



Pages 12 | ₹5 | LC

KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



READY TO TALK CHINA,
RUSSIA AND SOOTHE
ALLIES: BIDEN

P10



SUU KYI ON TRIAL:
CHARGES BOGUS,
SAY CRITICS



OPS ELECTED DEPUTY
LEGISLATURE PARTY
LEADER OF AIADMK

P9

INDIA AIM FOR FULL
POINTS AGAINST
AFGHANISTAN

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Light to moderate rain/thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 34 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 81% Min: 39%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 38.6°C (-3) Min: 25.5°C (-3)
SUN RISES 05:23 hrs SUN SETS 19:21 hrs
MOON RISES 10:27 hrs MOON SETS 23:21 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A devotee takes a holy dip in the Sarover at Gurudwara Dukhniwaran Sahib on the Martyrdom Day of Guru Arjan Dev, in Patiala. IANS

WPI inflation hits all-time high: The wholesale price-based inflation accelerated to a record 12.94 per cent in May, on account of rising prices of crude oil, manufactured goods and a low base of last year. In April 2021, WPI inflation hit double digit at 10.49 per cent. Retail inflation also rose to 6.3 per cent in May, breaching the RBI's comfort level, on the back of costlier food items. The Consumer Price Index based inflation stood at 4.23 per cent in April. (P8)

Bengal post-poll violence survivors move SC: Alleging horrific gang-rape by TMC workers, a 60-year-old woman and a 17-year-old minor girl from West Bengal have moved the Supreme Court for an SIT probe into all incidents of post-poll violence. The applications were filed in a pending case by Biswajit Sarkar, the brother of deceased Bengal BJP worker Abhijit Sarkar, allegedly murdered in postpoll violence.

Filmmaker moves Kerala HC for bail: Filmmaker Aisha Sultana, who has been booked by the Lakshadweep police on charges of sedition for allegedly accusing the Central government of using 'Covid-19 as a bioweapon' against the people of Lakshadweep, has approached the Kerala High Court seeking anticipatory bail. (P4)

India's active count below 10 lakh mark

Country logs 70,421 new Covid-19 cases, lowest in 74 days; 3,921 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

India's Covid cases continued a decline at 70,421 new Covid cases, lowest since 31 March and 3,921 deaths due to the virus in the last 24 hours, according to data released by the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry on Monday.

India's active caseload declines below 10 Lakh mark after 66 days. Meanwhile, daily recoveries continue to outnumber the daily new cases for more than a month, the Ministry data showed.

Recovery Rate increases to 95.43 percent and daily Positivity Rate stands at 4.72 per cent, less than 10 per cent positivity for 3 weeks. This is the seventh consecutive day when India has reported less than one lakh Covid cases.

On 13 June, India recorded 80,834 cases.

COVAXIN TRIAL ON KIDS

The recruitment for the clinical trial of the country's first indigenously-developed Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin, among children in the age group of 6-12 years will begin at the AIIMS in New Delhi from Tuesday. This will be followed by the clinical trial of children in the age-group of 2-6 years. The enrolment of children volunteers aged 12-18 years at the AIIMS has been completed and they have been given the first dose of Covaxin. "The recruitment process for the clinical trial of Covaxin among children in the age group of 6-12 years will begin from Tuesday," Dr Sanjay Rai, AIIMS, said.

India's overall tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,95,10,410. The active cases have come down below 10 lakh. The country has 9,73,158 active cases presently and has witnessed 3,74,305 deaths so far. According to the Health Ministry, a total of 1,19,501 people have been discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the total discharge to 2,81,62,947 till date.

The Health Ministry said that a total of 25,48,49,301 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 14,99,771 who were administered vaccines in the last 24 hours.

Delhi logs 131 cases, 16 deaths: The national capital today reported 131 fresh coronavirus infections — the lowest since 22 February — and 16

FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES	2,95,10,410
ACTIVE CASES	9,73,158
NEW CASES	70,421
NEW RECOVERIES	1,19,501
TOTAL DEATHS	3,74,305
<small>UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M. MONDAY 14 JUNE 2021</small>	

Covid-linked fatalities while the positivity rate dropped to 0.22 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. (See Page 2)

Delta plus: New Covid variant identified

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The highly transmissible Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 has mutated further to form the Delta plus or AY.1 variant but there is no immediate cause for concern in India as its incidence in the country is still low, scientists here said.

In its latest report on coronavirus variants, updated till last Friday, the health agency said Delta plus was present in six genomes from India as of 7 June. PTI

TRAFFIC SNARLS



Heavy traffic jam at ITO in New Delhi on Monday as the Covid-19 lockdown was eased in the national capital after a period of almost two months. SNS

AAP throws its hat into Gujarat poll ring; to contest all 182 seats in 2022

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 14 JUNE

AAP chief and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal on a visit to Gujarat on Monday said the people of Gujarat need an alternative from the last 75 years of rule by Congress and BJP.

years of rule by Congress and the BJP.

Kejriwal said that the Congress in Gujarat is virtually in the pocket of the BJP—probably an oblique reference to many Congressmen living off the sub-contracts managed from the big contracts handled by the ruling party leaders and their kin.

Addressing a Press Conference here, Mr Kejriwal said that AAP would contest all the 182 Assembly seats in the elections next year as the people of Gujarat need an alternative from the last 75

Kejriwal said that every section of the people, including traders, are feeling scared of the present BJP government. He cited an example of an invitation extended to him by an organization of businessmen in Gujarat. "The invitation was withdrawn at the last moment due to immense pressure brought on the businessmen", said the Delhi CM.

Kejriwal said that the agenda for next year's Assembly polls would be decided by the people of Gujarat.

He also inducted into AAP veteran journalist Ishudan Gadhwani who recently quit his job as anchor of a local television channel to plunge into politics full-time.

Details on Page 4

Congress: Big scam by Ram temple trust

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Congress on Monday alleged corruption in purchase of land in Ayodhya by the Ram temple trust and demanded a Supreme Court-monitored probe.

The party also alleged that it was a "big scam" committed using funds collected from devotees and demanded answers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Trust had purchased "12,080 square metres of land" at an inflated price of Rs 18.5 crore. PTI

Details on Page 4

India on course to achieve land degradation neutrality'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi tonight declared that India was on track to achieve its national commitment of land degradation neutrality.

"We are also working towards restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. This would contribute to India's commitment to achieve an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent," he said.

Modi was delivering his keynote address at the UN "High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought" via video conference. The Prime Minister spoke at the opening segment in his capacity as the

Asserting that land degradation affects over two-thirds of the world today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a high-level UN dialogue said if left unchecked, it will erode the very foundations of our societies, economies, food security, health, safety and quality of life

President of the 14th Session of the Conference of Parties of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Terming land as the fundamental building block for supporting all lives and livelihoods, he called for reduction of the tremendous pressure on land and its resources. The Prime Minister listed steps

taken by India to deal with the land degradation issue. Modi pointed out that in India, over the last ten years, around three million hectares of forest cover has been added.

This has enhanced the combined forest cover to almost one-fourth of the country's total area. The PM gave the example of the Banni region in Rann of Kutch in Gujarat to illustrate how restoration of land could start a virtuous cycle of good soil health, increased land productivity, food security and improved livelihoods.

'73 per cent elderly faced abuse during second wave lockdown'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

About 73 per cent of the elderly population experienced increased abuse during the lockdown imposed amidst the second wave of Covid-19, according to a new report.

The report by the Agewell Foundation, based on responses from 5,000 elderly, released ahead of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day said 82 per cent of the respondents claimed that their life has been adversely affected due to the current Covid-19 situation.

The report found among the 73 per cent, 61 per cent claimed that interpersonal relationships was the main factor responsible for fast increasing incidences of elder abuse in families. During the survey, it was found that 65 per cent elderly respondents were facing neglect in their life while approximately 58 per cent of the respondents said they are suffering abuse in their families and society.

Himanshu Rath, Chairman, Agewell Foundation said though the Covid-19 situation and related lockdown rules and restrictions have affected almost every human being, older persons are the most vulnerable so far as the coronavirus threat and its impact is concerned. "There is an urgent need to sensitize people about the growing incidences of elder abuse. Older persons also need to be educated about support systems, legal provisions available to them," he said.

Uncle's overnight couple leaves LJP boss Chirag in a fix

MANOJ CHAURASIA
PATNA, 14 JUNE



Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) MP Chirag Paswan had never thought even in his wildest dreams that he would find himself alone and isolated one day in his own "bunglow" ~ the party's election symbol. His uncle and parliamentarian Pashupati Kumar Paras, in a sudden coup, has hijacked the entire party and got himself elected as the LJP leader in the Lok Sabha as well as the party's national president - the posts which Chirag enjoyed till yesterday.

So, how did that happen? Was only Paras involved in this game or was this the result of the well-orchestrated coup planned at the level of chief minister Nitish Kumar?

Those familiar with the

Chirag's LJP won just one seat. The LJP had fielded 135 candidates primarily against the JD-U which sharply divided the NDA votes, dealing a severe blow to JD-U prospects.

Although Nitish managed to secure his throne, he had lost much of his power.

JD-U insiders say right since his party's "embarrassing show" in the Assembly polls, Nitish was burning with the fire of humiliation and planning to teach a lesson to Chirag. Soon thereafter, the JD-U engaged three leaders in the "mission split".

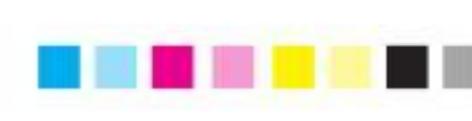
The team first targeted Paras who was running annoyed with Chirag since he was not getting the kind of prominence he got while Ram Vilas Paswan was alive. As such, Chirag had trimmed his uncle's power

first by removing him as the state LJP president and then as chief of the party's Dalit Sena.

Reports said Paras enjoyed good relations with Nitish since he served as a minister in his government prior to getting elected to the Lok Sabha and was in favour of his party contesting elections under his leadership but Chirag didn't take any note of his advice and instead fielded candidates against the JD-U.

Paras came in JD-U grip just after few meetings only, sources informed. In the second attempt, the JD-U team approached Prince Raj, another party MP and son of Chirag's late uncle Ram Chandra Paswan. Prince, once considered very loyal to Chirag, was going angry right since his power was divided. Prince enjoyed the role as the

More reports on Page 5



1984 riots case life convict seeks sentence suspension on med grounds, HC calls for report



PTI
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Delhi High Court on Monday called for a status report from the police regarding the health of a life convict in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case who has sought interim suspension of sentence for 90 days on medical grounds.

A bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Asha Menon directed the police to file the fresh status report regarding the medical condition of convict Naresh Sehrawat before the next date of hearing on July 5.

Advocate Dharam Raj Ohlan, representing Sehrawat, told the court that he was seeking interim suspension of sentence or parole of 90 days in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the High Powered Committee (HPC) set up for decongesting jails to prevent spread of COVID-19 among prisoners.

Ohlan contended that his client was suffering from stage 4 kidney and liver ailments for which transplants were the only option and till he gets a transplant he has to be on a special diet which would not be possible while in prison.

The lawyer also told the bench that in view of Sehrawat's medical condition he was susceptible to

COVID-19 infection.

Opposing the plea, senior advocate R S Cheema, representing the Special Investigation Team (SIT), told the bench that Sehrawat has already received two doses of COVID vaccine and he was being well looked after.

To this, Ohlan said that vaccination was not a 100 per cent guarantee or protection against COVID-19 infection.

Cheema also told the court that the convict was being provided all the requisite medical treatment and there was no emergency right now for grant of any relief to him.

An SIT was earlier set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs to reinvestigate the riot cases.

The trial court had awarded death penalty to convict Yashpal Singh and life term to Naresh Sehrawat in the case relating to the killing of two men in New Delhi during the 1984 riots -- the first convictions in the cases reopened by the SIT.

Sherawat has also appealed against his conviction and the sentence before the high court which is pending.

The death reference as well as appeal of Singh against the capital punishment awarded to him is also pending in the high court.

Classified

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed to all the public that my client Ritu Goenka D/o Late S.K Bansal R/o House No. 81-B, LIG DDA Flats, GULABI BAGH, New Delhi-7. Has no any relation with her husband Sharad Goenka as she has taken mutual divorce (1st motion) in the Court of Lt. PJC Renu Bhattacharya, Tis Hazari New Delhi on dated 12/3/2021 and HMA no. 547/21 & 2nd Motion is to be proceeded as per law. That Sharad Goenka has no right to use her rights and name in any manner. Those who will have any relation with him will have their own cost.

Siddhesh Roy
Advocate
Delhi High Court

Fire breaks out at IT building of Safdarjung Airport

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

A fire broke out at the IT building of Safdarjung Airport in Delhi on Monday afternoon.

Delhi fire services confirmed that six fire tenders were pressed into services to douse the flame. Another two fire tenders were pressed into services by the Airport Authority of India.

No casualty has been reported. Cause of the fire and extent of damage is yet to be determined.

PTI
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Preparing for Covid 3rd wave, Delhi pvt hospitals setting up own O2 plants

PTI
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Bracing for a possible third wave of coronavirus, several private hospitals in Delhi have started installing their own oxygen generation plants to avoid a repeat of the oxygen crisis the city witnessed during the second wave of the pandemic.

These include Jaipur Golden Hospital and Batra Hospital, where patients had died due to oxygen shortage during the peak of the second wave of the pandemic.

Recently, the Directorate General of Health Services had asked all private hospitals having 100 or more beds to install their own Pressure Swing Absorption (PSA) oxygen plants, refilling plants or create any other infrastructure to produce at least two times their normal requirement of oxygen.

Hospitals and nursing homes hav-

ing 50 to 99 beds have been asked to create an infrastructure enough to meet their normal requirement of oxygen.

Dr P K Bhardwaj, the executive director of Saroj Super Speciality, said the 250-bed private facility got an oxygen generation plant installed around 10 days ago.

"With the installation of oxygen generation plants at most hospitals, the load on vendors supplying liquid medical oxygen will reduce and these will be able to cater to smaller hospitals," he said.

Dr DK Baluja, the medical director of Jaipur Golden Hospital, where 20 critically-ill COVID-19 patients died due to oxygen shortage on April 24, said a PSA plant at the premises will be operational in three months, tentatively.

The hospital has an LMO storage tank, too, and it will continue to receive supplies from the ven-

dor, he said.

"The LMO will remain the backbone. The PSA plant is being added to avert a crisis," Dr Baluja said.

Sudhanshu Bankata, the executive director of the 500-bed Batra Hospital, which lost eight lives due to oxygen shortage on May 1, said the facility is in the process of shortlisting a credible vendor.

"We have started the process. The problem is that so many firms have cropped up in the last few weeks. They do not have a reliable history. So, one has to do due diligence and see that all the basics are covered," he said.

Bankata said the hospital has sought a few months from the health department to install their PSA plant. "It is going to take some time but we are very much on the job," he said.

Dr AC Shukla, the medical director of the 210-bed Mata Chanana Devi

Hospital, said it was necessary to set up PSA plants at every hospital considering the crisis Delhi faced during the second wave.

"We have started the process. The only thing is that many hospitals have placed orders with fabricators simultaneously and many parts are imported from outside India. So, it may take a couple of months. It will be ready by August," he said.

The hospital has also decided to increase the LMO storage capacity from 5,000 litres to 10,000 litres. "We will use the PSA plant to fulfil the needs of our wards, LMO will be used in the ICU," the officials said.

However, some smaller hospitals are struggling to create space and arrange funds to install PSA plants.

Kaustubh Mani Tiwari, head marketing, Rathi Hospital in Najafgarh said installing a PSA plant is a cost-intensive task.

"Not everyone has space, manpower and funds for such a task. Then, one needs multiple no objection certificates for it. So, installing a PSA plant is not an easy thing," he said.

Tiwari added that the recent crisis arose out of LMO shortage and hospitals will still need it in addition to the supply from their PSA plant.

The 101-bed hospital has earmarked 80 beds for COVID-19 patients.

An official from 50-bed Oncoplus Hospital on Panchkuan Road said space and budget is a big problem and hospital management has been holding discussions to resolve these issues.

As part of the preparation against the third wave, Delhi government-run hospitals are also installing PSA plants.

On Saturday, Chief Minister



Some people with vested interests are doing all this
GAUTAM DEB, CHAIRMAN, BOA, SILIGURI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
ON PROTESTS AGAINST SMC PLANS TO BUILD ANOTHER CREMATORIUM IN THE TOWN

Delhi logs 131 virus cases, lowest since 22 Feb; positivity rate 0.22%

Capital records 16 fresh Covid deaths, lowest since 5 April; active cases drop to 3,226

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The national capital today reported 131 fresh coronavirus infections — the lowest since 22 February — and 16 Covid-linked fatalities while the positivity rate dropped to 0.22 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Delhi had recorded 128 Covid cases on 22 February. The fresh fatalities count is the lowest since 5 April, when 15 people had succumbed to the viral infection.

Currently, there were 3,226 active cases in the city. As many as 960 Covid patients were under home isolation, the health bulletin stated.

Delhi's coronavirus caseload rose to 14,31,270 while its toll climbed to 24,839, the bulletin said.

Over 14.03 lakh patients have recovered from the infection in the national capital so far, the bulletin said.

Delhi had recorded 255 cases yesterday, 213 cases on Saturday,



A health worker administers Covid vaccine dose to a student at a vaccination centre organised for the students travelling abroad for higher studies, in the Capital on Monday.

238 cases on Friday, 305 cases on Saturday and 337 cases on Wednesday.

The city had recorded 23 Covid deaths yesterday, 28 on Saturday, 24 on Friday, 44 on Thursday, and 36 on Wednesday.

Its positivity rate stood at 0.4 per cent yesterday, 0.3 per cent

on Saturday and Friday, 0.4 per cent on Thursday, and 0.5 per cent on Wednesday, according to government data.

Today's reported cases were detected out of 59,556 tests, including 47,357 RT-PCR tests, according to the bulletin.

Delhi had been reeling from

a brutal second wave of the Covid pandemic that ripped through the country, claiming a large number of lives everywhere.

On April, Delhi had recorded 28,395 cases — the highest single-day tally since the beginning of the pandemic last year. On 22 April, its case positivity rate was 36.2 per cent — the highest so far. It had reported 448 Covid deaths on 3 May — its highest single-day fatalities tally.

With the positivity rate remaining below 1 per cent for two weeks, the Delhi government yesterday announced the partial lifting of curbs on restaurants and weekly markets from today.

While restaurants in the city have been allowed to reopen at 50 per cent capacity, one weekly market per municipal zone has also been allowed.

Salons, beauty parlours and bars, closed since the imposition of lockdown in Delhi on 19 April, were also allowed to reopen from today.

However, schools, colleges,

educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, multiplexes, theatres, gyms, spas, yoga institutes, swimming pools, auditoriums, banquet halls, amusement and water parks, and public parks and gardens will continue to be closed, according to an order issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had yesterday announced a slew of relaxations on lockdown curbs as part of Delhi's further unlock, pointing out that the Covid situation has come under control significantly in the city.

He had also announced that shops in markets and malls, which were allowed to reopen on "odd-even basis" from 7 June, will now open on all days from 10 am to 8 pm.

"I hope our lives will be back on tracks if the Covid cases continue to decline. It is a massive tragedy and we have to tackle it together, and hope the cases do not increase now," Kejriwal had then added.

20 pc of Delhi's 18-44 population get 1 dose against Covid: Atishi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE



Twenty per cent of people in the 18-44 age group in Delhi have been vaccinated against COVID-19 despite the inoculation centres for this category remaining closed for several days due to the non-availability of doses, AAP MLA Atishi said on Monday.

