

SHORT TAKES

Monsoon reaches last outpost in Raj, eludes Delhi

New Delhi: The southwest monsoon has reached Barmer in west Rajasthan, one of its last outposts, two weeks before its normal schedule but is yet to arrive in the north Indian plains including Delhi which have been reeling under searing heat, the Met office said on Tuesday. The wait for Delhi, Haryana, parts of west Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and west Rajasthan has been overdue even as the mercury and humidity have continued to soar, the IMD said, adding immediate relief was unlikely. "Prevailing meteorological conditions, large scale atmospheric features and the forecast wind pattern by dynamical models suggest that no favourable conditions are likely to develop for further advance of south-west monsoon. — PTI

Snake stuck in AC's compressor rescued

New Delhi: A six-foot-long rat snake made its way into the bedroom of a family residing in Inderpuri in Delhi and got trapped inside the compressor of their air conditioner, according to NGO Wildlife SOS. It took one-hour for a team of rescuers to extricate the snake out of the compressor safely. Seeking reprieve from the soaring temperature, the snake wandered into a house in Inderpuri and slithered into the window air conditioner unit fitted in the bedroom, an official of Wildlife SOS said. The shocked family members reported the incident on Wildlife SOS helpline and a two-member team from the wildlife conservation NGO rushed to the location with rescue equipment and protective gear. "After a one-hour-long rescue operation, the rat snake was safely extricated out of the air conditioner and later released into its natural habitat," the official said.

133 cops honoured by Delhi police commissioner

New Delhi: Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava on Tuesday presented 133 police officers with Police Commissioner's Commendation Disc Awards in a ceremony at New Police Headquarters on Jai Singh Road, officials said. Police Commissioner's Commendation Disc (Gold, Silver and Bronze) awards are on the lines of Central Armed Police Forces to boost up the morale of their personnel. These awards are presented to police personnel who have excelled in their fields, they said.

Top cop to retire today, Balaji to take additional charge

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

Balaji Srivastava (IPS 1988 batch) has been appointed as acting Delhi Police Commissioner. The order has been issued with the approval of Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G), Anil Bajjal after the present Delhi CP, S.N. Shrivastava is set to retire on Wednesday.

Balaji Srivastava, is presently posted as special commissioner of police, vigilance in Delhi Police. He had previously worked as Director General of Police (DGP), Puducherry, DGP, Mizoram, Special CP, Intelligence, Economic

Centre, Delhi spar over 1 nation, 1 ration card

Scheme implemented only in 1 circle in city, Centre tells top court

New Delhi, June 29: The Centre and the Delhi government sparred in the Supreme Court over the 'one nation one ration card' (ONORC) plan with the former accusing the latter of not implementing the scheme which provides for countrywide portability of ration cards of poor migrant workers and their families.

While the Delhi government submitted that it has implemented the ONORC scheme, solicitor general Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the national capital administration has not implemented it fully.

The Centre said the Delhi government has implemented the scheme in one circle, that is Circle No.63, Seemapuri, only a handful of transactions with 42 e-POS



Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal (C) with AAP Punjab president Bhagwant Mann (L) at a press conference in Chandigarh on Tuesday.

— PTI

machines have been done.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and M.R. Shah, in its 80-page judgement, took note of the submission of the Centre that Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Assam, and

Delhi have not implemented the ONORC scheme.

"We, thus, are of the view that those states who have not yet implemented the one nation one ration card scheme should implement the same. We direct the states

who have not implemented the one nation one ration card scheme to implement the scheme by no later than 31.07.2021," the judgement said.

The ONORC scheme is an important welfare measure to extend food security to migrants who are covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) scheme, it said.

"When migrant workers are spread throughout the country, each state has to implement the scheme, which is a necessary welfare measure towards food security for this class of persons. The states are duty bound to implement this scheme, which is a welfare scheme in the interest of the poor and marginal sections of the society," the top court said.

— PTI

Woman converts to Islam, moves HC for protection

New Delhi, June 29: A woman has approached the Delhi High Court seeking protection for herself and her family claiming that they are facing life-threats and being witch hunted by the UP police, media and vigilante groups after her willful conversion from Hinduism to Islam.

The woman, who is working in Delhi and belongs to Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, sought protection for her and her family as also her right to privacy, saying that because of her conversion she and her family are being targeted and malicious content is being published in media which should be stopped immediately.

The petitioner (woman) is an adult and she is protected by the Constitution to choose her own faith and she cannot be targeted and harassed for the choice she makes with regard to the religion she follows, the petition said.

Advocate Kamlesh Kumar Mishra, who represents the woman, said the petition is likely to come up for hearing on Wednesday.

The plea said Renu Gangwar alias Ayesha Alvi converted to Islam on May 27 in Delhi and since June 23, when she was in Shahjahanpur, she started getting calls from media persons requesting for a meeting which she refused.

It said media persons came to her place without her permission and took her photographs and videos and she started getting calls threatening that her conversion news will be published in media and she would be arrested and demanded money. Thereafter, one of them forcibly took Rs 20,000 while others too tried to extort money from her and her family, the plea alleged, adding that absurd and imaginary details are being reported in media regarding her conversion.

The woman, in her plea, said she gave a complaint to the Delhi Police Commissioner on June 24, seeking immediate intervention for her protection with regard to her conversion to Islam on her own free will and without any threat or coercion from anyone but no action has been taken on her complaint yet.

There is no other option other than approaching this court for immediate directions to stop the harassment of the petitioner, said the plea, filed through advocate Kamlesh Kumar Mishra and Nitin Kumar Nayak.

It sought to direct the authorities to ensure that the woman is not taken away from Delhi by force or coercion by any government agency or person and she and her family be granted protection and not harassed or interrogated regarding her conversion.

— PTI

CMV-related rectal bleeding '1st time in India': Docs

5 Covid +ve at Ganga Ram suffer rectal bleeding, 1 dies

New Delhi, June 29: Five Covid-19 patients have suffered cytomegalovirus (CMV) related rectal bleeding at a leading private facility here during the second wave of the pandemic, hospital authorities said on Tuesday and claimed it was being reported for the "first time" in immunocompetent persons.

These patients faced the problem on an average 20-30 days after the diagnosis of Covid-19, doctors at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said.

Until now it affected only immunocompromised patients, post-transplant, cancer, AIDS, etc., but this is the "first time in India" that cases of CMV-related rectal bleeding in Covid immunocompetent patients have been reported, a spokesperson of the hospital said.

According to Prof. Anil



Shahi Imam Syed Ahmed Bukhari receives his first dose of Covid vaccine in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

Arora, the chairman of the Institute of Liver Gastroenterology and Pancreaticobiliary Sciences at the hospital, "During the second wave of the pandemic, in April-May, we have seen five cases of CMV infection in otherwise immunocompetent patients with Covid-19."

"These patients presented with pain in abdomen and bleeding during stool discharge. None of them had other predisposing immunosuppressed states accounting for this viral infection," he said.

Delhi reported 101 Covid-19 cases and four more deaths on Tuesday, according to data shared by the health department here. The positivity rate increased slightly to 0.15 per cent from 0.10 per cent on Monday. — PTI

SC refuses to postpone CA exams, seeks opt-out scheme

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to pass any direction to postpone the Chartered Accountant (CA) exams slated in July but favoured the "opting out" scheme asking the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to spell out the scheme by Wednesday.

The court also sought the details of the Covid protocols to be followed in the examination halls.

A bench of Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari and Justice Aniruddha Bose said: "We are not stopping the exam. We are going to consider how opting out can be granted. In the midst of exams, out of five papers, if a student appears for three papers, he should be appearing in two papers only next time."

It posted for Wednesday (June 30) the hearing on the candidates who want to opt out before and during the exam.

The ICAI offered the "opting out" scheme for the candidates unable to appear in the exam on account of the Covid restrictions. Senior advocate Ramji Srinivasan told the court: "We have given in this cycle an opt-out scheme. We have suggestions which we will put to the institute."

Sisodia accuses BJP workers of attacking his car

AGE CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi, June 29

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday alleged that BJP leaders and "goons" vandalised his official vehicle while protesting the construction of a school in Rohtas Nagar.

The BJP, in counter allegation, claimed attack on its workers and accused Mr Sisodia of using "intemperate" language against them.

Sisodia also alleged that the BJP men ransacked the school and misbehaved with engineers and teachers there.

"BJP leaders and goons protesting construction of a school in Rohtas Nagar sabotaged the school and vandalised my official vehicle. They misbehaved with female teachers, engineers, and workers by breaking into the school. Why are the BJP people so much irritated by education?" Mr Sisodia, who holds the education portfolio, tweeted in Hindi.

Delhi home and PWD minister Satyendar Jain mentioned the incident in a tweet and said "even if the BJP carried out thousands of such attacks, the



Manish Sisodia

AAP government will continue to serve the people."

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged that the AAP cadre had attacked and beaten BJP workers at the behest of the deputy chief minister.

He said the deputy chief minister had gone to Rohtas Nagar to inspect the civil work on the construction of a school. The Rohtas Nagar BJP MLA, Jitender Mahajan, had already conveyed to the authorities that they would submit a memorandum to Sisodia during his visit, he claimed.

"As soon as Mahajan made a move to submit the memorandum to Sisodia, the AAP cadre started misbehaving and beating BJP workers," he charged.

RESTORATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS				
It is notified for the information of all concerned that following Unreserved Mail/Express special trains will be restored as per details mentioned below :-				
Train no	From	To	Frequency	Restoration w.e.f. (JCO)
04202	Pratapgarh Jn.	Varanasi Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04201	Varanasi Jn.	Pratapgarh Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04203	Faizabad	Lucknow	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04204	Lucknow	Faizabad	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04303	Bareilly	Delhi Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04304	Delhi Jn.	Bareilly	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04305	Balamau Jn.	Shahjahanpur	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04306	Shahjahanpur	Balamau Jn.	Daily	04.07.2021 to Till further advice
04636	Firozpur Cantt.	Ludhiana Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04635	Ludhiana Jn.	Firozpur Cantt.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04513	Nangal Dam	Daulatpur Chowk	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04514	Daulatpur Chowk	Nangal Dam	Daily	03.07.2021 to Till further advice
04213	Lucknow	Kanpur Central	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04214	Kanpur Central	Lucknow	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04503	Ambala Cantt.	Ludhiana Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04504	Ludhiana Jn.	Ambala Cantt.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04404	Saharanpur	Delhi Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04301	Moradabad	Saharanpur	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04302	Saharanpur	Moradabad	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04633	Jalandhar City	Firozpur Cantt.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04634	Firozpur Cantt.	Jalandhar City	Daily	03.07.2021 to Till further advice
04637	Jalandhar City	Firozpur Cantt.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04638	Firozpur Cantt.	Jalandhar City	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04459	Delhi Jn.	Saharanpur	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04461	Delhi Jn.	Rohtak	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04462	Rohtak	Delhi Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04455	New Delhi	Ghaziabad	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04626	Firozpur Cantt.	Ludhiana Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04625	Ludhiana Jn.	Firozpur Cantt.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04627	Firozpur Cantt.	Fazilka Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04628	Fazilka Jn.	Firozpur Cantt.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04629	Ludhiana Jn.	Lohian Khas	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04630	Lohian Khas	Ludhiana Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04632	Fazilka Jn.	Bathinda Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04631	Bathinda Jn.	Fazilka Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04643	Firozpur Cantt.	Fazilka Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04644	Fazilka Jn.	Firozpur Cantt.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04659	Amritsar Jn.	Pathankot Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04660	Pathankot Jn.	Amritsar Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04263	Varanasi Jn.	Sultanpur Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04264	Sultanpur Jn.	Varanasi Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04267	Varanasi Jn.	Pratapgarh Jn.	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04268	Pratapgarh Jn.	Varanasi Jn.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04523	Saharanpur	Nangal Dam	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04524	Nangal Dam	Ambala Cantt.	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04532	Ambala Cantt.	Saharanpur	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04327	Sitapur City	Kanpur Central	Daily	02.07.2021 to Till further advice
04328	Kanpur Central	Sitapur City	Daily	03.07.2021 to Till further advice
04334	Najibabad	Gajraula	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice
04333	Gajraula	Najibabad	Daily	01.07.2021 to Till further advice

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

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

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

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General manager of East Central Railway Lalit Chandra Triwedi felicitated officials and workers of ECR headquarters at Hajipur on the occasion of 66th Railway Week on Tuesday. The event was organised at Vaishali auditorium in Hajipur following strict Covid guidelines.

SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one lady (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Babita, W/o: Viresh, R/o: Kh.No. 45/1, Village Auchandi, Delhi, Aged: 38 years, has been missing (alongwith her 2 daughters: Beauty, Age14 years and Babi, Age: 8 years) from her house since 25.04.2021 at 12.00PM. In this Regard a case vide DD No. 110A, Dated 03.06.2021, has been registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi.**

Her physical description is as under:
Height: 4'6" feet, Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Medium, Wearing: Green Colour Saree, Blouse and Violet Colour Sandle in her feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing lady and her 2 daughters, may inform S/O, Bawana, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641

S.H.O P.S. Bawana, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27751949, 27756090

DP/1095/ON/2021

Babita

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the East Coast Railway has decided to extend cancellation/ reduction of the frequency of the following Rajdhani Special Trains due to operational reasons upto **14.07.2021**, as per the following details:-

Train No. & Name	Running (via)	Existing days of run (from originating station)	Active days of run (from originating station)	Date(s) of Cancellation	Days of Cancellation
02823 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Tatanagar Jn	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri	Tuesday, Thursday	02, 05, 09 & 12.07.2021	Mon & Fri
02824 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Tatanagar Jn	Tue, Wed, Thu, Sat	Wednesday, Thursday	03, 06, 10 & 13.07.2021	Tue & Sat
02855 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi Rajdhani Special	Sambalpur City, Anara	Saturday	---	03.07.2021 & 10.07.2021	Saturday
02856 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special	Sambalpur City, Anara	Sunday	---	04.07.2021 & 11.07.2021	Sunday

For any other information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SHORT TAKES

Maha Ganeshotsav to be low-key affair

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government on Tuesday asked the devotees to keep Ganeshotsav celebration low-key affair. The height of the Ganesh idols in public celebrations across the state is restricted to four feet. Idols in homes will be limited to only two feet this year in view of Covid. The home department issued a circular in this connection on Tuesday. This is the second consecutive year when the celebration would be low key. The 10-day festival will start from September 10. The circular was issued following the demands by the idol makers in Maharashtra as two months are left for the festival. According to the circular, Ganesh Mandals would need to get proper permission from the local administration. The organisers have been requested to make all the arrangements possible to provide online Ganesh Darshan.

Stalin okays ₹100cr to tackle 3rd wave

Chennai: Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday sanctioned ₹100 crore from the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund (CMPRF) to procure oxygen for treating Covid-19 patients in state-run medical facilities and also to initiate precautionary measures to tackle the possible third wave of coronavirus. Following an appeal by the chief minister, the government had received ₹353 crore till date from donors towards the pandemic prevention measures. From the sum, the government had already allocated ₹41.40 crore to procure oxygen cylinders, concentrators and other medical equipment from Singapore and other foreign countries. About ₹25 crore was allotted for purchasing life-saving drugs, including Amphotericin, for the treatment of black fungus. — PTI

Lightning claims 11 lives in Bihar

Patna: Eleven people were killed while six were injured in various parts of Bihar upon being struck by lightning on Tuesday, the disaster management department said. According to the department, West Champaran and East Champaran districts accounted for three deaths each followed by Patna (two) and Nalanda, Madhepura and Aurangabad (one each). Besides, four people were seriously injured in East Champaran and another two in Patna districts. According to the department, the state has received 339 mm of rainfall since the onset of monsoons, which is 139 per cent above normal. This has led to floods in at least four districts of Bihar. — PTI

DO NOT HAVE ITR OF PARTIES: I-T DEPT TO ACTIVIST

New Delhi: The I-T department has given a "contradictory" response when asked for tax returns of political parties under the Right to Information Act, by first saying that the information is not held by it and then citing exemption clauses to refuse disclosing the information, an RTI activist claimed on Tuesday. The CIC, the highest adjudicator of RTI matters, had ordered in 2008 that tax returns of political parties should be disclosed under the transparency law, a position which was repeatedly reflected in its orders later. RTI activist Venkatesh Nayak approached the Income Tax Department seeking tax returns filed by political parties in the last 10 years. "The applicant is hereby informed that, the requested information is not held as such, by the CPIO as registered information nor is the requested information required to be maintained as such by the CPIO, under extant rules or regulations," the RTI response said. Citing a Supreme Court order, I-T department's Central Public Information officer said where the information sought is not part of the public authority's record and where it is not required to be maintained under any law or regulations, the act does not cast an obligation upon the public authority to collect or collate such non-available information and furnish it to the applicant. — PTI

Drive to set up paediatric ICU in medical colleges, hospitals

Over 34K kids tested +ve in 2nd corona wave in Assam

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, JUNE 29

Assam health department has started a special drive to set up paediatric ICU in all the medical colleges and major hospitals in the wake of possible third wave of pandemic as 34,606 children below the age of 18 tested positive for Covid-19 during the second wave of the pandemic in Assam. This accounts for 12 per cent of the total cases reported since April 1 this year.

Assam health minister Keshab Mahanta told reporters that in the first wave only 8 per cent of children were affected. Referring to the data of the state health department he said that in the second wave a total of 5,755 cases belonged to below 5-year age category while 28,851 to 6-18 years age group.

Asserting that the government has taken note of the development, he said, "We are taking a number of steps including activating paediatric ICUs in all medical colleges in the state, as well as district hospitals."

The authorities in the National Health Mission said that out of the 34,606 positive cases, 34 have succumbed to the infection — 0.1 per cent of the total cases. "It is mostly because of comorbidities such as congenital diseases affecting the heart, kidney, etc," he added.

The district with the highest number of cases among the under-18 age group is Kamrup (Metro), with 5,346 children infected. "To stop the spread of infections among kids, we prefer that parents should opt for institutional quarantine," he said.



A health worker inoculates an old woman with Covid vaccine during a door-to-door vaccination drive at Chitnan village in Howrah on Tuesday. — PTI

'Assam Opp. in quarantine, only emerges during polls'

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, JUNE 29

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Tuesday said that the Opposition parties in Assam were in quarantine with some in the ICU during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Addressing the state BJP executive after the appointment of new Assam BJP chief Bhabesh Kalita virtually, Mr Nadda said that the Opposition parties emerge only during polls as political tourists but after that, they are nowhere to be seen. He said, "All the Opposition parties were in quarantine with some having reached the ICU. It was the BJP members who reached out to those in distress."

Asking the newly-appointed state unit president and chief minister



Himanta Biswa Sarma to take up vaccination of all eligible people in the state on a mission mode and to ensure implementation of Central schemes in the state, the BJP president also urged the chief minister to personally monitor the implementation of the Central schemes targeting at reaching out to the poor and marginalised sections of the society.

Mr Nadda asked both party organisations and the government to ensure Covid-19 vaccination for all as the top-most priority. "Not even a single person should be devoid of vaccination. Take it as a movement. Both organisation and government ensure that the free ration scheme by Centre should reach the poor. Ensure Central government schemes to be implemented in the state. Think of these as BJP's programmes," said the BJP chief.

The BJP chief advised the Assam BJP president to personally visit hospitals and ensure oxygen plants in every district hospital before the third Covid wave hits the country. Mr Nadda also hailed both present CM and former CM Sarbananda Sonowal for taking developmental works forward.

Govt apathy towards guest workers unpardonable: SC

Orders implementation of one nation, one ration scheme till July 31

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

The Supreme Court on Tuesday slammed the ministry of labour and employment for its unpardonable "apathy and lackadaisical attitude" towards developing a portal for the registrations of unorganised/migrant workers across the country so that they can reap the benefits of welfare schemes framed by the Centre and the states for them.

The top court in slew of directions issued on Tuesday set a deadline of July 31 to implement a one nation, one ration card scheme and for the Centre to set up a portal for registering migrant workers.

Noting that it had directed the ministry way back on August 21, 2018 to develop and provide the states with module of the portal for the registration of migrant workers, a bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and M.R. Shah

In spite of the direction... the ministry of labour and employment has not yet been able to provide the module to all states and Union Territories for the purpose of registration

— SC Bench

said, "When the unorganised workers are waiting for registration and are waiting to reap the benefit of various welfare schemes of the states and Centre, the apathy and lackadaisical attitude by the ministry of labour and employment is unpardonable."

Speaking for the bench, Justice Bhushan said, "In spite of the direction which was issued on 21.08.2018, the ministry has not yet been able to provide the module to all states and UTs for the purpose of registration,"

adding that "the stand taken by the Union of India does not commend us".

Taking a dim view of the "non-action" of the ministry in developing the portal, Justice Bhushan said, "It shows that the ministry is not alive to the concern of the migrant workers and the non-action of the ministry is strongly disapproved."

The court said that there was "urgency" for the portal to be finalised and implemented looking at the pandemic and the dire need of unorganised workers to receive the benefit.

Holding that the registration of unorganised workers is "pivotal and important" insofar as welfare of workers is concerned, the SC noted with dismay that although the Code on Social Security, 2020 had received the presidential assent in August, 2020 but "the same has not yet been enforced except the provision for use of Aadhaar".

Biden admin appoints Atul Keshap new envoy to India

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

The United States on Tuesday announced appointment of its senior career diplomat Atul Keshap — who is of Indian origin — as the Chargé d'Affaires (CdA) at the US embassy in Delhi following the retirement of the current CdA Daniel Smith. This comes a few years after Richard Verma, also of Indian origin, served as the US ambassador to India during the second term of President Barack Obama.

In a statement, the US state department said, that Mr Keshap, "a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, will be departing for New Delhi to serve as Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim, following the retirement of ambassador Daniel Smith."

It added, "Ambassador Keshap will bring a wealth of experience to the role, having served previously at US embassy, New Delhi, and as deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asia. He most recently served as the principal deputy assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs."

Nadda keeps quiet on Bengal rout

BJP chief says party will come to power by 'another long jump' in 2026 elections

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 29

BJP president J.P. Nadda, silent on his party's failure to win the Assembly elections with 200-plus seats in West Bengal and protect the cadres from post-poll violence by the ruling TMC, on Tuesday hailed their victory in 77 seats as a "long jump", which also made them the only Opposition, to boost the sagging morale

of the party ranks.

Throwing a challenge to three-time CM Mamata Banerjee within two months of the whitewash of the BJP, Mr Nadda, however, unabashedly painted a dream before his party leaders like Dilip Ghosh and Suwendu Adhikari of coming to power by "another long jump" in the state in 2026.

Mr Nadda told the state BJP executive committee meeting virtually from

New Delhi, "The election got over recently. The BJP has covered a long distance within a very short span of time. In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls we won only two seats which accounted for around 18 per cent votes. In the 2016 Assembly elections, we won three seats with a vote share of 10.16 per cent. In 2019, we bagged 18 seats, achieving 40.25 per cent votes. In this Assembly polls, we got

38.10 per cent votes and made a jump in seats from three to 77. It is a long jump."

He elaborated, "No one else is left in the field except the TMC which is ahead of us. Both the CPI(M) and Congress, which existed for three decades and two and a half decades respectively, vanished. It is only the BJP which has become the Opposition and is fighting the ruling TMC."

'No meet' was scheduled with Sidhu: Rahul

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and general secretary Priyanka Gandhi did not meet disgruntled legislator Navjot Singh Sidhu on Tuesday. On Monday, Navjot Singh's team had said he would meet Mr Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The suspense over the meeting continued during the day on Tuesday but when Mr Gandhi was stopped by reporters outside his residence, he said that there was "no meeting" scheduled between him and Mr Sidhu.

Insiders claim that though Mr Sidhu announced that he will be meeting Mr Gandhi but now a meeting may happen between him and the high-powered committee, constituted by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, to sort out the issues.

They added that maybe the optics of meeting between Mr Sidhu and Mr Gandhi may not look good, especially when a meeting between Punjab chief minister Capt. Amarinder Singh did



not take place. The chief minister was in Delhi last week and met the high-powered committee and several other leaders of the party. In the last couple of days, the support for Capt. Singh has grown within the party.

In a bid to solve the Punjab imbroglio apart from the high-powered committee, Mr Gandhi also has been meeting several leaders from the state, including ministers, MLAs and MPs.

The problem arose in Punjab when Mr Sidhu opened a front against Capt. Singh charging him with not keeping his promises to the people of the state. The utterances of Mr Sidhu have not gone down well with many in the party. Mr Sidhu went on a tirade against the Punjab chief minister in all publications and on his social media last week.

BJP candidate files plea in HC over Bengal poll defeat

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 29

BJP candidate from Pandabeshwar Jitendra Tiwari on Tuesday filed an election petition at the Calcutta high court challenging his defeat to Narendranath Chakraborty of the TMC by a margin over 3,500 votes in the West Bengal Assembly polls.

This is the first time a BJP candidate has moved legally to counter similar steps by chief minister Mamata Banerjee and four other TMC candidates for their defeat in close margins in the seats they had contested.

Recently state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh informed of



▶ **JITENDRA TIWARI**, a Trinamul Congress legislator from Pandabeshwar and also the Asansol mayor earlier, had defected to the BJP ahead of the Assembly elections in West Bengal

his party's decision to move the HC in those seats where it's candidates lost narrowly.

Mr Tiwari, who was a TMC MLA from Pandabeshwar and was also the Asansol mayor earlier, defected to the BJP ahead of the Assembly polls and got a ticket also.

He, however, lost to the TMC candidate by 3,803 votes.

Alleging foul play in the counting of votes on May 2, he sought a recounting

in his election petition which was, however, filed well beyond the deadline of 45 days from the date of announcement of poll results.

