated.

The next level of alert coded with 'Amber' colour (L-2) will come into force if the positivity rate rises above 1 per cent or new cases number 3,500 or oxygenated bed occupancy reaches 700.

'Amber' alert will invoke the same responses as 'Yellow' one except that malls and shops of non-essential goods and services will be allowed to open from 10 am to 6 pm.

The 'Orange' or L-3 alert will be the next stage which will kick in if the positivity rate crosses 2 per cent or new cases number 9,000 or oxygenated bed occupancy becomes 1,000.

Construction activities will be allowed with on-site labourers while industrial activities will be restricted except those related with essential commodities and

defence production. Malls and weekly markets will be closed. Only standalone non-essential shops will open from 10 am to 6 pm, the draft plan stated.

The 'Red' alert (L-4) will be the highest level and will come into force if the positivity rate crosses 5 per cent or new cases rise to 16,000 or oxygenated bed occupancy reaches 3,000.

Construction activities with on-site labourers and industrial manufacturing of essential commodities, national security and defence-related productions will be allowed, while malls and weekly markets will be closed, they said.

In May, the Delhi government had formed an eight-member state level expert committee to devise a strategy to mitigate and manage the possible third Covid wave in Delhi.

Kejriwal has earlier said that the Delhi government will make preparations to deal with up to 37,000 infections a day in case of a possible third coronavirus wave. It has already installed 32 Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen generation plants with a total capacity of 29.77 metric tonnes. Three liquid medical oxygen storage tanks with a cumulative capacity of 171 MT have also been set up.

## Capital adds 81 virus cases, 3 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The national capital today recorded 81 fresh Covid cases and 3 coronavirus-related deaths, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The positivity rate dipped to 0.11 per cent from yesterday's 0.12 percent. The city had then logged 93 cases and 3 deaths.

The fresh cases were detected out of 73,192 tests, the health bulletin said.

The number of Covid cases in Delhi was 93 last Wednesday. It was 79 on Tuesday.

Delhi's cumulative tally of Covid infections rose to 14,34,954 now, the bulletin stated.

The city's coronavirus toll climbed to 25,011.

According to the health bulletin, the number of active cases in the city fell to 798 from yesterday's 847.

The coronavirus patients being treated under home isolation numbered 257 today. This figure was 260 yesterday.

Delhi now had 13,610 beds vacant out of a total of 14,060 hospital beds meant for Covid patients.

The count of containment zones dipped to 604 from yesterday's 628.

As many as 1,59,010 people got vaccinated in the city against Covid during the past 24 hours. The cumulative number of persons having got their second vaccine dose was 20,14,455.

## Stubble burning: Delhi govt plans 3rd-party audit of Pusa bio-decomposer tech

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Delhi government has written to a consultancy firm of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, asking it to conduct an audit of the use of Pusa bio-decomposer.

The Arvind Kejriwal dispensation had hailed as a new, cost-effective solution to stubble burning last year.

The decision comes against the backdrop of some 'negative' comments from farmers in Punjab and "positive" feedback from Haryana following the use of the technique, which uses a microbial solution for fermenting stubble into manure, officials in the Delhi Environment Department told PTI.

Former Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar had last year said that Pusa bio-decomposer will be tried out in some areas of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and if the technique is found successful, it will be expanded to more areas.

We have written to WAPCOS to conduct an audit of Pusa bio-decomposer in Delhi. They will take feedback from the farmers who sprayed the solution in their fields last year," A P Saini, Joint Director, Agriculture Department, said.

"We have already released the results of the efficacy survey conducted last year. Now, we are looking to get Pusa bio-decomposer validated by a third party (WAPCOS). The audit is likely to start next week," the official said.

KPS Malik from WAPCOS confirmed that the Delhi government has approached them to conduct an audit, but said they are "yet to receive a formal go ahead".

"We will hold a meeting with officials of the Delhi government soon and ask them to provide area-wise lists of beneficiaries," he said. Officials said the firm will try to ascertain if the use of Pusa bio-decomposer gave them enough time to prepare their field for the next crop.

"We will also try to find out the impact of the solution on the soil quality," an official said.

Farmers say there is a small window of 10-15 days between paddy harvesting and sowing of wheat and they burn stubble as it is a cheap and time-saving method to manage the straw and prepare their field for the next crop.

Scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, who developed Pusa bio-decomposer, say it can turn crop residue into manure in 15 to 20 days and therefore, can prevent stubble burning, which is one of the main reasons behind high levels of pollution in the capital in October and November.

The solution was sprayed free of cost in 2,000 acres of non-basmati rice fields in Delhi starting October 13 last year.

The Delhi government later set up a 15-member impact assessment committee to ascertain its effectiveness.

## If water crisis continues, our workers'll cut DJB head's water connection: BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

responsible for acute water crisis in the Capital.

He alleged that the AAP came to power in Delhi promising to eliminate tanker mafia active under the then Congress government but now the same mafia is ruling the roost under the Arvind Kejriwal government.

BJP will not only intensify its agitation but also cut off the water connection of Delhi Jal Board chairman, Satyendar Jain if water problem is not resolved in Delhi within next forty-eight hours, threatened Bidhuri.

On Thursday, Delhi BJP leaders and workers staged a demonstration against the AAP government at different places across the national capital over the alleged water crisis.

The Aam Aadmi Party

assumed power in Delhi in 2014 with poll promises to eliminate water crisis in Delhi, but still, now water tanker mafia is ruling the roost under the Arvind Kejriwal government, Bidhuri alleged.

He added that the Kejriwal government and his ministers will only realise how it feels to be without water when a minister's water supply is cut off.

Gupta also claimed that the Jal Board, which was running at a profit of Rs 800 crore, is now on the verge of bankruptcy.

The Aam Aadmi Party

## Police on look out for 3rd suspect in murder case of Ex-Union minister's wife

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

**The late Union minister's wife was smothered to death on Tuesday night during an attempted robbery at her home in southwest Delhi's Vasant Vihar, police said**

Three Delhi Police teams are conducting raids to nab the third suspect in the murder of Kitty Kumaramangalam, the wife of late Union minister P Rangaraja Kumaramangalam, police said on Friday.

The late Union minister's wife was smothered to death on Tuesday night during an attempted robbery at her home in southwest Delhi's Vasant Vihar, police said.

The police had arrested two accused -- Raju (24) and Rakesh Raj, (34) -- and taken them into police remand for two days on Thursday, officials said.

Raids are being conducted in Rajasthan and areas in and around the national capital to nab Suraj, the third suspect in the case, who is suspected to have fled to Jaipur with the robbed gold ornaments to sell them, the police said.

"We have deployed three teams who have been working round-the-clock to locate

and nab Suraj. His last location was near Jaipur in Rajasthan but he keeps switching off his mobile phone. Technical surveillance has also been mounted to track him," a senior police officer said.

Financial crisis during the Covid pandemic and the greed for money led the three men to execute the murder-cum-robbery which they had been planning for over a month, police said.

The victim was an easy target for them as Raju had been working in the area as a washerman for over five years and visited the victim's house on a regular basis, the officer said.

As Raju kept the washed

clothes back in the victim's cupboard on many occasions because she trusted him and had known him personally, he was aware of the locker and the valuables kept inside the cupboard, police said.

The 70-year-old lawyer was smothered to death on Tuesday night by the three men during the attempted robbery. They first overpowered the victim's house help Mithila, who sustained injuries but was left alive as the accused were in hurry to escape after executing the robbery.

The scooty on which the three accused had arrived to execute their plan, has also been recovered, as their entry into the building was captured on a CCTV camera, police said. "The two accused have

confessed to their crime but the actual truth will known after the third suspect is nabbed and interrogated following which each of their versions will be corroborated," the officer said.

The 70-year-old lawyer was smothered to death on Tuesday night by the three men during the attempted robbery. They first overpowered the victim's house help Mithila, who sustained injuries but was left alive as the accused were in hurry to escape after executing the robbery.

Rangarajan Kumaramangalam served as a Union minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpeyi government between 1998 and 2001.s

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF  
DELHI AT NEW DELHI  
Notice Under Order V Rule  
20 Code of Civil Procedure  
Case No. MACA 362/2019 &  
CM Appl. 12288/2019

Appeal Against order dated  
30-08-2018

Passed by Sh. Satish Kumar,  
Addl. Distt. Judge-1+M.A.C.T  
(North West Distt.) Rohini  
Courts, Delhi

Suit No. M.A.C.T. No. 450045/16  
(Old No. 258/14)

National Insurance Co. Ltd.  
—Appellant(s)

Versus  
Sheela Devi (Deceased) Thr  
L.R.S. —Respondent(s)

Notice to : —Respondent No. 3,  
Sh. Hycent G. Chand, s/o  
Bruno Parkash, r/o H. No.  
144, Krishchayan Bagu, Vijay  
Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.  
(Owner)

Whereas the abovenoted

appellant has presented an

appeal under Section 173 of

MV Act 1988 which was listed

before Court on 03-04-2019

and the Court ordered

issuance of notice to you.

And Notice of the application

was also ordered to be issued

to you. And whereas it has

been proved to the satisfaction

of the Court that you

cannot be served in the ordinary

manner. Notice is hereby

issued that if you wish to

defend the aforementioned

appeal & application you may

cause an appearance to be

entered on your behalf either

in person or through an advocate duly appointed by you for the purpose before the Joint Registrar (Judicial) on 13-07-2021 at 11-00 a.m.

If no appearance is made on

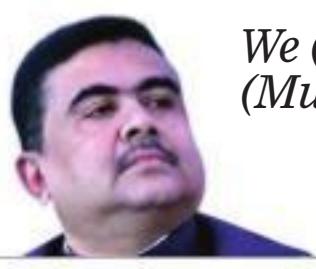
your behalf, by yourself, your

pleader or someone by law

authorized to act for you in the

said appeal & application you may

cause an appearance to be



We (BJP) had proposed six MLAs in the PAC committee...but still, he (Mukul Roy) was appointed as PAC chairman, defying the norms.

LEADER OF OPPOSITION SUVENDU ADHIKARI

SAYING THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T BELIEVE IN DEMOCRACY

# Pb allows more relaxations; lifts weekend, night curfew

Capt also orders reopening of bars, cinemas, restaurants, spas, swimming pools, gyms, malls etc. subject to all eligible staff & visitors having taken at least one dose of Covid shot

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 9 JULY

**W**ith Punjab's Covid-19 positivity rate sliding to 0.4 per cent, chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Friday ordered lifting of weekend and night curfew, and allowed gatherings of up to 100 persons indoors and 200 people outdoors from Monday.

Even as he hoped that better sense will prevail on the political parties and leaders brazenly violating Covid curbs by holding massive protests, the CM asked director general of police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta to issue challans against those indulging in anti-Covid behaviour.

At a virtual review meeting



of the Covid situation in the state, Capt Amarinder also ordered reopening of bars, cinema halls, restaurants, spas, swimming pools, gyms, malls, sports complexes, museums, zoos etc. subject to all eligible staff members

and visitors having taken at least one dose each of the vaccine.

Though schools will continue to remain closed, colleges, coaching centres and all other institutions of higher learning shall be allowed

to open by the deputy commissioner concerned, subject to a certificate having been submitted that all such teaching, non-teaching staff and students have been given at least one dose of vaccination at least two weeks ago.

The CM, while reviewing the Covid situation virtually, said the situation will again be reviewed on July 20. Strict use of masks must be ensured at all times, he asserted while announcing the easing of restrictions.

Health secretary Hussan Lal said four districts had shown positivity of one or less than one per cent, but the districts that still needed vigilance were Ludhiana, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Firozpur and Roop Nagar.

Referring to the cases of

mucormycosis or black fungus, which has been reported in 623 patients as of July 8, the CM asked the health department to work out a proposal for supporting and helping in the treatment of such patients. Of the 623 cases, 67 are from outside the state, the health secretary informed the meeting, adding that 337 cases were under treatment and 154 had been discharged while 51 patients had died. The maximum cases reported in a day was 34 on 27 May, while the average of daily cases in the first week of July stood at five.

The CM noted that due to the SOPs in place and the level of Covid and post-Covid care, Punjab has had much fewer black fungus cases and deaths than most other states,

including Haryana, and Delhi. Against 623 such cases and 51 confirmed deaths so far in Punjab, both Haryana and Delhi have reportedly seen over 1600 cases each, and 193 and 236 deaths respectively.

Capt Amarinder asked the departments concerned to step up Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) to expediently identify cases of new Covid variant and to fast track the project for execution of the MoU with ICMR for setting up the Regional Institute of Virology at Mohali.

Even as the second Covid wave continues to abate in the state, the CM on Friday approved Rs 380 crore to be spent by the health and medical education departments in preparing for a possible third wave of the Covid pandemic.

## Ensure Covid-appropriate conduct by tourists: HPCM to officials

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 9 JULY

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Friday directed the officers to ensure that the tourists visiting the state strictly follow Covid-19 appropriate behaviour to check spread of Covid infection.

After a virtual meeting with the DCs, SPs and CMOs, Thakur said the state government had allowed free movement of tourists to the state which had resulted in a large number of tourists heading towards the hills.

"Himachal being a tourist place is attracting tourists daily and although the state welcomes the tourists but at the same time, the government is also ensuring that no tourist would be allowed to flout Covid norms," he added.

He directed the district administration to keep watch on tourist's not following Covid appropriate behaviour and take action against the defaulters.

He also urged the tourists to use face masks and hand sanitizers besides strictly following the Covid norms.

Since the number of Covid cases were declining at a



steady pace, the number of tourists had also increased manifold.

The state government was not against this but at the same time the government was ensuring that people must adopt Covid-19 appropriate behaviour.

He called for measures to improve the patient care during hospitalization besides augmentation of testing capacity to handle the expected third wave.

Provision of oxygen concentrators at Community Health Centres level must be made. In addition, procurement of additional equipment for strengthening of ICU facilities was being ensured," he added.

He also called for giving special thrust must be laid on contact tracing and adopting a proactive approach to detect cases of coronavirus and urged to persuade shopkeepers and other business establishments to adopt the strategy of 'No Mask, No Service'.

## Apollo study uses 2-year patient data to see pandemic impact on non-Covid care

PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Seeking to get a broader understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on healthcare delivery system, leading private facility in Delhi has conducted an observational study based on data related to patients spanning two years, hospital authorities said on Friday.

The study included a thorough observation on the impact of the pandemic on various medical and surgical specialties, since the onset of the pandemic, and compared it with the preceding pre-pandemic period (June 1, 2019-March 31, 2020).

The first case of COVID-19 in Delhi was reported on March 1, 2020 and over 14.34 lakh cases have been recorded till date, as per official figures.

The study is titled 'Severe impact of COVID-19 pandemic on non-COVID patient care and health delivery. An observational study from a large multispecialty hospital of India'. It was done by Apollo hospital here, and was published in the Indian Journal of Medical Sciences on Friday.

The pandemic period considered for the study was April 2020 to March 21, hence the data on cases during the second wave

(April-June) of the COVID-19 is not included in it, a spokesperson of the hospital said.

"The study evaluated the data of 6,77,237 cases (599,281 outpatient and 77,956 hospital admissions) in the past two years (pandemic and pre-pandemic)," said P Shivakumar, Managing Director, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals here.

If found that there was a "significant effect" of the COVID-19 pandemic on most spheres of clinical practice, including the outpatient attendance and elective surgeries, officials said.

"Attendance of both new and follow-up cases dropped by 57.65 per cent. The outpatient cases attendance saw a significant reduction of 89.2 per cent, followed by a reduction of 80.75 per cent in surgical work," Shivakumar said.

Going forward, healthcare providers need to factor in the impact of fear which resulted in patients ignoring their healthcare needs which can be detrimental, he added.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted healthcare delivery across the globe. The entire healthcare delivery facilities had to undergo a transformation to combat the spread of this highly infectious viral disease, doctors said.

The mandatory travel restric-

tions and increasing COVID-19 cases have had a significant impact on the healthcare delivery system, they said.

The only medical specialty that saw more patients was respiratory medicine with a significant increase of 314.04 per cent in admissions, because of COVID-19 factor, said Dr Anupam Sibal, Group Medical Director, Apollo Hospitals Group.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on both the hospital's major medical and surgical specialties. The surgical work was reduced significantly across all the specialties, with bariatric surgery (87.5 per cent) and ophthalmology (65.45 per cent), being affected the most and general surgery (32.28 per cent), and neurosurgery the least," he said.

It was observed that all the medical and surgical specialties dealing more with critical and emergency care were less affected than the others. The most urgent surgical and interventional work was undertaken with due precautions, such as liver (56.46 per cent) and kidney (54.89 per cent) transplants, urgent neurosurgery (65.62 per cent), cardiac surgery (44.56 per cent), and surgical oncology (53.6 per cent)," Sibal said, sharing data from the study.

## Haryana asks motor vehicle owners to pay tax online

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 9 JULY

Now owners of motor vehicles in Haryana will have to submit their tax online, as the state government has decided to close all the 10 tax collection points set up in the state for depositing motor vehicle tax.

While giving this information in this regard an official spokesperson said the transport department had set up tax collection points in 10 districts of the state under Section 3 of the Haryana Motor Vehicle Taxation Act, 2016, which was notified on 19 September, 2016 for collection of Motor Vehicle Tax from the vehicle owners.

These tax collection points were set up in the districts of Gurugram, Faridabad, Rewari, Jhajjar, Bhiwani, Sirsa, Jind,

Panchkula, Ambala and Sonipat. Besides this, vehicle owners were also given the option to submit their taxes online.