She, however, said the city is again facing a shortage of vaccines and some of the inoculation centres for the 18-44 age group will be shut on Tuesday.

"So far, 20 percent of Delhi's young population has been vaccinated (one dose) despite the inoculation centres remaining closed for many days due to the shortage of doses," Atishi said.

Delhi started the vaccination drive for this age group on

May 3. Around 92 lakh people are eligible for vaccination in this category.

As of Monday morning, Atishi said, Delhi had 18,000 doses of Covaxin and 42,000 doses of Covishield left for the 18-44 age group.

"More than half of the centres where Covishield is being administered to people in the 18-44 age group will be shut on Tuesday," she said.

Delhi administered just 14,448 doses on June 13 as government vaccination centres remain closed on Sunday, she said.

So far, 60,88,649 vaccine doses have been administered in the city since the inoculation exercise started on January 16. Of these, 14,42,899 people have received both doses.

City restaurants start operations after 2 months with 50 pc capacity

PTI
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Installing protective screens, conducting temperature checks, contactless ordering, and visible cues to ensure physical distancing are among the various measures taken by restaurants in the national capital which reopened with 50 per cent capacity on Monday after nearly two months.

Dine-in facilities were barred in Delhi since April 17, when the first weekend lockdown was imposed in a bid to curb the spread of COVID-19 infection in the city. According to the latest guidelines of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), restaurants can open with 50 per cent capacity but they cannot serve liquor to their guests as bars in such establishments will remain closed till further orders.

The measures in place include mandatory daily wellness and temperature checks for everyone (crew, customers and delivery partners), compulsory

face masks, enhanced focus on hand hygiene with frequent hand washing and gloves for the crew," said Rajeev Ranjan, Chief Operating Officer, Connaught Plaza Restaurants Pvt Ltd, which operates McDonald's restaurants in north and east India.

"Front counters and drive-through have been fitted with protective screens and ordering, payment and delivery has been made contactless to minimize human contact. All restaurants have visual cues on furniture and floor to help customers and employees maintain adequate physical distance and follow Covid-protocols. The customers will also notice foot-operated taps in the rest rooms," he added.

Restaurants in south Delhi's Lajpat Nagar and Moolchand areas largely remained closed or opened shutters for just cleaning the premises on Monday.

In Lajpat Nagar's central market area, Afghan Darbar was among the restaurants which was inviting guests again to relish their exotic cuisine.

Delhi will have to wait more for monsoon

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE



The progress of the monsoon in northwest India has slowed down and it is not likely to hit the capital in the next two days, officials at India Meteorological Department said on Monday.

The weather department had earlier predicted that the wind system may reach Delhi by June 15, 12 days early. Normally, the monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27 and covers the entire country by July 8.

"Westerly winds have slowed down the progress of the monsoon in northwest India. It is not likely to hit Delhi in the next two days," an India Meteorological Department (IMD) official said. However, light to moderate rainfall is predicted in the capital on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) is passing through Diu, Surat, Nandurbar, Bhopal, Nowrangpur, Hamirpur, Barabanki, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Ambala and Amritsar, the IMD said.

Last year, the wind system had reached Delhi on June 25 and covered the entire country by June 29.



Today, it pains me that across the nation our farmer brethren are suffering owing to the indifference of the Centre. Together, we shall continue our fight to ensure the well-being of the very backbone of our society. Upholding their rights remains a top priority

MAMATA BANERJEE

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 15 JUNE 2021

Tourists make beeline for HP after easing of curbs

CMS says the govt has waived the condition of negative RTPCR test report for entry into HP, but it is also ensuring that no one is allowed to flout the Covid safety protocols; state police issue advisory for tourists

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 14 JUNE

Thousands of tourists are making a beeline for Himachal Pradesh and are even getting stranded at its borders on their way to the hill state in the midst of summer after the HP government waived the requirement for negative Covid RTPCR test report for entry into the state.

As per reports, over 5,000 vehicles had entered the state through Parwanoo in Solan district since Sunday evening with heavy rush of vehicles at border checkpost causing long traffic jams.

The traffic snarl-ups were also the result of checking the tourists for Covid e-Pass, which is still mandatory for entering the state, by police personnel. Besides, the tourists who had not registered for e-Pass were being manually registered before entry into the state.

Though the heavy inflow of tourists brought cheers to hoteliers who had been facing massive losses in the wake of the Corona curfew, it also



A long line of vehicles at Solan's Parwanoo border in HP. SNS

caused concerns in the state over the spread of Coronavirus, which had forced the state government to issue instructions.

Speaking to media persons, HP chief minister Jai Ram

Thakur said the government removed the condition of RTPCR report requirement to enter the state to facilitate the visitors.

But at the same time, the government was ensuring

that nobody was allowed to flout the norms fixed to check spread of the Coronavirus, the CM said.

"Free inter-state movement is allowed throughout the country and the Himachal Pradesh government has decided that the people visiting the state will be monitored through Covid e-Pass registration," he said.

He stated that all the persons desirous to enter into the state were now required to enter their particulars in this online software and details of their arrival were being shared with all the stakeholders concerned.

Besides, the hoteliers have been directed to strictly follow the SoPs issued by the state government.

The chief minister urged the tourists to adhere to the guidelines issued by the state government from time to time and also wear the facemasks and maintain social distancing.

He further stated that the Covid vaccination campaign was going on smoothly in the state.

So far, 25.17 lakh doses of

vaccine had been administered to the people of the state and efforts were on to complete the vaccine campaign well in time, he added.

Meanwhile, the Himachal Pradesh Police issued an advisory for the tourists visiting the state after relaxation in norms on RTPCR report and warned of strict action if Covid guidelines aren't followed.

A state police spokesperson said they welcome all tourists visiting the state after the end of Corona curfew.

"However, all tourists arriving in Himachal are advised to wear masks, practice social distancing and follow Covid guidelines issued by the state government.

First time offenders will be fined Rs 500 under Section 144 and 115 of HP Police Act 2007.

The repeat offenders will be arrested and sent to the court and they may face up to eight days imprisonment or fine of Rs 5,000 or both," he added.

He urged the tourists to follow all Covid guidelines in letter and spirit during their stay in the state.

Involve people in intensive plantation drive: Khattar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 14 JUNE

Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, on Monday directed the forest department to work extensively on the scheme regarding contribution of people in the intensive plantation drive.

Presiding over the review meeting of the plantation campaign and geo-tagging scheme of the forest and wildlife department here today, the CM said a target has been set to plant three crore saplings in the state this year.

Khattar said that this year will be known as 'Oxy-Van Year' and officers should work with this mindset. During this season, keeping in mind the



objective of environmental and water conservation in the state, plantation campaigns should be carried out and not only school students but the general public should also be involved in this campaign.

The CM said the forest department should formulate such a scheme that plants are easily available to the common people and are growing near

their homes during the rainy season. He asked to make a plan using technical resources for this so that the saplings can be easily available to the public. With the help of geo-tagging scheme, every plant sown in the state will be monitored. Besides this, to make the scheme successful, drone mapping will be done.

The CM directed the officers

to work closely in this regard and formulate such a plan which ensures survival of maximum planted saplings. For this, he asked officers to implement the scheme pursued last year in which the students were involved in the plantation campaign and further asked them to fix the incentive amount so that the children act as caretakers of these saplings planted by them at regular intervals.

The CM was informed 2,800 villages were selected for plantation drive and has also identified the sites for plantation in these villages. Apart from this, a detailed report has also been prepared with regard to availability of various varieties of plants in different plant nurseries.

denly pounced upon him inside the auto, covered his head with a cloth and began beating him up.

They eventually drove me to a secluded house in a field in Behta Hazipur village of Loni where they further beat me up while asking me to chant Jai Shri Ram.

Every time I cried in pain and inadvertently uttered Allah, they beat me up again asking me to chant Jai Shri Ram instead, said Samad.

They even shaved my beard, calling me a spy of Pakistan, he said.

Delhi man arrested with 100 gm smack in Haryana

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 14 JUNE

Haryana Police has arrested a man in connection with smuggling of narcotics and seized 100 gram of smack from his possession in Rohtak.

Giving this information on Monday, a Haryana Police spokesperson informed that a team of crime investigation agency was patrolling to keep a tab on anti-social elements.

In the meantime, the arrested accused was seen coming on foot from Mata darwaza side. Based on suspicion, when police nabbed and frisked him, 100 gram smack was recovered from his possession.

Arrested accused was identified as Kuldeep alias Cheeki, a resident of Najaigarh, Delhi.

A case has been registered against the accused under relevant sections of the NDPS Act and further investigation is underway.

In a separate incident, police arrested two persons riding a motorcycle with 35.5 grams of heroin in Fatehabad district. The police have registered a case under the NDPS Act against the accused.

AAP holds protest outside Pb CM house over SC post-matric scholarship scheme scam

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 14 JUNE

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s Punjab unit on Monday staged a protest in front of the official residence of Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh against the alleged scam perpetrated by the Congress government in the post-matric scholarship scheme for Dalit students.

Led by Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Punjab Assembly, Harpal Singh Cheema, a large number of party leaders and workers marched towards the CM's residence. Following this, Chandigarh Police forcibly detained the AAP MLAs and leaders and sent them to Sector 17 police station.

AAP senior leader Mandawinder Singh Giaspura said that the investigation report submitted by senior IAS officer Kirpa Shankar Saroj on the post-matric scholarship scam revealed that the scholarships were given by the Social Welfare Minister to his cronies managers of fake colleges.

"As a result, private colleges have not received funds and lakhs of Dalit students have been deprived of their right to education," he added.

Giaspura announced that his hunger strike would continue even while in police custody.

AAP leaders Saravjit Kaur Manuke, Budhrum and Baldev Singh said the AAP had raised its voice against the Dalit stu-

dents' scholarship scam and even though the Captain government had released some amount to private colleges; but Dalit students will not be able to sit for their exams till the government releases the balance amount of Rs 1,539 Crore.

The AAP leaders said Amarinder Singh's government had robbed the rights of Dalits during its tenure.

"While the government has embezzled the scholarship money of Dalit students, it has also discriminated in giving jobs to Dalit youth and promotions to employees," they added.

With the Punjab Assembly elections looming, the Captain government was doing a drama by releasing some amount of post-matric scholarship amount, but the people of Punjab would take account of the injustice done by the Punjab Congress government and Captain Amarinder Singh, the AAP leaders said.

Himachal Cong chief's mother passes away

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 14 JUNE

Malki Devi, the mother of Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore, passed away on Sunday evening at the age of 92 after a prolonged illness at Kumarasain in Shimla district.

Rathore informed about his mother's demise through a social media post in the morning and said she will always remain in the memories.

HP Congress incharge Rajeev Shukla, secretary incharge Sanjay Dutt, the leader of opposition Mukesh Agnihotri, state Congress general secretary Rajneesh Kimta, secretary Harikrishnan Hirnal condole Rathore's mother's demise and prayed to the God almighty to grant peace to the departed soul.

Chief minister Jai Ram Thakur has also expressed grief over the demise of Malki Devi, mother of Rathore who passed away last evening at her native place Kumarsain in Shimla district.

Thakur prayed to the god Almighty to give peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss. State BJP chief Suresh Kashyap, general secretaries Trilok Jamwal, Trilok Kapoor and Rakesh Jamwal too condoled the demise of Malki Devi.

Delhi court denies bail to ex-GTB hosp staff held for selling fake Remdesivir

PTI

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

A Delhi court on Monday denied bail to a former employee of Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) hospital who was arrested for allegedly selling fake Remdesivir injections, saying that he took undue advantage of its shortage during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.

During a police raid on

April 30, accused Amit was found to be in possession of two injections of low-cost antibiotic Monocef over which he had allegedly pasted stickers of 'Remdesivir'. He has been in judicial custody since May 1.

Rejecting his bail plea, Additional Sessions Judge Sanjeev Kumar Malhotra said, allegations against the accused are grave.

Remdesivir injections were in high-demand during the

second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Delhi police had arrested several people in similar cases during this period.

Additional Public Prosecutor Rakesh Mehta, appearing for the Delhi police, told the court a caller informed that three boys were pasting fake slips on COVID-19 related medicines, following which a raiding party was formed.

On June 13, the court detected 1,42,357 tests were conducted in the period which was the highest weekly achievement till now.

"Last week, Bilaspur district has registered 170 cases with positivity rate of 1.7, Chamba 410 cases with positivity rate of 4.2, Hamirpur 223 cases with positivity rate

of 2.1, Kangra 723 cases with positivity rate of 2.6.

Kinnaird recorded 87 cases with positivity rate of 4, Kullu 165 cases with positivity rate of 1.9, Lahaul-Spiti 47 cases with positivity rate of 1.3, Mandi 602 cases with positivity rate of 2.1.

While Shimla registered 336

cases with positivity rate of 3.1, Sirmour 218 cases with positivity rate of 2.7, Solan 220 cases with positivity rate of 2.4, Una 250 cases with positivity rate of 1.9," he added.

It is worth mentioning here that a total of 1,98,583 cases of Covid were recorded in the state till date with 3,379 deaths while 1,91,025 had been cured of the disease and there were only 4,158 active cases in the state.

The worst affected districts in Covid pandemic are Kangra with 45,213 cases with 1,006 deaths, Mandi 26,631 cases with 375 deaths, Shimla 24,704 cases with 590 deaths, Solan 22,052 cases with 306 deaths and Sirmour 15,145 cases with 205 deaths.

Shimla registered 336 cases with positivity rate of 3.1, Sirmour 218 cases with positivity rate of 2.7, Solan 220 cases with positivity rate of 2.4, Una 250 cases with positivity rate of 1.9," he added.

The research comes at a time in which the Union government had included NAFLD in the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS).

Dr Prosenjit Mondal said the molecular mechanisms that increase hepatic DNL due to overconsumption of sugar have not been clear.

"Our goal was to unravel this mechanistic pathway between excessive sugar consumption

and onset and development of fatty liver through DNL," he added.

He stated that India is the first country in the world to identify the need for action on NAFLD and with good reason.

The prevalence of NAFLD in India is about 9 to 32 percent of the population with Kerala alone having a prevalence of 49 percent and a staggering 60 percent prevalence among obese school-going children.

"Through a complementary experimental approach involving mice models, the research

team has shown the hitherto unknown link between the carbohydrate-induced activation of a protein complex called NF- κ B and increased DNL.

Our data indicates that the sugar-mediated shuttling of hepatic NF- κ B p65 reduces the levels of another protein, sorcin, which in turn activates liver DNL through a cascading biochemical pathway," he added.

Headed the team's research had conclusively shown that excessive sugar intake leads to

a fatty liver and this leads to general advise to the public to reduce sugar intake to stop NAFLD in its early stages.

It is worth mentioning here that NAFLD is a medical condition in which excess fat deposits in the liver.

The disease starts silently with no overt symptoms for as much as two decades. If left untreated, the excess fat can irritate the liver cells, resulting in scarring of the liver (cirrhosis), and in advanced cases can even lead to liver cancer whose treatment is difficult.

IIT team among researchers who unravel molecule mechanism causing fatty liver

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 14 JUNE

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi scientists have claimed to have unravelled the molecule mechanism that results in fatty liver disease, medically known as Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD).

A team of researchers from IIT Mandi led by Dr Prosenjit Mondal in collaboration with Dr Mohan Kamthan, Aiysha Siddiq Khan from Jamia Hamdard Institute, New Delhi, and Sangam Rajak from SGPGI,



Lucknow had made the discovery.

The research comes at a time in which the Union government had included NAFLD in the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS).

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"Our goal was to unravel this mechanistic pathway between excessive sugar consumption

and onset and development of fatty liver through DNL," he added.

He stated that India is the first country in the world to identify the need

*Misuse of those donations is unrighteous and
is a sin and an insult to their (devotees) faith.*

CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA
COMMENTING ON ALLEGED AYODHYA LAND SCAM

THUMBNAILS



Crowd at Sadar Bazar market after authorities eased Covid-induced restrictions, in New Delhi, on Monday. AGENCEZ

Senior Cong leader Indira Hridayesh cremated: The mortal remains of senior Congress leader Indira Hridayesh were consigned to flames with full state honours on Monday at Ranibagh's Chitrashila ghat, around six km from her home town Haldwani. Before the body of Hridayesh was taken for cremation, people from across the political spectrum turned up at her Haldwani residence to pay their last respects to the departed leader. PTI

Stepson kills family, then commits suicide: A married couple and their two sons were found dead at their home in Dhanbad town in Jharkhand on Monday morning, police said. Munna Yadav (45), his wife Meena Devi (35), and sons Rahul (20) and Rohit (14) were found dead at their rented accommodation in Gandhi Road in the Dhanbar police station area. PTI

JNU Issues show cause notice to Aische Ghosh: The Jawaharlal Nehru University has issued show cause notices to JNUSU president Aische Ghosh and another student for a protest they held in 2018, calling it an act of "indiscipline and misconduct". Reacting to the notice, Ghosh said despite the closure of several administrative offices owing to the Covid pandemic, the varsity's chief proctor's office "has been regularly functioning to intimidate and punish students". PTI

Cong demands SC probe in Ayodhya land deal fraud

Party alleges 'big scam' committed using funds collected from devotees, seeks PM Modi's answer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Congress on Monday alleged corruption in purchase of land in Ayodhya by the Ram temple trust and demanded a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the charge.

The party also alleged that it was a "big scam" committed using funds collected from devotees and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should answer whether those behind it had his protection.

Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged at a press conference that the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust had purchased "12,080 square metres of land" at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh at an inflated price of Rs 18.5 crore.

The land was purchased by the temple's trust at Rs 18.5 crore on 18 March, and according to land deeds, only a few minutes earlier on the same day Kusum Phatak had sold it for Rs 2 crore to Ravi Tiwari and Sultan Ansari from whom the trust bought the land, he claimed.

Citing the land deeds, Surjewala claimed that trust members Anil Mishra, who is a BJP leader, and Hrishikesh



Upadhyay, a former mayor of Ayodhya, is a signatory to the Rs 18.5 crore land deal.

The land was in the name of Pathak and was sold to Tiwari and Ansari, who in turn sold it to the trust, the Congress spokesperson claimed.

Surjewala said the trust formed for the construction of the temple for Lord Ram, who is considered a symbol of faith by crores of people, was set up on 5 February last year on the directions of the Supreme Court.

He said the facts that have come to light point to a "big scam" in funds collected from devotees and this amounts to committing a big sin and wrongdoing.

But Prime Minister Modi, who formed the trust on the directions of the Supreme Court, is totally silent, Surjewala said.

"Will the prime minister

answer if those sinners, who have traded the faith of Lord Ram's devotees, have his protection," he said.

"How could BJP leaders commit such a big malpractice in the name of Lord Ram whose words, values and ethical conduct are sworn as ideals. How much more land has been purchased in such a manner at throwaway rates out of funds received for the temple's construction," Surjewala asked.

He said that "with such a scam and facts coming to light", the Congress demands that the prime minister answer to the nation.

Ram temple a medium of business, says Rajbhar: Backing the demand for a central agency probe into the alleged corruption in the purchase of a piece of land in Ayodhya by the Ram temple trust, SBSP

chief Om Prakash Rajbhar on Monday said the BJP and the RSS have made the shrine a "medium of business". He also asked PM Modi and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath when action will be taken against the accused. Hitting out at the opposition over the allegations,

it is a political matter. The Trust formed for the construction of the temple should clarify if the allegations are true or false. The temple's 'bhoomipujan' ceremony was also attended by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. They should also speak out. Ram temple is a matter of faith. People have made donations out of faith. Even Shiv Sena had contributed Rs one crore to the 'Trust,' Raut said.

If the money collected out of faith is misused then what is the use of having faith? he asked. "We need to know what is happening. We need to know whether the allegations are true or false," the Sena leader said.