His lawyer, Samson Correa, however, pointed out that there have been instances of moving such a plea at the Supreme Court beyond deadline. "We will appeal to the high court for hearing our prayer in view of the Covid-19 pandemic situation," he said.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of passengers that Railways have decided to change the timings of Train No. 06002 Hazrat Nizamuddin-Thiruvananthapuram Central Superfast Special (Weekly) at Chiplun Railway Station as under:-

Revised Timings of Train No. 06002 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Superfast Special (Weekly) at Chiplun Railway Station					
STATION	Existing Timings		Revised Timings		With Effect From
	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	
CHIPLUN	20:02	20:04	20:22	20:24	02.07.2021 (Friday)

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

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

RailMadad Helpline No. 139

Visit RailMadad Website :- www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in

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NORTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Office of The Assistant Commissioner
City-Sadar Pahar Ganj Zone, Old Hindu College Building,
Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006

No. AC/C-SP/2021/D-201 Date : 25.06.2021

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION

The unclaimed goods removed from public places including roads, streets and footpaths during the course of encroachment removal actions in City-SP Zone under the provision of DMC Act, 1957 shall be auctioned to public on 02.07.2021 at 11:30 AM at Licensing Store, City Zone situated at Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg in front of G.B. Pant Hospital on the reserved price @ Rs.18,02,935/-. The goods/articles can be inspected on any working day with the permission of Administrative Officer/City-SP Zone. For more details, may visit North DMC portal www.mcdonline.nic.in or visit office of Administrative Officer of City-SP Zone. RO No. 16/DPI/North/2021-22 Administrative Officer, City SP-Zone

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL

BB CANTT, BATWARA, SRINAGAR, J&K-190004

Website: www.apssrinagar.co.in, E-Mail: apssrinagarkmr@gmail.com

TENDER NOTICE

- On behalf of Chairman APS Srinagar, sealed tenders are hereby invited for the **Printing & Supplying of 1,000 students School Diaries** by or before 09 July 2021.
- The school diary of 75 leaves in black ink printing with four title cover pages including cool lamination. The school reserves the right to cancel the call for quotation without assigning any reason or terminate this contract in part of in full. The supplier may visit the school to see the previous year's sample before quoting his final rates during the office hours. For any query contract during all working days on civil land line Phone No.: 0194-2468224.

Sd/-
PRINCIPAL

SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), Namely: Shweta Kumari, D/o: Sh. Gyanchand, R/o: H.No. B-1/04, Maharana Pratap Chowk, Shahbad Dairy, Delhi, Aged: 17½ years, has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi since 11.06.2021. In this Regard a FIR No. 0290/2021, Dated 12.06.2021, has been registered at P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:
Height: 5'1" feet, Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Clothing: Pink Colour Kurta, Pink Colour Pajama and Blue Colour Chappal in her feet.
Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/kidnaped girl, may inform SHO, Shahbad Dairy, Delhi at E-mail: cicbci@cbi.nic.in or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Fax No. 011-230111334, Tel. No. : 011-23014046 (Direct), 011-23015229 & 23015218 extn. 210

S.H.O
P.S. Shahbad Dairy, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27821047, 27822207

DP/1109/ON/2021.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of train No. 01057 CST Mumbai-Amritsar Jn. Express Special will be revised due to operational reasons from 10.07.2021. Details are as under:-

01057 CST Mumbai - Amritsar Jn. Express Special Train (Via Bhopal-New Delhi-Ambala)					
STATIONS	Existing Arr.	Existing Dep.	Revised Arr.	Revised Dep.	
CST Mumbai	---	23:30	---	23:30	
No time change between CST Mumbai & Talvada Stations					
Chhanera	10:10	10:12	10:10	10:12	
Khirkiya	10:45	10:47	10:47	10:49	
Harda	11:13	11:15	11:13	11:15	
Timarni	11:28	11:30	11:28	11:30	
Banapura	11:53	11:55	11:53	11:55	
Budni	Passing	Passing	13:20	13:21	
Mandi Dip	14:28	14:30	14:23	14:25	
Habibganj	14:50	14:52	15:08	15:10	
Bhopal	15:15	15:20	15:30	15:35	
Vidisha	16:17	16:19	16:13	16:15	
Gulabganj	16:36	16:38	16:33	16:35	
Ganj Basoda	16:53	16:55	16:50	16:52	
Mandi Bamora	17:20	17:22	17:18	17:20	
No time change between Bina Jn. & Amritsar Jn. Stations					
Amritsar Jn.	16:15	---	16:15	---	

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

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

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SHORT TAKES

Man feeds daughter beer, lands in jail

Kasaragod, Kerala: A 45-year-old man was arrested for allegedly feeding his minor daughter beer at Hosdurg in this north Kerala district, the police said on Tuesday. Radhakrishnan, a native of Thoyammal here, gave the alcoholic beverage to his eight-year-old daughter while consuming it himself at home on Sunday. The child suddenly developed uneasiness and started throwing up, following which her mother rushed her to a nearby hospital. After being alerted by the hospital authorities, the police came to the spot and recorded the statement of the girl in her mother's presence. "A case was registered and the father was arrested later based on her statement," a police official said. A local court here remanded the accused for two weeks. — *PTI*

Another extension to Niti Aayog CEO

New Delhi: Niti Aayog chief executive officer (CEO) Amitabh Kant was on Tuesday given one-year extension till June 2022, according to a personnel ministry order. This is a third extension for the 65-year-old civil servant in the post. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension in tenure of Kant for a further period of one year beyond June 30, 2021 i.e upto June 30, 2022 or until further orders, it said. He was appointed as the CEO of the National Institution for Transforming India (Niti Aayog) on February 17, 2016, for a fixed two-year term. Mr Kant was later given an extension till June 30, 2019. His term was further extended for two years, till this month end, in June 2019. — *PTI*

22 zila chiefs in UP elected unopposed

Lucknow: Chairpersons of 22 zila panchayats out of a total of 75 in Uttar Pradesh were on Tuesday declared elected unopposed by the state poll panel with the BJP claiming victory in 21 seats. The Samajwadi Party said the remaining one seat in the Etawah district was bagged by its candidate. The voting for the remaining 53 seats of district panchayat chairpersons will be held on July 3 from 11 am to 3 pm. The counting of votes will start the same day after the polling ends. UP State Election Commissioner Manoj Kumar, in a statement on Tuesday, said chairpersons of zila panchayats of 22 districts have been elected unopposed. The poll panel did not announce the party affiliation of winning candidates but the BJP later claimed victory over 21 seats and the SP over one seat of the Etawah district. — *PTI*

MAN FORCED TO EAT HUMAN EXCRETA, KILLED

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BERHAMPUR, JUNE 29

A man in Odisha's Ganjam district was forced to eat human excreta and asked to extract his own teeth by himself with a pair of pliers before being allegedly murdered by a group of villagers who suspected him of practicing black magic. The barbaric incident which occurred at Rameyapalli village under Ganjam district on June 19 came to light only after a video clip containing the act made its way to the internet. As many as 14 people have been arrested in connection with the incident. In the disturbing viral video, deceased, N. Venkataraman and two others, identified as Bhim Raju Reddy and P. Dhableswar, were seen being assaulted brutally by a mob. Hundreds of villagers were present when the trio was thrashed mercilessly. Later, a critically injured Venkataraman was asked to pull out his own teeth. A hapless Venkataraman was seen making desperate attempts to pull out his teeth. Subsequently, the attackers got his teeth pulled out by another victim. However, the brutality did not stop there. While Venkataraman was subsequently killed by the mob, two others escaped death by a whisker. "So far 14 persons have been arrested in connection with the incident," Ganjam SP Brijesh Ray said.

31 charged for ₹1,100cr J&K Bank loan fraud

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, JUNE 29

Jammu and Kashmir's anti-corruption bureau (ACB) has filed a chargesheet before a special anti-graft court at Jammu against 31 persons in a ₹1,100 crore loan scam in the state-owned J&K Bank Limited.

Among the accused are Sandip Jhunjhunwala, a businessman of Delhi who is the managing director of REI Agro Limited, Muhammad Yousaf Bhat, the then branch head of the J&K bank at Mahim, Mumbai and 29 others, including bank officials. The case registered by the ACB in 2019 under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code and J&K Public Company Act pertains to allegedly sanctioning and disbursing crop loans to the tune of ₹ 400 crores, term loan of ₹ 150 crores from J&K Bank branch Mahim and bill discounting facilities to the tune of ₹115 crores from J&K Bank, Vasant Vihar (Delhi) branch, in favour of Messer's REI Agro Limited "without tangible securities and in violation of banking norms".

"Investigation has revealed that the said REI Agro Ltd its its chairman and managing director had no intention of repaying the loans to the bank. The sole purpose from the very beginning was to swindle the funds obtained," the chargesheet says. It further said that these loans were sanctioned "with malafide intention in violation of banking norms in order to confer an undue benefit upon the promoters of the company and JLGs".

Delhi police books social media giant over access to child pornography on platform More trouble for Twitter, 3 fresh FIRs filed

New Delhi/Lucknow, June 29: In more trouble for Twitter, three fresh FIRs were lodged against the social media giant Twitter on Tuesday as it faces mounting legal scrutiny over recent issues flagged by the Centre and several state governments.

The Delhi police cyber cell on Tuesday registered an FIR under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Information Technology (IT) Act against Twitter on

the basis of a complaint from NCPCR over allowing access to child sexual abuse material on the platform.

In its May 29 letter, the NCPCR had said that it was found that "the toolkit for deep and dark web" was also available on Twitter. This gives access to all, including children, to obtain child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

The complaint was against Twitter Inc and Twitter Communication India Private Lt., the police said.

Though Twitter was



silent on the issue of the distorted India map, which it had removed on Monday after an uproar, its spokesperson said that the company has a zero-tolerance policy for child sexual exploitation and will work with law enforcement and NGO

CDS visits forward posts along LAC in Himachal

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 29

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat on Tuesday visited forward areas along the line of actual control (LAC) with China in the Central Sector in Himachal Pradesh to review the military preparedness.

This visit comes, when defence minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday completed his three days tour to the Ladakh sector where he discussed the situation at the LAC with China with top army commanders.

On arrival at the forward most post in Sumdo Sub Sector, the CDS was briefed on the operational preparedness of forces towards safeguarding the territorial integrity of the nation. The CDS interacted extensively with the Indian Army, ITBP and GREF personnel deployed in the remote areas and appreciated their state of high morale. He encouraged all ranks to keep up



Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat interacts with Army officers during his visit to the line of actual control near Sumdo, Himachal Pradesh, on Tuesday.

the high state of alertness and professionalism displayed by them.

Later in the day, General Bipin Rawat visited the Headquarters of Western Command of Indian Army at Chandimandir where he reviewed the operational situation along the Western borders.

CDS commended the formation for their efforts to ensure force preservation and at the same time stepping forward to provide support in terms of establishing Covid hospitals at Chandigarh, Patiala,

Faridabad, providing paramedical staff in aid of civil hospitals, assistance in vaccination of common citizens and revitalizing oxygen plants at various places in the nation's fight against the pandemic. He stressed the need to focus on training hard and remain vigilant to thwart the nefarious designs of our adversaries. He emphasized that all ranks must keep themselves abreast with the latest trends in information technology, emerging cyber threats and counter-measures.

2 Valley Sikh girls deny forced conversion, marriage

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, JUNE 29

One of the two Sikh girls who, as per the allegations levelled by the community leaders, were forcibly converted to Islam and married to Kashmiri Muslim youth came up with a video on social media late Monday night to deny it.

She said she was 19 years old when she embraced Islam way back in 2012 and solemnized Nikah with her college batchmate in 2014 and lives with him happily in Srinagar despite facing threats from some Sikh community members of Punjab. "It is being said that one of the two Sikh girls

Manmeet and Dhanmeet went missing and that while Manmeet has been recovered, Dhanmeet is still untraceable. Some Sikh leaders can be heard saying in a video that is currently in circulation that the statements attributed to both these girls were recorded at gunpoint which is untrue," she said.

She said, "I'm Dhanmeet and the statement I made was recorded by a magistrate in a courtroom. My story goes back to 2012 when I converted to Islam and two years later married my (college) batchmate Muzaffar."

She alleged that after her marriage with Muzaffar she was, along with her

parents, forced to travel to Amritsar where some Sikh leaders and activists harassed her and also threatened to kill her unless she changed her statement.

She said that it was after a judge recorded her statement that she was allowed to live with her husband in Kashmir. She urged the Sikh community not to present her case as "forced conversion and marriage" or make it a political issue.

Another Sikh woman 26-year-old Viran Pal Kaur, a former resident of Pulwama district's Awantipore area, who adopted Arabic Islamic name Khadeeja, has released to media documents-duly verified by concerned authorities-of her conversion and marriage with a Muslim youth from the Valley's central district of Budgam.

Manzoor Ahmed Butt that took place recently.

However, the third girl — 18-year-old Manmeet Kaur — from Srinagar's Chatti Patshahi, Rainawari area, who, the community lead-

ers had alleged, was forcibly converted to Islam and then married to a Muslim man almost thrice of her age but was restored to her parents has since reached Delhi.

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee president, S. Manjinder Singh Sirsa, who took her to the national capital, said he was grateful to the members of the Sikh community of Delhi "for extending such a welcome to Sikh daughter, Manmeet Kaur from Srinagar".

He said that Manmeet "came to Delhi with us today to take the blessings and thank Sangat for supporting her family".

partners in India to tackle the issue.