He said that after in-depth discussions on this subject, it has now been decided to close all these 10 tax collection points. Now, vehicle owners can deposit their tax online only.

For this, detailed guidelines have been given to all the DTO-cum-Secretary RTAs of the state so that they can motivate and spread awareness among vehicle owners for online submission of tax.

The spokesperson said that the transport commissioner, Haryana has directed all the DTO-cum-Secretary RTAs to close the tax collection points set up in the area concerned as well as ensure that the vehicle owners deposit motor vehicle tax online only.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi paid floral tributes to Singh at the party office, Rajiv Bhawan in Shimla and expressed his condolences to the family.

Meanwhile, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi had nominated a four-member delegation to attend the last rites of former CM Virbhadra Singh and pay respects on her behalf.

## Rahul, Nadda pay tributes to Virbhadra Singh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 9 JULY



Shimla at 3.40 am on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Congress chief Sonia Gandhi had nominated a four-member delegation to attend the last rites of former CM Virbhadra Singh and pay respects on her behalf.

The delegation will participate in Singh's last rites on behalf of the All India Congress Committee in Rampur Bushahr on Saturday afternoon.

"Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, All India Congress Committee treasurer Pawan Bansal, AICC Working Committee member Anand Sharma and state affairs in-charge Rajiv Shukla, who is in Shimla for the last two days, have been includ-

ed in the delegation," state Congress General Secretary Rajneesh Kima said.

Kimta said AICC secretary Sanjay Dutt, state Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore, Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri, all MLAs and state party office bearers will also attend the last rites of Virbhadra Singh in Rampur Bushahr tomorrow.

"The party office bearers will specially participate in the last rites of Virbhadra Singh," he said, adding with the death of Virbhadra Singh, the Congress party has lost one of the tallest and great personality.

However, on Friday, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha said, "To begin with, referring to a Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is highly misleading," it alleged, adding the aim of the three contentious Central farm laws is the collapse of the agricultural produce market committees (APMCs).

APMC markets are set up to provide market linkages and create an ecosystem of post-harvest public infrastructure open to all farmers.

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved modification in the central scheme making the APMC mandis eligible to avail financial support from the Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund to expand the regulated markets' capacity and provide better facilities to farmers.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has asserted that the decision to further strengthen the APMCs allays protesting farmers' fear that these mandis will be scrapped with the implementation of three controversial agriculture laws.

However, on Friday, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha said, "To begin with, referring to a Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is highly misleading because there has been no allocation of even a thousand crore rupees from the government. It has merely created a new head under which loans can be accessed from the country."

Farmers have been protesting in huge numbers at Delhi's borders since November 2020, demanding the repeal of the three farm laws.

Enacted in September, the three legislations have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector.

The protesting farmers, on the other hand, have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and do away with the APMC markets, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

## Punjab chief minister seeks Covid vaccines from Centre

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 9 JULY

With the state running out of Covishield and left with only one day's stock of Covaxin, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Friday again stressed the need for increase in vaccine supplies from the Centre.

Increase in supplies was critical given the gradual opening of sectors conditional to stakeholders having taken at least one dose, said the CM, directing the officials to continue pursuing

Chief secretary Vini Mahajan told the meeting that the administration was following up with the Government of India for more doses.

aggressively with the Centre for enhancement of the state's quota.

Pointing out that Punjab had already vaccinated nearly 83 lakh eligible persons (approximately 27 per cent of population), the CM said that the stock was being utilised in the state

Chief secretary Vini Mahajan told the meeting that the administration was following up with the Government of India for more doses.

## Services delayed on Delhi Metro's Blue Line section due to technical snag

PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

Services on a section of the Blue Line of the Delhi Metro were delayed for some time due to a technical snag on Friday, officials said. The Blue Line connects Dwarka Sector 31 in Delhi to Electronic City in Noida.

"Blue Line Update - Delay in services between Dwarka Sector 21 and Rajendra Place. Normal service on all other lines," the officials said.

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) tweeted. A senior official said the delay was due to a technical snag but it has been resolved.

About 35 minutes after the first tweet on the delay, the DMRC again tweeted, "Blue Line Update - Normal services have resumed."

There was a very brief delay on the Green Line earlier in the day also, but it was quickly sorted, the officials said.

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WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)  
JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543  
NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP  
LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

7 DAYS OPEN

## HP minister calls for prompt digitisation of revenue records



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 9 JULY

gy. He stated that the review of development works of the vision document was done in the meeting and the committee was satisfied with the accomplished works.

He further directed the authorities to expedite the remaining works and gave directions to make provision to ensure accountability of Tehsildar, Patwari and officials of Forest department regarding cultivation of illegal substances in their respective areas.

During the meeting, it was informed that a large number of works have been completed in Shimla and Dharamshala under the Smart City project.

In order to make Shimla a Green City,



Mr Dharmaendra Pradhan takes charge at the human resource development ministry, in New Delhi on Friday.

**Bail for R-Day violence accused:** A Delhi court on Friday granted bail to a man who was allegedly involved in the violence and vandalism at the Red Fort during the farmers' protest rally on Republic Day this year, taking the number of accused granted the relief to 18. Additional Sessions Judge Kamini Lau admitted accused Gurjot Singh on bail on furnishing a personal bond to the tune of Rs 50,000 with a local surety of like amount.

**Terror charges:** A Delhi court on Friday ordered framing of charges against four alleged members of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) group after prima facie finding that they received funds from Pakistan for carrying out terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

## T'gana red carpet for Kitex chief

HYDERABAD, 9 JULY

The Telangana government today rolled out the red carpet to welcome Kitex group chairman and managing director Sabu M Jacob to set up shop in the state for his Rs 3500 crore project which was originally proposed for Kerala after the businessman alleged that he had been "kicked out" of his home state.

State industry minister KT Rama Rao who had sent a chartered flight to fly in Mr Jacob and his associates has invited the company to set up their mega textile park at Warangal. The state government has stated it was ready to give it mega project status under its single window scheme TS-iPass which will allow them to offer customised incentives. After discussions with Mr Rama Rao the guests were taken to Warangal for a field visit on a helicopter and after returning Mr Jacob said he was ready to invest Rs 1000 crore in the first phase of the project.

# Kerala on alert for Zika

14 cases of Zika virus disease confirmed in state; Centre sends team of experts

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 9 JULY

**E**ven as the state grapples with the Covid-19 pandemic, 14 cases of Zika virus disease were reported in Kerala on Friday.

The Kerala health department has drawn up an action plan against the mosquito-borne disease with a special focus on pregnant women. The disease is considered to have severe impact on women up to four months of pregnancy.

have taken measures to collect samples of the Aedes species mosquitoes, which transmit it to people through its bite. All the districts have been alerted about this and measures been taken to control the spread of the disease, she added.

The health department has drawn up an action plan against the mosquito-borne disease with a special focus on pregnant women. The disease is considered to have severe impact on women up to four months of pregnancy.

Pregnant women should especially be wary of the Zika virus, as it can cause neurological

damage to the foetus, they should get themselves tested if they have fever, Ms George said at a meeting of the District Medical Officers (DMOs) on Friday. In this connection, the health minister has issued directions to district medical officers to ensure that all pregnant women up to five months of pregnancy are not infected with Zika virus. Lab facilities for detecting the virus will be set up at medical colleges and public health labs, said the minister. Private hospitals will be made part of the Zika control measures, she added.

There is no medicine for the

## End of the road for TDP in Telangana

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 9 JULY

A day after meeting TRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao Telangana TDP president L Ramana tendered his resignation to his chief N Chandrababu Naidu signalling the end of the road for the party set up by NT Rama Rao in the state. Mr Rao had invited Mr Ramana to join TRS hoping to capture a big chunk of backward class votes which have been going the BJP way in past few elections.

any leaders left in the party's Telangana unit.

This is vastly different from 2015 when Mr Naidu, then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, had declared TDP's ambition to be a national party with units in other states. However, he was banking on Telangana where though the party was not in power it had substantial presence with MLAs and MPs. However, his bête noir and Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao proceeded to clip

prevention and treatment of Zika. Doctors recommend adequate rest and drinking plenty of water to help relieve symptoms. If the symptoms worsen, expert care should be sought.

The Centre has meanwhile dispatched a six-member central team of experts to Kerala to monitor the Zika virus situation and support the state government in management of cases, the Union health ministry said on Friday. At a Press meet in New Delhi, joint secretary in the health ministry Lav Agarwal said, "To monitor the situation and to support the state government, a six-member team comprising public health experts, vector-borne disease experts and clinicians from AIIMS has already been issued instructions to reach there and support the state government in terms of management of Zika there."

his wings. While he ensured TDP MLAs were lured in TRS with Cabinet berths Mr Naidu and his favourite A Revanth Reddy were mired in the cash-for-vote controversy which soon led the TDP chief to exit Hyderabad. After this TDP was in a steady decline but the final blow came when Mr Naidu teamed up with Congress in the 2018 Assembly elections in an attempt to defeat TRS and Mr Rao, only to have the latter turn the tables on him.

## Kerala HC raises concern over crowdfunding

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 9 JULY

be a free for all because the source of the funds that comes and where it goes have all to be proper'.

The court said when the Kerala government has started collecting money for providing free vaccines, it got only Rs 68 lakhs whereas Rs 18 crores was collected within a few days by some people. The court made it clear that it is not interdicting the crowdfunding but only cautioning the government to have some control over it.

"Addressing Bangladesh PM as 'Hasina Di', in a letter dated 8 July, Miss Banerjee said she was "overwhelmed" to receive the gift and has distributed it among all. She also wrote:

## Mamata thanks Sheikh Hasina for mango largesse

KOLKATA, 9 JULY

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed her gratitude to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for gifting her mangoes.

Addressing Bangladesh PM as "Hasina Di", in a letter dated 8 July, Miss Banerjee said she was "overwhelmed" to receive the gift and has distributed it among all. She also wrote:

"I respect your affection and the fragrance of Bangladesh that has come through the mangoes. I am truly impressed."

The mangoes are of the Harihbaria variety, grown in Rangpur district in the northwest Bangladesh. Miss Banerjee wrote she has heard about this variety of mangoes but has never tasted it.

Miss Banerjee and PM Hasina are known to share a very cordial relation. In November 2019, Miss Hasina had visited Kolkata at the invitation of BCCI president Sourav Ganguly to inaugurate and watch India's

maiden day-night Test match against Bangladesh at the iconic Eden Gardens. A few days back Miss Hasina had sent 2,600 kg of mangoes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders including Miss Banerjee as a mark of friendship between the two countries.

SNS

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*Today, I assure Punjabis: Immediately after forming the govt in 2022, SAD-BSP will honour the martyrs of Kisan Andolan.*

SHIROMANI AKALI DAL CHIEF SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL

PROMISING GOVT JOB TO KIN OF FARMERS WHO DIED DURING STIR AGAINST FARM LAWS

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 10 JULY 2021

05

## THUMBNAILS



Former J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti arrives at her party's office at Gandhi Nagar in Jammu. AGENCIES

**Condition of Kalyan Singh better:** The condition of former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh, admitted to the intensive care unit (ICU) of Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences here, is better and his vital parameters are stable, the hospital said on Friday. "He is responding to simple commands and trying to communicate with the staff involved in his care," said a health bulletin issued by the SGPGIMS. PTI

**IPS officer appointed secy to Uttarakhand CM:** Senior IPS officer Abhinav Kumar was on Friday appointed the Additional Principal Secretary to Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami. It is for the first time in Uttarakhand that an IPS officer has been appointed to the post. An IPS officer of the 1996 batch, Kumar is an Additional Director General of Police currently posted as the spokesman of the Uttarakhand Police. The order of his appointment as Additional Principal Secretary to the CM has already been issued. PTI

**HM to chair meeting with CMs of NE states:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah will chair a meeting with CMs of northeast states on 17 July, during which he is likely to take up the matter of interstate border disputes among other issues, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said on Friday. The meeting will also be attended by chief secretaries and the director general of police of these states, he said. PTI

# Delimitation panel, in J&K, pledges it will act in a fair, transparent manner

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 9 JULY

**T**he Delimitation Commission on Friday assured that it has come to Jammu and Kashmir with an open mind and will act in a fair and transparent manner.

The commission that has been accused by certain Kashmir based political parties of conducting a pre-planned exercise, told media persons here after completing its 4-days visit to the union territory (UT) that the draft prepared by the commission will be put in the public domain for objections and the associate members will also be consulted before preparing the final draft.

Replies to a question about allegations of the PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti that delimitation was a pre-planned exercise, chairperson of the commission Justice (Retired) Ranjana Prakash Desai assured that the exer-



cise will be transparent and as such there should be no doubts or fear. We can talk only to those who want to participate in the process, she said while responding to a question on boycott of the commission by Mehbooba.

Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra, who is ex-officio member of the commission, said that the exercise to re-draw bound-

aries of Assembly constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir is a "very complex issue and not mere arithmetic."

He said that the delimitation was being done constitutionally under the J&K Reorganisation Act. Population will be the main criteria for delimitation but priority will be also the area, geography, topography and also

the communication facilities of the areas. The exercise is being done on the basis of the 2011 census.

He said that in the past four days, the 3-member commission met 290 groups consisting of about 800 persons in Srinagar, Pahalgam, Kishtwar and Jammu to know their viewpoints and suggestions. He said that all demands and recommen-

dations will be taken into account. The Chief Election Commissioner said the commission will also specify the number of seats to be reserved for the Schedule Caste and the Scheduled Tribes in J&K Assembly. It will be for the first time that seats will be reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the Assembly. Sushil Chandra said the visit of the commission was to ascertain the ground realities. "It is not arithmetical exercise, it is not mathematical exercise, it was to know genuine concerns of the public, to know the genuine difficulties of the people."

The Delimitation Commission has said that 7 more assembly seats will be added in the J&K Assembly. This will increase the strength of the Assembly to 90.

The Commission has ruled out de-freezing one-third of 24 seats reserved for displaced persons of the Pakistan occupied Jammu Kashmir (PoJK) settled here.

## SC tags Centre's plea for transfer of petitions on new IT rules from HC with pending matter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Supreme Court on Friday said the Centre's plea seeking transfer of petitions challenging the validity of new IT Rules from different high courts to the apex court would be heard on July 16 along with a pending matter related to regulation of over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna tagged the Centre's plea with a pending special leave petition (SLP) in which the apex court had in March this year stayed proceedings before several high courts on petitions related to regulation of OTT platforms. We will tag it (Centre's plea) with the SLP, the bench said, adding, the matter would be listed before an appropriate bench on July 16.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, urged the bench to stay the proceedings pending in different high courts on pleas challenging the validity of the



new Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. "We are not saying anything. We are simply tagging it with the other matter, the bench said.

One of the advocates, appearing in the matter, told the bench that the pending SLP is prior to the new Rules.

According to the new IT Rules, social media and streaming companies will be required to take down contentious content quicker, appoint grievance redressable officers and assist in investigations.

The new Rules also seek to regulate the functioning of online media portals and publishers, over-the-top (OTT) platforms and social media intermediaries.

The Centre has moved the apex court seeking transfer of pleas challenging the validity of new IT Rules from different high courts to the top court for an authoritative pronouncement on the issue.

Several petitions challenging the new IT Rules are pending adjudication in different high courts, including the high courts of Delhi and Madras.

## Virbhadrappa's son to take over royal role before cremation

SHIMLA, 9 JULY

After news of the death of former chief minister Virbhadrappa Singh reached Padam Palace in Rampur sub division of Shimla district, preparations have started for the anointment of his son Vikramaditya Singh as the new 'king'.

It is a tradition in the erstwhile princely state of Rampur Bushahr that the seat of the ruler should never be empty, one that locals follow religiously.

It is a known fact that most of the locals of Rampur Bushahr region and other interior areas of Himachal even follow their 'kings' in poll battles with majority of voters still preferring a candidate of royal dynasty, irrespective of party or ideology.

"The body of the longest serving chief minister of Himachal will reach Rampur palace late in the night and after that it can only be brought out of the premises after anointment of Vikramaditya as a 'king'.

The discussions with priests for anointment of Vikramaditya have started and it is being done as per age old customs. Virbhadrappa too was anointed 'king' after the death of his father Padam Singh in 1947 at the age 13 years.

"It is only after the ceremony is over that the body of the former CM will be cremated," a state Congress party office bearer said. Meanwhile, locals had started gathering at Padam Palace to pay tribute to their beloved 'Raja Sahab' since Thursday and thousands of supporters are likely to attend the cremation on Saturday.

SNS



## HC dismisses Chirag Paswan's plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The Delhi High Court Friday dismissed a plea by leader of one of the factions of Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) Chirag Paswan challenging the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's decision to recognise his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras as the leader of the party in the House, saying it was without merits.

"It is well settled that the right to regulate internal disputes of the House is the prerogative of the Speaker", the high court said.

"I find absolutely no merit in the petition. The petition is dismissed", Justice Rekha Palli said.

The high court, which was inclined to impose cost on Chirag, did not do so after a request was made by his counsel.

The petition sought setting aside speaker's June 14 circular showing the name of Paras as leader of Jan Lokshakti Party in the Lok Sabha.