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma said some people do not miss any opportunity to defame the Ram Janmabhoomi. Speaking to reporters in Ballia, Rajbhar said, "The temple is a symbol of faith for common people but the BJP and the RSS have made it a medium of business."

Black fungus jabs: 33 hosphs notified in Guj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD, 14 JUNE

The Gujarat government on Monday told the High Court that it had notified a hospital each in 33 districts to supply Amphotericin-B injections

used in the treatment of Mucormycosis or black fungus to government, civic and private hospitals as per requirement.

The state government also told the HC it had received 54,411 vials of the medicine

between 1 April and 13 June from the Centre, out of this, 37,494 had been distributed, while the Gujarat Medical Services Corporation Limited has the remaining 16,917 vials.

In an affidavit filed by Atul

Patel, under-secretary in the state health department, on Monday, the state government said a GR had been issued on 10 June to address concerns expressed by the court with respect to the distribution of Liposomal Amphotericin B injections.

One nation one ration card makes food security portable: SC told

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that 'One Nation One Ration Card' (ONORC) scheme makes food security portable, and primarily aims to enable migratory Na-

tional Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries to access the Public Distribution System (PDS) from any ePOS enabled fair price shop (FPS) in the country through portability.

The Centre said: "The

ONORC plan aims to empower all NFSA migrant beneficia-

ries to access their PDS/NFSA food grains from any FPS of their choice anywhere in the country by using their same/existing ration card with biometric authentication. In short ONORC makes food security portable."

The Centre claimed it has

extended the scheme for food

grains for all the beneficiaries, who are not covered under NFSA and to whom ration cards have been issued by state governments under their own scheme at 5 kg per person per month.

The SC has reserved its judgment in the matter.

Aisha Sultana moves Kerala HC for anticipatory bail in sedition case

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
TRIVANDRUM, 14 JUNE

Filmmaker and activist Aisha Sultana, who has been booked by the Lakshadweep police on charges of sedition for allegedly accusing the Central government of using 'Covid-19' as a bioweapon against the people of Lakshadweep, has approached the Kerala High Court seeking anticipatory bail in the case.

Sultana sought pre-arrest bail in the FIR registered by Kavaratti Police Station under

on the people of Lakshadweep, in a Malayalam TV channel debate. He said her words were in "bad taste and intended to create hatred and aversion in the minds of people."

In her bail plea, Sultana stated that the Sub Inspector of Police, Kavaratti police station, has issued a notice under section 41 A CrPC directing her to appear at the police headquarters at Kavaratti on 20 June for interrogation. She apprehends imminent arrest and detention. Hence, she filed the anticipatory bail plea.

Former Union minister and TDP leader Ashok Gajapathi Raju won a legal battle after Andhra Pradesh High Court ruled in his favour on the issue of heading an educational trust and the trustee board of Simhachalam temple both set up by the erstwhile royal family of Vizianagram to which he belonged.

Raju was removed from the posts by a government order issued by the state govern-

ment under chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy soon after coming to power. It had propped up Sanchita Gajapathi Raju, the daughter of his elder brother Anand Gajapathi Raju who died in 2016.

The court scrapped the order and directed the state government to reinstate the former minister.

While the state had argued that the niece was installed on rotational basis the counsel for her uncle had pointed out only elders could head the trusts.

While the state had argued that the niece was installed on rotational basis the counsel for her uncle had pointed out only elders could head the trusts.

Father held in hate killing case

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, 14 JUNE

Father of a teenage girl has been arrested in a suspected case of hate killing, barely 13 days after the daughter's love marriage in Meerut. The girl's body was exhumed by the police from her grave to know the truth.

The girl was buried on 31 May by family members who informed people known to the family that she died of Coronaviru

Circle Officer of Kotwali area Arvind Chaurasia confirmed arresting of Manzoor, father of deceased Saina (19) on Monday in connection of her murder.

"Few other suspects have been detained for interrogation and we are hopeful to arrest other accused in the case very soon," said the CO adding three teams have been deputed to ensure arrest of other accused. Chaurasia informed that the

TOO BUSY TO HANDLE



Heavy traffic at Karamchand Market after authorities announced relaxation in Covid-induced lockdown, in Jabalpur, on Monday. AGENCEZ

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O Panneerselvam elected as deputy legislature party leader of AIADMK

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 14 JUNE

accepting the post of deputy leader and insisting that one of his supporters should be made as party whip since this post is the key one as far as the Assembly is concerned.

Indicating further trouble to the current leadership of AIADMK, which itself is at loggerheads, its former interim General Secretary VK Sasikala has said in another leaked audio message to party functionaries that she cannot be separated from the party.

The election also crowned him as the Deputy Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly. Former Minister SP Velumani has been elected the party's whip in the Tamil Nadu Assembly.

The meeting took place at a time when there is said to be a rift between Leader of Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami and the party's coordinator O Panneerselvam and amid expelled general secretary V K Sasikala's efforts to make a comeback into the party.

S Ravi, MLA from Arakkonam, has been chosen as the deputy whip while former minister Kadambur C Raju will be the treasurer of the legislature party.

Political observers are of the view that Palaniswami is very much in control of the party for the time being and if Sasikala's efforts to win back party reign succeeded with the support and blessings of the BJP national leadership, then the situation can change. Meanwhile, Panneerselvam is reducing his clout within the party, says the observers.

Toolkit case: Ch'garh HC stays FIR against BJP leader Raman Singh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, 14 JUNE

Chhattisgarh High Court has stayed the investigation by state police into the case registered against BJP national vice-president and for-

Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas observed that the FIR against Singh was registered out of malafides and political grudge.

Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh and spokesperson Sambit Patra for tweeting out a document claiming it to be a toolkit by Congress.

Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas observed that the FIR against Singh was registered out of malafides and political grudge.

"Considering the facts of the case and perusal of FIR, prima facie no case is made out against the petitioner and criminal proceedings is manifestly attended against the petitioner with malafides or political grudge," the Court held.

Hence, continuation of investigation based on the FIR registered against Singh on 19 May would be an abuse of

process of law, the Court ruled staying the FIR. The FIR had been registered based on a complaint filed by one Akash Sharma who is the State President of National Student Union of India. Singh had tweeted a document alleging that it was a toolkit created by Congress party to tarnish the image of the country and Narendra Modi.

TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No: NR/CB Workshop/June/AMCVTL/2021-22/02 Date: 10.06.2021
For and on behalf of the President of India, the Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (DSE), Northern Railway Charbagh Workshop, Lucknow invites, following e-tender from reputed firms for works as given below:

Tender No.: W-CB-02-AMCVTL-2021-22. **Name of Work:** Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract for CNC Vertical Lathing (Make: HYT Engineering Company Private Limited, Punc) against COFMOW (I/ No. COFMOW/IR/S-497716/P-1/OP-102950 DT: 14.06.2017) at N R Charbagh Workshop, Lucknow for period of 05 years. **Estimated Cost of Work:** Re. 3,00,000/- (accepted through net banking or payment gateway only). **Cost of Tender Form:** Re. 3,00,000/- (only accepted through net banking or payment gateway only). **Period of Contract:** 05 years. **Date & Time for Submission of Tender:** from 22.06.2021 to 06.07.2021 up to 15.00 Hrs., Date & Time for Opening of Tender: after 15.15 Hrs. on 06.07.2021

- The tender form may be submitted at the website www.ireps.gov.in from 22.06.2021 to 06.07.2021 (up to 15.00 Hrs.).
- Mannual offers are not allowed against this tender, any such mannual offer received shall be ignored.
- Contractors are allowed to make payment against tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IRPEPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Mannual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipt, PDR etc are not allowed.
- The tender will be opened on specified date and time as above. In case the above date is a holiday the tender opening would be conducted at the same times on the next working day.
- No post tender correspondence for submission of additional documents shall be entertained after opening the technical & commercial offers. Even suo-moto post letter of the tender shall be treated as NULL & Void.

1294/21
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT 'NOTICE INVITING TENDERS'

Sealed item rate tenders on form 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Palampur Division HP.PWD., Palampur on behalf of the Governor of H.P. for the following work from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HP.PWD. (B&R) whose registration stand renewed as per revised rules and also registered under the H.P. General Sales Tax Act 1968 so as to reach in his office or on before 16.07.2021 up to 11.00 AM, and the same shall be opened on the same day at 11.30 A.M. in the presence of tendering contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender documents can be had from his office against cash payment (Non-refundable) on 15.07.2021 up to 4.00 P.M and the application for issue of tender form shall be received on 14.07.2021 up to 12.00 noon.

The earnest money in the shape of FDR/Saving account of the Post office/Bank in H.P duly pledged in favour of the XEN must accompany with each tender. Conditional/ incomplete tenders & tender without earnest money will be summarily rejected. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or drop the proposal of tenders without assigning any reasons.

S. No.	Name of work.	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time Limit	Cost of form

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The Modi government should practise in India what it preaches to the world



CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM
ON PM NARENDRA MODI'S SPEECH AT THE G7 OUTREACH MEETING



A health worker collects swab sample of a passenger for Covid test, at city railway station in Bengaluru, on Monday. ■ AGENCIES

Rathore's mother passes away: Malki Devi, mother of Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore, passed away on Sunday evening at the age of 92 after prolonged illness at Kumarsain in Shimla district. ■ SNS

Eatela joins BJP: Former minister Eatela Rajender on Monday joined BJP in the presence of Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan after flying to New Delhi along with supporters. Rajender resigned as TRS MLA after chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao chose to act on complaints of land grabbing against him. ■ SNS

Hospital attack case: A court in Gujarat's Jamnagar district on Monday acquitted BJP MLA Raghubir Patel and four others, who were sentenced to six months in jail by the trial court in a case of vandalising a hospital near Jamnagar in 2007. ■ PTI

Infant falls in borewell, rescued: A 3.5-year-old boy was rescued following an eight-hour operation after he fell into a 130 ft-deep borewell while playing in Dhariyai village, Agra, on Monday, police said. ■ PTI

Chirag Paswan has reaped what he had sown: JD(U)

JD(U) chief RCP Singh says Chirag was 'too young' and failed to keep his flock together in LJP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, 14 JUNE

aged to secure a majority and Kumar was backed for another term, the JD(U) ended up with a much smaller tally, conceding the upper hand to the BJP, which now has the lion's share in the council of ministers in Bihar two of them being CMs.

Asked about the praise showered on Nitish Kumar by Pashupati Kumar Paras, who represents the Hajipur seat from where Ram Vilas Paswan was elected for most of his career, Singh said "he was a minister in the state Cabinet until he got elected to Parliament. We shared extremely cordial relations".

The JD(U) chief also remarked that Chirag was "too young" and had failed to keep his flock together in the LJP, which owed its current standing, in a large measure, to "efforts put in by Pashupati Kumar Paras and Ram Chandra Paswan (Prince Raj's late father)".

Singh, however, parried queries as to whether the rebel LJP MPs would be welcome if they expressed the wish to join JD(U).

"Many formalities are to be completed. The five MPs who have revolted need to be notified as an independent group by the Lok Sabha Speaker. They have already stated they will remain in the NDA."

"In any case, in Bihar NDA, it is only the BJP and our party. Whichever party they join, they will be with us," he said.

He declined to comment on speculations about one or more rebel LJP MPs being inducted into the Union Cabinet from JD(U) quota or getting accommodated in the state ministry, but reiterated his stand that all NDA allies ought to get a "respectable" share at the Centre.

The developments in the LJP come barely three months after its lone MLA Raj Kumar



Cong is a sinking ship, says JD(U); ducks queries on possibility of split

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, 14 JUNE

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) on Monday questioned on speculations that a large number of Congress MLAs were planning to jump ship.

JD(U) national president RCP Singh, however, remarked the Congress was like a sinking ship and hence it may continue to suffer deserts as it has done in the past.

Singh was replying to questions on reports in a section of the media here that at least 13 MLAs of the Con-

gress, which has a total strength of 19, were planning to walk over to JD(U).

The party had suffered a split three years ago when its former state president Ashok Choudhary walked over to the JD(U) along with some other legislators. Choudhary has since risen to prominence in JD(U), as the party's working state president during the Assembly polls, and is seen as one of the trusted Cabinet colleagues of the chief minister.

When pressed about the possibility of Congress MLAs in Bihar switching sides in the foreseeable future, Singh shot back we shall cross the bridge when it comes.

Singh crossed over to the JD(U) upon being pulled up for voting in favour of Maheshwar Hazari, the NDA candidate for deputy speaker's post.

Singh had quit the LJP protesting the reproach from the leadership and asserting that he had supported the NDA candidate in line with the party's earlier stance of back-

ing Vijay Kumar Sinha, the alliance's nominee, as Speaker.

Notably, while Sinha belongs to the BJP, Hazari is from the JD(U).

'Modi govt hiding true death figs in 2nd wave of Covid'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 14 JUNE

AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi today said the Centre was trying to hide its incompetence and mishandling of the second wave of Covid-19 while denying the actual death toll from the pandemic. He went on to say that the Narendra Modi-led government has lost its connect with reality and was absolutely aloof.

Owaisi was referring to the report in the international weekly, *The Economist*, according to which the actual death toll was six times the official figures but Union health minister Harsh Vardhan denied terming it as "speculative" and "misinformed".

Owaisi said he was issuing a rebuttal to what the health minister had said. "Then why did you start vaccinating with Covaxin? Was there any peer reviewed scientific data at that time? Secondly, why did AYUSH ministry issue certification for Baba's (Ramdev) Coronil. Was there any scientific data? No state is giving district wise data. Nobody is following ICMR guidelines," said Owaisi.

Meanwhile, the SP on Monday demanded a high-level probe into the death of a journalist, who had recently reported on liquor mafia, apparently in a road accident here. The 42-year-old news channel reporter, Sulabh Srivastava, died as his motorcycle rammed a pole near a brick kiln in Sukhpur Nagar under the Kotwali police station area on Sunday.

On the one hand, they are taking action against the Opposition, especially the Samajwadi Party leaders, while on the other, showing their double standards, they support illegal activities of their party leaders and MLAs, violating corona protocol, Yadav said.

Citing an example, Yadav



said police have registered a case against 13 named and 120 unnamed people of his party for holding a meeting in the Pali area of Hardoi recently, but police "take no such action and remain a mute spectator when it comes to the BJP leaders and workers".

In another instance, he claimed, a Revenue Department team reached the house of SP leader and district panchayat member Avnesh Khatik in Agra recently and misbehaved with him.

Meanwhile, the SP on Monday demanded a high-level probe into the death of a journalist, who had recently reported on liquor mafia, apparently in a road accident here. The 42-year-old news channel reporter, Sulabh Srivastava, died as his motorcycle rammed a pole near a brick kiln in Sukhpur Nagar under the Kotwali police station area on Sunday.

He went on to add all epidemiological models stated the number of deaths is five to six times more.

"Bodies piled up to form a tower, bodies were found floating in the Ganga or being dug up from the ground and if the NDA is becoming stronger at the cost of the poor what is the point of this strength?" said Owaisi.

He dismissed that BJP was growing stronger in Telangana where it has replaced the Congress as the chief Opposition. Owaisi pointed out that BJP lost deposit in the last Nagarjunasagar, lost two MLCs, how is it possible they are growing stronger. BJP was not seen anywhere when people were dying in the second wave.



A passenger arrives at city railway station after authorities announced relaxations in Covid-19 lockdown, in Bengaluru, on Monday. ■ AGENCIES

RESTORATION OF TRAIN

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that train no. 12002/12001 New Delhi-Habibganj-New Delhi Shatabdi will be restored with regular number from 17.06.2021 as per detail given below:-

12002/12001 NEW DELHI - HABIBGANJ - NEW DELHI SHATABDI EXPRESS

Train No.: 12002	ARR. 06:00	DEP. 14:40	STATIONS	ARR. 23:50	DEP. 15:15	Train No.: 12001	ARR. 23:42	DEP. 00:02
	---	---	NEW DELHI	---	---		---	---

DAYS OF RUN: 12002 from New Delhi & 12001 from Habibganj from 17.06.2021 to till further advice.

STOPPAGES: Mathura Jn., Agra Cantt., Morena, Gwalior, Jhansi, Lalitpur & Bhopal Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-Executive Chaircar & AC-Chaircar.

Note: 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.

Note: For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table & Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTEs App.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

BSY, sulking MLAs pinning hopes on Arun Singh's visit

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, 14 JUNE



These hopes, however, may be belied, going by the growing feeling in a section of Yeddyurappa's critics. They believe Singh was not playing fair by shooting down all talks of a change at the helm.

He could have reserved his comments after meeting the MLAs and party leaders in the state, is the constant refrain. Nevertheless, these legislators are ready with their list of complaints against Yeddyurappa's government, which, they hope to highlight during their meeting with the Central observer.

While Yeddyurappa is heaving a sigh of relief following Singh's recent assertion that he would complete his term, he believes the Central leader's meetings with the disgruntled legislators, would help end all talks of a change in leadership after he takes stock of the situation.

Especially, as a few of them, including a minister, have expressed their unhappiness with the chief minister for his alleged failure in governance. Besides, they are quite vocal in charging B S Vijayendra, the chief minister's son, with interfering in the affairs of the state. Vijayendra, incidentally, is also one of the vice-presidents of the party in the state.

In this connection, the detractors had even visited New Delhi, hoping to catch the ear of the party's Central leaders. Accordingly, the much-awaited visit of the Central observer is expected to clear all the misgivings that these MLAs may have, a senior minister told The Statesman.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that a boy namely Kundan Kumar, S/o: Kamlesh Mehta, R/o: E-45, Kusumprahari, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 02.04.2021 at about 11:00 PM from his home. In this regard DD No. 61A dated 05.04.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Vasant Vihar, Delhi. The description of missing/kidnapped boy is as under:

Name: Kundan Kumar, Age: 26 Years, Height: 5'4", Face: Oval, Built: Thin, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Shirt and Jeans Pant.

If anyone has any information about this missing/kidnapped boy please inform P.S. Vasant Vihar, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in

Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO Police Station, Vasant Vihar, Delhi

DP/679/SW/2021 Ph: 011-26152577, 9871898875

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), Namely: Manisha D/o Sh. Raju R/o D-51, Harswaroop Colony, Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi has been missing since 31.05.2021 from the area of P.S. Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 70A dated 01.06.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Age : 23 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion : Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing : Red colour suit and salwar & slipper in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Fatehpur Beri New Delhi at E-mail Id - cic@cbi.nic.in

Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi

South Distt., Delhi

DP/554/SD/2021 Ph. No. 011-26659511, 26652562

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of following Special Trains will be revised at undermentioned stations with immediate effect as under:-

Train No. / Train Name	Stations	Revised Arrival	Revised Departure
02431/Trivendrum Central- Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Express Spl.	Vadodara	23:42	00:02
02617/Ernakulam Jn.-Hazrat Nizamuddin Superfast Special	Panvel	12:20	12:25
06001/Trivendrum Central-Hazrat Nizamuddin Superfast Special	Kalyan	13:27	13:30
	Panvel	18:00	18:05

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

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table & Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: [https://enquiry.indianrail](https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)

Tough call

Should India allow the four Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) brides from Kerala who are lodged in a prison in Afghanistan to come back home? The four women believed to be Sonia Sebastian alias Ayesha, Merrin Jacob alias Mariyam, Nimisha alias Fatima Isa, and Rafeela, surrendered to Afghan authorities in November 2019. Their husbands had travelled to Afghanistan to join the ISKP. Both the United Kingdom and France have taken tough stands to prevent a homecoming for their nationals in similar circumstances. Neither the women who left to marry Islamic State terrorists nor their children have been allowed to return. In many cases, their citizenship was revoked, such as that of 21-year-old Shamima Begum, a British national of Bangladeshi origin who was stripped of her citizenship in 2019 by then British Home Secretary Sajid Javid. There are two aspects to the issue of allowing these women - characterised as 'misguided' by those who argue that their home governments have a moral responsibility to give them a second chance and as 'national security threats' by those implacably opposed to doing so - the right to return which merit attention.