It is the latest in a series of run-ins between Twitter and Indian authorities. Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari was recently summoned by Ghaziabad police in a probe into an objectionable video posted in connection with an assault on an elderly Muslim man.

The Uttar Pradesh police has now moved the Supreme Court against an order of the Karnataka high court restraining it from taking coercive

action against Mr Maheshwari in the case.

The first FIR in the wrong map issue was lodged at the Khurja Nagar police station in Bulandshahr district of UP on Monday evening against Mr Maheshwari and news partnerships head Amrita Tripathi under IPC Section 505 (2) based on a complaint by an office-bearer of right-wing outfit Bajrang Dal.

Section 505 (2) relates to "statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes".

Charges under IT Act — Section 74 (publication for fraudulent purpose) have also been invoked in the case, according to the FIR.

The map showed the UTs of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir outside India.

Later, the MP police also booked the Twitter India MD over the display of a distorted map of India on the platform.

The BJP-ruled state had taken umbrage to the map controversy, with state home minister Narrottam Mishra calling it a "serious issue". — *PTI*

Indians advised to restrict travel in Afghanistan

New Delhi, June 29: The Indian embassy in Afghanistan on Tuesday issued an advisory strongly asking all Indian nationals to avoid all types of non-essential movements in view of escalating violence, including on civilians, in various parts of the country.

The embassy said the security situation in Afghanistan remains "dangerous" in several provinces and that terror groups have escalated violent activities and carried out a series of complex attacks, including on civilians, adding Indian nationals are no exceptions as they additionally face a serious threat of kidnapping.

It said travelling outside the main cities should be avoided and that any essential movement may be kept as discrete as possible.

"The security situation in Afghanistan remains dangerous in several provinces. Terror groups operating in Afghanistan have escalated violent activities and carried out a series of complex

attacks in various parts of Afghanistan, including targeting Afghan defence and security forces and Afghan government institutions and even civilians," the embassy said.

"Indian nationals are not exceptions, and they additionally face a serious threat of kidnapping," it said.

Afghanistan witnessed a series of attacks in the last few weeks as the US looked to complete the withdrawal of its forces from Afghanistan by September 11, ending a nearly two-decade of its military presence in the war-ravaged country.

"In recent weeks, targeted attacks are on the rise in various provinces and districts, directed against government establishments and security posts, have seen civilians caught in the middle of the conflict. Incidents of roadside IED (improvised explosive device) blasts and magnetic IEDs used to target vehicles of civilians continue to be reported from many parts of the country," the embassy said. — *PTI*

Govt issues draft notification on ethanol blending in petrol

New Delhi, June 29: Paving the way for the transformation of the fossil fuel ecosystem in the country, the ministry of road transport and highways has issued a draft notification for facilitating use of a blend of 12 per cent and 15 per cent ethanol in gasoline as automotive fuels.

Comments have been invited from stakeholders within a period of 30 days.

"The newly manufactured gasoline vehicles

fitted with spark ignition engine compatible to run on ethanol gasoline blends of E-12 and E-15 shall be type approved as per prevailing gasoline emission norms," the ministry's draft notification said.

Recently, road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari had said the government will take a decision over flex-fuel engines as it is considering making these mandatory for the automobile industry. — *PTI*

Govt asks NIA to probe drone hit; Lashkar may be behind it

■ **Continued from Page 1** the country," a senior intelligence official said.

The intelligence officials claimed there was a major threat to all defence installations close to the India-Pakistan border both in J&K and Punjab region and that they were now on maximum security alert.

Special Quick Reaction Teams have been deployed at all defence facilities in the border region with strict instructions that any suspected drones flying nearby should be shot down.

J&K's director-general of police Dilbagh Singh, said in the recent past drones have been used to drop weapons and narcotics consignments. He said the twin blasts at the Jammu Air Force Station was a "terror attack" in

which IED payloads were dropped using drones. A security alert for all vital installations in the Jammu region was issued on Sunday itself.

ICP (Kashmir range), Vijay Kumar told reporters in Srinagar on Tuesday that security has been beefed up further around vital installations across the Kashmir Valley as well in view of the threat posed by possible drone attacks. He said he attended a meeting chaired by Lt. Gen. Devendra Pratap Pandey, commander of the Srinagar-based 15 (Chinar) Corps, on Monday to discuss the situation emerging out of the recent drone attacks and activity and the possibility of such attempts in future. "In this backdrop, security has been

strengthened around vital installations and along the Line of Control," he said.

Mr Kumar said that another meeting was held a day earlier at which the officers of all security forces including the Army, CRPF, BSF, Air Force and NSG deliberated on the issue. "We have done the preparations... It is a very serious threat, a technological threat which will be dealt with technologically," he said. He added: "We have done deployment in this regard. Because it is of strategic importance, we cannot share further details."

He said a drone was seized by the police from Srinagar on Tuesday and an FIR has been lodged. "We are taking action in this regard," he added.

Arrested LeT 'commander' shot dead in J&K gunfight

■ **Continued from Page 1** jawan injured in the clash, he said. He claimed the slain militants were planning "two big attacks" along the Srinagar-Baramulla road, often used by the Army for carrying men and supplies to the Kashmir border.

He confirmed that Abrar, a resident of Nabal in central J&K's Budgam dis-

trict, was arrested by the police after intercepting the Maruti Alto car he was travelling in at a makeshift checkpoint laid at the Parimpora intersection of the road earlier on Monday. The police said the naka was laid jointly by it and the CRPF after specific inputs on militants planning an attack on the highway.

Mr Kumar told reporters that after arresting Abrar and seizing a pistol and a grenade from the car, he was booked under Section 27 of the Indian Evidence Act and taken to a nearby police station for a joint interrogation by the J&K police, Army and CRPF. "During interrogation, Abrar made a disclosure that he had dumped more

weapons in a house at Maloor but didn't reveal that his associate by the name of Muslim, a Pakistani terrorist, was also hiding in the house". He said that soon after the security forces launched an operation to recover the weapons, the hidden militant opened indiscriminate fire, triggering an encounter in which Abrar

was also killed. He added that two AK-47 rifles were recovered from the encounter site, besides the pistol and grenade seized from Abrar's possession earlier.

He said Abrar and Muslim had travelled to Srinagar from north Kashmir on Monday morning to carry out "two big attacks at two places".

He added that the two were part of a Lashkar module - that included Khurshid, who was killed in a fire-fight in Sopore earlier -- responsible for carrying out two separate attacks on the security forces in Parimpora and neighbouring Khushipora in which three CRPF and two Army jawans were killed respectively.

"Yesterday (Monday), the general officer commanding (of Chinar Corps) chaired a meeting in which I attended. The security has been strengthened around vital installations and along the Line of Control," Mr Kumar, IGP, Kashmir told reporters.

THE ASIAN AGE

30 JUNE 2021

FM's stimulus timely, but poor need immediate aid

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced eight measures to support certain sectors, including small businesses and micro-lenders, which were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The stimulus is estimated to be worth ₹6.3 lakh crore, but most of it will be provided through credit guarantees to stressed sectors.

As manufacturing companies have more or less come out of the deadly second wave successfully, the current stimulus package focuses on supporting contact-intensive sectors, especially tourism. Tourism is one of badly affected sectors as people have drastically curtailed their travel plans.

Though there have been demands — including from captains of the Indian industry — for direct cash transfers to the poor and the middle classes to sustain demand, the government does not appear to be keen on this idea. In his speech to delegates in Hyderabad, chief economic advisor Krishnamurthy V. Subramaniam gave out the government's line of thought. Referring to some studies, he claimed that a rupee spent on capital expenditure would add ₹4.50

Though the government's preference of capital expenditure cannot be faulted, the finance minister should not forget that the worst-affected are the poor...

to the economy, while the same amount spent on freebies would add just 97 paise. Though the second wave of Covid has been devastating for people's health, Mr Subramaniam argued that its impact on the economy has been milder than the first wave of infections last year. This interpretation appears to have led to the government's belief that the economy does not need a massive stimulus through direct cash transfers, and that the demand would return in the due course. While the government's assessment of the macroeconomic situation is accurate, it should not rely too much on GST collection numbers. Sometimes, higher consumption by the rich could offset the low demand from the poor and may result in robust GST collections. The government should, therefore, not lose sight of the Covid pandemic's impact at the micro level. The infection has forced lakhs of Covid-infected people from the unorganised sector to lose out on their income. Similarly, lakhs of people from the lower middle class, who were hospitalised for the treatment, had accumulated debt, which they can't repay for the next few years. Months-long lockdowns since last March have pushed many families into poverty.

The government, therefore, cannot behave as if everything is normal just because macroeconomic indicators appear healthy. Though the government's preference of capital expenditure cannot be faulted, the finance minister should not forget that the worst-affected, as the chief economic advisor had admitted, are the poor and she cannot expect them to wait for the fruits of economic reforms trickled down.

Though the spending on the infrastructure projects and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme have been immensely helpful in providing jobs to unskilled labour, the government needs to further increase capital expenditure and ensure the benefits of these initiatives reach the targeted people as fast as possible. Otherwise, it would be too late for many people.

Doctors, too, need protection

The recent advisory of the Union home ministry to the state governments to invoke the stringent sections of the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Act, 2020, against those who indulge in assault on doctors and healthcare professionals is welcome. As per the Act, a person proved to have assaulted doctors or healthcare professionals can be jailed for up to seven years and fined up to ₹5 lakh. The advisory becomes all the more relevant in the backdrop of the series of attacks on healthcare professionals during the pandemic; the latest being reported from Assam.

It must, however, be remembered that there is no lack of deterrent penal provisions against attacks on hospitals and people employed there: as many as 19 states have enacted special laws for their protection. But the real issue is the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the law enforcers to use the legal tools. The latest is the police inaction against a constable who assaulted a surgeon in a government hospital in Alappuzha district in Kerala alleging that medical negligence led to his mother's death though a police investigation report said the patient had died before reaching the hospital. The police advanced one reason or the other not to arrest the assaulter until he was granted anticipatory bail by the high court.

The danger of the state apathy towards the medical fraternity is that it could turn to defensive practice, which would impact the poorest sections of society.

The government must design a two-pronged strategy to address the issue as a whole. First, it must ensure that healthcare professionals are given adequate security and violators of the law must be brought to book without fail. Two, it must put in place a fair, transparent, fast and credible mechanism to process complaints of medical negligence. The issue demands urgent government attention and action, not just advisories.

THE ASIAN AGE

KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUBHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

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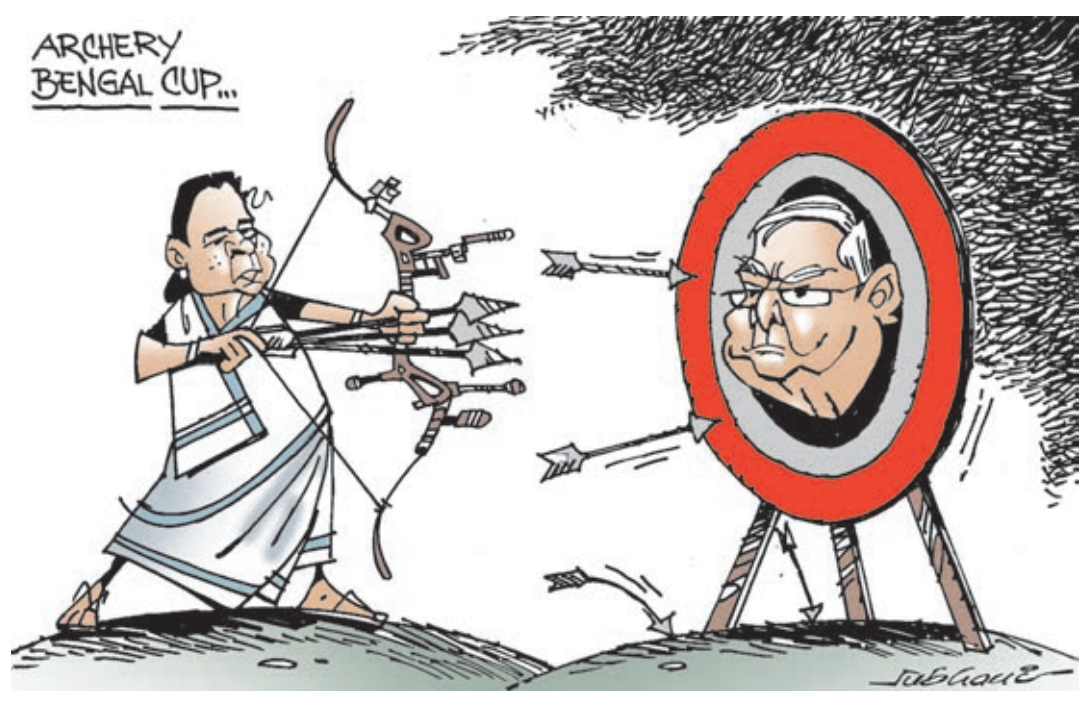
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Subhani



In Covid crisis, SC forces Centre to share vital info



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

Along with the Central and state governments, the Supreme Court has been playing an important role in monitoring the management of the situation arising out of the six-week-long Covid-19 second wave between the middle of April and the end of May. Through its order of April 30, the Supreme Court bench of Justices Dhananjay Y. Chandrachud, L. Nageswara Rao and S. Ravindra Bhat had been actively directing the Central and state governments on the supply of liquid medical oxygen in the last week of April and the first week of May, and the availability of beds for critically ill patients in hospitals, as well as the availability of vaccines and their proper distribution across the country.

Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government has claimed credit for its decision on procuring vaccines directly and then allocating them to the states, announced by the PM in a televised address on June 7, the suggestion actually came from the highest court after scrutinising the Centre's policy of acquiring 50 per cent of the vaccines at a set price and leaving the remaining 50 per cent to be negotiated by the state governments and private hospitals with the manufacturers.

The Supreme Court in its April 30 order had said: "Prima facie, there are several aspects of the vaccine pricing policy adopted by the Central government which require that policy to be revisited." The court went on to add: "Prima facie, the rational method of proceeding in a manner consistent with the right to life (which

includes the right to health) under Article 21 would be for the Central government to procure all vaccines and to negotiate the price with the vaccine manufacturers." It concluded with a judicious note of warning: "While we are not passing a conclusive determination on the constitutionality of the current policy, the manner in which the current policy has been framed would prima facie result in a detriment to right to public health, which is an integral element of Article 21 of the Constitution."

The court also noted that individuals and communities had turned to the social media for help and that through the online networks people had tried to help those in distress either by finding the medicines or hospital beds needed. And here comes the acerbic observation: "However, it is with deep distress that we note that individuals seeking help on such platforms have been targeted by alleging that the information posted by them is false and has only been posted on the social media to create panic, defame the administration or damage the nation's image". It went on to say: "We do not hesitate in saying that such targeting shall not be condoned, and the Central government and state governments should ensure that they immediately cease any direct or indirect threats of prosecution and arrest to citizens who air grievances or those who are attempting to help fellow citizens to receive medical aid."

It is indeed a matter of shame that during a time of extreme distress, the Central and state governments had taken adversarial positions against the people, and the

Supreme Court was forced to tick off the authorities and warn them against intimidating people. This is a judgment that should become an integral part of any account of Covid-19 in India, and political leaders in positions of power should hang their heads in shame.

It was after this chastening tone by the Supreme Court that the Central government, through the solicitor-general and its other law officers, has been filing affidavits informing the court about the availability of vaccines, a crucial part of the fight against the pandemic. Most of the vital information on the availability of the vaccines has not been shared by the government with the people. The daily press conference that the health ministry officials hold are used as a propaganda forum to trumpet the number of vaccinations that had been administered that day, and the total figure of those vaccinated. The other key figures like the number of new infections, the total number of those who have been infected since January 2020, and the Covid-19 death toll are relegated to the background. There is a vague promise that there will be enough vaccines available and that by December 2021 the entire adult population of the country, which amounts to 93-94 crore people, would be vaccinated. On May 16, the Union health ministry told the court that 216 crore Covid-19 vaccines would be available, but in its affidavit filed on June 27, the government revised the figure to 135 crores, and details were given of the

share of each of the vaccines available or to be made available in the market.

The information about the availability of vaccines keeps changing simply because the government is still negotiating with foreign vaccine makers like Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson, and there is no clarity as yet on the outcome. It is understandable that the foreign manufacturers are bargaining hard, which is a shameful thing, and the government is in a helpless situation. That is why it wants to do make do with the vaccines available in the country, which have been developed and manufactured in India like Covaxin, or those which have been developed outside the country like Covishield and Sputnik V and are manufactured in India. But transparency has not been a virtue of the Modi government. There has been a continuous attempt to paint a picture of normality in abnormally stressful and distressful times.

The Prime Minister might be under the illusion that he is keeping panic under control, but he is only adding to uncertainty and anxiety among the people. He should have used his monthly radio talk "Mann ki Baat" to share information about the Covid-19 situation in the country and the difficulties that the government and people are facing. Unfortunately, even democratically elected leaders in India have the bad habit of hiding the truth from the people. It is in this kind of dubious situation that the Supreme Court is performing the yeoman service of compelling the government to share facts, to share information, something that the government should be doing on its own. The Supreme Court is thus ensuring the flow of crucial information to the people in this time of crisis.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

The info about the availability of vaccines keeps changing simply because the government is still negotiating with foreign makers like Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson...

LETTERS

PREZ INDISCRETION

The President's candid but unnecessary comments on his salary and the tax he pays were unprecedented and surely unfortunate, coming as they did from the constitutional head of state. To compare his perceivedly meagre post-tax earnings with a teacher's supposedly more decent salary and savings was adding insult to injury. Curiously, His Excellency forgot to take into account the astronomical presidential perks (tax-free, of course) that he enjoys, including his super-luxurious stay at the sprawling Rashtrapati Bhavan. Lastly, did the President indirectly express an opinion on the country's regressive tax structure?

Bhaskar Roy
New Delhi

RECKLESS PAST BELIEF

IT IS HARD TO understand how the government of Uttarakhand could even think of having the Char Dham Yatra after what happened during the Kumbh Mela. It needed the wisdom of the courts to impose a stay on the Yatra. It has been observed that devotion and religious beliefs do not prevent the attack of the coronavirus. Considering that the Delta and Delta Plus variants are more infectious, the Centre should announce a blanket ban on all social, religious and political congregations for another three months.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

TSITSIPAS SADDENS

AMERICAN FRANCES Tiafoe caused the first big upset of the Wimbledon men's singles tournament by beating third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4 6-4 6-3 on Monday. Tsitsipas, playing his first match since his French Open final defeat by Novak Djokovic on June 13, was on the backfoot from the beginning against a 57th-ranked opponent who took the game to him. The Greek also lost in the opening round on his last previous appearance at the grass court tournament in 2019, when he was the seventh seed. Has he lost heart after losing the five-set final to the World No. 1?

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

A.G. Noorani



Modi's Kashmir plan: Present Pak with fait accompli post-delimitation

The conference of Kashmiri parties convened by the Indian government in New Delhi on June 24, 2021, proves once again that Kashmiris cannot be crushed into obedience. Jawaharlal Nehru imprisoned Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah for 11 years only to invite him to New Delhi as his guest for talks. In between, he had sent his Dr P. Subbarayan to the Jammu Central Jail to sound out Sheikh *sahib*. He discovered that the prisoner had not changed his convictions.

In 1965-66, Jayaprakash Narayan sent his emissaries to Kodaikanal to sound out Sheikh *sahib* who was in internment there with Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg. Nothing came out of it. Released in 1968, it took Prime Minister Indira Gandhi seven years to conclude an accord with her former friend Sheikh Abdullah whose imprisonment in 1953 she had opposed vehemently.

Those who criticise Sheikh *sahib* for the 1975 accord with Indira Gandhi should remember that the ground had been cut under his feet by the Shimla Pact of 1972. It con-

gealed the status quo but also provided for talks on Kashmir to which she never agreed.

Insurgency erupted in 1989. At its peak, Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao said that the sky was the limit if violence was eschewed. On the India-Pakistan plane, two major developments took place. The Agra summit was aborted by L.K. Advani for spurious reasons. An agreed draft was ready but was rejected by India at the very last minute.

At the domestic level, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference was wrecked by its foremost leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani. His was an impossible formula — all or nothing. Coupled with this was the personal angle. He wanted to be the leader and was foolish enough to declare this ambition twice. On each occasion sharp reactions by his colleagues compelled him publicly to withdraw his demand. In truth, he wrecked the Hurriyat. Sadly, he is now a broken man in poor health and has all but withdrawn from politics. Two Presidents of Pakistan discovered

his limits. Farooq Laghari was taken aback at the residence of Pakistan's high commissioner to India in New Delhi by how Geelani reportedly offered him sharp criticism of the apparel of Pakistan TV's anchors. President Pervez Musharraf reprimanded Geelani when he took up Balochistan and North Waziristan.

On the wreckage of the Hurriyat, a diminutive Joint Resistance League was formed comprising Geelani, Yaseen Malik and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, the most sensible of the lot. He is under house arrest still and was not invited to New Delhi.

Why has New Delhi taken the initiative now and what has it to offer to the Kashmiris after it wronged them in 2019?

Restoration of statehood had been offered by India since 2019. Restoration of Article 370 of the constitution, which was supposed to guarantee Kashmiris special autonomous status, is a different issue. Its abrogation had been demanded by the BJP. The government received public support in 2019 when it abrogated Article 370

though its action was shamelessly unconstitutional and the reasons for it were patently dishonest.

The Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has her ears transfixed to the ground and her eyes fixed on Hindu voters. She is desperate about retaining her diminishing flock. It is difficult to see how any Kashmiri with self-respect can possibly support the abrogation of Article 370.

But apart from Article 370, New Delhi's real concern is with fresh determinations of Assembly constituencies so that Jammu acquires a majority in the assembly. This is Narendra Modi's game — settle the Kashmir dispute once and for all "on the ground", as they use the expression. Next confront Pakistan with a fait accompli — "see it is all over. We have nothing to talk about now".

There is a fatal flaw in this cynical reasoning. There is a powerful pro-Pakistan constituency in Kashmir. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed could not resist paying tribute to Pakistan the day he took the oath of office as chief minister in December 2014 in the presence of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. He was riled because Mufti Sayeed thanked Pakistan for allowing elections to be held in Kashmir. This revealed a lot more than he intended.

The question is: what result can an open conference of 14 parties possibly yield? The Centre has consistently kept its stooges in Kashmir well supplied with funds. Among the invitees to the New Delhi conference were at least two who are notorious as New Delhi's paid agents.

It may be recalled that the cruel blow which New Delhi inflicted on Kashmir had three dimensions — abrogation of Article 370, wipe out of Kashmir's identity and delimitation of Assembly constituencies.

It is the last which lies at the core of New Delhi's foul deed. On June 22, Mehbooba Mufti, president of the People's Democratic Party, said: "Delimitation is part of the same process used to break the state. This wasn't reorganisation, it was disorganisation. That way it is illegal and done with a certain purpose."

By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKES

XI HANDS OUT MEDALS AMID CELEBRATIONS

Beijing, June 29: Amid celebrations over the centenary of the ruling Communist Party, Chinese President Xi Jinping has awarded loyal party members with medals and called for adherence to Marxism.

Xi's speech at a ceremony Tuesday follows a lavish celebration at Beijing's Olympic stadium on Monday night emphasising China's rise to economic and political prominence following reforms enacted more than 40 years ago.

While unleashing private industry, the ruling party has maintained an iron grip on political power, along with preferential policies toward state-run companies.

RUSSIA TARGETS INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS

Moscow, June 29: Russian authorities on Tuesday morning raided the apartments of several investigative journalists and their family members, a move that comes amid mounting pressure on Russia's independent media outlets.

Police searched the apartments of Roman Badanin, chief editor of the *Proekt* investigative online outlet, and Maria Zholobova, one of its journalists.

Officers also raided the home of the parents of Badanin's deputy, Mikhail Rubin. Rubin was detained near Zholobova's residential building and brought to his parents' apartment. *Proekt* said in its account in the Telegram messaging app that the raids occurred after the outlet promised to release an investigation into Russia's interior minister, Vladimir Koltsev, and his alleged wealth.

BUSAN FORMER MAYOR JAILED FOR SEX ABUSE

Seoul, June 29: The former mayor of South Korea's second-largest city was jailed Tuesday on a three-year sentence for sexually abusing two city employees during his tenure. The lawyers of Oh Keo-don didn't immediately return calls and text messages asking whether they plan to appeal.

Busan's district court also ordered Oh to receive counselling and banned him from jobs at child welfare organisations and disability facilities for five years following the end of his jail term. Oh, who was seen as a key ally of Busan-raised President Moon Jae-in, stepped down as the city's mayor in April 2020 after admitting he had "unnecessary physical contact" with a female public servant who accused him of groping her in his office.

SUU KYI BID TO DISQUALIFY TESTIMONY DENIED

Bangkok, June 29: Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi suffered a legal setback Tuesday when a judge denied her lawyers' motion to disqualify prosecution testimony against her on a sedition charge, her defense team said.

The court, however, said it would allow the issue to be referred to the High Court and would suspend testimony until a ruling is issued. Ousted President Win Myint and the former mayor of Naypyitaw, Myo Aung, her close political allies, are co-defendants in the charge. The court will continue to hear prosecution testimony on other charges Suu Kyi faces: That she illegally imported walkie-talkies for her bodyguards' use and used those radios without a licence, and violated Covid-19 curbs twice during the 2020 election campaign.

JAIL TO ZUMA FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT

Johannesburg, June 29: The apex court in South Africa on Tuesday sentenced the country's former president Jacob Zuma to 15 months' imprisonment for contempt of court after he walked out of hearings of the Commission of Enquiry into State Capture in November last year and refused to return to it.

The court also said that the sentence could not be suspended. The Commission, which is investigation allegations of corruption and bribery at state and parastatal institutions, had asked that Zuma be sent to prison for two years.

Zuma has repeatedly said that he would rather go to jail than cooperate with the Commission.

Justice Sisi Khampepe of the Constitutional Court described Zuma's statements as "outlandish" and "intolerable".