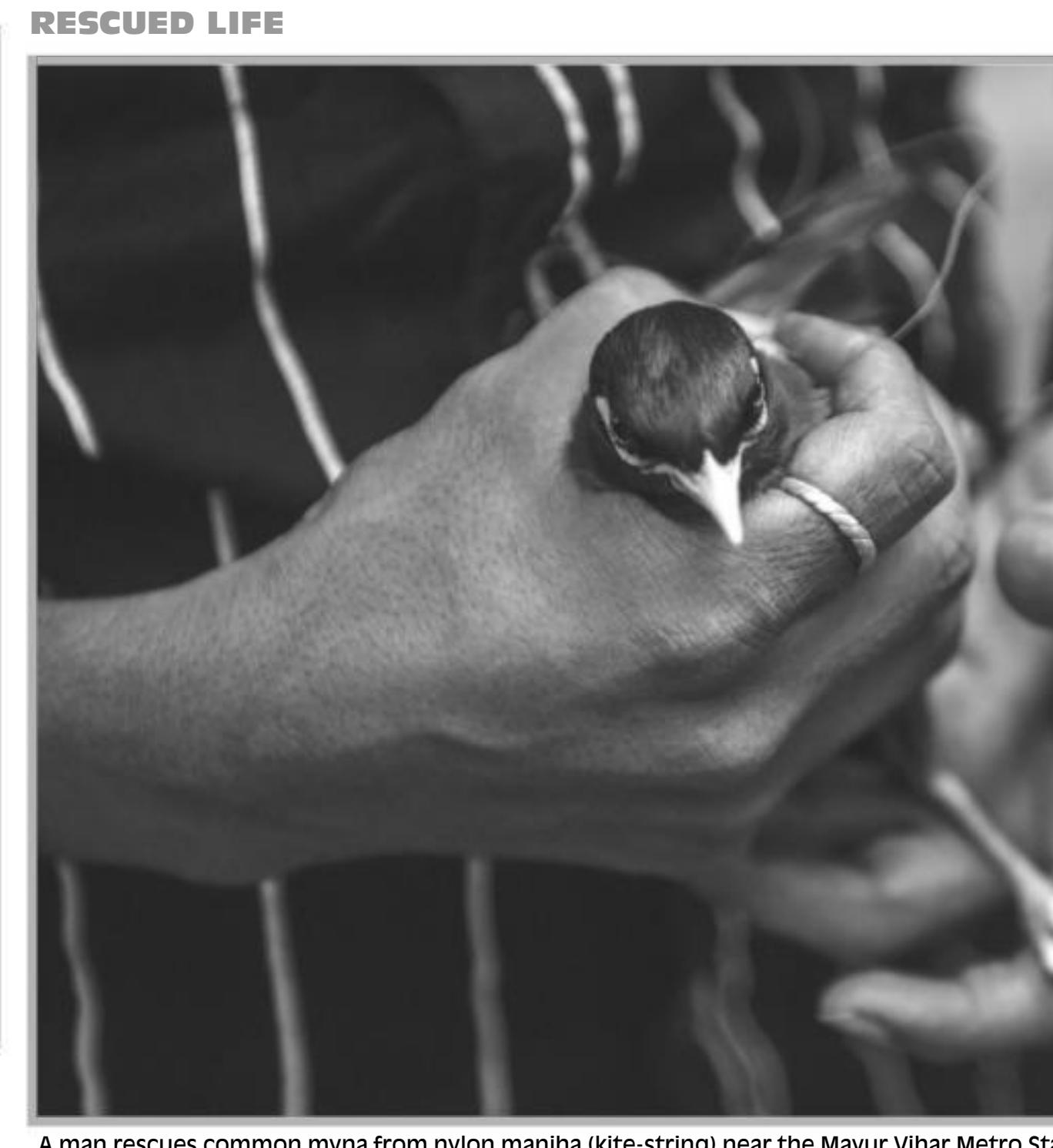
During the hearing, advocate Arvind Bajpai, representing Chirag, said among the six party MPs, five wrote to the Speaker to recognise Paras as leader of the party in the House and directions were passed in this regard.

The apex court said it was inclined to agree with the submissions of the counsel for the Centre and the Speaker's office.

The judge said, Now it is very clear. If you want to press, it is your wish. I am clear that this is inter-party dispute. You can exercise your remedies. You take your call, I will then pass an order by making some observations.

Chirag's counsel submitted he was not here to settle the inter-party dispute and the chief whip cannot claim that he should be declared as leader of the party in the House.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Cen-



A man rescues common myna from nylon manja (kite-string) near the Mayur Vihar Metro Station in New Delhi. AGENCIES

## Parents at school with children to learn English, speak at home

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HOOGHLY, 9 JULY

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has taken special initiative towards starting English section in Bengali-medium schools.

The Serampore Girls High School has taken a special initiative to imbibe fluency in English among students who were previously studying in English or Bengal-medium schools.

The school has even taken initiative to guide the pupils' parents in which a reading class has been introduced, to be held weekly, to impart parents with the basic knowl-

edge of the English language and Spoken English.

The parents are enthusiastic about the weekly English classes and are eager to learn spoken English which will help them to speak in the language with their children at home.

Headmistress of Serampore Girls High School Ivy Sarkar said the students reading in Bengali or English section are no less intelligent than students in English-medium schools.

Students can pick up languages easily if properly guided, she said, adding that however parents also play a vital role in their upbringing.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of all concerned that railways have decided to change the timings of following Special Trains:-

06317 Kanniyakumari-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special (Weekly) with immediate effect to till further advice

06318 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-Kanniyakumari Special (Weekly) from 12.07.2021 to till further advice

02687 Madurai-Chandigarh Superfast Special (Bi-Weekly) from 11.07.2021 to till further advice

02688 Chandigarh-Madurai Superfast Special (Bi-Weekly) from 16.07.2021 to till further advice

NOTE: Passengers are therefore, advised to please check the detailed Time-Table of above trains through RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Vishwakarma Bhawan, Sheed Jeet Singh Marg, New Delhi-110016 (Delhi Office) Email: [nectar@nectar.org.in](mailto:nectar@nectar.org.in)

Advt. No. 03/2021/REGULAR POST/ S&T&A

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Applications are invited from eligible Indian nationals for filling up various regular posts on Deputation/ Including Short Term Contract/Absorption basis only falling which applications will then be taken up on Direct Recruitment basis.

The candidates applying for Deputation/ Including Short Term Contract/Absorption basis will be considered for selection on Direct Recruitment basis and vice versa. Relaxation is applicable to Departmental Candidates as per the provisions in the RRs and By-laws of NECTAR.

SI Name of the Post 7th CPC Pay Level No. of posts

SCIENTIFIC POSTS

1 Sr. Advisor Technical 14 (Rs.37400-67000 in Pay Band-4 Grade Pay Rs.1000/-) 01

2 Advisor Technical 13A (Rs.37400-67000 in Pay Band-4 Grade Pay Rs.8900/-) 01

3 Chief Radio Technologist 12 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.7600/-) 01

4 Chief Coordinator 12 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.7600/-) 01

5 Software Engineer 11 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.6500/-) 01

6 Junior Geomatics Officer 10 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.5400/-) 01

7 Structure Designer 10 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.5400/-) 01

8 Food Technologist 10 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.5400/-) 01

TECHNICAL POST

9 Sr. Analyst 7 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4600/-) 06

10 Jr. Analyst 6 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4200/-) 04

ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS

11 Sr. Admin. Officer 12 (Rs.15600-39100 in Pay Band-3 Grade Pay Rs.7600/-) 01

12 Accounts Officer 7 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4600/-) 01

13 Private Secretary 7 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4600/-) 01

14 Executive Assistant Accounts 6 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4200/-) 01

15 Executive Assistant Admin 6 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4200/-) 01

16 Personal Assistant 6 (Rs.9300-34800/- in Pay Band-2 Grade Pay Rs.4200/-) 02

Note: The priority on filling up of the above posts will be on Deputation/ Including Short Term Contract/Absorption basis only falling which applications will then be taken

## Resurgent Taliban

Last Sunday, key districts in Afghanistan's Badakhshan and Kandahar provinces were captured by the ever so resurgent Taliban, with the Afghan troops fleeing to neighbouring Tajikistan. That retreat or escape, so to speak, has gained momentum with the capture of several strategic districts from the fleeing Afghan forces. The latter would appear to be fighting a losing battle, and the future of the narrative is much too fearsome to imagine. More than 300 Afghan military personnel crossed over from Badakhshan as Taliban fighters advanced towards the border, Tajikistan's State Committee for National Security said in a statement. "Guided by the principles of humanism and good neighbourliness," the Tajik authorities allowed the retreating Afghan government forces to cross into Tajikistan. The subplot of Sunday's adventure in rugged terrain must be that the Taliban is on the offensive, most particularly in the wake of the United States withdrawing from the Badgam airbase ~ 20 years after the conflict began ~ and ahead of the formal pullout which has now been deferred by two months. Since mid-April, when President Biden announced the end to Afghanistan's "forever war", the Taliban has made strides throughout the country. But its most significant gains have been in the northern half of the country, a traditional stronghold of the US-allied strongmen who helped defeat them in 2001. The Taliban now controls roughly a third of all 421 districts and district centres in Afghanistan.

The gains in north-eastern Badakhshan province in recent days have mostly come to the armed group without a battle, said Mohib-ul Rahman, a provincial council member. He blamed Taliban successes on the poor morale of troops who are mostly outnumbered and lack supplies. The majority of the districts were left to the Taliban without any fight. In the last few days, 10 districts fell to the militants, eight without a fight. Hundreds of Afghan soldiers, police and intelligence troops surrendered their military outposts and fled to Badakhshan's provincial capital of Faizabad. Even as a security meeting was being held early on Sunday to plot the strengthening of the perimeter around Faizabad, some senior provincial officials were leaving the city for Kabul. In late June, the Afghan government resurrected volunteer militias with a reputation of brutal violence to support the beleaguered Afghan forces, but many of the fighters in the Badakhshan districts put up only a half-hearted fight. The Taliban also captured a key district in its former bastion of Kandahar after fierce night-time fighting with Afghan government forces.

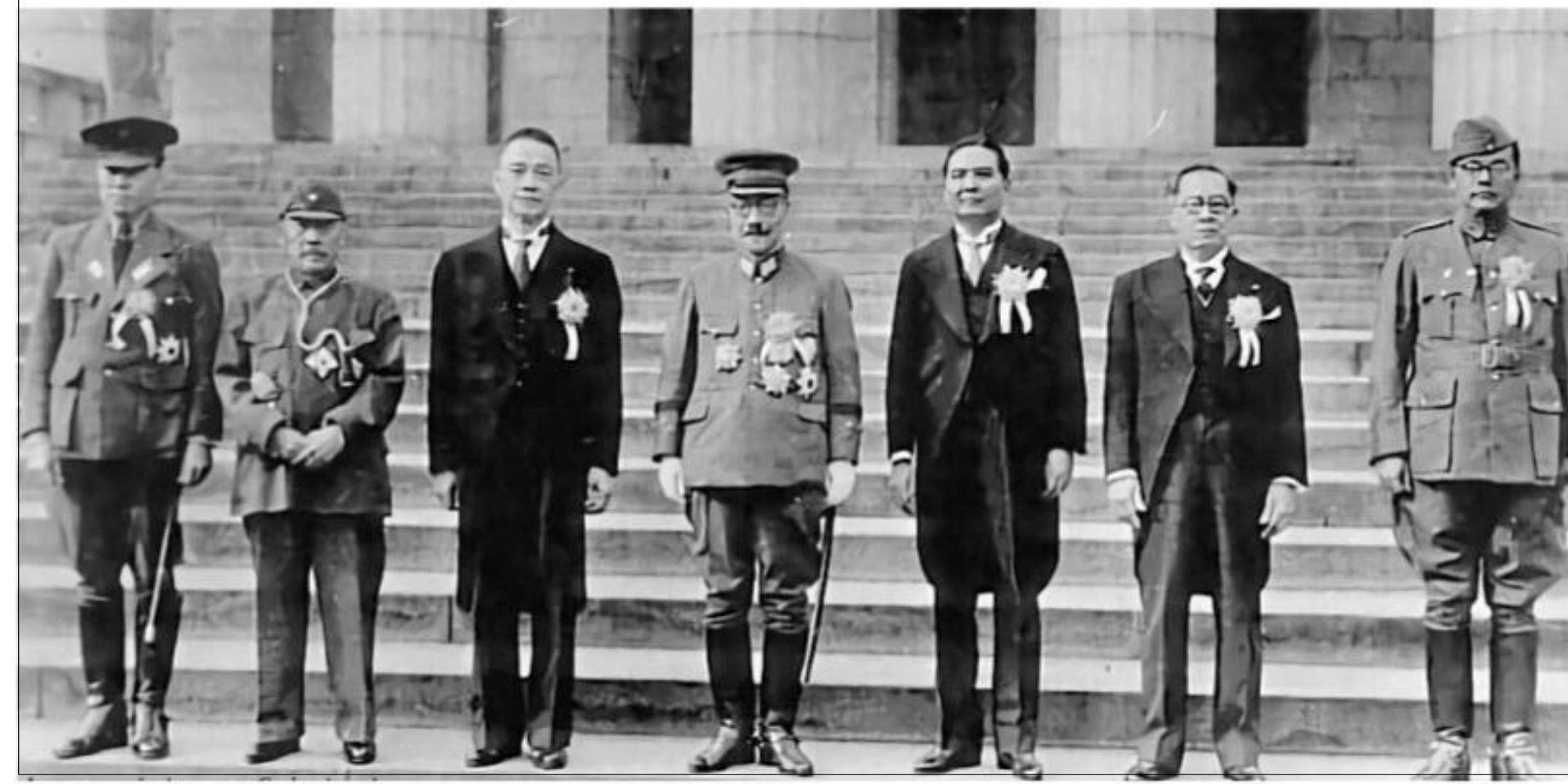
The fall of Panjwai district in Kandahar comes just two days after US and Nato forces vacated their main Bagram airbase near Kabul. Over the years, the Taliban and Afghan forces have regularly clashed in and around Panjwai, with the armed group aiming to seize it given its proximity to Kandahar city, the provincial capital.

## Horrific, abhorrent

Haiti bears witness to an upheaval. It was an unusual assassination of the country's President, Jovenel Moïse, who was killed in a shootout with security forces at his residence in Port-au-Prince, faintly recalling the killing by Army officers of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and part of his immediate family in Dhaka on 15 August 1975. Mr Moïse (53) was fatally shot and his wife was injured when attackers stormed their home early on Wednesday. First Lady Martine Moïse survived and has been flown to Florida where she is receiving treatment. Four people suspected of assassinating the President were killed in a shootout with security forces. While President Biden offered condolences to the people of Haiti for the "horrific assassination", Britain's Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has called it "an abhorrent act" and also appealed for calm. Clearly, an assassination in relatively obscure Haiti has caused a flutter in the international roost. Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph called for calm and has declared a nationwide state of emergency, also referred to as a "state of siege", which envisages a ban on gatherings and use of the military for police roles, along with other extensions of executive powers. There was apparently a groundswell of opposition to the Moïse regime. He became President in 2017, but in recent times faced widespread protests demanding his resignation. Coups, political instability, widespread gang violence and natural disasters have plagued the country for decades and rendered it the poorest nation in the Americas, indeed in the Western hemisphere. Haiti has been a failed state under a decidedly failed leadership. There has been widespread international condemnation of the assassination. The UN Security Council, which is due to hold a closed-door meeting on the killing this week, issued a statement in which it made "an emphatic call on all political stakeholders to refrain from any acts of violence or incitement". The internal crisis is, therefore, deep-seated though it may have been overshadowed by the mayhem in the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince. Moïse's tenure in office was rocky; as Head of State, he faced accusations of corruption and widespread demonstrations. Tuesday's bloodshed was ignited by worsening poverty and political unrest. The country is politically polarised amidst a growing humanitarian crisis caused by shortage of food, fears and widespread chaos. Parliamentary elections should have been held in October 2019 but disputes have delayed them, implying that Moïse had been ruling by decree. In February this year, on the day the opposition wanted him to leave office, Moïse said an attempt to kill him and overthrow the government had been foiled. Haiti has also faced a wave of gang violence and kidnappings, particularly in the capital, with several of its districts becoming no-go areas.

# Bengal and Japan ~ II

Rash Behari Bose is mostly known as a revolutionary in India, but he is remembered in Japan for another thing, which only a few know. During his stay in Japan, he introduced an authentic Indian curry that is a key dish on the menu at Tokyo's popular restaurants even today



Other eminent Bengali personalities with a Japan connection were Rash Behari Bose, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose role is well known and documented, and Justice Radha Binod Pal ~ all of who had their unique contribution in bringing India and Japan closer.

But there is a little known commoner from Bengal whose role in the India-Japan friendship deserves mention. A commoner from Bengal, Hariprabha married a Japanese Uemon Takeda, in Dhabka in 1907. After marriage Hariprabha visited Japan with her husband in 1912 to meet his family.

The saga of the Hariprabha-Uemon Takeda marriage in an age when international marriages were frowned upon is an interesting footnote in the evolution of India-Japan relations at the people-to-people level.

As it happens in most cases of marriages when the woman moves to her husband's home after marriage, Hariprabha had to travel to Japan to meet her in-laws. Hariprabha Mullick (1890-1972), a Brahmo Bengali woman, wrote a travelogue titled Bangamahilar Japan Jatra (A Bengali lady's visit to Japan) and published in 1915, wherein one finds mention of Uemon Takeda (b.1875).

The travelogue offers a Bengali woman's perspective of a Japanese household in the early 1900s with reflections on contemporary Japanese society and culture. This was the earliest published travelogue on Japan by a Bengali woman.