First, the legal precedent. Shamima Begum, who appeared on television complete with apology and condemnation of Islamism begging to be let back into the UK before moving the courts, is only one of an estimated 52,000-odd women, men, and children who travelled to (or were born in) the areas of Iraq and Syria under IS control between 2013 and 2018 and are today stateless, lodged in camps across the region. The British Supreme Court has since dismissed her appeal in a unanimous ruling which held that her rights were not breached when she was refused permission to return to the UK and her citizenship revoked. Legally, New Delhi would be perfectly justified in refusing the Kerala brides, as it were, the right to return. But the deeper issue for the policy establishment in India, where Islamic radicalisation especially among women in states such as Kerala is a burgeoning problem, is that of the nature of citizenship and the duties and rights it bestows. One could argue that women face double jeopardy in this case; because of their actions as enablers (at the very least) of Islamic terror, and because as women they have as a group faced societal discrimination, misogyny, and been socialised into submission whether overtly or covertly. The fact remains that whether brainwashed or not, those who have fallen in with a radical ideology which espouses religious intolerance and justifies violence must bear the consequences of their actions. The call New Delhi has to take is a tough one. A thorough probe into all four cases to determine the tricky issue of whether their actions emanated from free will is vital. If proven so, the women must remain in the paradise they willingly opted for. But if a significant element of coercion is found to have led to their actions - and they are willing to publicly abhor Islamist ideology, apologise, call out the misrepresentation they were taken in by, and join the Indian state's deradicalisation programme - the harshest prison sentences under the law, but in India, could be considered.

Bubble of Untruth

From the summer of 2020 to the present, the bubble of untruth has spread to an alarming degree... from certain hospitals in Kolkata to as many as eight districts in Bihar. Noticeable also is the tendency to keep coronavirus deaths under the hat in what appears to be an exercise in obfuscation leading to medical data being swept under the carpet. The distinguished historian Prof Hari Vasudevan's passing was in the death certificate attributed to "chronic ailments", whereas he had actually succumbed to Covid-19 on May 10 last year, when the state's health authorities were at sixes and sevens to treat the dreaded illness. It eventually devolved on his wife to spill the beans, robustly denying that her husband was admitted to AMRI in Salt Lake to address "chronic" health problems. At another remove, the latest report from Bihar is an insult to medical science. It thus comes about that Covid death figures in the state rose from 5478 on June 8 to 9429 on June 9 ~ following a bout of data revision on the orders of Patna High Court. The 72 per cent increase in the number of casualties was a direct consequence of the judiciary stepping in to counter the contrived obfuscation by health authorities.

The High Court had ordered a three-week audit in the aftermath of allegations that the authorities were concealing the number of Covid infections and deaths. In Bihar's Buxar district for instance, there were gross inconsistencies in the death figures advanced by senior bureaucrats. Small wonder *The New York Times* reported recently that the actual Covid infections in India could be 20 to 26 times the government figure, and the casualty figures could be five to 13 times the official count. While the Union government has denied the contents of the report, doubts persist not the least because of events in Bihar. The numerical jugglery may have driven people quicker to death than to a semblance of treatment, let alone the dearth of oxygen and vaccines. The health authorities have drawn a fine distinction between deaths in private hospitals, deaths during transit to hospital, deaths in home isolation and deaths from post-Covid complications. Such semantic quibbling on the part of the administration in Patna shall not lessen the enormity of the tragedy. The death toll has been much higher in Bihar in the wake of the second wave. It is almost incredible that casualties in 35 of the state's 38 districts were "unreported", according to the audit. Patna was the worst affected district. The RJD leader, Tejashwi Yadav, has summed up the crisis in public health succinctly with the searing criticism ~ "The Nitish government is fake, hence its data will also be fake." *Quod Erat Demonstrandum* (QED).

Saint or sinner?

One can understand, to an extent, that politicians would want to shut out those who seem inconvenient to the well-settled interests to which they are committed. But the courts, that are the guardians of the constitutional rights of citizens? Well, we expect something different from them



Some say Father Stan Swami is a 'torch-bearer of the Indian Constitution'. The government says he is an instigator of violence, an anarchist who conspires, in tandem with the Maoists, to overthrow the government. As per Aristotle, the truth should lie in between. What lies in between in this case is that he was a sympathiser with the cause of the Dalits and the Adivasis. He sought to empower them to demand and claim their rights.

Here's something more about the man. Stan is an 83-year-old Jesuit priest. He is enfeebled by Parkinson's disease. Jesuits are the most scholarly religious order in the Catholic fold. They are pioneers in quality education in India. Tens and thousands of India's top-notch leaders, bureaucrats and experts in diverse areas of service have been educated in Jesuit-run educational institutions.

The Jesuits as an order - founded on 15 August 1534 - have advocated justice rather than violence throughout their history. Commitment to justice is basic to the vision of education they practise. Whether the pursuit of justice has anti-national implications is something I am not competent to settle. I leave that to the venerable judges of this country.

Fr. Stan is accused of plotting insurrection. Surely, there must be some shreds of evidence for it? If there is, it would be instructive to let the people of India know about it. Everyone stands to gain from knowing how a frail old man in poor health can be so mighty and menacing as to destabilize the mighty Union of India.

At this point, I am tempted to compare Stan with Swami Agnivesh, who died last year. Like Stan, Swami Agnivesh too was in disfavour in the corridors of

power for being a sympathiser with the cause of the adivasis, who had been, especially in Jharkhand, struggling to secure the rights enshrined in the Constitution of India. While on a visit to Pakhur in Jharkhand, he was set upon by goons, and nearly lynched. He was eighty years old at that time. He never recovered from that physical and mental trauma. Unlike Stan, Swamiji was not cast into prison. He was fortunate enough to die in a hospital, rather than in a jail. The question still remains: why was it that Stan was arrested, and Swamiji wasn't? It is better to die, says Stan, than to languish in prison.

All right, let us buy the argument that an 83-year old man is a terrible threat to the State of Jharkhand and to the Union of India. Still, we wish to know if there is a single speech that Stan made advocating violence. A single conspiracy in which he was involved. A single publication by him, inciting insurrection. Any complaint of any kind filed against him anywhere in the last half a century? Well, any instance even of Fr. Stan having raised his voice in saying or responding to anything in any context?

Not long ago, violence was unleashed on Christian missionaries serving in Dang, Gujarat, in its Adivasi dominated areas. Why was this done? Not because the missionaries were inciting anti-national activities or hatching conspiracies. They were targeted because they were educating and empowering the people. Prior to the commencement of their mission,

seen in this light, Fr. Stan is paying the price for living his faith. One wonders if Article 25 of the Constitution, which guarantees to all citizens the right to 'practice, preach and propagate' his faith, is still operative in India; and if it is, to what extent and

there were only a handful of undergraduates in this region. In less than four decades their number swelled to over ten thousand. As a result, the tribals began to resist the expropriation of their land and attempts to dislodge them from their traditional habitats, legally and otherwise.

This Dalit-and-adivasi empowerment seems 'anti-national' and anarchic in the eyes of vested interests. It is not unlikely that Stan seems guilty of such presumptive intentions of violence. This is not for the first time that a people's cry for justice is misrepresented as their war-cry against the State.

Think of the tens and thousands of citizens of India, who have benefited greatly from the education received from Jesuit-run schools and colleges. They have no excuse for not knowing what the Jesuit order stands for, or how the Jesuits live and serve the people. They also know that not only the Jesuits but also Christians as a whole are mandated by Jesus Christ

to be committed to the poor and the under-privileged. Jesus came to be in solidarity with them. He lived in their midst, much like Fr. Stan having lived amidst the disposed and the exploited. This is the essence of the biblical faith.

Seen in this light, Fr. Stan is paying the price for living his faith. One wonders if Article 25 of the Constitution, which guarantees to all citizens the right to 'practice, preach and propagate' his faith, is still operative in India; and if it is, to what extent and

where?

Oh, yes! The Supreme Court did say that the 'right to propagate' one's faith does not include the 'right to convert' people from other faiths. Fair enough. Fr. Stan is accused of the intention to convert. Is there a charge-sheet against him for doing so by force or fraud? Has even a single person been identified as converted by this wily old man? If there is any credible material available on this, it should be made public; so that the rest of us who still care for justice and fairness can live less tormented by an uneasy conscience in respect of Fr. Stan.

The most distressing aspect of the matter is that the courts in this country continue to deny bail to him. One can understand, to an extent, that politicians would want to shut out those who seem inconvenient to the well-settled interests to which they are committed. But the courts, that are the guardians of the constitutional rights of citizens? Well, we expect something different from them. Legal literalism - going by the name of the law invoked - could fall short of the basics of justice. The fact that someone is arrested under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, infamous for its draconian provisions, does not mean that the honourable judges need to shut their eyes to the merits of the case and its humanitarian face. Surely, the law doesn't allow the judges to do that.

Well, in that case the law concerned needs to be looked at seriously. Anything less is tantamount to the abdication of the duty to give effect to the spirit and provisions of the Constitution of India. It is no credit to any country that venerable people languish in its jails for seeking to do what they deem is not only just but also their spiritual duty.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Closure of education

Going back on its plan to reopen schools and colleges partially, the government has once again extended the closure of schools and colleges to June 30. Earlier the education minister had announced that all educational institutions would open from June 12. Understandably, the Covid situation with a new surge in infections has led to such a decision. However, it is rather incongruous to see life running at a normal level in every sector despite the lockdowns, except in the education sector. It is also a fact that the country has been hit by the second wave, but that has affected the border areas more than the hinterlands.

Classes have been suspended since March last year, and the adverse consequences of such a long hiatus from classroom has had its effect on the students in lesser or greater degree which cannot be lost upon our planners. Pushing back plans constantly to reopen educational institutions is frustrating for the students, teachers and parents. Thus, such a situation demands a well-deliberated action plan for all the educational institutions all over the country. The idea of wide-scale remote or distant or online learning is impracticable in Bangladesh. And this too has been limited to the affluent and mainly to the upscale schools and colleges in the Capital. How many students can afford the facilities to participate in online classes? What about the students of the outlying districts whose access to IT facilities is very limited if at all? And what about the primary schools? It does not need an expert to

The Daily Star

suggest that the so-called auto promotion is self-defeating. The idea of not opening the universities till every student has been vaccinated defies logic. We ask if the government needs to wait for the infection rate to come down to 5 percent all over the country. Why do all the education institutions have to open at the same time all over the country? Why can't those areas with less than 5 percent positivity rate at present, and there are a few, open without further ado? Why can't safety measures be enforced in all schools and colleges? To start with, can't the schools and colleges run in shifts, and can't students attend school for three instead of five or six days? There are raft of alternatives, which those who are capable of thinking and offering practicable alternatives can offer. All we can assume from the way the education sector has been handled during the pandemic is that very little thought has been given to devise ways and means to tide over the situation in a manner that would ensure safety of the students as well as disrupt their education as little as possible. We believe that the government should not rely entirely on bureaucrats but fall back on experts for their suggestions, some of which have already appeared in the print media.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Congress decline hurts democracy

SIR, At a time when Congress ought to have been on the prowl, taking advantage of BJP's ham-handed Covid management, the opposite happens, with the cauldron continuing to leak for Congress, as another big gun like Jitin Prasada jumps the ship.

Capitalizing on the internal fault-lines of the Congress, BJP is systematically emasculating the party. Every time a Congress leader joins BJP the top leadership, looking blasé, cries foul, airbrushing the grim reality to trivialize these fault lines.

The desperate attempt by the Gandhis to diss and dismiss the dissenters with outrageous attacks is itself an exercise in self-deception. This is the result of an acute leadership crisis at a time when BJP is practicing realpolitik with professionalism by depleting the Congress of its future potential.

There is no doubt that there is an urgent need for Congress to introspect and correct itself, but since the 'umbrella culture' is absent in Congress any criticism runs the risk of being touted as 'disloyalty'. Even implied criticism of Gandhi family is viewed as disaffection. It is neither prepared to introspect, nor to allow any change in the way it is run.

The dogged perseverance with the Gandhis by the loyalists offers juicy fodder to the BJP to run the government on whims and caprices in the absence of a viable political opponent, to the detriment of democracy.

Congress now direly needs a revamp in leadership, as it needs

to pass the baton to a young, dynamic leader. Congress must get rid of the shackles of succession by lineage.

Yours, etc., Sudipta Ghosh,
Jangipur, 14 June.

SHAMEFUL

SIR, The hounding of the writer of the poem 'Shav Vahini Ganga' is a shameful reminder of the times we are living in. By attacking the poetess to the extent of calling her a literary Naxal, the Gujarat Sahitya Akademi has done a great disservice to the literary traditions of the nation. An honest criticism would be acceptable but not this kind of jingoistic blabber against the poetess.

The cultural nationalists have most likely threatened her and therefore she has gone into hiding. Tyrants are always afraid of the power of the pen and can feel threatened by a poem. The people,

especially those in the literary field, must stand for the poetess. Otherwise we may as well shut our libraries and join the others in the descent to hell!

Yours, etc., Anthony Henriques,
Mumbai, 11 June.

GOOD DECISION

SIR, A landmark decision has been made by the Odisha Police on Saturday. The Odisha police recruitment board published its application form for men, women and transgenders for appointment as constables and sub-inspectors.

This decision by Odisha Police is being welcomed by the community and the common mass as well. By breaking the stereotype and giving this opportunity, Odisha has set an example for all the other states.

The transgender community wholeheartedly appreciates this

exemplary decision. They are looking forward to serve in many relative fields if the opportunity is given. Taking this example, other sectors should come forward to provide the same space to the community and establish gender equality.

Yours, etc., Manoj Kumar Jena,
Cuttack, 14 June.

FLYOVERS

SIR, Some new flyovers in Kolkata have been conceived as part of the WB state budget proposals for the current financial year. Budgeted flyovers include ones connecting Gurusaday Dutta Road to Maa Flyover, Jadavpur to Garia, Ultadanga to Posta etc.

However, some old aspirational proposals for flyovers at rail crossings at suburban stations to ease the lives of common people in semi-urban areas remain unfulfilled and overdue for years. At these places, local commuters remain stranded and suffer the pain of tiresome waiting at closed

NOT PROPER

SIR, Please refer to the letter of Mihir Kanungo. The behaviour of Alapan Bandopadhyay, during the visit of PM to West Bengal, is not befitting that of an All India Services Officer.

We cannot blame him alone when most of the IAS officers are mad for post-retirement jobs, to keep their position intact. They retain accommodations, and all privileges enjoyed beforehand, including retaining positions of their spouses, if in service.

I find many readers coming in support of Mr Bandopadhyay due to sub-nationalism.

Yours, etc., PK Tripathy,
Bhubaneswar, 8 June.



HARSHA KAKAR

It is confirmed that the US, while withdrawing from Afghanistan, wants to set up drone bases in the region for monitoring, engaging terrorist targets and supporting Afghan forces in their operations against the Taliban. Simultaneously, it is pushing for an agreement within Afghanistan, resulting in the establishment of a coalition government. It also intends to deny space to other terrorist groups, including al Qaeda and ISIS, from enhancing operations. Reports suggest that while the US is in talks with nations along Afghanistan's borders, it prefers bases in Pakistan.

Pakistan had, in 2011, allowed the US to use its Shamsi air force base, claiming it was under operational control of the UAE and that permission was granted by them. Subsequently, the facility was closed but the US maintains overflight rights over Pakistan. Its recent airstrikes on Taliban targets have taken this route. The US' adversarial relationship with Iran limits the choice for overflight to Pakistan.

The US has engaged with Pakistan at different levels to convey its requirement for a base. Pakistan's National Security Advisor, Moeed Yusuf, rushed to Geneva in the third week of May to discuss the American request for bases in Pakistan with his US counterpart, Jack Sullivan. Media reports from Pakistan say that William Burns, the CIA director, made a secret visit in April, during which he held discussions for drone bases with the army chief, General Bajwa and DG ISI, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed. Pakistan described this visit as 'discussions on counter-terrorism cooperation.' Pakistan released inputs on Burns' visit, only after an article appeared in the New York Times on 6 June, covering the secret visit.

The article in the New York Times stated, "Pakistan placed a variety of restrictions in exchange for use of a base." Pakistan demanded approval of targets that would be engaged within Afghanistan in advance, which was unacceptable. Discussions for bases have been held between foreign ministers as also General Bajwa and the US defence secretary. Evidently, Pakistan is in a quandary over the US demands.

Pakistan's foreign minister, SM Qureshi, stated in the senate that the

The dilemma that Pakistan faces

country would not permit foreign boots on its soil. In a TV interview last week he mentioned, "Search for bases could be their wish. There's no question of giving them (US) bases, we have to see our interest." Similar comments have been made by other politicians.

Two major factors impact Pakistan's thinking. The first is displeasure from China and second is alienating the Taliban. A Taliban spokesperson had recently announced, "We urge neighbouring countries not to allow anyone to do so (granting a base) ... If such a step is taken, it will be a great historic mistake and disgrace," adding that the Taliban would "not remain silent in the face of such heinous and provocative acts."

Pakistan is already witnessing an independent Taliban which refuses to accept its diktats. Reports of increased attacks on the Pakistan army in Baluchistan and Waziristan by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, an offshoot of the Taliban, continue to flow in. In case Pakistan provides a base, the Taliban could unleash more attacks, adding to security concerns. There is also frustration within the Pakistani hierarchy on the attitude of the Taliban, which escalates violence in Afghanistan while spurning offers for talks. Pakistan, for its own interests, does not desire a strong Taliban controlling Kabul on its own.

Simultaneously, there are reasons for Pakistan to remain on the right side of Washington. These include release of funds, military aid, support in global forums including FATF and IMF as also pushing India for talks on Kashmir. Further, in case Afghanistan moves towards civil war, the world would blame Pakistan. Hence, comments by Qureshi that Pakistan would not allow foreign boots on its soil appear solely for domestic consumption. Pakistan would never miss an opportunity to regain its toehold in Washington, while demanding its pound of flesh. Pakistan realizes benefits of being in



Washington's good books.

President Biden ignored Pakistan after he assumed office. This was evident when Pakistan was neither invited to the Global Climate summit, where Bangladesh and India were present, nor has he spoken to Imran Khan. Carrots in the form of lifting Pakistan from the Grey List of FATF, restoring military aid and better terms for IMF loans are possibly being dangled before Pakistan. Some hint of possible benefits was given when the Biden administration included military aid to Pakistan in its forthcoming budget demands to the Congress.

Pakistan is aware that in case the US obtains bases elsewhere, its importance would recede as also it would be blamed for adverse fallouts in Afghanistan. Once the US completes pull out, Pakistan's relevance

would decrease, though its strategic location will ensure that China and Russia continue remaining engaged with it. If Pakistan is dubbed as a China ally and US-China relations deteriorate, Pakistan could face greater US neglect.

As a corollary, any base for the US will impact Pak-China relations, especially when China is Pakistan's financial lifeline. Hence, Pakistan cannot take any decision involving the US without concurrence of China. For China, a US foothold in Pakistan implies enhanced monitoring of its CPEC projects, including its future naval base at Gwadar. Within Pakistan, the anti-US clergy could enhance protests claiming the government is granting bases to the US to target Muslims in Afghanistan. This could embarrass the government.