US to spend big to counter China

\$250 bn to boost American competitiveness

Washington, June 29: The US plans a large spending plan to counter China. According to the senate, China is America's biggest geopolitical and geo-economic problem and handed the United States Innovation and Competition Act 2021 to spend greater than \$250 billion to be certain that the US stays on prime in phrases of technological analysis and manufacturing.

The invoice is an uncommon level of settlement between the Republicans and the Democrats. In a vote, 68 of the 100-member senate supported the measure, with 32 in opposition to. The senate is evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats and consultants say that the vote exhibits how the two political events are united on the necessity to counter Beijing's financial and army ambitions.

Supporters say the bundle is one of the greatest industrial payments in US historical past and the largest funding in scientific analysis that the nation has seen in many years.

The invoice geared toward bolstering American competitiveness with China with a spread of measures.

- According to the senate, China is America's biggest geopolitical and geo-economic problem.
- It handed the United States Innovation and Competition Act 2021 to spend greater than \$250 billion to be certain that the US stays on prime in phrases of technological analysis and manufacturing.

The key thought is that this, from part 3005, which reads: "The United States must ensure that all federal departments and agencies are organised to reflect the fact that strategic competition with the PRC is the United States' greatest geopolitical and geo-economic challenge."

To meet that problem, the senate licenced within the finances \$190 billion geared toward massively growing R&D at universi-

ties and different establishments and boosting improvements in synthetic intelligence, drones and different rising applied sciences. To create an American model of China's 'Special Economic Zones', \$10 billion are to be invested in "regional technology hubs". For the growth of home semiconductor manufacturing, \$52 billion has been provisioned. More than \$23 billion for area exploration and the event of area industries has been earmarked as effectively.

The invoice contains a number of China-specific provisions, together with the prohibition of the social media app "Tik Tok" from being downloaded on authorities units. The buy of drones manufactured and offered by Chinese state enterprises would even be blocked beneath the laws. Chinese organisations engaged in US cyber-attacks or theft of US mental property from US corporations would face sanctions too.

The invoice additionally requires sanctions over human rights abuses in Xinjiang province and abuses in opposition to Uighurs.

— ANI

Urge Pak to act against ultras, India tells UN

United Nations, June 29: India has told the UN General Assembly that it is high time the international community called on Pakistan to take "effective and irreversible" actions against terror outfits operating on its soil, asserting that Islamabad should not take the "high road of morality" which is only laden with mines of falsehood.

Hitting out at Pakistan for its "vitriolic diatribe" against India, Special Secretary (Internal Security), Ministry of Home Affairs in the Government of India V.S.K. Kaumudi said: "As expected, the delegation of Pakistan has again resorted to peddling false narratives and making baseless allegations against India."

He was speaking at the 2nd High Level Conference of the Head of Counter Terrorism Agencies of the Member States in the

General Assembly on Monday. "For a nation that engages in sectarian violence against its own minorities and harbours a deep sense of insecurity and orchestrated hatred for India, there is nothing new that we could have expected from this delegation," he said at the session 'Global scourge of terrorism: Assessment of current threats and emerging trends for the new decade'. He noted that the 7th review of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS) is over and Pakistan's false narrative was summarily negated by the UN membership.

"It's high time that the international community called upon Pakistan to take effective, verifiable and irreversible actions against terror outfits operating on the territory under its control and not take the high road of morality."

— PTI

Two Americans apologise for role in Ghosn escape

Tokyo, June 29: Two Americans charged in Japan with helping Nissan's former chairman, Carlos Ghosn, jump bail and escape Japan for Lebanon apologised Tuesday in a Tokyo court.

"I deeply regret my actions and sincerely apologise for causing difficulties for the judicial process and for the Japanese people. I'm sorry," Michael Taylor, a former Green Beret said, bowing and holding back sobs.

Taylor, on trial in Tokyo District Court with his

son Peter, said in response to questioning by his lawyer and by prosecutors that he had been misinformed by Ghosn and his wife, Carole Ghosn.

Carole Ghosn told Taylor or her husband was tortured and grilled in solitary confinement, he said.

Ghosn also said he was being mistreated, Taylor said. Taylor said he has been well treated in Japan. "I didn't know much about Japan. All I know is that the Japanese are the friendliest people I've ever bumped into," he said.

At the outset of their trial earlier this month, the Taylors indicated they weren't fighting the allegations, in Japan's equivalent of pleading guilty.

They were arrested in Massachusetts last year and extradited to Japan in March. Peter Taylor, who allegedly met with Ghosn to plan the escape, also apologised to the court for the trouble he had caused.

"I must apologise to the people of Japan," Peter Taylor said, bowing to a panel of three judges.

— AP

NEW | SURVEY

Chinese internet titan Tencent had top grossing mobile game Spending in mobile apps at a new high

San Francisco, June 29: App revenue from mobile phone users around the world climbed to new heights in the first half of this year, nearly reaching \$65 billion, market tracker Sensor Tower said Monday.

Apple and Google saw their respective mobile app shops thrive as the Silicon Valley giants remained under fire for the power they wield at their respective marketplaces.

Preliminary figures from Sensor Tower indicate that \$64.9 billion was spent across the App Store

and Google Play in the first six months of this year in a 25 percent jump for the same period in 2020. Sensor Tower projected that \$41.5 billion would be spent at Apple's App Store during the first half of this year on subscriptions and apps, including in-app purchases such as virtual items for game characters.

Google Play was expected to generate a total of \$23.4 in revenue by the end of June. Video-snippet sharing sensation TikTok was the top grossing non-

game mobile app, with users spending more than \$920 million in a increase of 74 percent from the first six months of last year, according to Sensor Tower. Google-owned video streaming platform YouTube was the second biggest non-game revenue generator, with users spending some \$565 million there, the market tracker estimated.

Globally, spending in mobile games hit \$44.7 billion in the first half of this year, up nearly 18 percent from the same period



Medical personnel tend to Covid-19 patients in a tent set up outside a hospital in Bogor on Tuesday, as infections soar in Indonesia. — AFP

Red Cross warns Indonesia faces Covid-19 catastrophe

Jakarta, June 29: Indonesia needs to urgently increase medical care, testing and vaccinations as the number of new infections in the country has rapidly increased and left it on the edge of a Covid-19 catastrophe, the Red Cross said Tuesday.

The group said its coronavirus hospital in Bogor, outside of Jakarta, was overflowing and emergency tents had been set up to be able to house more patients. It was a similar scene at other hospitals near the capital, including in at the Bekasi city hospital that had 90% of its beds filled.

"We are seeing record number of infections, but every statistic is a person who is suffering, grieving or struggling to support the people they love," Sudirman Said, secretary general of Indonesian Red Cross, said in a statement. "Our medical teams are providing lifesaving care, with hospitals full to the brim and oxygen supplies critically low."

The surge in Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, is being blamed in part on the Delta variant of the virus, which was first spotted in India and is thought to be more contagious. Indonesia reported more than 20,600 new cases on Monday and more than 400 deaths.

Indonesia has seen more than 2.1 million cases since the pandemic began and more than 57,500 deaths, both the most in Southeast Asia. Less than 5% of adults in the nation of 270 million people have been fully vaccinated. The Red Cross called for global action so countries like Indonesia can get the vaccines they need.

Health authorities in Thailand on Monday announced 5,406 new Covid-19 cases, as the country struggles with how to cope with new coronavirus variants and contain its rapid spread around the capital Bangkok and in southern provinces.

Nine of the new cases were in prisoners, while the others among the general public marked a record high for that category of patients.

Thailand has had 249,853 confirmed Covid cases since the pandemic began last year, more than 88% occurring in the third wave of the coronavirus that started this April.

— AP

AZ to Oz adults for rapid rollout

Canberra, June 29: Australia is offering AstraZeneca to all adults in a bid to rapidly ramp up sluggish vaccination rates as more of the country on Tuesday locked down against the spread of Covid-19. The government late Monday agreed to indemnify doctors who administer the AstraZeneca vaccine that has been blamed for at least two fatalities from a rare blood clot complication in Australia since April.

That exceeds the single death from Covid-19 in Australia this year, and vaccine hesitancy has increased with only 5% of the population fully inoculated. Pfizer has been the recommended vaccine for people younger than 60 since a 52-year-old woman died in May of blood clots in the brain blamed on AstraZeneca.

But supply of Pfizer, the only alternative to Australian-manufactured Astra-

Zeneca, cannot keep up with demand.

There's a preference for Pfizer until the age of 60. That's a preference, Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly said on Tuesday.

It's a discussion for doctors to have with their own patients and work through their own risk and benefit in relation to that, Kelly added.

The Queensland state capital Brisbane and surrounding cities will be in lockdown for three days from late Tuesday after the government reported two new Covid-19 infections. Sydney reported 19 new infections in that east coast city, Perth reported two new cases on the west coast and Darwin reported two new cases on the north coast. Those three cities and their surrounds are already in lockdown.

Australia has been relatively successful in containing clusters throughout the pandemic.

— AP

VIRUS OUTBREAK IN FIJI TESTS HEALTH SYSTEM

Suva, June 29: A growing coronavirus outbreak in Fiji is stretching the health system and devastating the economy. It has even prompted the government to offer jobless people tools and cash to become farmers.

The Pacific nation got through the first year of the pandemic without any significant outbreaks and just two virus deaths.

But an outbreak of the highly contagious Delta variant two months ago has grown to the point where Fiji is adding about 250 new cases each day.

The government has so far resisted calls for a lockdown, in part to try and protect an economy which had already shrunk by 19% last year after international tourism evaporated. Nearly half of all jobs were connected to tourism in the island nation that's known for its white-sand beaches, clear water and welcoming people.

— AP

Russia daily toll hits 652

Moscow, June 29: Russian authorities have reported 652 new coronavirus deaths on Tuesday the highest daily tally in the pandemic. The new record comes as Russia struggles to cope with a surge in infections and deaths and low vaccine uptake.

Russia's state coronavirus task force has been registering over 20,000 new coronavirus cases and around 600 deaths every day since last Thursday. On Tuesday, 20,616 new contagions were recorded.

Russian officials have blamed the surge, which started in early June, on Russians' lax attitude toward taking necessary precautions, growing prevalence of more infectious variants and laggard vaccination rates.

Although Russia was among the first countries to announce and deploy a coronavirus vaccine, only about 14% of the population has received at least one shot.

Russia's coronavirus task force has reported nearly 5.5 million confirmed coronavirus cases in the pandemic and 134,545 deaths.

— AP

CHINESE VAX EFFECTIVE IN CHILDREN, SAYS STUDY

Beijing, June 29: Two doses of the China-made Covid-19 vaccine, CoronaVac, are safe and produce a strong antibody response among children and adolescents aged 3-17 years, according to a study published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal.

The phase 1/2 trial on 550 young people found that over 96 per cent of children and adolescents who received two doses of the vaccine, manufactured by Sinovac, developed antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. Most adverse reactions were mild or moderate, with pain at the injection site the most commonly reported symptom.

— PTI

EU ASYLUM APPLICATIONS DROP DUE TO COVID-19

Brussels, June 29: The European Union's asylum agency said Tuesday that the number of people seeking international protection in Europe hit its lowest level last year since 2013, but that the drop was due to Covid travel curbs.

EASO said in a new report that 485,000 asylum applications were made in the 27 EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland in 2020. That's a 32% decrease over the previous year. It said that "reduced applications were primarily due to restricted mobility and travel, rather than a decrease in the number of people in need of international protection."

— AP

Fans mark Diana's 60th birthday

London, June 29: Most people wouldn't volunteer to walk through a minefield. Princess Diana did it twice. On January 15, 1997, Diana walked gingerly down a narrow path cleared through an Angolan minefield, wearing a protective visor and flak jacket emblazoned with the name of The HALO Trust, a group devoted to removing mines from former war zones. When she realised some of the photographers accompanying her didn't get the shot, she turned around and

did it again. Later, she met with a group of landmine victims. The images of that day appeared in newspapers and on TV sets around the globe.

Today, a treaty banning landmines has 164 signatories. Those touched by the life of the preschool teacher turned princess remembered her ahead of what would have been her 60th birthday on Thursday, recalling the complicated royal rebel who left an enduring imprint on the House of Windsor.

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52549.66	-0.35
Nifty 50	15748.50	-0.42
S&P 500*	4,295.83	0.12
Dollar (₹)	74.22	-0.02
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.82	0.40
Euro (₹)	88.39	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,167▼89	0.19
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.11	0.58
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.036	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.507	0.029

* As of 8:30 PM IST

RIL signs pact to join Abu Dhabi petchem hub

Reliance Industries has signed a pact to invest an undisclosed amount in a giant petrochemical hub being built in the UAE. The conglomerate will join the recently formed Ta'ziz joint venture of Abu Dhabi state energy giant Adnoc and state holding company ADQ for developing the Ruwais Derivatives Park in western Abu Dhabi. Unconfirmed reports put the investment at about \$1.5 billion.

New Range Rover Sport SVR comes at ₹2.19 crore



Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover introduced the most powerful Range Rover yet, the Range Rover Sport SVR, at a starting price of Rs 2.19 crore. The imported Sport SVR is powered by 5.0-litre supercharged V8 petrol engine. It can accelerate from 0-100 kph in 4.5 seconds. The Land Rover range in India includes the Range Rover Evoque starting at Rs 59.04 lakh and Range Rover at Rs 2.10 crore.