The next historical connect with Japan in contemporary times is the role of freedom fighter Rash Behari Bose, which is often underplayed in India. Not many in India are even aware of it

and therefore it needs to be highlighted.

As one of the unsung heroes and freedom fighters of India, the story of his role in India's struggle for freedom is a significant episode in the history of the Indian independence movement.

It was Rash Behari who founded the Indian National Army and later handed over the task to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The former Prime Minister of Burma (now Myanmar) Thakin Nu had observed, "if Netaji came

out in the fight as Garibaldi of the movement, Rash Behari Bose's part in the drama was more than of a Mazzini". Not many are aware that Rash Behari Bose was the founder of the Indian National Army (INA), as it is often credited to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. This historical fallacy needs to be corrected.

As a revolutionary from his student days, Rash Behari planned to escape from India to Japan from where he planned to continue his revolutionary movement against the British colonial power. After reaching Tokyo in June 1915, he reached out to Japanese sympathizers.

As a signatory to the alliance with Britain, the Japanese government was forced to direct Rash Behari to leave the shores of Japan. However, Bose got the support from the Japanese people, who hid him in the cellar of a restaurant Naka Muraya.

When a British ship fired at a Japanese merchant carrier, Japan was provoked and relationships between the two nations soured. In order to embarrass Britain,

Japan went soft on Bose, encouraging him to come out of hiding to carry on his revolutionary movement against British rule in India. Japan also withdrew the deportation order issued against Bose based on the terms of the Anglo-Japanese alliance.

During his stay at Naka Muraya, the owner of the restaurant Mr. Kot-suko Soma and his wife Mrs. Aizo Soma bestowed Bose with affection and care, offering their eldest daughter Toshiko in marriage to him. Thus Rash Behari became the son-in-law in the Land of the Rising Sun but never forgot his motherland.

Rash Behari Bose is mostly known as a revolutionary in India, but he is remembered in Japan for another thing, which only a few know. During his stay in Japan, he introduced an authentic Indian curry that is a key dish on the menu at Tokyo's popular restaurants even today. He was given shelter by the owner of Naka Muraya, owned by the Soma family, because the couple supported India's struggle for independence.

Gradually, Rash Behari developed a bond of affection with the Soma family. It was here that he shared the recipe of his favourite Indian chicken curry, making the curry popular in the Soma house. The bond between Rash Behari and the Somas thickened when the latter offered their eldest daughter in marriage. The marriage was solemnised in 1918. This was a bold decision on the part of the Soma family, at a time when such alliances were frowned upon in Japan. Toshiko not only willingly accepted the life of a social out-

cast, but also shouldered most of the domestic responsibilities letting Bose pursue his goal of Indian independence with single-minded devotion. The last in my list of Bengali persons who cemented India-Japan relations was Justice Radha Binod Pal. At the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, known as the 'Tokyo Trial', as the representative of the British power, Justice Pal, much to the surprise of the Allies became the sole judge to give a dissenting judgement exonerating the Japanese of any war crimes.

At the end of the Second World War, the leaders of the defeated Axis powers were tried for crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity in two specially established international military tribunals. Unlike at the vaunted Nuremberg trials, the judgment of the less-illustrious Tokyo tribunal was not unanimous. On 12 November 1948 when the tribunal announced the final judgment, "Guilty", pronounced one judge after another, until one voice thundered, "Not Guilty!". The disbelieving gasps came first and then came shocked silence. That voice of dissent came from Indian Justice Radha Binod Pal.

In his dissenting opinion, Justice Radha Binod Pal comprehensively disagreed with all aspects of the trial, finding all defendants "not guilty" of the charges levelled against them. Despite being considered quite incendiary at that time, the dissenting opinion has been largely ignored by international relations scholars analysing the development of legal norms and institutions in global politics. Notwithstanding its many limitations, the questions raised in Pal's dissent about criminality, power and justice, while situated in a specific historical moment, remain far from settled.

(Concluded)

are liabilities against foreign reserves (assets). You cannot do what you want with the reserves, because you do not "own" these. You can use these reserves to fund infrastructure investment, but only at your peril.

The foreign currency assets pay very little interest, while domestic bonds pay more. There is, then, a "quasi-fiscal" cost to accumulating reserves. There is also a feedback link here. Capital inflows cause an appreciation of our currency (in "real" terms) and our goods become more expensive compared to foreign goods.

This results in a current account deficit, throttling any hopes of (say) Atmanirbhar Bharat. The stock market booms, property prices rise, but it is bye-bye to industrialization. The lack of clarity on this matter afflicts many in India. P Chidambaram, often in error but never in doubt, would repeatedly tell Parliament that as "we know from Econ 101, the current account is the difference between foreign exchange receipts and payments". Unfortunately, this is generally not true ~ and, certainly not for India. We run current deficits persistently, but sit atop a small hill of foreign

### GREAT LOSS

SIR, The death of hockey legend Keshab Datt is a great loss for our country. His brilliant ability helped the Indian hockey team to victory in the Olympics in 1948 and 1952. He was one of the players who helped Bengal to victory in the 1952 National senior hockey championship. He played a key role in keeping Bengal hockey alive. It must be mentioned that Leslie Claudio, Keshab Datt and Gurba Singh mesmerized hockey lovers of Bengal. Datt may no longer be with us but his game and his talent will keep him in our hearts.

Yours, etc., Jayanta Datta,  
Chinsurah, 8 July.

exchange. It is tragic that thirty years after India's economy was opened to capital flows, the level of understanding of these issues is still very rudimentary.

Yours, etc., Partha Sen,  
New Delhi, 7 July.

### LAME EXCUSE

SIR, The image of the party with a difference and the government it heads at the Centre certainly takes a severe beating when someone like Narayan Tatoo Rane is inducted as a Cabinet Minister. In fact, Rane himself and his wife and two sons have been accused at different times of multiple wrong doings, including criminal acts, ranging from money laundering, unauthorised land grabbing,

assault of public servants on duty, extortion and much else, thereby earning the dubious sobriquet of being Maharashtra's "First Family of Controversies".

Strangely, none of these charges have been allowed to reach their legal conclusion. The vacuous excuse apparently adduced for his inclusion in the Cabinet is to checkmate the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, particularly the Konkan belt.

One wonders whether it's morally correct to sacrifice the self professed virtues of honesty and transparency, flaunted so frequently by the ruling party, at the altar of political expediency. It's bad optics as well and reflects the sad state of affairs in our polity today.

Yours, etc., Bhaskar Roy,  
New Delhi, July 9.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Foreign exchange reserves

SIR, Reading Govind Bhat-tacharjee's article Problem of Plenty (*The Statesman*, 7 July) on India's foreign exchange reserves, one gets the feeling that while there is a lot of discussion of various items that constitute India's foreign reserves, there is a lack of clarity in his analysis.

The question is: how does an economy accumulate foreign exchange reserves? There are two ways to do it. The first way is to

spend less than your income (GNP) ~ i.e. by running current account surpluses. This is how an individual accumulates wealth, by saving. This wealth can be spent later, thrown into the Bay of Bengal, etc. It is yours, so you do what you want with it. The second way is through intervention in the foreign exchange market. When there is a capital inflow into India, the RBI gives the foreign investors rupees for (say) dollars. But now the

money supply has gone up, causing concern about inflation.

So the RBI takes preventive measures, and it sells domestic bonds (for money).

The net result is an increase in the supply of bonds, in exchange for foreign currency.

This is called sterilized intervention (because the

money supply has been sterilized from the effect of capital inflows).

Note, in this case there



## 'Outreach must for Covid-hit kids'

**A**s chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), **ANURAG KUNDU** is mandated to monitor implementation of the rights of children, commission research studies, inquire into specific complaints/violations of children rights, and advise the Delhi government on policy matters on the issue of early childhood care and development, school education, protection of children from physical, mental or sexual violence, child labour, early marriage, substance abuse, and trafficking. A computer science engineer by training, Kundu has chaired or has been part of several key Delhi committees on vital issues ranging from education to Covid-induced lockdown. In an interview with **RAKESH KUMAR**, he shares his thoughts on some crucial matters relating to the pandemic and its fallout for children. Excerpts:

**Q.** In the national capital the second Covid wave seemed to be like an apocalypse. The havoc it has wreaked on the lives of children across the country is unimaginable. What is your take?

A. Thousands of children have lost one or both parents because of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially during the second surge in April-May 2021. It is nothing short of a national emergency. It isn't only about the trauma that children experience because of parental loss which manifests in sleeping disorders, anxiety, and loss of appetite or expression but also the potential drop-out from school, and drop in income levels affecting quality of life, both of which are catastrophic for a child.

**Q.** A large number of kids lost their parents or other family members, which has devastated them in every possible way including emotionally, psychologically and economically. What, in your view, must be done urgently to address this epic crisis?

A. Three things are most crucial: Outreach, financial and educational assistance, and social-emotional support. Nearly 400,000 people have reportedly died because of Covid. There is considerable evidence that this is gross underreporting. Governments must actively establish contact with families using its Covid-19 death database as well as its death certificate issuance database and reach out to them. This approach will help governments quickly identify children who have lost one or both parents. Additionally, SOS helplines and strengthening ChildLine is very crucial to enable people to reach out should they know children in need. Secondly, schemes that provide for financial assistance and educational support are important. Most state governments including Delhi government have announced such schemes already. However, governments need to ensure that least documents are required to avail benefits under the scheme or else these would become yet another way to punish the victim by making them run from pillar to post. Governments need to be liberal and broader about the definition of Covid as far as schemes for children are concerned. The Government of Delhi's scheme is a good example that other states may follow. There is no income criteria and all deaths within one month of testing Covid positive are covered.

Lastly, governance cannot be reduced to a mere banking transaction. Therefore, robust mechanisms for these families, especially for children, to vent out their anxiety, frustration, pain and suffering is critical. Counselling is important to enable these families to process the grief of their loved one. Schools have a crucial role to play here.

**Q.** What are your estimates on the number of children who have become orphans or lost either parent in Delhi and the country during the entire Covid pandemic period so far?

A. Nearly 10-12 per cent of the deaths are of individuals less than 50 years old, an age benchmark where the children of the deceased are likely to be less than 18 years old. This points to nearly 5,000 children losing either parent in Delhi. Using the



same logic, one can estimate the number of children losing either parent at about 80,000+. But we understand that these are grossly underreported. Several people did not get themselves tested or deaths went unreported as Covid death. So actual numbers could be much higher. DCPCR has been able to trace 70 children who lost both parents in Delhi, NCPCR reports 3,500 children having turned orphan in the whole country. I am sure many children have not been traced, and I sincerely hope they are. Identification is the first step to providing support.

**Q.** The Delhi government has announced it will provide free education and Rs 2500 per month for kids orphaned by the pandemic. For them the Centre has also declared a scheme involving free education and a Rs 10 lakh corpus fund when any such orphan turns 18. Do you think these are sufficient measures for these children?

A. No government assistance

can replace the love, affection, and security that parents provide to their children. The financial assistance can at best provide to cover the loss of income that parental loss causes. To that extent, the Government of Delhi has provided Rs. 50,000 as one time assistance and Rs. 2500 per family (per child in case of orphans). This is a very good beginning. How we keep these children in schools, and how schools provide them the needed social and emotional support are important.

**Q.** What is the DCPCR's stand on the issue of adoption of kids orphaned by Covid. What measures must be taken to ensure their safe and secure adoption?

A. Adoption is a beautiful concept. It provides the children the sense of security and love of the parents, and the parents a new centre for their world. I hope that more and more people come forward to adopt children. However, it is critical that the adoption happens through the

prescribed legal mechanism only. All those interested in adoption must register themselves on the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)'s website and not believe the social media posts offering children for adoption. Such posts are illegal, and must be immediately reported. It is also the time to reflect and review the adoption rules and processes. It must be a process to evaluate the credentials of prospective parent(s), and prepare them for the children coming to their home. However, the process can sometimes be frustrating. For example, nearly 4,000 adoption requests have been pending since 2016 and 2017. Nearly 8,000 have been pending since 2018. This can be a frustrating experience for parents excited to adopt children. This is also injustice to the children who have to wait for such long time before they can find the comfort and love of a family.

**Q.** In the pandemic fallout millions of underprivileged and marginalised children are believed to have dropped out of their schools for financial and other reasons including the digital divide thrown up by the prevalent online education system. What needs to be done to get these kids back to schools?

A. Three things: Let the schools and the teachers reach out to these children through phone and home visits. Teachers whom the children love and admire are best suited to assuage the pain the children are experiencing because of parental loss. Secondly, the school community and the people at large need to come forward to support these children through fee waiver, digital devices, and all other means. Schools have been innovating and need to continue to innovate means of ensuring learning without heavy reliance on laptops/computers. Also, attendance of these children is the first and foremost predictor of potential drop-out and difficulty in their lives and schools need to be vigilant to their attendance. Lastly, financial assistance schemes of the governments may prove crucial in retention of these children in schools.

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

Sir Robert Horne's statement in the House of Commons regarding the cost of precautionary measures taken during the coal stoppage in Great Britain shows that the authorities were well prepared to deal with any attempt by alien plotters to take advantage of the situation to stir up trouble. From the great body of the miners, as events have proved, there was no danger of any violent outbreak, whatever may have been the case with small irresponsible minorities or a few fanatics liable to be the cogsaws of foreign intruders. The bulk of the miners, whether they were right or wrong, may claim to have conducted their case in a straightforward and orderly manner. They have fared all the better for it, and there is no bitterness left against them, despite the enormous losses caused to the community by their action. Their case for the national wage pool failed, not on account of the Government's measures, but because public opinion was against it, and the other great trade unions refused to support the proposal. The upshot of the whole story has been to afford a decisive demonstration that the Labour extremists - by whatever name they call themselves - are repudiated both by the great mass of the British working-class, miners included, and by the British public in general. Such a demonstration is, perhaps, worth the cost to which the taxpayer has been put.

### NEWS ITEMS

### ARSON AND LOOT IN ALIGARH

In connection with the recent riots at Aligarh it is stated that the trouble began in Mr. Liddiar's court, which the mob tried to rush as soon as the sentence was pronounced on the accused. News was brought by the City Inspector that the mob was completely out of hand. The crowd, or part of it, first made for the Municipal Hall where a half-hearted attempt was made to rush it. Another lot rushed the Police Chowky near by and sacked it. From here they made for the Post Office which was set on fire and absolutely gutted. The mob rushed into the room and attacked the sentry. The latter fell but held on to his rifle and before he was overpowered he fired at his assailant. In this fight four were killed, and a considerable number were seriously injured.

### TRADE SITUATION IN AMRITSAR

The following survey of the trade situation in Amritsar is given by a special correspondent of the Civil and Military Gazette: It is now two years since the merchants enriched themselves with war profits, but many of them have now to unload themselves of their acquired wealth. Most of the merchants who are failing at this moment are chiefly suffering for their folly. About ten merchants have already failed through speculation. The cloth markets are dull on account of the various causes mentioned above, and it is to be noted with regret that the two chief sundry goods dealers have also declared their inability to pay their debts. Attempts at a compromise are being made, and in the case of one of these have succeeded.

### MADRAS NON-BRAHMIN CONFERENCE

Rao Bahadur A.P. Patro, the newly appointed Minister, presiding over the Tamil District non-Brahmin Conference at Tinnevelly today said, in the course of his address, that the non-Brahmin movement aimed at destroying the slave mentality of blind and unreasoning submission to authority of any kind, either of a priest or of a public servant. Referring to non-cooperation he said that he could not agree with Mr. Gandhi's political ideas as they were not practicable. Through constitutional action and through their fitness for responsibility by undertaking the duty of working self-governing institutions, through their work in the Legislative Councils and in committee and in building up a strong nation they demonstrated their fitness for complete self-government. Non-cooperation would fail as a political measure.

### SIMLA HOSPITALS' BED FUND

The Lady Franklin Hospitals Bed Fund was created in 1903 by the late Surgeon-General Sir Benjamin Franklin, then Director-General, Indian Medical Service, to assist in meeting the hospital charges of European and Anglo-Indian patients at the Walker Hospital, Simla. To obtain the benefits of the Fund, it is necessary for one or other of the medical officers of the Hospital to certify that patients are unable to meet in whole or part the minimum charge of Rs 5 a day. The Fund was assisted as usual by the contribution of the offertory on Sunday in the season in each of the local churches and by the Masonic Fraternity of Simla. The Fund is a deserving one, and donations will be received by the Director-General, Indian Medical Service, who administers it.

## Trump can't beat social media, but...

FRANK LOMONTE

**F**rom condo salesman to reality TV host to leader of the free world, Donald Trump has occupied several lifetimes' worth of identities over a remarkable career of reinventions. Even so, the billionaire mogul's latest metamorphosis – into a consumer-rights plaintiff seeking to regulate big business – is a peculiar one.

With a volley of lawsuits against the operators of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, former President Trump is asking the courts to do what tycoon Trump once would have denounced: tell some of America's most powerful corporations that they have no choice who they do business with.

As a First Amendment and media law scholar, I believe the former president knows he can't win in court. Here's why – and why even his most ardent supporters don't really want him to.

After the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol by rioters bent on preventing Congress from certifying President Biden's electoral win, all of the major social platforms – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube – pulled the plug on Trump's accounts. The companies cited internal rules about misuse of their platforms to spread misinformation and incite violence.

Trump's lawsuit barrage seeks not just to overturn his own bans but to invalidate a 1996 federal statute, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, that entitles website operators to choose who and what

### CROSSWORD

appears on their pages without fear of liability. His attorneys are arguing – creatively, but I believe without much legal foundation – that the Communications Decency Act is unconstitutional in that Congress has given platforms too much speech-policing power.