Alternatively, the US has bases

in the Middle East which it could employ. However, they enhance flying time by almost five hours, impacting operational effectiveness. An alternative is to deploy aircraft carriers in the Arabian Sea as bases, but this is not a feasible, long-term option. The US has operated from Pakistan earlier and hence would prefer bases there.

Pakistan has to walk a tightrope. Refusing permission for bases could alienate the US leading to reduced support in global forums, apart from impacting military and developmental aid. Granting bases could anger China, the Taliban and its own clergy. The final call will be taken by Rawalpindi, possibly in consultation with China.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

Quad and the region's future

AMM MUNIRUZZAMAN

The increasing influence of China's activities, particularly in the South China Sea and Indo-Pacific region, has raised many eyebrows among western nations and members of the Asia-Pacific region itself. As a reactionary measure to compete and off-set the meteoric rise of the Asian superpower, America and its friends from the region, namely Australia, Japan and India, have used their platform - the Quad - to give the world an insight of what the future of competition against China might look like.

Although China was not mentioned exclusively in the recent deliberations of the Quad leaders' summit, the joint statement released by the White House stating, "...cooperation on the critical technologies of the future to ensure that innovation is consistent with a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific" and "...meet challenges to the rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas," clearly hint at the push-back against Chinese influence. However, the initial function of the Quad was far from the current state of affairs in the region and its scope of operations has undergone several mutations in the last decade.

When Japanese Prime Minister at the time Shinzo Abe first proposed the Quad in 2007, he called for a "quadrilateral strategic dialogue" among the nations. However, this was not the first time these nations have come together for a mutual cause. The Quad members have worked before during 2004-05 in coordinating response to the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean as a "Tsunami Core Group". So, at the very beginning, the scope

of operation between the nations was not for security. But fast-forward to the fall of 2007, after Abe's announcement, the Quad and Singapore conducted their first maritime exercise, expanding the scope of its operations. Just like now, the exercise left a notion of political ambiguity around what all of it would mean: would this be a simple exercise for cooperation? Or ultimately some form of defence treaty?

A major obstacle came the way of the Quad as Australia opted out with the Australian foreign minister declaring in a joint statement that "they would not be proposing to have such a dialogue again." This marked the end of the quadrilateral security dialogue for quite some time. It was not until November 2017 that the group resurfaced again and since then, it has met regularly and worked at ministerial levels. The nations of the Quad each laid out their vision for a "free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific" in the form of comprehensive and separate official documents discussing their way forward.

With all things considered, and with Australia returning to the crux, all eyes are on the future trajectory of the Quad. Many analysts argue that it will evolve into a defence treaty - possibly a more structured NATO of Asia. A growing fear of militarisation of the region could see the light of day considering India, Japan and US have already been participating in the Malabar joint naval exercises with the recent addition of Australia. The Quad members have also been taking part in each other's multilateral exercises; most notable of which is the Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC) - the world's largest naval exercise - which is clearly an attempt to further deepen their defence ties.

Instead of directly evolving membership, the Quad may also opt to take a "plus process" approach - Quad plus three, etc., to collaborate with other major member states at various levels. This

could be similar to how ASEAN conducts its ASEAN+3 cooperation. The Quad can also expand to work with and support smaller nations. These nations can act as "support clusters" to assist the operations and be a part of Quad-based activities and cooperation. It would be in the best interest of the Quad to lobby members from south and south-east Asia into the clusters due to their strategic relevance.

The scope of operations of the Quad has not expanded to just include security. The "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement" also displayed the four nations' commitment to tackling climate change. A more notable area of cooperation that the summit highlighted was equitable access for the Covid-19 vaccine in the Indo-Pacific. Quad is not just confining themselves to conventional diplomacy but also exploring new avenues of post-Covid-19 multilateralism. Many developing nations were left astray as they could not meet the demands for vaccines required to help fight the spread of Covid. It was initially China and Russia that came to their rescue as they shipped millions of jabs to these destitute nations. This not only strengthens bilateral ties but also bolsters their strategic influence. The Quad is perhaps looking to form its own vaccine distribution project to off-set the influence of China and Russia. However, this exhibition of "vaccine diplomacy" combined with the Quad's expansion into regional security can prompt severe implications.

Quad's attempts at countering Chinese influence in the region can cause a stir rise in strategic tension based on strategic competition. Many have regarded China's quadrilateral discussion with Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan - otherwise known as the Trans-Himalayan Mul-

tidimensional Connectivity Network - as a "Himalayan Quad" formed as a counter, even though Beijing has stated that this cooperation is solely for mutual economic interests. Although a major reactionary measure is yet to have been taken by Beijing, it is likely that the Asian superpower may look to enter discussions with the Russian Federation for future deliberations in the region. China will also look to its companions in South and South-East Asia to not have direct involvement with the Quad if they are to ensure relations with Beijing do not turn sour. Bangladesh has been the latest recipient of this as the Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh stated that should Dhaka join the "club", it would substantially damage bilateral relations between the countries, even though there was no formal invitation from any member of the Quad to Bangladesh. The remark gives us an idea of the important strategic role Bangladesh has in terms of future deliberations of Quad and a glimpse of what a militarised future in the Indo-Pacific might look like - either you are against the Quad or against China.

Conclusively, going forward, Bangladesh and countries alike must tread very carefully regarding matters involving Quad operations. They must find innovative ways to manoeuvre diplomatically and use a "hedge-and-engage" approach whenever necessary. However, this is not to say that Dhaka should engage in any form of direct action or alignment. The best course of action would be to exercise all elements of strategic neutrality so that a bi-polar geo-political situation, like the Cold War era, does not arise in the region. However, such a future seems to be more plausible as days go by.

The Daily Star/ANN.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The now famous letter which the Registrar of Calcutta University addressed to the Government of India in March or April last has, it will be observed, been made the subject of an interpellation in the House of Commons, where Mr. Montagu gave the usual reply to Colonel Yate that he had no information, but would make inquiries of the Government of India. It is to be hoped the inquiries will be made and the result published to the world. It will be remembered that the letter was written in reply to a communication from the Hon. Mr. Sharp, in which he had conveyed the decision of the Government of India declining to re-consider the University's request for an enhancement of the Matriculation and Intermediate fees. Mr. Sharp's letter was placed before the Senate, and the Senate decided to make a further representation to the Government. It was this representation that the Registrar forwarded in the letter now in question. We are not aware of the rules governing the practice and procedure of such an august body as the Calcutta University in these matters, but in the case of any other public institution it is certain such a letter would never have been issued without the draft being previously circulated to, and approved by, the body in whose name it was sent. The published proceedings of the Senate of the Calcutta University do not show that this was done.

NEWS ITEMS

A PROHIBITED CONGRESS MEETING

Lahore, June 14
In regard to the prohibition recently of the meeting of the City Congress Committee under the Seditious Meetings Act, Pundit Rambhai Dutt Chaudhri, in the course of an interview with a representative of the Tribune said: That the notice convening the meeting, which was prepared under his instructions, made it perfectly clear that no one except members producing membership certificates would be permitted to enter the hall. He further stated that the dimensions of the place of meeting or the number of persons attending it had nothing to do with its being a private or a public meeting. In reply to his telegram Bijayraghava Chariar, President of the All-India Congress Committee has promised to place the matter before its meeting of June 14.

REPUDIATION OF CONTRACTS

Referring to the telegram of the Bombay Native Piece Goods Merchants' Association, the Committee of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce are anxious that there should be no misunderstanding as to the nature of the disputed contracts. The contracts are in sterling, and any refusal to meet invoices in sterling constitutes repudiation; nor is the buyer entitled to tender rupees against sterling contracts at any arbitrary rate of exchange. The committee, while recognising fully the difficulties of all parties, desire to reiterate the principle of sanctity of contracts and strongly deprecate the Bombay Native Piece Goods' Merchants' Association statement that their present policy of refusing to settle except at an arbitrary rate of exchange differs in any way from the wholesale repudiation of contracts.

SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY

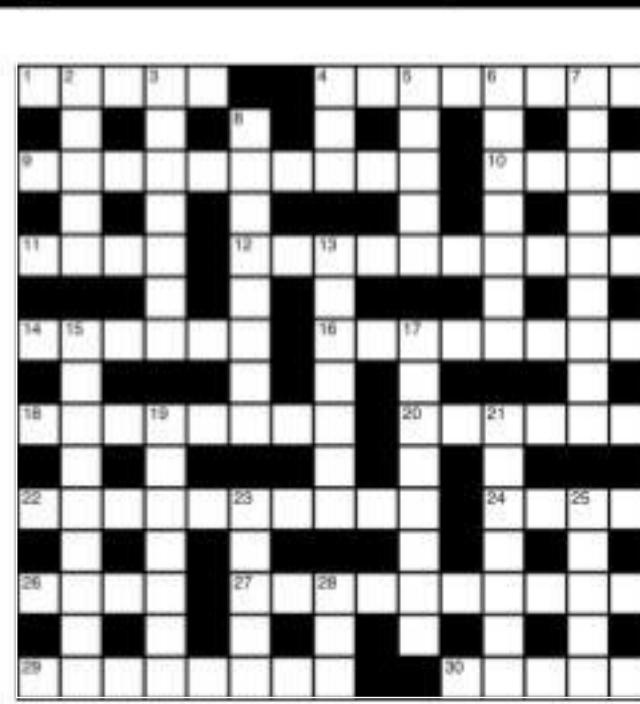
The anniversary celebrations of the Servants of India Society commenced yesterday, the vice-president Mr. Devadhar presiding in the absence of the Hon. Mr. Sastri. Mr. Devadhar, reviewing the position of the Society in the country, said that the non-cooperation movement had left the strength of the society unimpaired. Not only had the membership remained the same but a large number of young Indians, being convinced of the utter unsuitability of the non-cooperation movement as an instrument for promoting India's advance, had sought admission to the society, and though all could obviously not be admitted, it showed that a reaction had already set in against the movement. Several of the members of the Society had been able to secure admission into the Councils.

GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF BUSINESS ACUMEN

The criticism of Government departments for their "lack of business acumen" by business men and the newspapers has recently risen to crescendo on account of repeated increases in the charges for public services and the failure to diminish wartime taxation. The campaign has borne fruit in the case of the Post Office. Mr. Kelleway in the House of Commons announced that in addition to the abandonment of the increase in the postal rates on printed matter overseas, which is due to the Government's realisation that the increase would hamper overseas trade propaganda in comparison with the United States and the Germany, the Government are establishing a Post Office Council with a view to ensuring efficient management and development.

CROSSWORD

NO 28943



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- Whip on prof's rear and quickly show your bits (5)
- Police to arrest a trainee English stockholder? (4,4)
- Given good spirit, but aim to drink beer (10)
- Sleep around, having accepted liberal proposal (4)
- Plain awful to be full of flu essentially (4)
- Y-fronts less than penny? Worker gets small (10)
- Cost to bring in northern musician at one time (6)
- European and Scotsman chasing after Italian (8)

DOWN

- Large bitter drunk by head of Indigo Books (8)
- Temporary head of state is concerning chap (6)
- Recreational vehicle seen on the Strand? (5,5)
- Con parting from last of loot is a wrench (4)
- Good opportunities get drinks (4)
- Criminal pals crept around a pair one shouldn't upset? (10)
- Once more bring round a new rake for landscaping (8)
- One pumping round into Republican? Au contraire! (5)
- Tight garment that you must wear for fight (8)
- Dash of liquorice infusing (13)

- bold sweet (7)
We hire inn out to have a drink (5,4)
- Male bohemian socialist killed for beliefs? (8)
- Southern fellow framing present is photographer (7)
- Foreign fighter heading to Malta with retired soldier (3)
- Serpent is more evil, doing Bluth's head in! (5)
- Salt limit Brown has admitted 'primarily idiotic' (7)
- Naughty baron at it in transport bound for docks? (4,5)
- Tight garment that you must wear for fight (8)
- Indy setter shortened piece of wordplay (3)

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



THUMBNAILS

Fuel price hike: Hyderabad on Monday became the second metro city in the country to see petrol price crossing Rs 100 per litre mark after fuel prices were raised yet again. Petrol price was hiked by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 30 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The hike ~ 24th in six weeks ~ pushed fuel prices across the country to new historic highs. In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 96.41 a litre. PTI

Flipkart: ADO, formerly known as Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company, is in advanced stages of discussions to pump in about \$400-500 million (around Rs 3,000 crore to Rs 3,660 crore) in e-commerce major Flipkart, according to sources. The transaction could value Flipkart between \$35 and 40 billion, sources close to the development said. An announcement could be made in the next few weeks, they added. PTI

Kohli-Audi tie-up: Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli continues his association with German luxury car maker Audi India, according to a Press release. "I am extremely delighted to continue my association with Audi India and be a part of the brand family. It is safe to say that my relationship with Audi India is more of a test match than just a T20," said Kohli. SNS

PepsiCo relief works: PepsiCo Foundation has announced a series of community relief outreach programmes for West Bengal in partnership with Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (Seeds) India. As part of the programme, PepsiCo Foundation and Seeds India provided oxygen concentrators and hygiene kits to the state to support the state's on-ground medical requirements, according to a Press release. SNS

Franklin fined: Sebi on Monday imposed a penalty totalling Rs 15 crore on senior officials of Franklin Templeton AMC and its trustee for violating regulatory norms in the case of winding up of six debt schemes in 2020. A fine of Rs 3 crore has been levied on Franklin Templeton Trustee Services Pvt Ltd and Rs 2 crore each on Franklin Asset Management (India) Pvt Ltd president Santanu Sapre and its chief investment officer Santosh Kamat, according to a Sebi order. PTI

iQOO phone: Smartphone maker iQOO has unveiled its new smartphone ~ iQOO Z3 ~ in India. "With unparalleled performance, future-ready 5G capabilities, superb camera technology and strong hardware specifications, Z3 is a truly fully loaded smartphone for the Gen-Z consumer," according to the company. The phone has been priced at Rs 19,990 for basic variant. SNS

WPI inflation hits all-time high of 12.94 per cent

Primarily, on account of rising prices of crude oil, manufactured goods and a low base of last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

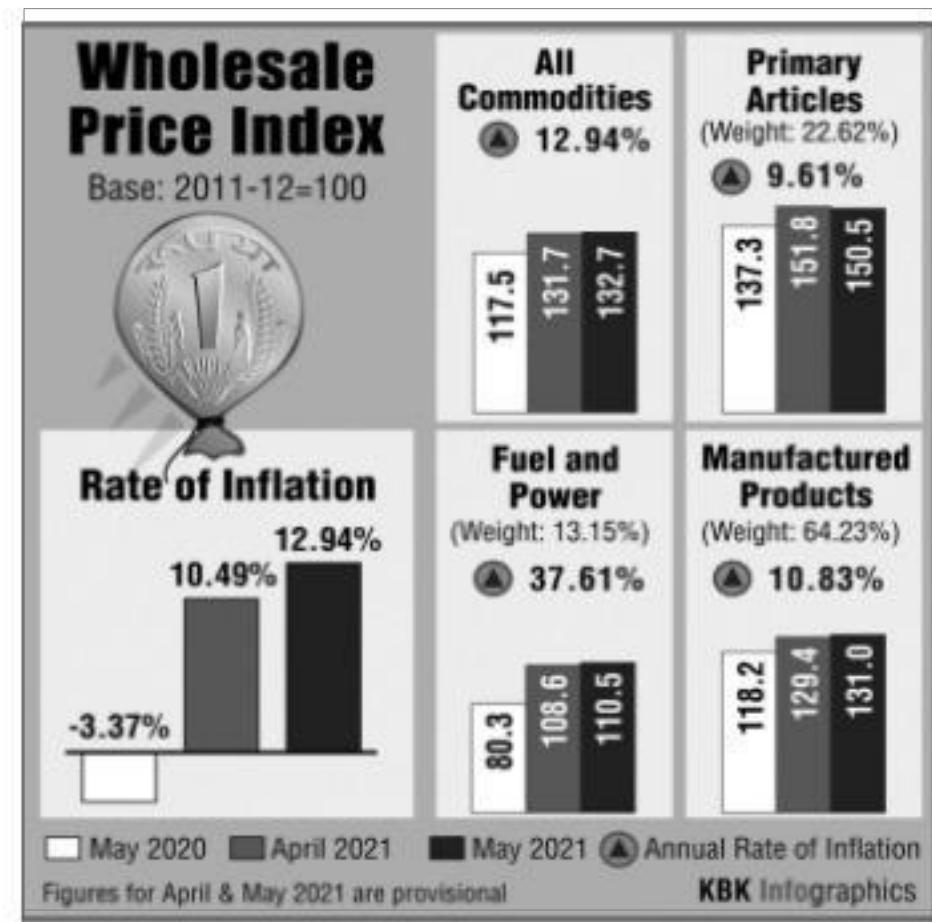
The wholesale price-based inflation accelerated to a record 12.94 per cent in May, on account of rising prices of crude oil, manufactured goods and a low base of last year.

In May last year, WPI inflation was (-) 3.37 per cent and in April 2021, WPI inflation hit double digit at 10.49 per cent.

This is the fifth straight month of uptick seen in the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation.

"The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly WPI, was 12.94 per cent for the month of May 2021 (over May 2020) as compared to (-) 3.37 per cent in May 2020."

"The high rate of inflation in May 2021 is primarily due to low base effect and rise in prices of crude petroleum, mineral oils viz. petrol, diesel, naphtha, furnace oil, etc. and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the commerce and industry ministry said.



Inflation in fuel and power basket spiked to 37.61 per cent during May, against 20.94 per cent in April, amid hardening of global commodity prices.

Prices of crude petroleum and other fuels had crashed last year in May due to lockdowns across the globe which

had caused demand to plummet.

In manufactured products, inflation stood at 10.83 per cent in May, against 9.01 per cent in the previous month.

However, inflation in food articles eased marginally to 4.31 per cent in May, even as onion prices spiked. Inflation in

onion stood at 23.24 per cent in May, against (-) 19.72 per cent in April.

Icra chief economist Aditi Nayar said the core-WPI inflation (manufactured non-food products) hardened sharply to a series-high 10 per cent in May 2021, with a broad-based uptrend across most sub-sectors.

"The continued rise in global crude oil prices, a weaker rupee and the upward revision in domestic fuel prices remain risk factors for the upcoming WPI print. However, we expect the headline WPI inflation to recede modestly to 11.9-12.3 per cent in June 2021, as the base starts to normalise," Nayar added.

PHDCCI president Sanjay Aggarwal said high fuel inflation is escalating the input costs of the industry and its competitiveness in the domestic and international markets.

"At this juncture, we urge the government to consider bringing petroleum products in the ambit of GST to rationalise the prices and to contain the rising inflation," Aggarwal added.

Retail inflation breaches RBI's comfort level

NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Retail inflation rose to 6.3 per cent in May, breaching the RBI's comfort level, on the back of costlier food items,

government data showed today. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation stood at 4.23 per cent in April. As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), inflation in the food basket was 5.01 per cent in May, significantly up from 1.96 per cent in the preceding month.

The government has asked the Reserve Bank to keep the retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

The RBI, which mainly factors in retail inflation while arriving at its monetary policy, has left the key interest rate unchanged earlier this month. PTI

during the quarter dropped to 203.42 million tons (MT) over 213.71 MT in the corresponding quarter of 2020.

The company's offtake during the January-March period was at 164.89 MT, over 164.33 in the corresponding quarter of 2020.

Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output. The company is eyeing one billion tons of output by financial year 2023-24.

IOB profit: State-owned Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) on Monday reported a jump of over two times in its net profit at Rs 349.77 crore in the last quarter of the fiscal ended March 2021. The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 143.79 crore in the same period a year ago.