Electricity Bill may be tabled in monsoon session

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2021, which enables power consumer to choose from multiple service providers as in the case of telecom services, is likely to be introduced and pushed for passage in the monsoon session of Parliament beginning in July. At a Bloomberg virtual event, power and renewable energy minister R. K. Singh said the bill seeks to delineate distribution of electricity.

Standard Life sells ₹6,783-crore HDFC Life stake

HDFC Life Insurance Company's promoter Standard Life (Mauritius Holdings) offloaded shares worth over Rs 6,783 crore in the firm, through open market transactions. Standard Life (Mauritius Holdings) 2006 Ltd held 8.88 per cent stake in the firm. As per BSE data, the promoter sold 10 crore shares. The total deal value stood at Rs 6,783.59 crore. HDFC Life stock ended 1.39 per cent lower on the BSE, at Rs 686.35.

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₹10,000 for Reits and ₹15,000 for InvITs. Lot starts at 1 Minimum investment in Reits, InvITs relaxed

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 29

In an attempt to deepen the market for new instruments Reits and InvITs, markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday decided to reduce the minimum subscription amount and trading lot size for such publicly listed investment trusts.

The minimum application value for Real Estate Investment Trusts (Reits) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) will be in the range of Rs 10,000-Rs 15,000 and the trading lot will be of one unit, the Sebi said. Currently the threshold investment is Rs 50,000-Rs 100,000 range.

For unlisted InvITs, the regulator has introduced the concept of minimum unit-holders requirement. "The minimum number of unit holders, other than sponsor, its related parties and its associates shall be five, together holding not less than 25 per cent of the total unit capital of the InvIT," the Sebi said in a release after its board meeting.

Real estate players hailed the Sebi's decision to reduce the minimum subscription amount and trading lot size for Reits, saying it will encourage retail investors to participate in the publicly traded instrument.

The Sebi board has approved amendments to Reits and InvITs Regulations on Tuesday.

"The revised minimum application value shall be within the range of INR 10,000-15,000 and the

'ACCREDITED INVESTORS' TO GET MORE INVESTMENT FREEDOM

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 29

Capital market regulators Sebi on Tuesday approved the proposal to introduce a framework for 'accredited investors' in the securities market.

Accredited investors are a class of investors who may be considered to be well-informed or well advised about investment products

Accredited investors may eventually be offered benefits such as flexibility in minimum investment amount, flexibility and relaxation in regulatory requirements and access to products/ services offered exclusively to accredited investors.

According to the regulator, accredited investors may be individuals, Hindu undivided family (HUFs), family trusts, sole proprietorships, partnership firms, trusts and body corporates based on financial parameters.

"Eligible subsidiaries of depositories and specified stock exchanges, and any other specified institutions will be recognised as

revised trading lot shall be of one unit," the release said.

Under the current rules, while making an initial public offering and follow-on offer, the minimum sub-

accreditation agencies for these accredited investors," the Sebi said.

These agencies will grant accreditation status and issue accreditation certificate to the investors.

"Accredited Investors shall have flexibility to participate in investment products with an investment amount lesser than the minimum amount mandated in the Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) Regulations and Portfolio Managers Regulations," the Sebi said.

"Accredited investors who are clients of investment advisers will have the flexibility to determine the limits and modes of fees payable to the investment adviser through bilaterally negotiated contractual terms."

Investors welcomed the move. "The flexibility in investment decisions would allow AMCs & AIFs to work closely with the well-informed investors like family offices to create bespoke proposals," said Prateek Pant, chief business officer, White Oak Capital Management.

scription should not be less than Rs 50,000 for Reits and Rs 1 lakh for InvITs.

Allotment to any investor is required to be made in the multiples of a lot. At present, for initial listing, a

TIGHTER NORMS ON INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS

New Delhi, June 29: In efforts to bolster corporate governance, the Sebi on Tuesday approved various amendments to rules governing the appointment, re-appointment and removal of independent directors, including the requirement to disclose resignation letters of such individuals.

There will be a one-year cooling period for an independent director transitioning to a whole-time director in the same company/ associate company belonging to the promoter group.

Appointment, re-appointment and removal of independent directors should be done only through a special resolution passed by shareholders. Further, the process to be followed by the Nomination and Remuneration Committee while selecting candidates for appointment as independent directors has been made more transparent. —PTI

trading lot should be of 100 units and during follow-on offer, each lot should consist of such number of units in its trading lot as it had at the time of initial offer.

States asked to monitor pulses stocks as prices go up

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 29, 2021

The Centre has directed states and union territories to ask millers, traders and importers to declare their stocks of pulses. They will also have to monitor pulses prices on a weekly basis.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs says it has noticed a sudden spurt in prices of pulses, which may be due to hoarding by stockholders. Hoarding could lead to a situation of artificial scarcity and price rise. According to the trade, pulses have become dearer by about 10 per cent on an annual basis.

As per the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, the government can issue orders for collecting information and statistics to persons engaged in the production, supply or distribution or trade of any essential commodity, the letter issued by the ministry said.

Though the Essential Commodities Act, 2020, notified in September last year, stipulates that the supply of certain food articles, including cereals, pulses and oils, can only be regulated in extraordinary circumstances such as war, famine and natural calamity, the Act has not come into force yet due to a stay order by the Supreme Court.

"Stockholders like millers, traders and importers may be directed by the states/ UTs to declare the stocks of pulses and that may be verified by states/UTs. States/UTs are also



requested to monitor the prices of pulses on a weekly basis," the ministry said. The ministry has also created an online portal and provided the list of millers as per the Nafed data.

However, the trade argues that there is no hoarding happening and there is no major price rise at the wholesale level and that many pulses are trading at the minimum support price (MSP) level or below it. "No hoarding is happening in pulses. At the wholesale level, moong and chana are trading below MSP, tur and urad around MSP and masoor above MSP. The MSP has gone up by 5 per cent after the recent revision and last year the pulses were trading below MSP. The price rise is at retail level as the retailers are taking a margin of Rs 50/60 a kg. The government should address the issue at the retail level," said Bimal Kothari, vice chairman, Indian Pulses and Grains

Association. Earlier, the government had fixed an annual quota to import 4 lakh tonnes of tur and urad dal from Myanmar and Malawi for the next five years. It has also extended a quota to import 2 lakh tonnes of the pulses with Mozambique for five years. This annual quota will be imported through private trade. If there is any shortfall in the annual quota, that quantity will be imported from other countries. The quota system allows imports of the specified quantity even if the commodity falls into the restricted category.

After a gap of three years, India, the largest pulses producer and consumer, had moved import of tur, moong and urad from restricted to open category in May this year till November-end.

"This is an assurance given to the farmers of these countries by India as very few countries produce pulses like tur and India is the largest consumer."

Though India's production has been rising, the consumption is increasing faster. Apart from Myanmar and Malawi, we have also extended a similar agreement with Mozambique for next five years," said Kothari.

For decades, India has been producing 14-18 million tonnes of pulses. However, from 2016-17, the production crossed 23.13 million tonnes, 25.42 million tonnes in 2017-18 and 23.22 million tonnes in 2018-19. The total consumption of pulses is estimated at around 25 million tonnes.

Fresh Covid threat hits Asia-Pac markets

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 29

Fresh coronavirus outbreaks in the Asian region dampened market sentiment across Asia and led to some profit taking in Indian market too. Barring healthcare and FMCG, all other sectoral indices on the BSE closed in the red.

Australia, Russia and China have seen new Delta variants along with a surge in Covid cases in other smaller Asian countries like Malaysia.

The Sensex closed 185.93 points or 0.35 per cent down at 52,549.66 while the Nifty-50 closed 0.42 per cent or 66.25 points lower at 15,748.45.

The broader market's BSE Mid-cap index also closed 0.42 per cent down while BSE Small-cap index was down 0.07 per cent.

Major Asian markets indices closed in the red, led by Japan's Nikkei (-0.81 per cent), Hong Kong's Hang Seng (-0.94 per cent), China's



Shanghai Composite (-0.92 per cent) and South Korea's Kospi (-0.46 per cent).

"The rise in cases of a new Covid variant has started weighing on the sentiment globally and it may cascade to our markets too," Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking said.

"Weakness in the Asian markets, consistent selling pressure from FIIs since the last three sessions, and steadiness in the prices of Brent crude at \$75 per barrel could be the few reasons to keep the market within the trading range," said Shrikant Chouhan, executive VP, equity technical research, Kotak Securities.

PERSONAL LOANS GROW 13.5% IN MARCH QUARTER

Mumbai, June 29: Personal loans continued to grow at a robust pace and recorded a 13.5 per cent year-on-year rise in March 2021, while industrial loan growth remained negative during all quarters of the last fiscal, the Reserve Bank of India said on Tuesday.

As per the Quarterly Basic Statistical Returns (BSR)-1: Outstanding Credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), March 2021' released by the RBI, private sector banks registered a higher loan growth compared to the other bank group.

Their share in total credit increased to 36.5 per cent in March 2021 from 35.4 per cent a year ago and 24.8 per cent five years ago, it said.

Credit to the household sector rose by 10.9 per cent (YoY) and its share in total credit increased to 52.6 per cent in March 2021 from 49.8 per cent the year-ago period. Growth in credit to the private corporate sector, however, declined for the sixth successive quarter and its share in total credit stood at 28.3 per cent. —PTI

RBI slaps penalties on Mahesh Co-op, 3 others

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, JUNE 29

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday said it has imposed penalties on four co-operative banks, including a Rs 112.50 lakh fine on Hyderabad-based Andhra Pradesh Mahesh Co-operative Urban Bank, for contravention of certain regulatory directions. A penalty of Rs 62.50 lakh has been imposed on The Ahmedabad Mercantile

Co-operative Bank, Ahmedabad; Rs 37.50 lakh on SVC Co-operative Bank, Mumbai; and Rs 25 lakh on Saraswat Cooperative Bank, Mumbai.

The penalty on Andhra Pradesh Mahesh Co-operative Urban Bank was for non-compliance with directions issued by the RBI contained in Master Directions on 'Interest Rate on Deposits' and 'Know Your Customer'.

The Ahmedabad Mercantile Co-operative Bank has been penalised for violation of norms contained in Master Directions on 'Interest Rate on Deposits'.

According to the RBI, it imposed penalty on SVC Co-operative Bank for non-compliance with directions on 'Interest Rate on Deposits' and 'Frauds Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism'. Saraswat Cooperative

Bank was penalised for non-compliance with directions on 'Interest Rate on Deposits' and 'Maintenance of Deposit Accounts'.

The penalties, the RBI said, have been imposed for based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and are not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers.

Govt for new rating system for MSMEs

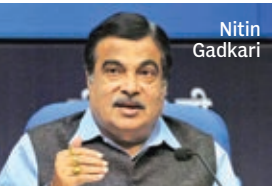
SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 29

The government has suggested creation of a new ratings system for micro small and medium enterprises and a dashboard for effective monitoring of MSME schemes.

A simple and transparent methodology should be evolved to give ratings to MSMEs having good turnover and GST records to enable them to get finances from the banks and institutions, Minister for MSME Nitin Gadkari said. According to him, the

whole world now wants to invest in Indian industry and with an effective rating system MSMEs can get good investment from abroad.

The RBI already has a BLR rating for MSMEs with a loan exposure of Rs 5 crore and above. However, the MSMEs have not been happy with the rating as it applies the same model applicable to large companies. The MSMEs have been complaining about this rating system. "If the minister has now announced a rating system, I presume that



the ministry is talking about a new rating system that will take care of the concerns of the industry. If it does that, the rating will be useful for the MSMEs," said Anil Bharadwaj, secretary general of Fisme.

Gadkari also proposed setting up a dashboard for monitoring schemes to pre-

venting delays in decision making. The ministry already has such a dashboard, so it is not clear if the minister is looking for a real-time dashboard.

Gadkari asked Sidbi to take decisions within three months and provide support. It is time to make the system transparent, time-bound, result oriented and performance oriented and help appropriate entrepreneurs with a good track record, he said. Industry presumes the new dashboard might have details of newer schemes like the ECLGS.

Shrinkflation is a monster worth watching

STEPHEN MIHM JUNE 29

How will we know if inflation is making a comeback? Most economists are focused on the price of commodities, wages, and other basic goods and services. But history suggests they might want to keep an eye on a related phenomenon that often escapes notice: so-called "shrinkflation."

This practice became increasingly common in the 1960s and 1970s, when manufacturers confronting runaway inflation tweaked packaging rather than hike prices. At first, the practice attracted relatively little notice: It's difficult to discern changes in unit prices when they're camouflaged in different-looking boxes and bags.

In fact, it was the humourist Art Buchwald who was among the first to sound the alarm. In a column entitled "Packaged Inflation" published in 1969, he lampooned the growing tendency to conceal price increases. Tongue in cheek, he praised American industry for "devising new methods to make the product smaller while making the package larger."

This wasn't far from the truth. As inflationary pressures rose over the course of the 1970s, manufacturers pursued a number of methods to pass along price increases. The most basic of these was so-called "downsizing" - same package, same price, fewer goods.