Section 230 has been called the law that "created the internet," as it enables anyone who operates or uses a website – not, as Trump claims, only social media behemoths – to disavow responsibility for what outsiders come onto the site and say.

The law does enable YouTube to deactivate videos, or entire accounts, without assuming "ownership" of anything libelous that remains viewable. But it also allows the proprietor of a small-town news site to entertain reader comments without being considered the "publisher" of – and thus liable for – every scurrilous statement that ends up in the comments section.

Social networks have enforced their "content moderation" rules spotily and without much transparency. That's a bad business practice, and it's arguably unfair. But the Constitution doesn't offer a remedy for all of life's adversities. It certainly doesn't offer one for Donald Trump here.

Court after court has rejected the argument that because social networks are widely considered – in the Supreme Court's words – "the modern public square," speakers are entitled to demand access to their platforms just as they are entitled to use a physical public square. That's

not how the First Amendment works. The protections of the First Amendment are triggered when a public agency exercises governmental power to restrict people's speech – what is known as "state action." On rare occasions, private organizations can be considered "governmental" – for instance, when a private hospital or university is given police power to make arrests on its premises.

But operating a video-sharing platform is not a "governmental" function – and judges have said so, unanimously.

Conservatives, including Trump, cannot possibly want private businesses to be governed by the same constitutional standards that apply to cities and counties. If courts started applying the Bill of Rights to Walmart or McDonald's just because they are large and powerful entities that control a lot of property, those establishments would be forced to welcome even the most disagreeable speakers – let's say, a diner wearing a "F\*\*\* Trump" T-shirt – no matter how many offended customers complain.

For decades, conservatives have fought – quite hard and quite successfully in court – to establish that corporations have First Amendment rights equivalent to those of living, breathing people. That includes the corporations operating social media channels.

In a recent essay about democracy in the social media age, I explain how the Communications Decency Act has evolved into the near-impenetrable liability shield that it is today.

In the essay, I describe how the proprietor of a hotel or tavern isn't liable for harm caused by customers visiting the establishment – unless the customer has a known history of dangerousness that the proprietor chooses to ignore. That might offer a split-the-difference path for addressing the worst trolling behavior on social media by repeat bad actors – but, to be clear, it's not the law today.

Today, the law unmistakably entitles the Twitters of the world to do just about anything with their customers' posts: take them down, leave them up, add warnings or modifiers. If users are aggrieved by the way they're treated, they can do exactly what they'd do in the offline world: Take their business somewhere else.

The Supreme Court already decisively dealt with this issue a half-century ago, when newspapers and television stations held power over political discourse comparable to that of Facebook and Twitter today.

In the case, Miami Herald Publishing Co. v. Tornillo, the justices rejected a state legislative candidate's insistence that he was entitled to space in the local newspaper to respond to criticism in two editorial columns.

While the justices acknowledged that a big-city newspaper might have a near-monopoly over information about local elections – sound familiar? – they agreed that the First Amendment would not tolerate commandeering the presses of a private publisher in the interest of government-enforced "fairness."

A federal judge in Florida, relying on the Tornillo case, just ordered the state not to enforce a newly enacted "anti-deplatforming" law enabling any Florida political candidate whose social media posts are hidden, modified or deactivated to sue the platform. The judge concluded that the law violates the First Amendment rights of the platforms by (for example) compelling platforms to let candidates post anything they want, without moderation. "Balancing the exchange of ideas among private speakers," the judge wrote, "is not a legitimate governmental interest."

No one involved with this case could be serious about winning in federal court. But that is not the "court" to which the former president is playing.

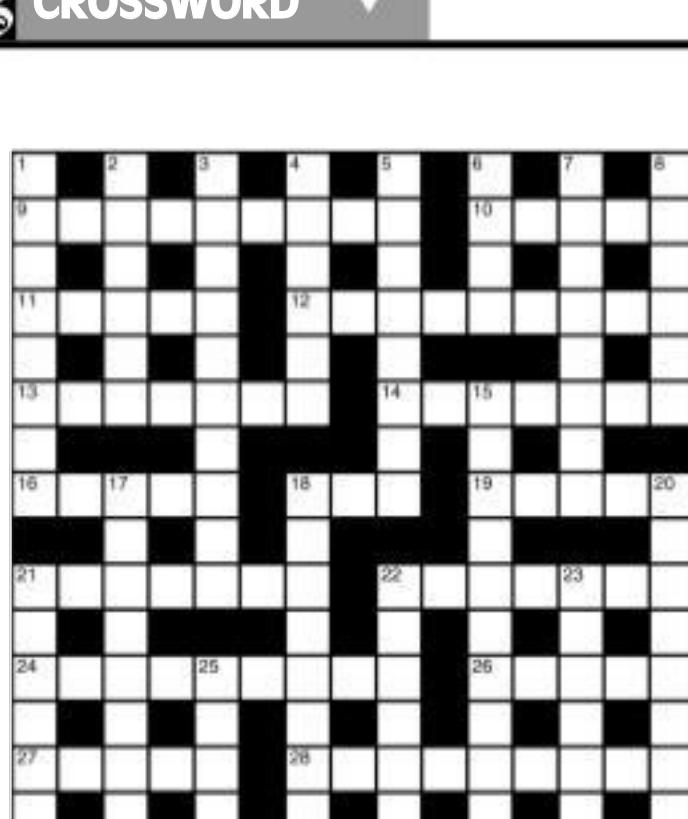
Tilting at Silicon Valley appeals directly to Trump's populist followers, many of whom probably suspect that their own clever tweets failed to go viral only because the system is rigged against them.

But even if, as experts suggest, Trump's case is destined to fail, dismissal would be yet another headline and fundraising hook, along the lines of, "You knew those socialist judges were in Hillary's pocket." And even if Trump were ordered to pay Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's attorney fees, they'd have to queue up behind decades' worth of unpaid Trump creditors.

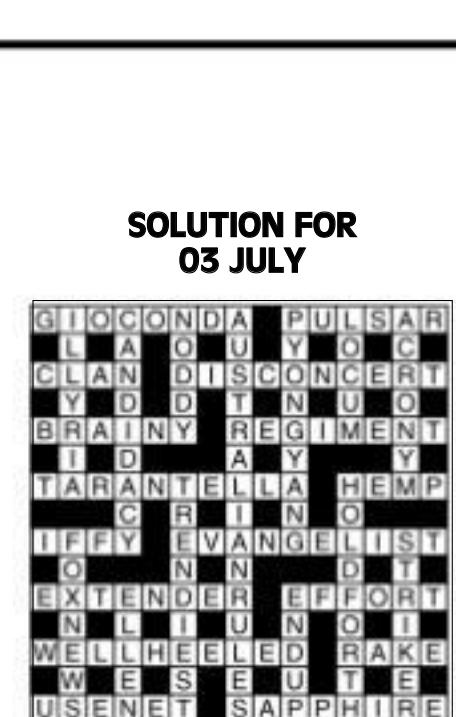
As Trump would tweet, if given the chance: "So much winning!"

The writer is Director of the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information, University of Florida. This article was published on [www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)

NO 28968



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



SOLUTION FOR  
05 JULY

### ACROSS

- 9 Graduate attired in leather brewed drink (6,3)
- 10/17 Band destroying great many commercial vehicles? (5,3,5)
- 11 North American company importing hot snack (5)
- 12 Under pressure to answer, perhaps immediately? (2,3,4)
- 13 Connected to ground seen within near the dyke (7)
- 14 Check on heartbeat (7)
- 16 Offered labourer's first hammer (5)
- 18/7 Watch display by pioneering German band (3,8)
- 19 Queen once given kiss as appropriate (5)
- 21 Sharp cross from Metatron say in holy books returned (7)
- 22 Poet hired assassin to follow wife (7)
- 24 Plunder so arranged shows radiance (9)
- 26 Backed Irish setter producing big blue shiner (5)
- 27 Hillage finally opening show (5)
- 28 Rolled second piano through wrong entrance (9)
- 29 Poet hired assassin to follow wife (7)
- 30 Onset unnoticed in non-specific health problem (4)
- 31 See 18 Across
- 32 Claimant legally keeping sleeveless cloak (6)
- 33 Up with mountain soldier on an ascent in lift (10)
- 34 See 10 Across
- 35 Watchers finding nothing acceptable among hooligans (8)
- 36 Times cryptic hotline offers 'rock within rock' (8)
- 37 Flower attached to tail of giant guinea pig (6)
- 38 City wasn't prepared for revolution (6)
- 39 Crub shown in periodical taken (6)
- 40 Line suggesting Stead might become depressed? (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)



BSE has acted as a catalyst for investments and helped in creation of \$3 trillion wealth since it was set up in 1875.

ASHISH KUMAR CHAUHAN  
MD AND CEO, BSE

## THUMBNAILS

**Holcim rebranding:** Swiss building material major LafargeHolcim has been rebranded as Holcim Group and has unveiled a new brand identity for all the markets in which it operates. It owns two leading Indian cement manufacturing companies ACC Ltd and Ambuja Cement. The new group identity is uniting all its market brands and is committed to playing an essential role to accelerate our world's transition to a net-zero and inclusive future, a statement by Holcim Group said. PTI

**Android TV:** German consumer electronics company Blaupunkt has launched four "Made-in-India" Android TV models in India. The brand has entered into an exclusive licensing agreement with Indian contract manufacturer Super Plastics Pvt Ltd (SPL). As per the licensing contract, Blaupunkt's manufacturing, branding, designing, packaging, and retailing supply chain will be handled by SPL, said a Press release. SNS

**Warehousing lease falls:** Kolkata witnessed warehousing transaction volume of 3.1 million sq ft in fiscal 2020-21, according to a report from Knight Frank India, a property consultant. Compared to 3.9 million sq ft of warehouse spaces leased in FY 2020, this represents a 22 per cent YoY growth, said the report. It attributed the decline to the sudden lockdown during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. SNS

**Amazon Digital Kendra:** Amazon India has launched its first Digital Kendra in India in Surat, Gujarat. Amazon Digital Kendras are brick and mortar resource centres that will provide micro, small and medium enterprises the opportunity to learn about benefits of e-commerce and avail a range of third party services. Vijay Rupani, chief minister of Gujarat, inaugurated the first Amazon Digital Kendra. SNS

**Online grocery:** 24 Chanta ~ Round the clock, an online grocery shop and a brainchild of Shahid Iqbal, Kundan, and Rahul Sinha, has launched its operations in Kolkata. With over 8,000 products from 400 brands, the online grocery platform enables one to get access to any food and household supplies of choice and get it delivered to the doorstep within 30 minutes, according to a Press release. SNS

**Vivo smart retail:** Smartphone maker Vivo said that it has successfully delivered one lakh smartphones between 10 May and 10 June 2021 through its unique Vivo Smart Retail Initiative (VSR). The first of its kind click-to-mortar model allows the customer to experience and buy Vivo products and services from the safety and convenience of their homes, said a release. SNS

# Economy showing signs of revival: Finance ministry

Activities gather momentum on targeted fiscal relief, monetary policy and rapid vaccination drive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

The finance ministry today said the economy has started showing signs of revival from the impact of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic on the back of targeted fiscal relief, monetary policy and a rapid vaccination drive.

The broad-based economic relief package, extended to mitigate the second wave, amounted to Rs 6.29 lakh crore. The Reserve Bank of India continues with its efforts to calm the nerves of the market and revive sectors with both backward and forward linkages and multiplier effects on growth, the ministry said in its monthly economic review.

To stimulate the economy and ease the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month announced eight economic measures amounting to Rs 6.29 lakh crore to provide relief to individuals as well as businesses in the country.

Resilient tax collections of the Central government in the first two months of this

## ECONOMIC REVIEW



economic relief package is expected to further oil the wheels of the capex cycle via implementation of the PLI scheme and streamlining of processes for PPP projects and asset monetisation.

Apart from eight relief measures announced in health and other worst affected sectors, Sitharaman announced a stimulus package for the tourism industry, which included five lakh tourist visas to be issued free of charge, once the government resumes issuance.

The total financial implication of the scheme will be Rs 100 crore.

Resilient tax collections of the Central government in the first two months of this

financial year and sustained momentum in capital expenditure, particularly in the road and rail sector, the report said, augur well for continued economic recovery driven by capital expenditures.

The recently announced economic relief package is expected to further oil the wheels of the capex cycle via implementation of the PLI scheme and streamlining of processes for PPP projects and asset monetisation.

Consumption sentiment is expected to pick up with further enhancement of employment support under Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ANBRY), targeted support to the urban poor through the credit guarantee scheme for on-lending by micro-finance institutions and wider Bharat-Net digitisation coverage, the economic review for June said.

Free foodgrain and enhanced fertiliser subsidies under the package along with continued MGNREGA implementation, on the other hand, would serve as a cushion for rural demand in the coming quarters, it said.

Maintaining a rapid pace on vaccination and quickly bridging healthcare infrastructure gaps across both urban and rural areas would emerge as the most sustainable stimulus for durable recovery of the Indian economy," the report added.

Going forward, it said, further expansion of vaccination and strict adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour will

and asset monetisation.

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Going forward, it said, further expansion of vaccination and strict adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour will

be a critical safeguard against the emergence of a possible third wave. On high food prices, the report said, healthy monsoon coverage, gradually rising kharif sowing and unlocking of states are expected to ease food, and thereby headline inflation.

However, it said, risks due to global demand-led recovery in commodity prices and input cost pressures remain.

About global economic growth, it said this has continued its upward trajectory in June 2021.

Falling Covid-19 infections and accelerating vaccinations consolidated US recovery and renewed growth prospects in the Euro area, it said, adding global trade remained buoyant with an uptick in global commercial flight and port activity, which portends well

for Indian exports.

However, it said, the resurgence of delta variant infections, firming inflationary pressures, unequal access to vaccination and burgeoning debt levels continue to lend substantial uncertainty to the global economic outlook.

India, digital innovation and emerging fuels, international solar alliance for enabling clean energy, and promotion of energy efficiency and afforestation.

"FM Smt. @nsitharaman highlighted that in India, fiscal policy options are used for better environmental outcomes such as new #EnergyMapofIndia, digital innovation and emerging fuels."

"FM Smt. @nsitharaman emphasised on the role of #technology in fighting #ClimateChange & called for international cooperation to increase supply of alternative sources of energy & technologies for adaptation," tweeted finance ministry.

In a series of tweets, the ministry of finance said that the minister shared India's innovative policy mix for better environmental outcomes such as new energy map of the ministry.

## Commercial mining: Vedanta, Hindalco among 20 bidders for coal blocks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY



Vedanta Ltd, Hindalco Industries, Adani Power Maharashtra and Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd (Balco) are among the 20 companies that have submitted bids for 19 coal mines put up for sale in the second round of auctions for commercial mining.

Of the total 34 bids submitted by these firms, the maximum (four each) were from Aurobindo Realty & Infrastructure Pvt Ltd and Sunflag Iron and Steel Company Ltd.

Three bids each came from Shree Satya Mines Pvt Ltd and South West Pinnacle Exploration Ltd.

Adihunik Power & Natural Resources Ltd, CG Natural Resources Pvt Ltd and Jhar

Mineral Resources Pvt Ltd submitted two bids each.

Companies like Vedanta, Hindalco Industries Ltd, Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd and Adani Power Maharashtra Ltd put in one bid each.

"A total of 20 companies have submitted their bids in the auction process," the coal ministry said in a statement.

A total of 34 bids have been received for the 19 coal mines, of which 10 are fully explored mines and nine are

partially explored.

Four of these mines are coking coal mines while the remaining 15 are non-coking coal ones.

"Two or more bids have been received for eight coal mines," the statement said.

The online bids were decrypted and opened electronically in the presence of the bidders. Subsequently, sealed envelopes containing offline bid documents were also opened in the presence

of bidders. The entire process was displayed on the screen for the bidders, it said.

The bids will be evaluated by a multi-disciplinary technical evaluation committee. The technically qualified bidders would be shortlisted for participation in the electronic auction to be conducted on MSTC portal, the statement said.

The last date of submission of technical bid was Thursday.

"As part of the auction process, technical bids comprising of online and offline bid documents were opened today...in New Delhi, in the presence of the bidders," it said.

The auction process of 67 coal mines for sale of coal was launched by the Nominated Authority, ministry of coal, on 25 March.

## Scope for greater India-UK financial service cooperation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY



Markets Working Group presented their work on the Indian corporate bond market, and the India-UK Financial Partnership presented their recommendations on the UK-India financial services relationship, particularly on development of GIFT City as global services hub," reads the Press note.

As two services-driven economies, both sides agreed that there is significant scope for strengthening the financial services cooperation between India and the UK. They also concurred to continue to engage bilaterally on these areas in the coming months, in the run-up to the next EFD and the beginning of negotiations for a future India-UK FTA, both expected to take place later this year.

## Proposal to build smart cities alongside highways: Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JULY

"We are making 400 road-side amenities," Gadkari added.

He said the road transport and highways ministry is now submitting a scheme for the second phase of Bharatmala Parivahan that is more than 65,000 km to 70,000 km, and resolution of claims worth Rs 41,500 crore.

"We are making parking plazas, logistic parks...we are now planning to make tunnels worth Rs 2.5 lakh crore," Gadkari said.

Replying to a question on cost escalation of road projects, the minister said: "What you are telling me is correct, but I don't know what are the contractual terms. We will refer to the contractual terms and then we will consider all these issues."