Total income during Q4 FY'21 rose to Rs 6,073.80 crore as against Rs 5,484.06 crore in Q4 FY'20. IOB said in a regulatory filing.

Provisions for bad loans and contingencies for the reported quarter increased to Rs 1,380.46 crore as against Rs 1,060.38 crore parked aside in the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

Coal India's profit drops marginally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

State-owned Coal India today reported a marginal 1.1 per cent decline in its consolidated profit at Rs 4,586.78 crore for the quarter ended March 2021 on the back of lower sales.

The coal behemoth had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 4,637.95 crore in the same period a year ago, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a filing to the BSE.

Its consolidated sales in the January-March period declined to Rs 24,510.80 crore, from Rs 25,597.43 crore in the March quarter of fiscal 2019-20, the filing said.

However, the expenses of the company during the January-March 2021 quarter dropped to Rs 21,565.15 crore from Rs 22,373.046 crore in the year-ago period.

In a separate filing, the company said that the board of directors has recommended a final dividend of Rs 3.50 per equity share of face value of Rs 10 each for the financial year 2020-21. However, it is subject to approval of the members at the ensuing annual general meeting of the company.

The production of CIL

The three funds feature among the top 12 investors and owned about 2.1 per cent to 8.91 per cent stakes in five Adani group companies as of 31 March 2020, annual investor presentations show. The value of their holding in the five Adani group firms was valued at \$7.78 billion before the stocks witnessed mayhem today.

Later in a statement, the ports-to-energy conglomerate said the FPIs (foreign portfolio investors) in question have been investors in Adani Enterprises Ltd for more than a decade.

"Demergers (which led to creation of separate firms holding businesses such as power, renewable and oil & gas) have resulted in the ownership mirroring in the portfolio companies," it said.

CEAI urges PM to revisit present tendering system

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 14 JUNE

Consulting engineers' apex body CEAI, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has urged to revisit and have a relook at the present tendering system to make "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" vision of the government successful.

It said: "No work, however complex it is, should be awarded to an international company. The work should be awarded to a joint venture of an Indian company and an international company, with the Indian partner bringing in the local knowledge and financial strength to the consortium, and the international partner, the technical knowhow."

In all consultancy assignments requiring an international partnership, a minimum of 40

per cent of the key staff must be provided by the Indian partner besides all logistics like office facilities, operations, vehicles and local administration, the Consulting Engineers Association of India said.

The essential condition for the international company should be to transfer specialised knowledge / technology to the Indian partner through limited specialised input; and the payment to the foreign partner should be linked with transfer of technology," said KK Kapila, chairman, business and policy committee of the CEAI. "Aatmanirbhar Bharat can only be achieved by getting foreign funds without strings attached to assist enterprising start-ups, import substitution exercise, in every manner. In the case of our consulting industry for instance, in order

to attract the foreign players to invest in India, set up with their Indian counterparts, share the technology and be a minor shareholder with the Indian team," said Kapila.

The association has also urged the government to make amendment in the Constitution to clearly bring out that the Government of India will never resort to any retrospective taxation.

Similarly, the PPP agreement must explicitly include that if the concessionaire is restrained from collecting the toll in highway projects or a power project is foreclosed, they will be compensated on an agreed mechanism contained in the agreement itself.

"Similar dispensation will be relevant in the case of other sectors as well. This will be in the larger interest of the nation," CEAI said.

Reports of NSDL freezing accounts of 3 FPIs are blatantly erroneous: Adani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group today said it has written confirmation that accounts of three foreign funds that are among its top shareholders are not frozen and reports to the contrary are "blatantly erroneous and misleading."

Shares of Adani Group companies plunged today after reports that the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) froze the accounts of the three foreign funds that are among the top stakeholders in the firms.

Adani Enterprises, the conglomerate's flagship company, as also Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, Adani Green Energy Ltd, Adani Transmission Ltd,

dated 14 June, 2021, clarifying that the demat account(s) in which the aforesaid funds hold the shares of the company are not frozen, the firms said.

The NSDL website, however, showed the accounts of Albulia Investment Fund, Cresta Fund and APMS Investment Fund holding shares in the group firms were "blatantly erroneous and is done to deliberately mislead the investing community."

"This is causing irreparable loss of economic value to the investors at large and reputation of the group," they said.

Given the seriousness of the issue and its consequential adverse impact on minority investors, "we requested registrar and transfer agent, with respect to the status of the demat account(s) of the aforesaid funds and have their written confirmation vide its e-mail

dated 14 June, 2021, clarifying that the demat account(s) in which the aforesaid funds hold the shares of the company are not frozen, the firms said.

The NSDL website, however, showed the accounts of Albulia Investment Fund, Cresta Fund and APMS Investment Fund holding shares in the group firms were "blatantly erroneous and is done to deliberately mislead the investing community."

"This is causing irreparable loss of economic value to the investors at large and reputation of the group," they said.

A source at the group, however, said the registrar has in writing stated that the accounts that hold Adani group stocks have not been frozen.

Sebi tweaks delisting regulations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 14 JUNE

Sebi said the committee of independent directors will be required to provide their reasoned recommendations on the delisting proposal. Promoter or acquirer will be required to disclose their intention to delist the company by making an initial public announcement.

been introduced or revised to make it more efficient.

Sebi said the committee of independent directors will be required to provide their reasoned recommendations on the delisting proposal.

Promoter or acquirer will be required to disclose their intention to delist the company by making an initial public announcement.

Under the new rules, timelines for completion of various activities forming part of the delisting process have



been bound to accept the price discovered through a reverse book building if the same is equal to the floor price or indicative price.

In addition, the role of merchant banker involved in the delisting process has been elaborated.

According to the regulator, voluntary delisting will not be permitted pursuant to buyback and preferential allotment, unless a period of six months has elapsed from completion of the last buyback or preferential allotment.

It further said that neither any company will apply for nor any stock exchange will permit delisting of equity shares of a company unless a period of three years has elapsed since the listing of that class of equity shares on any bourse.

Under the rules, for successful delisting, the acquirer has to acquire 90 per cent of the total share capital of the company.

Sensex, Nifty at new lifetime highs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 14 JUNE

The Sensex and the Nifty erased initial losses to finish at fresh lifetime highs today, buoyed by brisk buying in market heavyweight Reliance Industries. Positive global cues and a declining trend in new Covid-19 cases added to the momentum traders said.

Rising for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 76.77 points or 0.15 per cent higher at its new closing peak of 52,551.53 points. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 12.50 points or 0.08 per cent to a record 1



We need more small centres, mobile outreach, walk-in facilities, especially in rural outskirts.

MALAYSIA PUBLIC HEALTH PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT ZAINAL ARIFFIN OMAR
COMMENTING ON THE COVID-19 VACCINE STRATEGY IN THE COUNTRY

Israel's new govt begins as Netanyahu era ends

Israel's parliament narrowly approved the new Bennett-led coalition government on Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM, 14 JUNE

For the first time in 12 years, Israelis on Monday woke up to a new government and a new prime minister after Naftali Bennett secured the backing of parliament and ousted longtime leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

The two were slated to hold a handover meeting later in the day, but without the formal ceremony that traditionally accompanies a change in government.

Israel's parliament, the Knesset, narrowly approved the new Bennett-led coalition government on Sunday, ending Netanyahu's historic 12-year rule. The divisive former prime minister, the longest to hold office, will now serve as the opposition leader.

David Bitan, a Likud lawmaker, told Kan public radio that Netanyahu was not hold-



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, seated on the left, President Reuven Rivlin, seated in the centre, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. ■ AP

ing the handover ceremony with Bennett because he feels cheated by the formation of the Bennett-Lapid government and doesn't want to give even the slightest legitimacy to this matter.

Under a coalition agreement, Bennett will hold office of the premier for the first two years of the term, and then Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, the

architect of the coalition, will become prime minister.

The new government was sworn in late on Sunday and set to work Monday morning, with ministers announcing appointments of new ministry directors. Outgoing President Reuven Rivlin, who finishes his term in office next month, hosted Bennett, Lapid and the rest of the Cabinet at his offi-

cial residence in Jerusalem for the official photo of the new government. Bennett and Lapid declined giving comments to the press.

Topaz Luk, a Netanyahu aide, told Army Radio that the former prime minister will fight this dangerous and horrible government" as opposition leader.

He's full of motivation to topple this dangerous government as soon as possible, Luk said.

World leaders have congratulated Bennett on becoming the 13th person to hold the office of Israeli prime minister.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson congratulated Bennett and Lapid on forming a government, tweeting that this is an exciting time for the UK and Israel to continue working together to advance peace and prosperity for all.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who

shared close ties with Netanyahu, congratulated Bennett in a tweet in Hebrew, saying he looks forward to meeting you and deepening the strategic relations between our countries. Modis also voiced his deep recognition of Netanyahu's leadership.

Lapid, Israel's new foreign minister and alternate prime minister, spoke with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and discussed the special relationship between the US and Israel, he wrote on Twitter.

Bennett, 49, a former ally of Netanyahu turned rival, became prime minister after the 60-59 vote in Knesset on Sunday.

The motion passed after a member of the coalition was taken by ambulance from hospital to the parliament building to cast her vote, and despite an abstention by a member of the Islamist Raam party.

China denounces G7 statement, urges group to stop slandering country



AGENCIES

BEIJING, 14 JUNE

China denounced on Monday a joint statement by the Group of Seven leaders that had scolded Beijing over a range of issues as a gross interference in the country's internal affairs, and urged the group to stop slandering China.

The G7 leaders on Sunday took China to task over human rights in the heavily Muslim region of Xinjiang, called for Hong Kong to keep a high degree of autonomy and underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait - all highly sensitive issues for Beijing.

China's embassy in London said it was strongly dissatisfied and resolutely opposed to mentions of Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

that distorted the facts and exposed the "sinister intentions of a few countries such as the United States".

With the COVID-19 pandemic still ranging and global economy sluggish, the international community needs unity and cooperation of all countries rather than "cliquey" power politics sowing division, it added.

China is a peace-loving country that advocates cooperation, but also has its bottom lines, the embassy said.

"China's internal affairs must not be interfered in, China's reputation must not be slandered, and China's interests must not be violated," it added.

"We will resolutely defend our national sovereignty, security, and development interests, and resolutely fight back

against all kinds of injustices and infringements imposed on China."

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Sunday's statement from G7 was a significant move forward for the group as leaders rallied around the need to "counter and compete" with China on challenges ranging from safeguarding democracy to the technology race.

"We urge the United States and other members of the G7 to respect the facts, understand the situation, stop slandering China, stop interfering in China's internal affairs, and stop harming China's interests."

The embassy also said work on looking at the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic should not be politicised, after the G7 in the same statement demanded a full and thorough investigation of the origins of the coronavirus in China.

Myanmar's Suu Kyi on trial; critics say charges bogus

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANGKOK, 14 JUNE

Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi was set to go on trial Monday on charges that many observers have criticized as attempt by the military junta that deposed her to delegitimise her democratic election and cripple her political future.

Suu Kyi's prosecution poses the greatest challenge for the 75-year-old and her National League for Democracy party since February's military coup, which prevented them from taking office for a second five-year term following last year's landslide election victory.

Human Rights Watch charged that the allegations being heard in a special court in the capital, Naypyitaw, are bogus and politically motivated with the intention of nullifying the victory and preventing Suu Kyi from running for office again.

The junta officials have threatened to dissolve the National League for Democracy for alleged involvement in election fraud and any conviction for Suu Kyi could see her barred from politics.

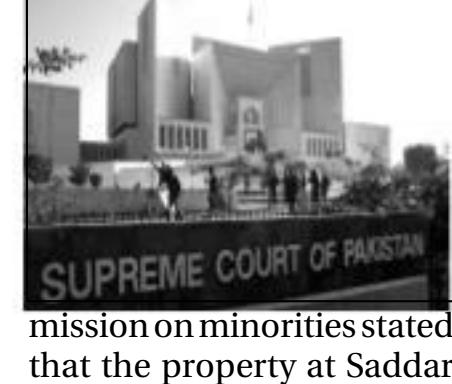
The junta has claimed it will hold new elections within the next year or two but the country's military has a long history of promising elections and not following through.

The military ruled Myanmar for 50 years after a coup in 1962, and kept Suu Kyi under house arrest for 15 years after a failed 1988 popular uprising.

Pak SC stops Hindu dharamshala demolition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 14 JUNE



SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Supreme Court has ordered the Karachi administration to stop the demolition of a Hindu dharamshala and leasing out the heritage property located in the heart of the city.

A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed issued the order on Friday while hearing a case regarding the implementation of a 2014 judgment on minorities' rights.

During the hearing, Dr Ramesh Kumar a co-opted member of a one-man com-

plaint with other members of her government and ruling party. The coup reversed years of slow progress toward more democracy for Myanmar.

The army cited the government's failure to properly investigate alleged voting irregularities as its reason for seizing power an assertion contested by the independent Asian Network for Free Elections and many others.

Junta officials have threatened to dissolve the National League for Democracy for alleged involvement in election fraud and any conviction for Suu Kyi could see her barred from politics.

Hopefuls are running to replace the term-limited President Hassan Rouhani, whose promises of a bright economic future withered as Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers collapsed. The backlash of disappointment in Rouhani's relatively moderate administration has given hard-liners an edge this time, analysts say, even as the US and Iran now negoti-

ate a return to the landmark accord.

Iran's clerical vetting committee has allowed just seven candidates on the ballot, nixing prominent reformists and key Rouhani allies. The presumed front-runner has become Ebrahim Raisi, the country's hard-line judiciary chief who's closely aligned with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

As Iran reels from the coronavirus pandemic, global isolation, sweeping US sanctions and runaway inflation, the mood among potential voters appears to be one of apathy. Tehran, the vast and churning capital, has been eerily quiet in the days leading up

to the poll, with some Raisi campaign posters scattered around the city and none of the huge rallies that drew roaring crowds to the streets during past election seasons.

Few expect the vote to ease the nation's sense of crisis. Some say they'll vote for Raisi, known for his televised anti-corruption campaign, to

protest Rouhani's failures.

Heavy rain kills 9 in Pak

PESHAWAR, 14 JUNE

Heavy rains and windstorm have claimed at least nine lives and injured 17 people in northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said on Monday.

It said the incessant rainfall, that mostly hit the hilly and mountainous districts including Chitral, Dir, Mansehra and Swat, left four more people dead and injured 12 others, damaging three houses in the last 24 hours.

Mass vaccination site in Tokyo to offer jabs to police

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

TOKYO, 14 JUNE

cial said.

At large, at state-run vaccination sites in Tokyo and Osaka, numerous slots have been left open by elderly people eligible to be vaccinated and people who have made reservations yet not turning up.

In a bid to not waste the slots, the government will from Monday in Tokyo open up the slots to Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel, members of the National Police Agency, Fire and Disaster Management Agency and the Japan Coast Guard.

Voices of Iranians ahead of the presidential election

AGENCIES

TEHRAN, 14 JUNE

through the shop-lined promenades of Tehran's jam-packed Grand Bazaar. She pointed with astonishment to the skyrocketing prices of baby clothes. "It disappoints me, so I cannot say which candidate is my favorite. At the moment, none."

Consumed by fear of future economic decline, Fatemeh Rekabi, a 29-year-old accountant, also believes there's no candidate worth voting for.

"I don't have any trust in the candidates because I don't know what is going to happen next. What if the situation gets worse?" she asked. "Our people wouldn't survive."

Sasan Ghafouri, a 29-year-old who studied to become a lab technician but is now grinding out a living selling clothes at a Tehran mall, said he's exhausted from work and disillusioned with electoral politics that deliver nothing.

"I come here at 9 in the morning and work until 9-10 p.m., day in, day out. When I don't have any time left to have fun or study, continue my education and pursue my dreams, what is the meaning of life?" he said. "At the moment, I can't think about my dreams." Those staking their hopes on Raisi say they're desperate for any change in their fortunes after watching their savings evaporate as the national currency, the Iranian rial, collapsed under Rouhani.

As Iran reels from the coronavirus pandemic, global isolation, sweeping US sanctions and runaway inflation, the mood among potential voters appears to be one of apathy. Tehran, the vast and churning capital, has been eerily quiet in the days leading up

to the poll, with some Raisi campaign posters scattered around the city and none of the huge rallies that drew roaring crowds to the streets during past election seasons.

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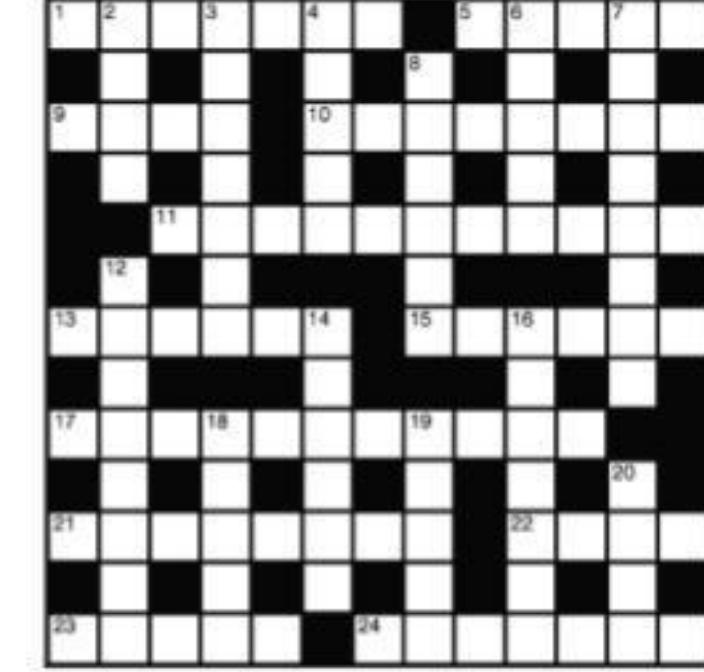
protest Rouhani's failures.

Others are undecided or plan to boycott the vote, saying they have no trust in the government to improve their lives.

"I've watched the presidential debates but didn't see any of them offer real solutions," said 30-year-old Masoumeh Eftekhari, six months pregnant and strolling

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Chesspieces (7)
- Evil spirit (5)
- Ancient Roman robe (4)
- Drivel (8)
- In a state of disrepair (11)
- Tropical bird (6)
- Swindle (Informal) (6)
- Red-faced (11)
- Childish (8)
- Prayer ending (4)
- Indian loincloth (5)
- Public dissent (7)

DOWN

- Gas used in lighting (4)
- Window fitter (7)
- The Friendly Islands (5)
- Doglike carnivore (5)
- Not in good taste (8)
- Relax (6)
- Malign (Informal) (8)
- Hot and dry (6)
- Made in a mould (3-4)
- Skiffl (5)
- Bullock (5)
- Chest muscles, in short (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

1. Beam, 2. Cyclist, 3. Tempo, 4. Trill, 5. Reuse, 6. Tress, 7. Espy. 12. Abbreviated, 13. Backing, 14. Astute, 15. Costly, 16. Catch, 17. Idle, 18. Means.