In late summer of 1974, for example, Woolworth's offered a packet of pencils



at its back-to-school sale for 99 cents—same price as the previous year. But as a sharp-eyed reporter at The New York Times observed, the packages only contained 24 pencils, six fewer than the previous year. The same strategy affected packets of construction paper (24 sheets, not 30).

The grocery store offered numerous opportunities for downsizers. At the

beginning of the decade, that staple of postwar cuisine, Rice-A-Roni, sold boxes containing 8 ounces of the product. Soon, though, it shrank to 6.9 ounces, but the packaging and price remained the same.

This kind of sleight-of-hand became ubiquitous. Everything from cans of tuna fish to jars of spaghetti sauce contained less and less. Advocacy groups like the Consumers' Union (now Consumer Reports) inveighed against downsizing, but the practice remained widespread.

Gumball makers may have pulled off the most brazen act of shrinkflation. As the price of sugar climbed in the 1970s, they

couldn't easily raise prices—gumball machines were set up to accept a specific coin. And they couldn't make the gumballs smaller—the dispensers couldn't reliably handle any other size. So they created a hollow in the formerly solid gumball. Instead of sugar, kids got some air.

Many of these unit-pricing systems survive in 2021. But so, too, does shrinkflation. In the past year, there have been increasing reports of manufacturers whittling away everything from sheets of toilet paper to servings of cat food. These have intensified in recent weeks.

If the trend continues, beware: This may signal that inflation, long dormant, may finally be resurgent. —Bloomberg

Column

SHORT TAKES

Dutee nominated for Khel Ratna

Bhubaneswar: Odisha government on Tuesday nominated ace sprinter Dutee Chand for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, the country's highest sporting honour. Apart from Dutee, the Odisha government also sent five other recommendations to the sports ministry, said an official here. "I'm thankful to Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik for nominating my name for the Khel Ratna Award. May your blessing always be upon me," Dutee said on Twitter.

The Indian sprint ace broke her own 100m national record, clocking 11.7 seconds at the Indian Grand Prix 4 in Patiala last week to miss the automatic Olympic qualification time by 0.02 seconds. She is, however, set to make it to the Tokyo Olympics on the basis of world rankings. — *PTI*

Jehan in race for Arjuna award

New Delhi: Indian motorsports' governing body FMSCI has nominated its own president Akbar Ebrahim for the Dronacharya Award besides sending Jehan Daruvala's name to the government for Arjuna Award after inexplicably ignoring him last year. Racer turned coach Ebrahim's name was also recommended for Dronacharya last year but none of FMSCI's nominations for the national sports awards was short-listed by the government appointed selection panel. India's biggest racing star at the moment, Jehan stands the best chance of getting the award. The 22-year-old is into his second year in F2 and has multiple podium finishes to his name. He won the sprint race in Bahrain last year and has scored two podiums. — *PTI*

Southee auctions jersey for a cause

Auckland: New Zealand pace spearhead Tim Southee is auctioning a shirt he wore during the inaugural World Test Championship final to raise funds for the treatment of an eight-year-old diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. The shirt is signed by the entire Black Caps squad. Southee, who played a crucial role in New Zealand's eight-victory over India in the marquee clash last week, has placed the memorabilia to raise funds for eight-year-old Hollie Beattie, who was diagnosed with a rare, aggressive form of cancer called neuroblastoma back in 2018. The 32-year-old said he learnt about Beattie's condition a couple of years ago and has been trying to help her ever since. — *PTI*

Mithali back in top five of ODI ranking

Dubai: India captain Mithali Raj has returned to the top five of the latest ICC Women's ODI Rankings for batswomen after top-scoring for India with 72 in the series opener against England in Bristol. The 38-year-old, who has completed 22 years in international cricket, rescued her side from a precarious 27 for two but India's total of 201 for eight was not challenging enough for England, who will be defending their World Cup title in New Zealand next year. Mithali has gained three slots to reach fifth position after the Bristol knock. — *PTI*

India aim to level series vs England

Taunton: India will have to shed their outdated batting approach and play more freely to bounce back against formidable hosts England in the second women's ODI here on Wednesday. India consumed as many as 181 dot balls on way to posting a below par 201 which England chased down rather comfortably to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series on Sunday. Ahead of the World Cup in New Zealand early next year, India have got work to do in all departments as pointed out by skipper Mithali Raj herself. The game could see India making multiple changes in the playing eleven as the batters' inability to rotate strike is proving to be a big issue for the team. — *PTI*

CREDIT SUISSE

Spirited Switzerland pack off World champs France

Paris, June 29: Kylian Mbappe missed the crucial penalty on Monday as world champions France were sent packing from Euro 2020 in a shoot-out against Switzerland, who go through to a quarter-final tie against Spain after an unforgettable day of drama which featured a total of 14 goals in two games.

Switzerland had never won a knockout tie at the European Championship and had never won a shoot-out, but they triumphed 5-4 on penalties against the World Cup holders after a remarkable 3-3 draw in Bucharest.

France, who came into the tournament as favourites to add the conti-

mental crown to the World Cup they won in Russia three years ago, had earlier come from 1-0 down to lead 3-1 and looked to be cruising through, only to concede two late goals.

The game in the Romanian capital followed a 5-3 extra-time win for Spain over Croatia in Copenhagen, and the 2008 and 2012 European champions will face the Swiss in the last eight in Saint Petersburg on Friday.

Switzerland went ahead early on when Haris Seferovic headed in a cross, but they looked set to rue the moment early in the second half when Ricardo Rodriguez's penalty was saved by Hugo Lloris.

By the hour mark the

Switzerland 3

(Haris Seferovic 15, 81, Mario Gavranovic 90)

France 3

(Karim Benzema 57, 59, Paul Pogba 75)

Switzerland win 5-4 in penalty shootout

game — watched by a crowd of around 25,000 after coronavirus restrictions in Bucharest were eased — had been turned on its head by Karim Benzema, who controlled Mbappe's pass to fire in the equaliser and then nodded in Antoine Griezmann's centre. Paul Pogba's stunning

curling strike into the top corner seemed to have put Les Bleus out of sight at 3-1 with quarter of an hour left, but Seferovic pulled one back and substitute Mario Gavranovic netted a last-minute equaliser to force extra time.

With no further goals, the tie went to penalties and all nine kicks were converted before Mbappe saw his effort saved by Yann Sommer.

"It is painful," said France captain Lloris.

Switzerland, who only qualified for the last 16 as one of the best third-placed sides, had not won a knockout tie at a major tournament since the 1938 World Cup.

"It was an incredible evening. I am so proud of

the team," said goalkeeper Sommer.

SPAIN EDGE CROATIA IN 8-GOAL THRILLER

Somehow the drama in Bucharest topped that in Copenhagen earlier, when Alvaro Morata netted an all-important goal as Spain prevailed in extra time against the 2018 World Cup runners-up, but only after they also let slip a 3-1 lead. Luka Modric's Croatia came back to force the extra half-hour but that was when Morata, the Atletico Madrid striker who has been panned for his performances by critics and subjected to abuse from fans, controlled a cross and volleyed home in the 100th minute. — *AFP*

Sterling carries England into QF

London, June 29:

Raheem Sterling and Harry Kane fired England into the Euro 2020 quarter-finals as they sealed a 2-0 win against Germany that ended decades of hurt at the hands of their bitter rivals on Tuesday.

Sterling struck with 15 minutes left in a tense last 16 tie at Wembley before Kane clinched England's first knockout stage victory over Germany since 1966. In the 55 years since England beat the Germans in the World Cup final, the Three Lions had endured a painful litany of defeats against Die Mannschaft when the stakes were highest.

England were eliminated from the 1970, 1990 and 2010 World Cups by Germany, who also beat them in the Euro 96 semi-finals at Wembley. But Gareth Southgate's side have finally exorcised the ghosts of Paul Gascoigne's tears and their own manager's penalty miss 25 years

England 2

(Raheem Sterling 75, Harry Kane 86)

Germany 0

ago.

England produced a gritty display capped by clinical finishes from Sterling, who now has three goals in the tournament, and Kane — who finally bagged his first of the competition.

England, yet to concede a goal in the tournament, head to Rome on Saturday for a quarter-final against the winners of Tuesday's other last 16 tie between Sweden and Ukraine.

Chasing a first major international trophy since 1966, England's side of the draw looks wide open, with a potential semi-final against Denmark or the Czech Republic unlikely to strike fear into their hearts. It was only England's second knockout stage win in Euro history. — *AFP*

Federer survives first round scare

London, June 29: Roger Federer survived a huge scare to reach the Wimbledon second round on Tuesday when French opponent Adrian Mannarino was forced to retire injured at the start of the fifth set.

Eight-time champion Federer was level at 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 3-6, 6-2 when Mannarino called it quits after just one point in the decider.

The Frenchman, celebrating his 33rd birthday, suffered a bad fall in the seventh game of the fourth set.

Despite taking treatment from the trainer, he was hardly able to move and grimacing in pain had to retire.

Just five weeks shy of his 40th birthday, Federer faces either Richard Gasquet or Yuichi Sugita for a place in the last 32.

Germany's Alexander Zverev eased into the second round of Wimbledon on Tuesday beating Dutch qualifier Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 in just 89 minutes.

The 24-year-old French Open semi-finalist had

lost to qualifiers at Wimbledon on two occasions — Ernests Gulbis in the third round in 2018 and to Jiri Vesely in the first round in 2019 — but he made no mistake this time round.

Not even a 15 minute break so the Court One roof could be closed due to rain upset the fourth seed's rhythm.

VENUS' RECORD APPEARANCE

Venus Williams marked her record 90th Grand Slam appearance with a three-set victory over Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania at Wimbledon on Tuesday and revealed the secret to her longevity: "I'm good at what I do".

The 41-year-old, who is a five-time champion at the All England Club, triumphed 7-5, 4-6, 6-3. Former world number one Williams first played Wimbledon in 1997 and is making her 23rd appearance at the tournament. Now at 111 in the world, she fired 10 aces and 33 winners to defeat her 160th-ranked opponent. — *AFP*

T20 World Cup from Oct. 17, final on Nov. 14

Dubai, June 29: This year's T20 World Cup, which has been moved to the UAE and Oman from India due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be played from October 17 to November 14, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Tuesday. "The BCCI will remain the hosts of the event, which will now be held in Dubai International Stadium, the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the Sharjah Stadium, and the Oman Cricket Academy Ground, from 17 October to 14 November 2021," the ICC said.

The first round of the tournament, comprising the eight qualifying teams, will now be split between Oman and UAE.

Four of these teams will then progress to the Super 12s round where they'll join the eight automatic qualifiers. — *PTI*

Olympic briefs

Manu off social media

Teen shooting sensation Manu Bhaker on Tuesday decided to switch off from social media till the end of Tokyo Olympics to focus on her preparation and performance in the Games, starting July 23. The 19-year-old Bhaker is currently training in Croatia along with other members of the Olympic-bound Indian team, which is taking part in the ISSF World Cup here. The shooters will directly fly to Tokyo before the Games.

Mary heads to Italy for training

Six-time world champion MC Mary Kom has decided to join the rest of India's Olympic-bound boxing team in Italy for training to avoid the added restrictions on those travelling to Tokyo from here amid the pandemic. Mary Kom will take off for Assisi in a day or two to join the eight other Olympic-bound boxers, who are set to leave for Tokyo from there itself. The London Olympics bronze-medallist was training at Pune's Army Sports Institute so far.

Wawrinka joins exit list

Former Olympic Games gold medallist Stan Wawrinka on Tuesday joined the growing list of players withdrawing from the Olympics. Wawrinka, who won an Olympic title in men's doubles alongside Roger Federer at Beijing in 2008, has undergone surgery on his left foot. The 36-year-old hasn't played on the tour since Doha in March. "He is very disappointed not to be able to play in the Games," said a statement by his management team.



COPA QF LINE-UP

July 3	Peru vs Paraguay at Goiania	2.30 am
	Brazil vs Chile at Rio de Janeiro	5.30 am
July 4	Uruguay vs Colombia at Goiania	3.30 am
	Argentina vs Ecuador at Brasilia	6.30 am

JAN SAHAYAK - AAPKA SAHAYAK

Initiative of Haryana Government to implement M-Governance in true sense

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

User can access Department wise services or services of SARAL portal or raise issues in section of Public Grievances

Emergency Services (Direct Dialing)

- 112 Emergency call
- 100 Police
- 108 Ambulance
- 101 Fire
- 104 Health
- 1091 Women Helpline
- 1098 Children Helpline
- 1075 COVID-19 Helpline

Others

- Tenders
- Bill Payments
- Travel
- Jobs
- Sports Infrastructure
- Skill Development

Government Services G2C

SARAL Services

Department wise services

Users wise services

Public Grievance and RTI

In addition to above, it has multiple information related services for citizens

Latest News

Calendar & Events

What's New (Latest achievements & announcements by the Government)

Telephone Directory

State Government can send custom notifications to citizens of a particular District, Age Group, etc.

Citizens can also give his/ her feedback and suggestions on the service delivery to the Government through JanSahayak platform which shall be utilized by the concerned departments for betterment of the service delivery

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