Addressing a virtual event, Gadkari said his aim is to construct world-class highway networks and the road transport and highways ministry has chalked out a plan for monetising existing highways projects for infra capital generation.

"And now we have prepared a Cabinet note for approval....for making road-side townships, smart cities, logistic parks, industrial clusters," he said.

Admitting that cost escalation of road projects is a seri-

ous issue, he asked contractors to submit their proposals to the ministry.

"I am positive but we are also bound with the contract, we will try to find a way out for that," Gadkari said.

On the recent trend of highway contractors quoting less than the bid price in many projects, the minister said he knows that many big contractors are very much annoyed because of some relaxations in bidding norms by the ministry.

"There should be competition among contractors (for road projects). And this is also not true that those contractors who quote low prices for work, compromise with the quality of work," he said.

According to the minister, contractors will have to reduce the cost of construction to survive.

Admitting that cost escalation of road projects is a seri-

## Sensex, Nifty languish for 2nd day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 9 JULY

Equity indices buckled under selling pressure for the second straight session today as risk appetite remained subdued amid lacklustre global cues and lower-than-expected results from IT major TCS.

Banking, finance and IT counters accounted for most of the losses, while strong demand for metal stocks cushioned the fall.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 182.75 points or 0.35 per cent lower at 52,386.19 points. The broader NSE Nifty dropped 38.10 points or 0.24 per cent to close at 15,689.80 points.

Bajaj Auto was the top laggard on the Sensex chart, shedding 1.99 per cent, followed by TCS which dropped 1.52 per cent post its results.

The country's largest IT firm had on Thursday reported a 28.5 per cent jump in June

quarter net profit at Rs 9,008 crore, but called out the domestic business as a drag which restricted its overall growth.

HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, Kotak Bank and IndusInd Bank were among the other losers.

On the other hand, Tata Steel led the gainers' list with a jump of 4.16 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, NTPC, Maruti and Bajaj Finance.

During the week, the Sensex declined 98.48 points or 0.18 per cent, while the Nifty dropped 32.40 points or 0.20 per cent.

Domestic equities traded on a weak note today, mainly led by continued profit booking in financials, said Binod Modi, head - strategy at Reliance Securities.

"While visible improvement in business momentum with ease of business curbs by states started offering comfort, recent uptick in daily case-load and increasing positive rate could be a near-term risk as we saw Japan impos-



after TCS missed earnings estimates, he said, adding that buying momentum remained visible in mid-cap and small-cap stocks as improved earnings prospect attracted investors' interest.

"While visible improvement in business momentum with ease of business curbs by states started offering comfort, recent uptick in daily case-load and increasing positive rate could be a near-term risk as we saw Japan impos-

ing fresh restrictions in Tokyo," he noted.

Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services, said: "The domestic market continued to be under the grip of bears following weak Asian peers as investor confidence was shattered due to the global spread of Delta virus variant. The equity market is turning risk-averse and side-lined."

"The IT sector also turned bearish as the initial earnings results did not meet the expectations of the market...The focus of domestic investors has shifted from secondary to attractive primary IPOs, affecting the liquidity of trading in the equity market, which we believe to be short-term," he added.

Meanwhile, the rupee gained 7 paise to end at 74.64 against the US currency today, tracking weakness in the American currency in the overseas market.

## Restaurants become next target of online behemoths

RAJA MURTHY  
MUMBAI, 9 JULY

After sending the brick-and-mortar retail industry in India into losses and shop closures the past five years, restaurants appear as next target of overseas-funded online behemoths – so allege the National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI).

The NRAI has accused food aggregators Zomato and Swiggy of employing the same industry-wrecking strategy that Amazon, Flipkart and Co brazenly use – use their war-chest of billions of dollars of overseas funding to offer unsustainable deep discounts, and thereby forcing conventional restaurants to close.

Zomato is to launch its initial public offering (IPO) on

this disruptive textbook, will be online behemoths in a monopoly that endangers long-term interests of consumers now lure by huge discounts bankrolled by foreign funding.

The NRAI has complained to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) alleging that Zomato and Swiggy have caused "many" restaurants to shut down. Zomato and Swiggy are violating laws, the NRAI alleged, by forcing restaurants into giving exorbitant commissions and hiding customer data. NRAI represents more than 5 lakh restaurants across India with net value of more than Rs 298,52 crore (\$4 billion).

The NRAI also accused Zomato and Swiggy of refusing to share critical customer information with restaurants, but use data masking (automatic process to hide confidential data such as credit card details, names, addresses and phone numbers) to promote their cloud kitchen restaurants. Cloud kitchens or ghost kitchens are delivery-only food providers without dining-in options, a phenomenon increasing during the pandemic lockdown.

Swiggy, Zomato claimed that data masking was to protect privacy of customers, and they give restaurants relevant data needed to improve their ratings for performance and better customer reviews.

# Covid fatality count rises with ongoing 'audit'

Case load in three districts a cause of worry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

**O**disha on Friday registered 61 deaths due to Covid-19 pushing the death toll to 4,476 while the state reported yet another below-3000 spike of 2,806 fresh infections at 3.86 per cent Test Positivity Rate (TPR).

The health department said the death figure is not related to one single day and the mounting fatalities are coming in after a three-stage audit and reconciliation. Some of it could be that of deaths which had occurred during the peak period of the

pandemic.

The worrying feature, however, is that Khordha, Cuttack, Jajpur districts continue to report high number of fresh Covid cases unlike other districts where it has been on the decline.

Meanwhile the active cases have come down to 27,429 with daily recoveries breaching the number of fresh cases.

As many as 2,896 patients who were either home isolated or hospitalized recuperated from the disease in the past 24 hours.

As many as 1,61,404 COVID-19 positive cases were reported in the 39 days

at a daily average of 4,138 cases in the state.

Of the new coronavirus cases reported from 30 districts, 1,613 are from quarantine centres, while the rest 1,193 are local contact cases.

In the last 24 hours, Khordha district logged the highest 590 cases in the last 24 hours, followed by Cuttack (441), Jajpur (252), Balasore (153), Dhenkanal (124) and Jagatsinghpur (119).

The state has tested over 1,43 samples for COVID-19 to date, including 72,645 on Thursday.

The recovery rate in the state currently stands at

96.58 percent.

It may be noted that the central government had flagged three districts of Odisha and deputed a central team to ascertain as to why the cases continue to be on the higher side with test positivity rate being above the rest of the districts in the state.

The central team has visited the districts and analyzed the situation.

State health authorities persist with the version that these districts are the hub of business and office activity hence floating population is more than the other parts. They also insist that the situation will improve by 15 July.

The pandemic has affected the livelihood of the poor

## Naveen extends package for MGNREGA wagers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik provided special assistance of an additional Rs 352 crore to 32 lakh MGNREGA wagers on Friday.

The assistance is for three months from April to June to all those who have been engaged in the daily wage scheme. Each of them will get an additional Rs 50 and the total works out to Rs 4500 to their respective bank accounts, he said.

The CM interacted via video conference with several beneficiaries across the state, said a release issued by the CMO.

Safeguarding the interest of the poor is my priority, helping them gives me immense satisfaction, said the CM.

He referred to the Rs 1690 crore special assistance provided by the state government to wagers, milk farmers, street



people, he observed while directing district authorities to increase the number of man-days created under MGNRE-GA.

The CM also appealed to the wagers to get themselves vaccinated and abide by Covid-appropriate behavior.

Last year, under the MGREGA scheme we had created 20 crore mandays and till date this year we have been able to create seven crore mandays, he said.

Minister Pratap Jena highlighted the pro-poor measures taken by the government while MLAs present lauded the CM.

In another programme on video, through an outfit in Keonjhar district to thank the CM for the proposed steel plant in the district, the CM said with the cooperation of all the proposed steel plant in the mineral rich district will come up soon.

The 3MT plant is to be set up by Rungta Group near Champua. The CM said it had been a long standing request from mla's and others of the district.

The CM said the proposed government medical college in the district will be established soon. A nursing college will also come up and a mega pipe water scheme is also in the offing.

## Western Odisha overlooked in Union Cabinet reshuffle

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

The reshuffle of the union cabinet has disappointed the BJP rank and file, particularly, in the western Odisha belt which had given the party as many as five of the total eight MP's from the state.

Western Odisha districts have favoured the BJP in the parliamentary assembly and panchayat elections.

The party had been able to establish its foothold in the region comprising of Sambarpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Deogarh, Sundargarh districts ever since the year 2000 when it was in alliance with the BJD and the majority of the seats allotted to them belonged to these districts. The coastal belt was dominated by the BJD.

BJP workers and leaders were hopeful that at least one of the five MP's from western Odisha would be inducted in the union cabinet as there were reports of educational qualification, regional and sub-regional aspects, caste being taken into consideration, though mostly in the context of Uttar Pradesh and a few other states.

The five elected MP's from the western belt are Jual Oram, Sangeeta Singh Deo, Suresh Pujari, Basant Panda and Nitish Ganga Deb.

Admitting to the disappointment among workers, one of the MP's said "yes a few workers are disappointed but PM Narendra Modi has accorded importance to the state. We had two berths in the cabinet now we have three in Dharmendra Pradhan, Ashwini Vaishnaw and Bishweswar Tudu".

The 'neglect' of western Odisha is just one of the several debating points in political circles here including the fact that he was elected to the Rajya Sabha with the help and support of the BJD in what is a rarity in Indian politics.

The BJD was comfortably placed to get any one of its own party members elected, yet CM Naveen Patnaik acceded to PM Modi's request and declared that Vaishnaw will be a BJP candidate with the support of the BJD.

Vaishnaw had quit service after serving in the then PM Atal Behari Vajpayee and was known to be associated in the mining and steel business with interests in Odisha when he was nominated to the RS.

This had prompted political circles and the Opposition Congress to read between the lines and hurl accusations relating to the mighty influence of the mining lobby.

But the fact is that he had maintained his relations with CM Naveen Patnaik who used to be in excellent terms with late PM Vajpayee.

While there is near unanimity over Vaishnaw's acumen in fostering the 'private-public-partnership' model and his skill, the BJP circles here are not enthused as they 'do not identify him with Odisha'.

It is like telling Dharmendra Pradhan belongs to Madhya Pradesh just because he is elected to RS from that state, remarked political circles.

The party organisation in Odisha has not benefitted from the union cabinet reshuffle, the central government has, is the interpretation by many.

## Family attempts suicide due to financial distress

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BALASORE, 9 JULY

A plumber poisoned himself, his wife and minor daughter ostensibly due to financial stress in Balia on the outskirts of Balasore on Friday. All three are battling for life at the hospital.

Laxmidhar Barik living in a rented accommodation had availed loan of over Rs 4 lakh and unable to sustain his family due to loss of livelihood. He allegedly consumed poison and also fed his wife and daughter with it.

The nine year old daughter however informed her maternal uncle who rushed to rescue all three and shift them to the district hospital. Laxmidhar's condition worsened and he was shifted to SCB Medical College Hospital, Cuttack. The other two are under treatment at the district hospital here said the police.

## Lokayukta gives clean chit to top bureaucrat

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

The Lokayukta in Odisha gave a clean chit to principal secretary Bishnupada Sethi, IAS, in a case relating to alleged wrongful reimbursement of medical bills and receiving bonus during his tenure in Odisha State Cooperative Bank (OSCB).

The Lokayukta went on to laud Sethi for having returned the said amount to the bank and asked the government to consider reimburse the medical bills as per rules.

The order issued on Fri-

day came as a big relief to administrative circles here.

With regards to the bonus issue, the Lokayukta stated that "Sethi clearly became entitled to receive bonus under section 56 (2)(f) of the Odisha Cooperative Societies Act. Therefore the allegation that by misusing his office he had illegally received bonus from the OSCB is without any foundation".

The Lokayukta has cited the findings of the Director of Inquiry appointed by it to go into details about these two allegations leveled against Bishnupada.

The bills were reimbursed from the fund of the bank after obtaining permission from the government. As a gesture of goodwill, he had returned the entire amount to OSCB in June 2021.

## District SP-level changes in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

The Odisha government today effected a reshuffle in the IPS cadre at the district SP level.

Akhileshwar Singh, commandant of SOG has been made the SP of Jagatsinghpur district while Prakash R has been shifted from the district to the state vigilance.

The SP of Nuapada, Rahul Jain has been moved to Bargarh district and Prat�yush Diwakar appointed in his place.

SP of Mayurbhanj district, PS Parashortamdas has been sent to Nabarangpur district while K R Dyandeo has been posted in his place and P S Meena made the Malkangiri district SP.

S. Dev Dutta Singh who returned from central deputation has been posted as IGP police headquarters.

## Another tusker electrocuted in Odisha

### Four elephants electrocuted in past 30 days

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

An adult tusker died of electrocution in Talagarh forested areas under Baantal forest range of Angul district after it came in contact with live wire.

The live wire trap might have been laid out by suspected poachers, besides, farmers in the region also resort to laying live electric wires to protect their cropland from wild animals. All possible angles leading to the tusker's death are being examined, said Prasanna Kumar Behera, Divisional Forest Officer, Angul Forest Division.

The jumbo's body was

spotted during wee hours by anti-poaching squad personnel. The tusk of the male elephant was however intact, said the forest official.

The post mortem of the animal body will be conducted tomorrow. Search operation is on to nab the suspected poachers, added the officials.

It may be recalled here that three elephants were electrocuted in Dhenkanal, Ganjam and Angul districts in June. On 15 June, a female elephant had perished after coming in contact with live wire in Jagannathpur village in Angul forest division. Besides, a tusker and a female elephant were also electrocuted in Ganjam and Dhenkanal districts

during the first week of June. Live wire poaching traps, sagging overhead lines and electrified fences result in electrocution of these national heritage animals.

Majority of the electrocution deaths are attributed to live wire poaching. Since 2010, around 100 electrocution deaths of elephants have occurred in Odisha. The shrinkage of forest cover, which used to be the habitat corridor of elephants, has led these animals to stray into village areas in search of food.

This is resulting in man-elephant conflict and fatalities of protected animals including elephants, said wild life activists.

## Odisha's ecotourism spots poised for facelift

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 9 JULY

The Odisha government has decided to put in place house-boats, water-sports recreation projects in over 100 ecotourism destinations to increase the visitors' footfall and boost up the tourism economy in the post-pandemic period.

State's Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra who presided over a high level meeting on digital mode on Friday directed the departments of Forest & Environment, Water Resources and Tourism to identify around 100 spots through joint verification for the launch of the boating recreation facilities. The departments were asked to finalize

the list in a month and were directed to initiate steps for the setting up of the floating jetties and boats by December of the current year.

Principal Secretary Tourism, Vishal Dev and Director Tourism Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav made a presentation of the viable spots and the plan of action to promote water sports, boating etc.

Odisha has around 118 small, big dams, reservoirs including the major dams with scenic and picturesque locations in Hirakud, Mandi, Patora, Deras, Hadgarh, Pital-mahal, Jumuka, Indrabati, Kolab, Kunaria, Sarafgarh, Godhabada, Kanjhari and Sarbagarh etc.

Similarly, the State is

bestowed with the natural lakes like Chilika, Anupura, Pata, Kanjia, Hiarakud. There are around ten major river basins in Mahanadi, Bramhani, Baitarani, Rusikulya, Bansadar, Nagabali, Kolab, Indravati, Subrahmeha and Budhabalanga river systems. These places offer plenty of options for boating recreation activities.

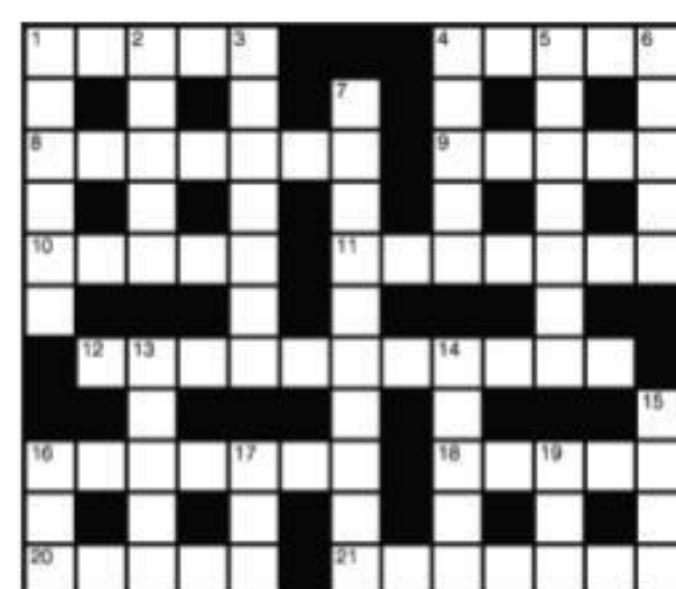
"The locations should be

identified on the basis of the objective criteria of their competitiveness for being popularized in the tourism market, and offering exotic and exhilarating experiences to the tourists. Proper choice of the location and their popularization will attract private investment to the sector soon, and that will catapult State's ecotourism to next higher level", chief secretary Mahapatra said.