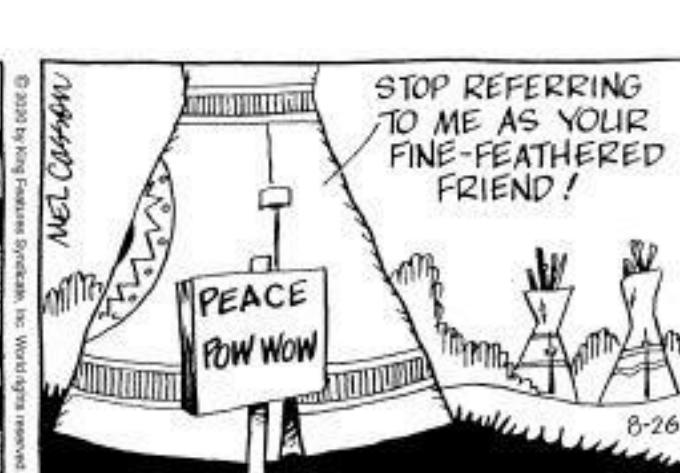
By arrangement with The Independent

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

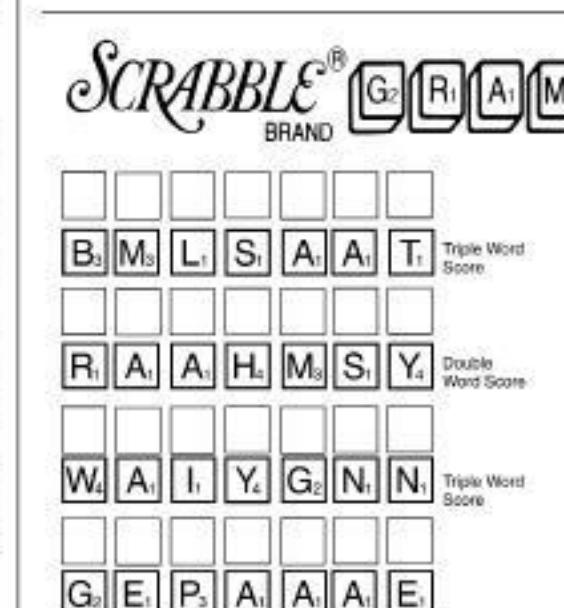
RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry: 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES 23861262, City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23354373

SCRABBLE® BRAND





We have been accused of all kinds of things... election interference, cyberattacks and so on and not once did they bother to produce any kind of evidence or proof

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

CALLS ACCUSATION OF CYBERATTACKS AGAINST US 'FARCIAN'

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



Protesters, one depicting a detainee of the US detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, stage a demonstration during a NATO summit in Brussels on Monday. AP

Spectator dead in Australian off-road race: A spectator was killed and two people were injured after an accident involving in a racing vehicle in the Finke Desert Race in central Australia on Monday. Motorsport Australia issued a statement saying police in the Northern Territory confirmed a man died following the incident that occurred about 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the finish of the 460-kilometer race. AP

Small plane crashes at Texas airports: One person was killed and five others injured when a small airplane crashed on Monday at a municipal airport in Texas, authorities said. The crash happened at about 1 a.m. at the airport in Madisonville. AP

Ready to talk China, Russia & soothe allies: Biden

Biden is trying to rally allies for greater coordination in checking China and Russia, whose actions have become chief foreign policy concerns



NATO heads of the states and governments pose for a family photo during the NATO summit at the Alliance's headquarters, in Brussels, Belgium on Monday. ■ AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, 14 JUNE

President Joe Biden makes his entrance at a NATO summit aiming to consult European allies on efforts to counter provocative actions by China and Russia while highlighting the US commitment to the 30-country alliance that was frequently maligned by predecessor Donald Trump.

The summit on Monday comes as Biden tries to rally allies for greater coordination in checking China and Russia, two adversaries whose actions on economic and national security fronts have become the chief foreign policy concerns in the early going of the Biden presidency.

Biden will use his time at the summit to underscore the US commitment to Article 5 of the alliance charter, which spells out that an attack on one member is an attack on all and is to be met with a collective response.

"I will make it clear that the United States' commitment to our NATO alliance and Article 5 is rock solid," Biden told US troops in the United Kingdom last week on the first stop of his eight-day European

trip. It's a sacred obligation."

The White House said the communique to be signed by alliance members at the end of the NATO summit is expected to include language about updating Article 5 to include major cyber attacks a matter of growing concern amid a series of hacks targeting the US government and businesses around the globe by Russia-based hackers.

The update will spell out that if an alliance member needs technical or intelligence support in response to a cyber attack, it would be able to invoke the mutual defense provision to receive assistance, according to White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

The President will begin his day meeting with leaders of the Baltic states on NATO's eastern flank regarding the "threat posed by Russia, China and the recent air piracy in Belarus," according to Sullivan. He'll also meet with NATO secretary Jens Stoltenberg.

The G-7 meeting ended with a communique that called out forced labour practices and other human rights violations impacting Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities in the western Xinjiang province.

Some US allies near Russia are wary of Biden-Putin summit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV (UKRAINE), 14 JUNE

Central and Eastern European nations are anxious about the coming summit meeting between US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin, wary of what they see as hostile intentions from the Kremlin.

Some in the countries that once were part of the Soviet Union or the Moscow-led Warsaw Pact during the Cold War worry that Washington could scale down support for its allies in the region in a bid to secure a more stable and predictable relationship with Russia.

"I think there have been doubts as to the resoluteness of the present administration to face Russian aggressive actions in a decisive manner," said Witold Rodkiewicz, chief specialist on Russian politics at Warsaw's Center of Eastern Studies, a state-funded think tank that advises the Polish government.

Both Russia and the US have sought to moderate expectations about Wednesday's summit in Geneva, ruling out any breakthroughs amid the worst tensions between the two powers since Soviet times, especially after Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula following the ouster of Ukraine's Moscow-friendly president in 2014 and a Russia-backed separatist insurgency in the country's east as well as other strains.

Rodkiewicz, however, noted the White House's decision to waive sanctions against the German company overseeing the prospective Russian-built Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline running under the Baltic Sea to Germany.

That project could potentially allow Moscow to bypass Ukraine, Poland and other countries in Eastern and Central Europe that collect transit fees on the energy.

In a clear, unequivocal way the administration signaled that for them, Europe is Germany basically, and German interests are going to be taken into account, while the interests of other players in Europe are going to be sort of put on the back burner, Rodkiewicz told.

Nowhere else are worries about the summit more acute

The President declined to discuss private summit negotiations over the provision, but said he was satisfied with the communique, although differences remain among the allies. Biden is focused on building a more cohesive bond between America and allies who had become wary of US leadership after enduring four years of Trump.

The last administration was at odds with some leading NATO members, including Britain, Germany and France, over Trump's 2018 decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear agreement that was brokered during the

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than in Ukraine.

It has been locked in a tense tug-of-war with Russia ever since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula following the ouster of Ukraine's Moscow-friendly president in 2014 and a Russia-backed separatist insurgency in the country's east as well as other strains.

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Biden assured Zelensky of the unwavering US support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Kyiv appeared overly eager to interpret the conversation in its favor. In its initial readout of the call, Zelensky's office claimed Biden emphasized the importance of offering Ukraine a specific roadmap for joining NATO. But it then changed that version to clarify it was Zelensky who pushed for providing Ukraine with a membership action plan; it said Biden promised that Nord Stream 2 would deprive it not only of transit fees for pumping Russian gas to Europe but also erode its strategic importance and weaken it politically.

A US failure to block the pipeline would mark a personal loss for President Biden and a serious geopolitical victory for the Russian Federation," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

He tried in vain to push for a meeting with Biden before the summit but has spoken with him by phone.

ican leadership. He's also highlighted NATO members' contributions in the war in Afghanistan.

NATO members are also expected to endorse the creation of a new cyber defense policy to improve coordination with countries impacted by the increasing frequency of ransomware attacks, a climate security action plan to reduce greenhouse gases from military activities in line with national commitments under the Paris Agreement and a Macron nasty."

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NATO nations ready to jointly respond to attacks in space

BRUSSELS, 14 JUNE

NATO leaders on Monday will expand the use of their all for one, one for all, collective defense clause to include attacks in space, the military organization's top civilian official said.

Article 5 of NATO's founding treaty states that attack on any one of the 30 allies will be considered an attack on them all. So far, it's only applied to more traditional military attacks on land, sea, or in the air, and more recently in cyberspace.

"I think it is important (with) our Article 5, which states that an attack on one will be regarded as an attack on all, that we will respond," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said, at a German Marshall Fund think tank event.

"We will make it clear at this summit that, of course, any attack on space capabilities like satellites and so on or attacks from space will or could trigger Article 5," he said, a few hours before chairing a summit with US President Joe Biden and his counterparts.

Around 2,000 satellites orbit the earth, over half operated by NATO countries, ensuring everything from mobile phone and banking services to weather forecasts. Military commanders rely on some of them to navigate, communicate, share intelligence and detect missile launches.

In December 2019, NATO leaders declared space to be the alliance's "fifth domain" of operations, after land, sea, air and cyberspace. Member countries are concerned about what they say is increasingly aggressive behavior in space by China and Russia. AP

Infections rise; England braces for new delays on reopening

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON, 14 JUNE

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to disappoint many people across England later Monday by saying that restrictions on social contact will remain for a few more weeks because of rising coronavirus infections due to the delta variant.

With the variant first found in India estimated by some to be at least 60% more contagious than the previous dominant strain, British scientists have urged the prime minister to err on the side of caution and postpone plans to lift most coronavirus restrictions in England on 21 June. There is growing speculation that the rules will stay in effect until 19 July.

For businesses, particularly those in hospitality and entertainment, any delays to what has been dubbed by the British media as "Freedom Day" will be a massive disappointment. A delay will be a particularly bitter pill for nightclubs, as they have not been allowed to reopen since the first lockdown was imposed in March 2020.

The expected delay will also likely impact how many fans are allowed into the Wimbledon tennis tournament as well as European Championship soccer matches at Wembley Stadium, which will host the tournament's semi-finals and final.

Many businesses, including many pubs and theaters, have remained closed despite the recent easing in restrictions as the reduced capacities allowed have meant it has not been financially viable.

"The reality is we have marched the troops up the hill," the 72-year-old co-founder of theater operator Trafalgar Entertainment said. "Thousands of people have been mobilised in order to work in the theatre from next Monday, and now we are being told, apparently: 'Oh no, it's not that date.'"

When Johnson first outlined the government's four-stage plan for lifting the lockdown in England in February,

ROYAL MEET



US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden smile while standing with Britain's Queen Elizabeth II watching a Guard of Honour march past before their meeting at Windsor Castle near London on Sunday. ■ AP

China tried to warn US off strengthening Quad, reveals Biden

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 14 JUNE

US President Joe Biden has revealed how China tried to warn him off strengthening the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, referred to as the Quad as an informal strategic partnership between India, Japan, Australia and the United States.

Addressing a press conference at the conclusion of the UK-hosted G7 Summit in Cornwall on Sunday, the President who took charge in the White House earlier this year said that in his conversation with a Chinese leader he was asked about his international relations plans before he assumed the presidency. Biden did not reveal the identity of the Chinese leader.

Chinese President Xi Jinping spoke to Biden for two hours in February, days after he assumed office as the US President.

On 11 February, President Biden told leaders of the coalition that a "free and open" Indo-Pacific is essential to their countries and vowed that his country was committed to working with its partners and allies in the region to achieve stability.

During the summit, President Biden told leaders of the coalition that a "free and open" Indo-Pacific is essential to their countries and vowed that his country was committed to working with its partners and allies in the region to achieve stability.

being elected, I said we're going to re-establish the strength of American relationships so we can be counted on again," Biden recalled on Sunday of the meeting with the unidentified Chinese leader.

The Chinese leader then requested him to not get India, Japan, Australia, and the US together under the Quad umbrella. Biden said the Chinese leader suggested that, "Well, maybe you (Biden) shouldn't get the Quad"—meaning India, Japan, Australia, and the United States ~ working together."

Known as the "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue", representatives for the four member nations have met periodically since its establishment in 2007. Interestingly, Biden hosted the first virtual summit of Quad leaders on 12 March.

During the summit, President Biden told

Minds matter most

A recent report shows that Indians are among the most overworked, and underpaid in the Asia-Pacific region. But that is only one of the factors affecting the mental health of employees in corporate India



**MADHURIMA
SENGUPTA**

Professional success brings along social recognition and a comfortable lifestyle. But it often comes at the cost of one's mental peace. If that is ignored, it won't be long before the facade of a secure life comes tumbling down.

A global human resource services provider, Gi Group, has come up with a largely statistical report titled, "All in the mind: The state of mental health in corporate India". It takes a closer look at the various underlying issues in organisations that have the potential of affecting both employers' and employees' mental health. "Our report aims to initiate a much-needed discussion on this subject, between employers, employees, experts and policy makers. Our endeavour will be to bring it to a larger level with all stakeholders, thereby raising the awareness level, exchanging best practices and ensuring transparency," said Sonal Arora, executive director and business staffing head, Gi Group India, and a core member of the research team.

Corporate entities have acknowledged that workplaces have an

impact on mental health, which has only become more pronounced since the Covid-19 pandemic. It affected organisations and 48 per cent of the employers surveyed reported having taken cognisance of mental wellness concerns. How did Covid impact the approach towards addressing mental health? "Since physical presence is limited due to the present health crisis, in-person counselling is a challenge and it does change the approach towards addressing mental health-related issues. Because of the work anxiety induced by virtual workspaces, burn-outs have become more common. During these times, it becomes important for employers and human resource representatives to make sure that their employees feel heard at all times," said Arora.

According to the report, 29 per cent of the employers surveyed are constrained by various stigmas on mental health. "The Indian corporate world is still in the early stages of the process of having a better understanding of mental wellness. They should develop effective strategies to initiate a proactive discourse about raising awareness on the mental-health epidemic," Arora said.

Also, the onus of such concerns

falls on everyone involved rather than just the human resources department. "Mental well-being is an issue that cannot be department-centric. Even colleagues can help each other by being available to talk to their peers about any concern," said Arora.

The report shows that information technology-enabled services and banking, financial services and insurance are sectors where both employers and employees are most aware about mental health. Fast-moving consumer goods and e-commerce, however, lack awareness. Chennai and Bangalore lead, while Hyderabad and the National Capital Region lag, among cities.

Employers and employees, however, contradict each other on two main factors in influencing mental health. 77 per cent employers believe that long, erratic, always-on work hours are the top issues, while 79 per cent employees believe that leadership plays the biggest role. "Salary reduction, scepticism about work security, and maintaining productivity while managing one's personal life are some of the other major variables that have contributed to mental anguish in the last one year," said Arora.

According to the report, Indians are among the most over-worked globally, while earning the lowest minimum statutory wage in the Asia-Pacific region, barring Bangladesh. 81-88 per cent of the FMCG and BFSI organisations across Bangalore and Chennai are trending up the role of work hours, while 20-30 per cent of the employees from small and medium-sized automobile organisations in Hyderabad and Pune are under-mining it.

Amid such differences of opinion, who decides the ideal work structure in offices? "There cannot be a one-size-fits-all kind of solution for this. There are, anyway, statutory and even International Labour Organisation's guidelines in terms of maximum number of working days/hours which surely must be followed. But above all, organisations must explore a work structure that allows employees to recharge, disconnect and have an adequate work-life balance," Arora said.

The gap between awareness and action is substantially wide – only nine per cent employees take action based on awareness. Even then, formal measures and policies are an exception and not a norm. So, when

employees actually need help, they are left to find for themselves. Speaking of what formal measures can be taken to address mental health in workspaces, Arora said that an effective, empathetic and transparent interaction channel must be set up to maintain trust between employer and employees. Clear guidelines must ensure a decent work-life balance and offer flexibility.

"Also, the government needs to work more actively in increasing awareness regarding mental well-being at a larger level. Mass consciousness programmes along with educating employees and human resource departments and formulating efficient policies can boost awareness. Currently, only about Rs 40 crore is budgeted for the National Mental Health Programme," said Arora.

There is an urgent need for employers and employees to gain a shared understanding of the causes and influencers of mental health issues. "Corporate bodies need to formulate open-door policies for allowing an unrestricted flow of communication between ranks rather than following a hierarchical setup," she said.

Since the needs and capabilities of different employees are naturally inclined to vary, Arora said, "The best way is to have a multi-pronged approach where you allow employees to share feedback on their stressors in a manner that they are most comfortable with. There could be a combination of different ways to reach out – a grievance redressal team, open town halls, e-mail ids, etc. Organisations can also take help of trained therapists."

Half-hearted measures will not help in reaching the root of the problem. Arora said, "Only setting up grievance redressal units is not sufficient to address mental health issues. Those might address a specific work-related grievance of any employee at a point of time. Mental health, however, is not necessarily impacted only by specific episodes/grievances but by many other ongoing factors such as organisational culture, working relationships between an employee and his/her peers and seniors, family situation or even external factors like the current pandemic. Organisations can look at engaging with skilled professionals outside the office and set up personal counselling sessions."

But if employees are keen on opening up about their mental-health concerns, isn't there a possibility that the fine line between emotional and professional spaces will get blurred? Arora said, "Workspaces can maintain a balance between nurturing employees' mental health and professional growth. These need not be mutually exclusive goals. Organisations must acknowledge that employees' mental well-being is a necessary precondition to productivity and success."

The report raises important questions which otherwise remain disregarded amid the ceaseless race to the top.

The writer is a staff member, Features, *The Statesman*, Kolkata

PLUS POINTS

Freshers fiesta



National Institute of Technology, Andhra Pradesh recently celebrated Petrichor 2021 freshers' festival virtually for the first time. It was a two-week event, intended to enable students to display their talents by engaging them in an online photography contest, meme-making event and an online treasure hunt besides an online singing contest. The festival, which featured 11 online events, was also open to the public for viewing, free of cost. It was streamed live on Graphic Cafe's YouTube channel with more than 3,000 people viewing it.

Markets made easy



With a view to provide exposure to students in the area of financial markets, Sanskriti University conducted a webinar on stock markets in association with Shine Projects. The event was attended by Rana Singh, vice-chancellor of Sanskriti University, along with faculty members and students. The keynote address was delivered by Venkata Harsha, managing director, Shine Projects. Harsha created awareness regarding various avenues available for investment in the stock market. Interacting with students, he clarified the difference between equity shares and initial public offering, which are key components of the stock market.

The discussion touched upon various topics like stock exchange, difference between Sensex and Nifty, market capitalisation and how exchanges segregate stocks, top stocks in the current scenario and advantages of investment in equity. Basics were conveyed in a simple language, which was easily comprehended by students.

Summer school



IIT-Delhi inaugurated the second edition of the five-week intensive online employability enhancement programme – VLSI ReVisited Summer School – recently. It will continue till 9 July and is being technically co-organised by IEEE Circuits and Systems Society and Control Systems Society, Delhi chapter.

Professor Ranjan Bose, director, IIT-Delhi gave the inaugural address. He welcomed the faculty and students from more than six IITs, five IIITs, 13 NITs, prestigious government colleges like Delhi Technical University, Punjab Engineering College, etc and numerous private engineering colleges like BITS-Pilani, Manipal Institute of Technology, and others. This year's cohort of more than 170 students also includes international students from Malaysia.

Gauging value

Pearson VUE released the latest "Value of IT Certification" report recently. It explores why candidates pursue information technology certification and provides detailed insight into how certification benefits both individuals and employers.

The most recent findings are polled from 29,000 candidates who completed IT certification exams between November 2019 and October 2020 – a period of seismic change across the world. Respondents were from 160 countries and ranged from those who had pursued a certification for the very first time, to seasoned IT professionals who hold multiple IT credentials.