Mahapatra stressed on the adoption of community management model with appropriate training and orientation to the local community. Vana Surakhya Samiti (VSS) and Women Self Help Groups (WSHG) for operation and management of the facilities.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



By arrangement with The Independent  
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

SCRABBLE® BRAND



PAR SCORE 120-130  
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL  
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

H-A-G-F-I-S-H RACK 1 = 75

E-Q-U-I-N-E RACK 2 = 30

D-A-L-L-Y RACK 3 = 27</p

France will withdraw more than 2,000 troops from an anti-extremism force in Africa's Sahel region and pivot its military presence to specialised regional forces



FRENCH PRESIDENT EMANUEL MACRON

AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERS OF THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	27 R
HONG KONG	32	29 R
TOKYO	24	17 R
LONDON	23	12 S
DUBAI	42	29 S
SAN FRANCISCO	20	11 S
NEW YORK	22	13 H
MOSCOW	14	07 H

S= sunny, CL= clear, H=hazy, R= rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



Soldiers driving a jeep on the Champs Elysees avenue during a rehearsal for the Bastille Day parade in Paris on Friday. Bastille Day is the French national holiday that commemorates the beginning of the French Revolution. AP

**Lambda Covid-19 variant found in Canada:** Canada's chief public health officer says there are cases of the latest Covid-19 variant of interest in the country, but it's too early to know how widespread it is or what impact it could have. The National Institute of Public Health of Quebec said Thursday it has confirmed 27 cases already, all in March and April. AP

**Texas shooting:** Two men died and a woman was wounded in what Houston police said was a murder-suicide at a downtown seafood restaurant. The shooting happened shortly after 8 p.m. Thursday as a man and woman were finishing dinner in Aquarium Restaurant. AP

**Plane crash:** A small plane carrying skydivers crashed outside the Swedish town of Orebro on Thursday night, killing nine people, police said. The dead included the pilot and eight passengers. AP

**African American wins 2021 Spelling Bee; Indian-Americans come 2nd & 3rd**

WASHINGTON, 9 JULY

Zaila Avant-garde, a 14-year-old basketball prodigy, has won the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee, becoming the first African American contestant to win in 93 editions of the prestigious competition.

Indian-Americans, who have been dominating the National Spelling Bee for years, had to be satisfied with the 2nd and 3rd positions. Chaitra Thummala, a 12-year-old from San Francisco and Bhavana Madini, 13, from New York won the second and third place at the keenly-fought competition, which was attended by US First Lady Jill Biden.

Avant-garde correctly spelt Murraya-a genus of tropical Asiatic and Australian trees having pinnate leaves and flowers to win the competition and \$50,000 prize money on Thursday.

"It was the smile and twirls for us! After tying for 370th place in 2019, #Speller13 Zaila Avant-garde wins the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee. Congrats to all of our spellers. We're proud of everyone's poise and courage in facing the dictionary. #TheFeelsBack," Scripps National Spelling Bee tweeted after the competition, which was not held last year due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic.

Avant-garde outlasted a field of 11 finalists, including Indian-Americans, to win the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee title and the first-place prize of \$50,000.

Jill Biden congratulated Avant-garde on her historic win. "Congratulations Zaila!!!," she tweeted. Jill, a community college educator, previously attended the 2009 Scripps National Spelling Bee finals when it was held in Washington, DC. AP

## 2 US men, ex-Colombia soldiers held for Moise assassination

TWO SUSPECTS are believed to hold dual US-Haitian citizenship, Colombia says at least six are ex-army

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI), 9 JULY

**S**eventeen suspects have been detained so far in the stunning assassination of Haiti's President, and Haitian authorities say two are believed to hold dual US-Haitian citizenship and Colombia's government says at least six are former members of its army.

Lon Charles, chief of Haiti's National Police, said on Thursday night that 15 of the detainees were from Colombia.

The police chief said eight more suspects were being sought and three others had been killed by police. Charles had earlier said seven were killed.

We are going to bring them to justice, the police chief said, the 17 handcuffed suspects sitting on the floor during a news conference on developments following the brazen killing of President Jovenel Moise at his home before dawn Wednesday.

Colombia's government said it had been asked about six of the suspects in Haiti, including two of those killed, and had determined they were retired members of its army. It didn't release their identities.

The head of the Colombian national police, Gen. Jorge Luis Vargas Valencia, said President Iván Duque had ordered the high command of Colombia's army and police to cooperate in the investigation.

A team was formed with the best investigators ... they are



Suspects in the assassination of Haiti's President Jovenel Moise are shown to the media, along with the weapons and equipment they allegedly used in the attack, at the General Direction of the police in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on Thursday.

going to send dates, flight times, financial information that is already being collected to be sent to Port-au-Prince, Vargas said.

The US State Department said it was aware of reports that Haitian Americans were in custody but could not confirm or comment.

The Haitian Americans were identified by Haitian officials as James Solages and Joseph Vincent. Solages, at age 35, is the youngest of the suspects and the oldest is 55, according to a document shared by Haiti's minister of elections, Mathias Pierre. He would not provide further information on those in custody. Solages described himself as a certified diplomatic agent, an advocate for children and budding politician on a website for a charity he started in 2019 in south Florida to assist people in the Haitian coastal town of Jacmel. On his bio page for the charity, Solages said he previously worked as a bodyguard at the Canadian

Embassy in Haiti.

Canada's foreign relations department released a statement that did not refer to Solages by name but said one of the men detained for his alleged role in the killing had been briefly employed as a reserve bodyguard at its embassy by a private contractor. He gave no other details. Calls to the charity and Solages' associates at the charity either did not go through or weren't answered.

Witnesses said a crowd discovered two of the suspects Thursday hiding in bushes in Port-au-Prince, and some people grabbed the men by their shirts and pants, pushed them and occasionally slapped them.

An Associated Press journalist saw officers put the pair in the back of a pickup and drive away as the crowd ran after them to a nearby police station. They killed the President! Give them to us! We're going to burn them, people chanted outside.

The crowd later set fire to several abandoned cars riddled with bullet holes that they believed belonged to the suspects. The cars didn't have license plates, and inside one was an empty box of bullets and some water.

Later, Charles urged people to stay calm and let his officers do their work. He cautioned that authorities needed evidence that was being destroyed, including the burned cars.

Officials have given out little information on the killing, other than to say the attack was carried out by a highly trained and heavily armed group. Not everyone was buying the government's description of the attack.

When Haitian journalist Robenson Geffrard, who writes for a local newspaper and has a radio show, tweeted a report on comments by the police chief, he drew a flood of responses expressing skepticism. Many wondered how the sophisticated attackers

described by police could penetrate Moise's home, security detail and panic room and escape unharmed but then be caught without planning a successful getaway.

A Haitian judge involved in the investigation said Moise was shot a dozen times and his office and bedroom were ransacked, according to the Haitian newspaper *Le Nouvelliste*. It quoted Judge Carl Henry Destin as saying investigators found 5.56 and 7.62 mm cartridges between the gatehouse and inside the house.

Taiwan says 11 arrested at its Haiti embassy

Taiwan's foreign ministry says Haitian police have arrested 11 armed suspects who tried to break into its embassy in Port-au-Prince.

It gave no details of the suspects' identities or a reason for the break-in.

As for whether the suspects were involved in the assassination of the President of Haiti, that will need to be investigated by the Haitian police, Foreign Affairs spokesperson Joanne Oui told The Associated Press in Taipei.

Officials said police were alerted by embassy security guards while Taiwanese diplomats were working from home.

The ministry said some doors and windows were broken but there was no other damage to the embassy.

Haiti is one of a handful of countries worldwide that maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan instead of the rival mainland Chinese government in Beijing.

Jubilee USA Network, said that the IMF action would allow developing countries to immediately receive more than \$200 billion in support.

"Wealthy countries who receive emergency reserves they don't need should transfer those resources to developing countries struggling through the pandemic," LeCompte said.

More than six months after vaccines became available, reported Covid-19 deaths worldwide have fallen to about 7,800 each day, after topping out at over 18,000 a day in January.

The World Health Organization recorded just under 54,000 deaths last week, the lowest weekly total since last October.

However, Covid-19 has illuminated global inequities as deaths worldwide climbed to 4 million, a milestone recorded Wednesday by Johns Hopkins University.

Vaccination drives are barely getting started in Africa and other desperately poor corners of the world because of extreme shortages of shots.

To fund the spending, the IMF will expand its Special Drawing Rights, a currency reserve that can be tapped by IMF member countries.

## Bodies of all plane crash victims recovered in Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MOSCOW, 9 JULY



Rescuers have recovered the bodies of all 28 people who were on a plane that crashed in a remote area in Russia's Far East this week, local officials said Friday. One of the plane's black boxes also was recovered.

The Antonov An-26 crashed Tuesday near its destination in the Kamchatka town region town of Palana, apparently as it came in for a landing in bad weather. The plane was en route from the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky to Palana when it missed a scheduled communication and disappeared from radar.

The rest of the bodies were

found Friday, along with one of the two black boxes. It

wasn't immediately clear whether the black box recovered was a voice recorder or a flight data recorder.

In the aftermath of the crash, authorities in Kamchatka declared three days of mourning.

Officials said that families of the victims will receive payments of more than 3.5 mil-

lion rubles (about \$47,200) that includes compensation from the airline, an insurance payment and a subsidy from the regional government.

Police have opened an investigation and are looking at three possible causes of the crash weather, equipment malfunction or pilot error.

In 2012, an Antonov An-28 plane belonging to Kamchatka Aviation Enterprise crashed into a mountain while flying the same route as Tuesday's flight.

Ten of the 14 people on board were killed. Blood tests found alcohol in the systems of both pilots, who were among the dead, Russian news agency Tass reported.

## BURNING ISSUE



Firefighters monitor the Sugar Fire, part of the Beckwourth Complex Fire, as it burns at Frenchman Lake in Plumas National Forest, California on Thursday.

CDC: Vaccinated teachers and students don't need masks

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK, 9 JULY

Vaccinated teachers and students don't need to wear masks inside school buildings, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday in relaxing its Covid-19 guidelines.

The changes come amid a national vaccination campaign in which children as young as 12 are eligible to get shots, as well as a general decline in Covid-19 hospitalizations and deaths.

"We're at a new point in the pandemic that we're all really excited about," and so it's

time to update the guidance, said Erin Sauber-Schatz, who leads the CDC task force that prepares recommendations designed to keep Americans safe from Covid-19.

The nation's top public health agency is not advising schools to require shots for teachers and vaccine-eligible kids. And it's not offering guidance on how teachers can know which students are vaccinated or how parents will know which teachers are immunized.

That's probably going to make for some challenging school environments, said Elizabeth Stuart, a John Hopkins

University public health professor who has children in elementary and middle schools. "It would be a very weird dynamic, socially, to have some kids wearing masks and some not. And tracking that? Teachers shouldn't need to be keeping track of which kids should have masks on," she said.

Another potential headache: Schools should continue to space kids and their desks feet apart in classrooms, the CDC says. But the agency emphasized that spacing should not be an obstacle to getting kids back in schools.

And it said distancing is not required among fully vaccinated students or staff.

The new schools guidance says: No one at schools needs to wear masks at recess or in most other outdoor situations. However, unvaccinated people are advised to wear masks if they are in a crowd.

Ventilation and hand-washing continue to be important. Students and staff also should stay home when they are sick. Separating students into smaller groups, or cohorts, continues to be a good way to help reduce spread of the virus. But the CDC discouraged putting vaccinated and unvaccinated kids in separate groups.

## Amid growing frustration, White House pushes voting rights

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 9 JULY

the West Wing, while Vice President Kamala Harris announced \$25 million in new spending by the Democratic National Committee to support efforts to protect voting access.

Biden and his team have been pushing ongoing legal efforts and have repeatedly promised a major legislative push on voting rights amid complaints from civil rights activists and other Democrats that the White House has not done enough to fight attempts by Republican-led state legislatures to restrict access to the ballot.

President Joe Biden met with civil rights leaders in

rights and that he would be going on the road on this issue. So far, a major speech has not happened and a trip has not occurred, leading to rising frustration from those in his own party who view the GOP crackdown on voting rights as an existential threat to both Democrats and democracy.

That pressure has only mounted after a Supreme Court decision limited the ability of minorities to challenge state laws that Democrats say are discriminatory under the Voting Rights Act.

Our new findings are important as they will inform shielding guidance for young people as well as decisions about the vaccination of teenagers and children, not just in the UK but internationally, he added.

These new findings show that the risks of severe illness or death from SARS-CoV-2 are extremely low in children and young people, said Pro-

fessor Russell Viner from UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health and senior author on two of the studies.

Those young people at higher risk are those who are also at higher risk from any winter virus or other illness that is, young people with multiple health conditions and complex disabilities. Covid-19 does however increase the risks for people in these groups to a higher degree than for illnesses such as influenza (seasonal flu), he said.

Our new findings are important as they will inform shielding guidance for young people as well as decisions about the vaccination of teenagers and children, not just in the UK but internationally, he added.

These conditions were also risk factors for other illnesses leading to admission to intensive care, but to a lesser degree than for Covid-19.

"We're at a new point in the pandemic that we're all really excited about," and so it's

time to update the guidance, said Erin Sauber-Schatz, who leads the CDC task force that prepares recommendations designed to keep Americans safe from Covid-19.

The changes come amid a national vaccination campaign in which children as young as 12 are eligible to get shots, as well as a general decline in Covid-19 hospitalizations and deaths.

"We're at a new point in the pandemic that we're all really excited about," and so it's



The latest update will contribute to encouraging tourists of different nationalities to visit Egypt.

EGYPT'S TOURISM VICE MINISTER GHADA SHALABY  
AS THE NATION ADDS 28 MORE COUNTRIES TO E-VISA PORTAL

## THUMBNAILS



A food delivery worker wearing a face mask carries orders during a heavy downpour in downtown Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Friday.

AP

**Indonesia to allocate 200,000 tonnes of rice:** The Indonesian government is set to allocate 200,000 tonnes of rice as part of the country's social assistance program amid the latest Covid-19 restrictions imposed in the wake of the ongoing second wave of the pandemic. This was informed by the Indonesian State Logistics Agency's President Director Budi Waseso on Thursday.

IANS

**Taiwan extends level-3 Covid alert:** Taiwan will extend its level-3 Covid-19 alert to 26 July, while allowing some regulations to ease for commencing more social activities from next week, the island's disease monitoring agency said. Given the risks of community spread, the current level-3 alert imposed until 12 July will last for another two weeks.

IANS

**Heavy rain forecasted across much of Japan:** The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) has issued a warning of landslides and flooding as heavy rain is expected across much of the country. In a statement on Thursday, the JMA said that rain clouds have developed over western Japan and the rain is also getting heavy in the country's eastern region. Atami city, where massive mudslides occurred, will likely witness thunderstorms until 12 July.

IANS

# Taliban claim to hold 85 pc of Afghanistan's territory

They would also 'not allow anyone to use the soil of Afghanistan against neighbouring countries'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MOSCOW, 9 JULY



The Taliban claimed on Friday that they now control 85 per cent of Afghanistan's territory amid a surge in wins on the ground and as American troops complete their pullout from the war-battered country.

The announcement came at a press conference at the end of a visit by a senior Taliban delegation to Moscow this week, a trip meant to offer assurances that the insurgents' quick gains in Afghanistan do not threaten Russia or its allies in Central Asia.

The claim, which is impossible to verify, was considerably higher than previous Taliban statements that more than a third of the country's 421 districts and district centres were in their control. There was no immediate response from the government in Kabul on the latest claim.

Earlier this week, Taliban advances forced hundreds of

Afghan soldiers to flee across the border into Tajikistan, which hosts a Russian military base.

Tajikistan in turn called up 20,000 military reservists to strengthen its southern border with Afghanistan. Russian officials have expressed concern that the Taliban surge could destabilise the ex-Soviet Central Asian nations north of Afghanistan. Since mid-April, when President Joe Biden announced the end to Afghanistan's forever war, the Taliban have made strides throughout the country.

They recently have swept through dozens of districts, taking control, often without a fight. Over the past week, they seized border crossings with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and on Thursday, with Iran.

However, at the Moscow presser, the Taliban promised not to attack provincial capitals or seize them by force, and expressed hopes for a political resolution with Kabul.

We will not seize provincial capitals in order not to inflict death on Afghan citizens, said Taliban negotiator Mawlawi Shahabuddin Delawar.

Guarantees for that have

been presented to the Afghan authorities, along with demands for the release of more Taliban prisoners from Afghan jails, Dilawar said.

He added that the Taliban now control 85% of Afghan territory.

The Taliban also vowed they would "not allow anyone, any individual, any entity to use the soil of Afghanistan against neighbouring countries,"

"We don't want to fight. We want to find a political resolution through political negotiations," said Taliban spokesman Mohammad Sohail Shaheen. The Taliban representatives spoke through a translator.

Iranian media reported Friday that the Taliban were in control of two border crossings between Afghanistan and Iran, including the key transit route of Islam Qala seized on Thursday.

Iranian state radio said 300 Afghan soldiers and civilians had escaped the Taliban advance and slipped across the

border to Iran.

In southern Kandahar there was fighting on Friday near the provincial capital and the government had sent more troops to protect the prison there from attempts by the Taliban to attack it and free the inmates.

Moscow, which fought a 10-year war in Afghanistan that ended with Soviet troops' withdrawal in 1989, has made a diplomatic comeback as a mediator, reaching out to feuding Afghan factions as it has jockeyed with the US for influence in the country.

It has hosted several rounds of talks on Afghanistan, most recently in March, that involved the Taliban even though Russia has labelled them a terrorist organisation.

Asked about this week's visit and the terrorist label, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that Moscow's contacts with the Taliban were necessary, given how intensely the situation in Afghanistan is developing.

Iranian state radio said 300 Afghan soldiers and civilians had escaped the Taliban advance and slipped across the

## Situation in Afghanistan deteriorating, cautions Pak



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, 9 JULY

process.

He said Pakistan would not be able to tackle the influx of more refugees in case the armed conflict intensified.

His remarks came in the midst of Taliban militants seizing dozens of districts in recent weeks and are now thought to control about a third of the country, ahead of the complete withdrawal of US and Western troops from Afghanistan.

Qureshi said that an important conference would be held in Uzbekistan in the coming days over the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan would highlight that peace in Afghanistan was not solely its responsibility as all its neighbours should play their roles.

The situation in Afghanistan is worsening and holding Pakistan responsible for this situation is not fair," he said, adding that Iran has an important role regarding Afghanistan.

The US and the Taliban signed a landmark deal in Doha on 29 February, 2020 after multiple rounds of negotiations to bring lasting peace in war-torn Afghanistan and allow US troops to return home from America's longest war.

## West, Russia head to showdown over aid to northwest Syria

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 9 JULY

Western nations headed to a likely Friday showdown with Russia over the delivery of humanitarian aid from Turkey to rebel-held northwest Syria, where the U.N. says 3.4 million people are in desperate need of food and other assistance while the current mandate for cross-border deliveries expires Saturday.

The key issue is whether the UN Security Council should authorize deliveries through the Bab al-Hawa crossing for another year as the West, UN and humanitarian groups want or for just six months as Russia, Syria's closest ally, is insisting on.

The council is expected to vote Friday, and Russia's UN ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, told reporters Thursday that 12 months doesn't fly. Norway and Ireland have put up for a vote their draft resolution that would authorize a one-year extension of deliveries through Bab al-Hawa to Syria's Idlib region.

They say a year's extension is essential to ensure the flow of aid, while six months would require another vote in January and could potentially leave millions of Syrians without aid in the middle of winter.

Russia circulated a rival resolution Thursday that would authorize a six-month extension with the anticipation of renewal subject to a report from U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on transparency in aid deliveries and

progress on sending aid directly across conflict lines with Syria.

Nebenzia told the Security Council two weeks ago that aid moving across conflict lines is the only legitimate option for humanitarian operation to deliver assistance. He accused Western nations of wasting the past year that could have been used to find a seamless and constructive solution and an optimal balance of Idlib's procurement through both Bab al-Hawa and domestic channels.

He also claimed that some aid was going to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the strongest militant group in Idlib, and not to needy Syrians and demanded greater transparency in the cross-border operation.

## Keeping up attacks, Iraq militias challenge Iran

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BAGHDAD, 9 JULY



in minor injuries, stoking fears of escalation.

But he was met with defiance. One of the six faction leaders spoke up in their meeting: They could not stay quiet while the death of his predecessor Qassim Soleimani and senior Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in a US drone strike went unanswered.

Militant attacks have only been increasing against the US in military bases in both Iraq and Syria. Three missile attacks in the last week alone resulted

in doing the same.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meetings.

Iran's influence, sustained by ideological ties and military support, has frayed because of the US killing of Soleimani and al-Muhandis last year, because of differing interests and because of financial strains in Tehran.

With nuclear talks restarting following US President Joe Biden's inauguration this year, these differences have come to the fore.

Iran isn't the way it used to be, with 100 per cent control over the militia commanders, said one Shiite political leader.

Increasing rocket and drone attacks targeting American troops in Iraq and Syria have alarmed Western and coalition officials.

There have been at least

eight drone attacks targeting the US presence since Biden took office in January, as well as 17 rocket attacks, according to coalition officials.

The attacks are blamed on the Iranian-backed militias that make up the bulk of Iraq's state-supported Popular Mobilization Forces.

The Biden administration has responded by twice targeting Iraqi militia groups operating inside Syria, including close to the Iraqi border.

What is taking place now is when Ghaani asks for calm, the brigade leaders agree with him. But as soon as he leaves the meeting, they disregard his recommendations, said another Shiite political leader.

The loudest of the defiant militia voices has been Qais al-Kazali, leader of the Asaib Ahl al-Haq faction, which also maintains a political party.

## Oxfam: 11 people die of hunger each minute around the globe



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
CAIRO, 9 JULY

The anti-poverty organisation Oxfam says 11 people die of hunger each minute and that the number facing famine-like conditions around the globe has increased six times over the last year.

In a report titled The Hunger Virus Multiplies," Oxfam said Thursday that the death toll from famine outpaces that of Covid-19, which kills around seven people per minute.

The statistics are staggering, but we must remember that these figures are made up of individual people facing unimaginable suffering. Even one person is too many, said Oxfam America's President and CEO Abby Maxman.

The humanitarian group also said that 155 million people around the world now live at crisis levels of food insecurity or worse some 20 million more than last year.

Around two-thirds of them face hunger because their country is in military conflict.

Today, unrelenting conflict on top of the Covid-19 economic fallout, and a worsening climate crisis, has pushed more than 520,000 people to the brink of starvation, added Maxman. Instead of battling the pandemic, warring parties fought each other, too often landing the last blow to millions already battered by weather disasters and economic shocks.

Despite the pandemic,

## Israeli hospital to deploy drug-delivery robots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JERUSALEM, 9 JULY



tually expand the system, and have robots constantly making drug-delivery runs to all departments.

This is very exciting as we're moving from needing humans to transport drugs to a solution that uses robots to increase speed and efficiency, Ronen Loebstein, director of clinical pharmacology at Sheba.

It will be the first deployment of robots by Israeli startup Seamless Vision, which hopes to now attract clients

internationally, the report said.

The company's CEO, Amir Nardimon, said that while some robotic drug-delivery systems already exist, this is more advanced than others because the robots are able to operate even in the most crowded areas, and are able to negotiate in outdoor spaces with relatively flat surfaces, as well as indoors.

The robots have four wheels and an electrical engine, Nardimon said adding, The batteries provide six to eight hours of charge for continuous use, and the robots stop and charge themselves wirelessly between tasks".

The compartment for the drugs is refrigerated at four degrees Celsius, and is secured, meaning it's locked so drugs

can't be removed unless people have permission, the executive noted stressing that and are generated if anyone tries to mess with the robot, meaning it won't be kidnapped".

The hospital's chief pharmacist Dr Andre Lazarovich, said that the deployment will really make a difference to patients as the [golf cart] driver right now comes to take chemotherapy drugs once an hour.

"If we prepare drugs one minute after he [golf cart driver] leaves, that patient will be waiting for another hour or more. But with the automated system, there will be several robots and they can be sent out as needed, reducing the time patients need to wait, Lazarovich was quoted as saying.

## South African court rejects ex-leader's bid to delay prison

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ESTCOURT, 9 JULY

A South African court has rejected former South African President Jacob Zuma's request to postpone his current jail term.

Zuma, who started his 15-month jail sentence Thursday, will remain behind bars after his application for his prison term to be delayed was dismissed by the Pietermaritzburg High Court on Friday.

He has one more legal bid to be released which will be heard by the Constitutional Court, the country's apex court, on Monday. He is currently imprisoned in the Estcourt Correctional Center for failing to obey a court order

to testify at a judicial commission that is investigating allegations of corruption during his term from 2009 to 2018.

Some of Zuma's supporters have been protesting in different parts of his home province of KwaZulu-Natal, barricading roads with burning tires.

Some of Zuma's supporters in KwaZulu-Natal protested his imprisonment on Friday by blocking some roads in the province.

The 79-year-old surrendered to authorities shortly before a midnight Wednesday deadline and was taken to Estcourt prison, about 200 kilometers (124 miles) from his rural home in Nkandla.

## Lockdowns in Asia as some nations see first major virus surges

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BANGKOK, 9 JULY

Several countries around Asia and the Pacific that are experiencing their first major surges of the coronavirus rushed to implement tough restrictions Friday, a year and a half into a pandemic that many initially weathered well.

Faced with rapidly rising numbers of infections in recent months, authorities hope the measures will slow the spread before health care systems are overwhelmed.

It's a rhythm familiar in much of the world, where repeated surges deluged hospitals and led to high numbers of deaths. But many Asian countries avoided that cycle by imposing strict travel restrictions combined with tough measures at home.

Now some are seeing record numbers of new cases and even deaths, blamed in part on the highly contagious delta variant combined with low rates of vaccination and decisions to ease restrictions that have hit economies hard.

Though overall numbers are nowhere yet near those seen during outbreaks in hotspots in Europe and the United States, the rapid rise set off alarm bells just as many Western countries with high vaccine rates began to breathe a sigh of relief.

Thailand reported a record number of new deaths on Thursday with 75 and they came in at 72 on Friday. South Korea set a record for number of new cases on Thursday, only to break it on Friday with 1,316 infections, according to the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. For the first time, Indonesia is seeing a surge that has hospitals turning patients away and oxygen supplies running out.

Of Thailand's 317,506 confirmed cases and 2,534 deaths since the pandemic started, more than 90% have come since the start of April.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha's handling of the surge has been widely criticized, including the decision to allow people to travel for

slow, and we should get better vaccines," said resident Cherkarn Rachasevet, a 60-year-old IT analyst, who hustled to the grocery store to stock up on supplies after hearing new restrictions were coming, wearing four masks and a face shield.

She lamented that she isn't due for her first shot until the end of the month.

Across the Asia-Pacific region, immunisation rates have lagged for a variety of reasons, including production and distribution issues as well as

an initial wait-and-see attitude from many early on when numbers were low and there was less of a sense of urgency.

In South Korea widely praised for its initial response to the pandemic that included extensive testing and contact-tracing critics



## FURY TESTS POSITIVE

A person with knowledge of the situation says heavyweight champion Tyson Fury has tested positive for COVID-19, and his third bout with Deontay Wilder will be postponed likely until the fall. The person spoke to *The Associated Press* on condition of anonymity Thursday because the promoters of the lucrative heavyweight trilogy are still finalizing the new date for the most anticipated heavyweight bout of the summer.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

# Brazil vs Argentina Copa final, more than just Neymar vs Messi

AGENCIES

RIO DE JANEIRO, 9 JULY

**A** contest between Neymar (in photo, left) and Lionel Messi (in photo) is how many fans perceive the Copa America final between Brazil and Argentina.

The players themselves, though, see the bigger challenge on Saturday at Maracana Stadium will be between one of the toughest defensive lines to break in world soccer and the protection around one of the best players in history.

With a dash of pepper off the pitch to spice up the rivalry.

Neymar's Brazil lineup has conceded only two goals in six matches at the Copa America. Veteran Thiago Silva, Marquinhos and der Milito are taking shifts as starters without putting the Selecao under too much of any risk. Defensive midfielders Casemiro and Fred are relentless. Right-back Danilo and left-back Renan Lodi are keener to defend than go running up front.

These players initially criticized the South American soccer confederation for shifting the continental tournament to Brazil in emergency mode. Before the final against Messi's Argentina, they've changed their narrative to winning at all costs. And keeping a clean sheet.

"The zone where Messi plays is where I play, we face each other a lot during matches," Casemiro told a news conference on Thursday.



"I can't mark any player by myself, you need teammates. And you don't mark only one player. It starts with Neymar, Richarlison and it ends in the goalkeeper a team plays with 11, defends with 11 and attacks with 11."

Meanwhile, Argentina has found a formula to try protect Messi, who now at age 34 plays much closer to the final third of the pitch. Midfielders Rodrigo de Paul and Giovani

Lo Celso, notably creative players, are selflessly adding to a barrier around Messi. Although they still manage to give good passes to aggressive wingers Lautaro Martínez and Nico González.

Messi has scored four goals and given five assists during this edition of Copa America. Before the tournament, he said it was his dream to win his first major title with Argentina, which hasn't won major



trophies in 28 years. He is playing Barcelona-style for his national team, scoring from free kicks, dazzling adversaries with frequent runs despite his age and giving plenty of passes.

"Messi is one step ahead of all of us," De Paul said before the penalty shootout win against Colombia in the semifinals.

"One is here to grow, to help. We are all on the same path.

What matters is to win and represent Argentina well." The strengths of Brazil and Argentina also belie some of their weaknesses.

The Selecao trusts so much in its defense that its strikers are under-performing at Copa America. Richarlison and Roberto Firmino scored only one goal each for Brazil. Gabriel Jesus, who is suspended from the final, didn't find the back of the net.

Argentinian goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez also provoked Colombia players during the penalty shootout that put his team in the final. Martínez made three saves.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro kicked off the final rivalry in an online meeting with his Argentinian counterpart Alberto Fernández.

"I will say what the result will be. It will be 5-0," said Bolsonaro, who is not expected to attend. Fernández just laughed.

## 'Durand Cup bid by Kolkata'

KOLKATA, 9 JULY

Word is that the Indian Football Association, controlling the game in West Bengal, wants the Durand Cup to be held here again, a formal request having already been made to the national authorities, the All-India Football Federation. One of the world's oldest tournaments, the Durand Cup was organised in Bengal in 2019, when Kerala's Gokulam won it beating Mohun Bagan in the final at Salt Lake stadium. The global coronavirus pandemic caused it to be held over last year.

According to sources in the IFA, it wants now that it has decided on holding the local league with in-camera matches amid hopes that the IFA

Sheld too would be held in due course - the Durand Cup brought back to Kolkata for a renewal of the happy experience of 2019. It will recalled that Goa too hosted the competition earlier.

The sources, insisting on anonymity, told *The Statesman* today that local football simply had to be re-started this season as, without it, sponsorship funds would have dried up completely. Assurances relating to the creation of a controlled environment for player safety were made but there were insiders who sounded sceptical, saying: "We can't afford it." They also seemed to doubt that the IFA would have time enough for the Durand Cup after finishing its own competitions. SNS

It's being billed as the best team of the tournament against, in effect, the host nation.

The European Champ-

ship final between Italy and England at Wembley Stadium on Sunday has all the makings of a tight and tense title match. Here's where the game could be won and lost:

**MIDFIELD DISPARITY**

Midfield is the department where Italy undoubtedly has the edge in terms of quality and experience.

Marco Verratti is one of the few genuinely world-class midfielders at the tournament, Jorginho is a newly crowned Champions League winner and is the conductor of play in front of the defense, while Nicolo Barella at age 24, the youngest

of the trio has been a revelation coming off a title-winning season at Inter Milan.

While England's hard-working central-midfield pairing of Declan Rice and Kalvin Phillips gives the team a solid base, they should be overmatched.

"The games against Spain (in the semifinals) and England will be very different," Verratti said. "The midfield is a key section. We can perhaps make the difference there and must dictate the pace of the game."

Expect Mason Mount, Eng-

land's attacking midfielder, to play a little deeper to help out Rice and Phillips, or even potentially a change of system.

**BENCH DEPTH**

This is probably England's biggest strength. Get this: The full backs from Chelsea's Champions League-winning team,

Reece James and Ben Chilwell, have played one game between them at Euro 2020.

The two players England coach Gareth Southgate was able to bring on at the start of extra time against Denmark in the semifinals were Jordan Henderson, the Champions League and Premier League-winning captain of Liverpool, and Phil Foden, widely regarded as the future star of English soccer. Among the unused subs were Manchester United forwards Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho, a player who has just been signed for \$100 million from Borussia Dortmund.

England probably has had the most attacking depth of all teams in the tournament along with France, which could be crucial if the final goes to extra time.

Italy's squad isn't quite so

stacked with high-profile names, especially up front, but has midfielder Manuel Locatelli one of the best players in the group stage and some reliable defenders in reserve.

**COACHES' CALLS**

One is a Premier League-winning manager with experience of coaching in three other countries and a number of Europe's top clubs. The other's only stint in club management lasted three years and saw him get relegated. Euro 2020 is showing, however, that Southgate's abilities should not necessarily be regarded as inferior to Roberto Mancini's international level, For much of the news confer-

ence, however, the 58-year-old Mourinho was more relaxed. Much like he has been since his much-celebrated arrival in Rome last week.

He has been sharing videos on social media of his first week back in Italy, including of his arrival at Roma's training ground on an iconic Vespa scooter.

On Thursday, he was happy to joke with reporters gathered on a terrace in the city. The conference took place in a makeshift structure and, about 10 minutes in, the wind caused the plastic sheeting to flap around, creating a loud and consistent noise.

It was Mourinho who quickly got up and tore down the plastic panels. He'll be hoping to fix Roma that easily.

Roma finished seventh in Serie A last season, 29 points behind champion Inter. The team has not won a single trophy since 2008 when it lifted the Italian Cup.

There is something that we can't escape from, Mourinho said. We haven't won for a long time and we finished 29 points behind the top and 16 points behind fourth spot. We can't escape from that reality.

But, before anything, we want to understand why, understand how we can improve to get to where we want to get to. Obviously we're talking about time.

**WEAK AREAS**

The semifinals perhaps highlighted a couple of areas to be exploited within two teams containing few obvious weaknesses.

England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford came into the tournament as possibly the team's biggest concern, yet has been virtually error-free until a ragged performance against Denmark when his kicking was poor and his oft-questioned composure was shown up.

**TIGHT DEFENCES**

These have been the two best defences at Euro 2020.

England has conceded one goal and that came from the only successfully converted direct free kick of the tournament. With Southgate often preferring two defensive midfielders sitting in front of his back four, England's opponents can have little space to operate.

As for Italy, England likely will have noticed Spain frequently getting in behind Italy left back Emerson Palmieri, who came in as the replacement for injured starter Leonardo Spinazzola.

Emerson, who only appeared fleetingly for Chelsea this season, is a naturally attacking full back and could leave gaps behind him, especially if Italy loses possession and England can break quickly.

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