The pandemic did not hamper the pursuit of certification. As Covid-19 accelerated the adoption of digital tools by organisations, the survey revealed that demand for skills in cloud computing increased significantly. For details visit, www.pearsonvue.com/voc

NUANCES OF DIGITAL LEARNING

Here are the key features essential for delivering an engaging online education experience

RAJSHEKHAR RATREY

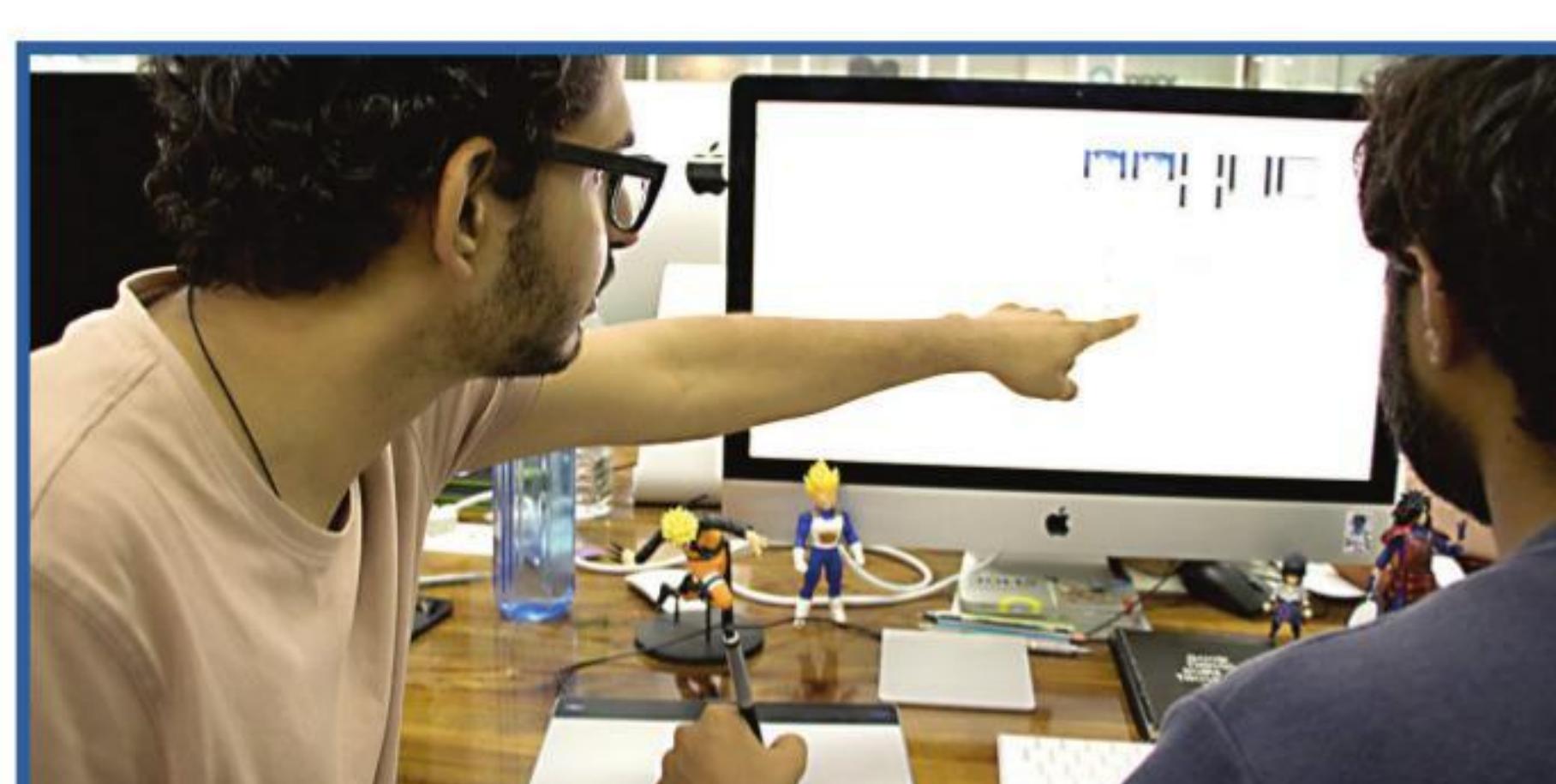
While e-learning is becoming popular in today's world, it comes with specific subtleties. In addition to classical teaching elements, factors such as user-experience design, personalisation and delivery formats are also needed to be kept in mind. Seamless online learning requires several components to come together that make a learner's and instructor's experience enjoyable. Nothing dampens the enthusiasm of a new online learner faster than technological glitches. Or kills a teacher's willingness to go digital if the software is complicated.

Here's a closer look at some of the key features that are essential for delivering an engaging learning experience online.

User Experience

UE design governs the relationship of the user with the product. It takes into account one's behavioural and emotional aspects while interacting online. A good UE facilitates improvement based on metrics such as engagement (time spent in studying), frequency (regularity) and retention (coming back to the equipment after days or months).

Data analytics makes it possible to observe the learning pattern and



behaviour of each student as they navigate from one section to another. It assesses the concepts a student finds difficult or easy and then uses that data to provide instant feedback to them on their progress. Such messaging keeps users engaged and motivated while learning. Technology has also enabled the creation of customised improvement strategies to assist students in preparing for examinations.

Personalisation

For the last several years, the main function of content and learning management systems was to track the completion of a course (via e-learning) and manage online learning resources. Down the years though, it has evolved to become deep content management systems with billions of data points stored as small bite-sized learning resources.

The use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning has made it possible to customise the different phases of learning, including knowledge acquisition, practice, revision and more. Deep content libraries are designed to provide targeted study materials that help customise a student's experiences and offer adaptive learning paths.

Moreover, it also gives scope for thorough and insightful feedback to each student instead of just assigning

a grade. An effective online learning platform empowers students with subject-wise strength and weakness analysis, along with emphasis on areas where they have been repeatedly going wrong.

Content management

One of the most important roles of e-learning platforms involves tracking and cataloguing videos, questions, notes, images and files used in online course instructions. An effective content management system assists educators in categorising, monitoring and handling the content of digital courses. It also helps in scaling learning resources at an advanced pace and economical rate.

Instead of re-creating materials on a previously dealt topic, content management allows instructors to simply locate an existing material and use it. Educators can easily add and delete new knowledge pieces based on students' interaction with content.

The primary objective of e-learning is to extend education cost-effectively to a widely dispersed user base. Formal classroom training is too costly and slow at scale. A good learning

recommendation system and high-quality user experience, added with excellent online learning content and collaborative tools, enables students to learn efficiently. The process empowers educators to create experiences that can be focused towards all students with varying learning potentials.

Important technology principles

Irrespective of the level of technologies and software an online-learning solution employs, the design of such a highly effective platform must have the ability to sustain deep content libraries for the long-term. If instructors find it difficult to add and remove content, recycle questionnaires and perform other core functions, they will quickly drop the technology. The platform needs to be simple, straightforward and intuitive. It should be easy to navigate, move from one section of the course to another, and communicate with the instructor.

Any solution by design should be able to modularise knowledge objects into small pieces of instruction that

can be steered from one lesson or programme to another completely different piece of e-learning. It can then be re-used as needed to meet a learner's instructional needs through notes, tables or topics across grades and boards.

Accessibility in e-learning involves using technology and standards to create content that comes handy to all learners, regardless of their geographical location or the device they use to access the platform. This means creating content that is responsive to the learner's device with minimal additional requirements.

The technology component of e-learning is critical to the success of a student and an online programme. Careful consideration of the types of solutions required by students will help to improve and fast-track the learning process. Wider acceptance of these innovative methods by students along with seamless integration with classroom practices will be central to e-learning's success.

The writer is senior vice-president of products, Toppr.com



'BIGGEST DREAM'

Lionel Messi (*in photo, left*) has won it all with Barcelona in a decorated career. Winning a title with Argentina remains one of his biggest ambitions. The 33-year-old Messi might have one of his final chances at the Copa America. "I am always available to my national team. My biggest dream is to win a title with this shirt," Messi told a news conference in Rio.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Tendulkar donates blood:
Former India captain Sachin Tendulkar on Monday donated blood to mark the 'World Blood Donor Day'. The legendary former batsman also urged citizens to come forward and take part in voluntary blood donation. "We all have the power to save a life. Let's use it," he tweeted.

Prize money for WTC: The winner of the upcoming World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand will walk away with a prize money of USD 1.6 million along with the Test Championship Mace, the International Cricket Council said on Monday.

Fan injury: A soccer fan was in serious condition in a London hospital after falling from the stands at Wembley Stadium during England's 1-0 victory over Croatia at the European Championship. "We will continue to work with UEFA to ensure the matter is fully investigated and we are continuing to monitor the situation," said the English Football Association, which owns Wembley.

World basketball head steps aside: The president of basketball's world governing body has stepped aside during its investigation into alleged systemic sexual abuse of women players at his home federation. Hamane Niang "strongly denies the allegations" that he ignored abuse by coaches and officials in Mali when he led the national federation.

NZ's multi-dimensional attack can trouble Kohli, says Parthiv

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, 14 JUNE



India skipper Virat Kohli (*in photo*) needs to revisit 2018 to get back into the habit of scoring hundreds though it won't be easy against New Zealand's bowling attack which possesses variety, said former India wicketkeeper-batsman Parthiv Patel. India play New Zealand in the World Test Championship final that begins on Friday.

"I think probably he will have to give himself a bit of time and try to think what he did in 2018 -- where he got number of hundreds. Probably he is better equipped than what he was in 2014 [when he scored 134 across 10 innings in England]. But there will be challenges and there will be challenges of variety of fast bowlers. Reason being -- it (New Zealand's) is not a one-dimensional fast bowling attack," said Patel.

Kohli had ended year 2020 without an international century, his first such calendar year in 12 years. His debut year, 2008, when he was picked to the national side after leading India under-19 team to a World Cup title, was the last time before 2020 that he endured a calendar year without a century.

In 2020, he played 22 international games which, compared to the recent few years, is quite low since Covid-19

ensured India did not play international cricket for almost nine months. This is the first time since 2009 that the talismanic India batsman has played as few as 22 matches.

'Fast pitch for WTC final'

Head groundsman at Southampton Simon Lee is aiming to produce a pacy and bouncy pitch for the World Test Championship final with some assistance for spinners later on in the game. The final will be played between India and New Zealand from June 18.

"Pitch preparation for this Test is a little simpler as we are a neutral venue, we are guided by the ICC, but we all want is a good pitch that offers an even contest between the teams," Lee told ESPNcricinfo.

"For me personally I just want to get something out that has some pace, bounce and

carry in the pitch. It can be a hard thing to do in England as the weather doesn't help us most of the time, but the forecast in the build-up is good with a lot of sun, so we are hopeful that we'll get some pace and a hard pitch without over-rolling it and killing it."

Both the teams have high quality pace bowlers and Lee wants them to be in the game at all times. "Pace just makes red-ball cricket exciting, I'm a cricket fan and I want to produce a pitch where the cricket lovers have to watch every ball in case they miss something, be that some class batting or an amazing spell of bowling.

"A maiden over can be quite exciting if it's a battle of skill between both bowler and batter. So, yeah, if we can get some pace and bounce in the pitch, but not too one-sided towards seam movement, we'll be happy," he said.

Picked Rahane's brains, we are mentally prepared for England: Harmanpreet

AGENCIES
BRISTOL, 14 JUNE

Indian women's team vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Monday said the squad is mentally prepared to take on mighty hosts England in its first Test in seven years, especially after "picking the brains" of red-ball specialist Ajinkya Rahane.

India and England will play a one-off Test here from Wednesday, which will start the visitors' full-fledged tour of the UK, where they will also feature in ODI and T20 series.

"I have not played much of red-ball cricket, I have played just two Tests. This time we got a chance to speak to Ajinkya Rahane, we picked his brains on how to bat in the longer format, mentally we are prepared," Harmanpreet said during a virtual press conference.

Problem for Rohit

Former New Zealand all-rounder Scott Styris feels India opener Rohit Sharma might find it difficult to negotiate the swinging ball during the World Test Championship final against the Kiwis, beginning in Southampton on June 18.

Head groundsman at Southampton, Simon Lee has made it clear that they are aiming to produce a fast and bouncy pitch, and Styris believes it can spell trouble for Rohit. "It is pitch dependent... I think I can't stress that enough. I think if the ball is moving around then Rohit will have his struggles...," Styris said.

"Rohit doesn't really move his feet a lot early in his innings. If that's the case, then the swinging ball could be a problem for him."

ing a virtual press conference. The washbuckler has made a name for herself in white-ball cricket and is now looking to stamp her class in the traditional format.

She added, "Even in the nets, we try to be in the right frame of mind. When you are happy, you play good cricket. We try to play to our strengths.

"We had an easy and friendly talk with Rahane, he is very experienced, we had a chance to talk to him and we did exactly that."

Elaborating on the interaction with Virat Kohli's deputy in the men's Test team, she said, "Rahane has so much experience, he shared them with us, offered us tips on how to bat, what kind approach should we have to batting because it's long format, how to break your innings in parts..."

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Dumfries scores as Netherlands tops Ukraine 3-2 at Euro 2020

AGENCIES
AMSTERDAM, 14 JUNE



Denzel Dumfries (*in photo*) picked a pretty good time to score his first international goal. After missing an open chance in the first half, Dumfries helped set up two goals in the second and then headed in an 85th-minute winner on Sunday night to give the Netherlands a 3-2 win over Ukraine at the European Championship.

"I kept believing that a chance would come and then you have to be in the right place," Dumfries said.

The winning header came only minutes after Ukraine had scored two late goals to equalise. The victory vindicated Netherlands coach Frank de Boer's decision to play a 5-3-2 formation at Euro 2020 with Dumfries and Patrick van Aanholt as wingbacks instead of the 4-3-3 attacking formation favored by many Dutch fans.

Austria win

The Austrians finally earned a victory at the European Championship, getting the goals they needed from the bench.

Michael Gregoritsch and Marko Arnautovic both came on as substitutes and scored late to help Austria beat North Macedonia 3-1 on Sunday in Group C.

It was Austria's first win at a major soccer tournament in 31 years and its first ever at the European Championship.

Austria captain David Alaba set up the winning goal for Gregoritsch, curling in a perfect cross in the 78th minute. Arnautovic then collected backheel flick from Konrad Leimer before calmly rounding goalkeeper Stole Dimitrovski and scoring the final goal with a minute to go.

France v Germany

France and Germany usually play each other in the latter stages of major soccer tournaments. Not this time.

The teams will meet in the group stage of a European

Championship or World Cup for the first time on Tuesday when they open their Euro 2020 campaigns in Munich.

Their last match at a major tournament came in the Euro 2016 semifinals. Antoine Griezmann scored twice for France in the 2-0 victory over then-World Cup champion Germany in Marseille.

Germany has never really recovered, and though the French lost to Portugal in the final five years ago, they went on to win the World Cup two years later. German hopes this time are pinned on a good start in Munich to set the team up for success in Joachim Low's last tournament as coach after 15 years in charge.

Hungary v Portugal

Home advantage at the European Championship may not count much when Hungary faces a Portugal team with scoring talent and one particular player looking to make history. Cristiano Ronaldo needs six more goals to become the all-time leading scorer for a men's national team.

If the defending champions go far at Euro 2020, Ronaldo could indeed break Iran striker Ali Daei's record of 109 goals. And he'll get his first chance to add to his total on Tuesday against the Hungarians at the Puskas Arena.

Portugal beat France 1-0 in the Euro 2016 final in extra time after losing Ronaldo to injury. He hobbled off injured mid-way through the first half.

Besides Ronaldo, the team has scoring threats in standout midfielder Bruno Fernandes, winger Bernardo Silva and forward Diogo Jota.

Brazil open Copa America with 3-0 win over Venezuela

AGENCIES
SAO PAULO, 14 JUNE



Brazil kicked off a Copa America tournament that has been opposed by some members of its own team with a 3-0 win over Venezuela here. Marquinhos, Neymar (*in photo*) and Gabriel Barbosa scored in the opener at Man Garrincha stadium in Brasilia on Sunday, less than a day after several Venezuelan players tested positive for COVID-19.

South American soccer's governing body, CONMEBOL, chose Brazil as host less than two weeks ago, despite its alarming COVID-19 figures, after Argentina and Colombia were dropped as co-hosts.

Despite his opposition to staging the tournament in his home country, Brazil captain Casemiro said the defending champions intended to retain their trophy. "It could be a friendly, Copa America, World Cup qualifiers, we play it to win," he said.

"Venezuela had the idea of defending, they wanted a draw. But we were focused and we were aggressive in the last third of the pitch."

Venezuela summoned 15 new players at short notice after eight squad members tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday, and the disruption showed on the field. The

Selso wasted opportunities but faced little resistance from Venezuela. Brazil opened the scoring in the 23rd minute after a corner kick ended with Marquinhos striking from close range. Brazil coach Tite who also opposed holding the tournament took Lucas Paquet off at halftime, but kept Roberto Firmino on the bench. Instead, Everton Ribeiro went on and provided more dynamism on the right flank.

Ribeiro found Danilo on the right edge of the box, and the Brazilian was pushed to the ground. Neymar calmly scored from the spot in the 63rd to make it 2-0. He looked to the right of Venezuelan goalkeeper Joel Graterol, but took his shot to the left. Neymar dribbled past Graterol and crossed for Barbara to chest the ball into the empty net in the 89th. A flop at Inter Milan and Benfica, Barbara is a hero at Brazilian club Flamengo, which wants him on the national team more often. Tite said he's experimenting with combinations, thinking ahead to the World Cup in Qatar next year.

"I am seeking tactical alternatives, positional alternatives. But operating on different functions," the Brazil coach said.

"The idea is not to lose our character, otherwise you break the links, the connections, you remove confidence from the athletes."

Colombia win

A surprising choreographed move gave Colombia a 1-0 win against Ecuador in its first match of Copa America.

Edwin Cardona scored the winner at the Arena Pantanal in Cuiba in the 42nd minute of a tense game on Sunday.

The decisive moment started when midfielder Cardona took a free kick close to the edge of the Ecuadorian penalty box. Instead of shooting, he exchanged three short passes with Juan Guillermo Cuadrado, who moved the ball forward to where Miguel Borja was waiting. Borja headed the ball back to Cardona, who had run toward goalkeeper Pedro Ortiz and who scored with a right-foot shot as the Ecuadorian defenders watched on.

The winning header came only minutes after Ukraine had scored two late goals to equalise.

Arnautovic then collected backheel flick from Konrad Leimer before calmly rounding goalkeeper Stole Dimitrovski and scoring the final goal with a minute to go.

France v Germany

France and Germany usually play each other in the latter stages of major soccer tournaments. Not this time.

The teams will meet in the group stage of a European

Djokovic on track for calendar Slam

ready for Wimbledon. He was so focused."

I tried my best: Tsitsipas

World No.5 Stefanos Tsitsipas, who lost the French Open final on Sunday said he does not have any regrets as he gave it all against Novak Djokovic who won his 19th Grand Slam title.

Tsitsipas had threatened to cause an upset as he won the first two sets before the Serb world No. 1 bounced back after a break from the court to win the next three sets.

"I do not think I have regrets. I could have easily cried, but I see no reason for me crying because I tried everything. I could not come up with anything better," said Tsitsipas, who believes he can win a Grand Slam title one day with the way he is playing.

"He is a legend, and he is on the way to winning all four in the same year," Zverev said on Eurosport. "I was looking at Novak when they were preparing the trophy ceremony and he looked like he was getting

"So yes, it's on and the way he looks -- he looks young, he looks fresh at the end, he looks scary good and motivated."

Djokovic displayed mental strength and physical fitness on Sunday to come back from two sets down and beat Greek 22-year-old Stefanos Tsitsipas after battling for four hours and 11 minutes, the exact time he took to get past 13-time French Open winner Rafa Nadal in the semi-finals less than 48 hours earlier.

Mischa Zverev, the brother of world number six Alexander, said Djokovic already looked like he had turned his attention to Wimbledon.

"He is a legend, and he is on the way to winning all four in the same year," Zverev said on Eurosport. "I was looking at Novak when they were preparing the trophy ceremony and he looked like he was getting

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