



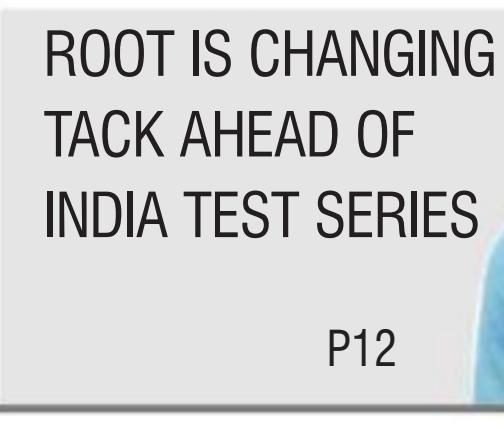
VOICE OF SANITY

'HIGHEST GST
MOP-UP TO
BE NEW NORMAL'

P6

TRUMP ORG CFO
SURRENDERS AHEAD
OF EXPECTED CHARGES

P8

ROOT IS CHANGING
TACK AHEAD OF
INDIA TEST SERIES

P10

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Heat wave conditions at isolated places. Duststorm/thunderstorm accompanied with very light rain and gusty winds towards evening/night. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 41 and 31 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 46% Min: 29%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 43.1°C (+6) Min: 31.7°C (+4)
SUN RISES SUN SETS
05:28 hrs 19:23 hrs
MOON RISES MOON SETS
00:53 hrs 12:46 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Porters carry goods on a Kolkata street amidst heavy rains on Thursday.

IANS

Nirav's sister "remitted" Rs 17 crore, says ED: The ED on Thursday said fugitive businessman Nirav Modi's sister has "remitted" over Rs 17 crore from a UK bank account to that of the Indian government after she was allowed pardon from criminal proceedings in lieu of extending help in the investigation into the over Rs 13,000 crore PNB loan fraud case.

Pak exchanges list of Indian prisoners: Pakistan on Thursday exchanged with India a list of 609 Indian prisoners, including 558 fishermen, lodged in the country's prisons as part of a biannual agreement. It is in accordance with clause (i) of the Agreement on Consular Access between Pakistan and India, signed on 21 May, 2008, the Foreign Office here said.

Concerns on bid to amend Cinematograph Act: The government's proposal to amend the Cinematograph Act is another blow to the film fraternity and will potentially endanger freedom of expression and democratic dissent, says a letter signed by industry insiders such as Vishal Bhardwaj, Mira Nair and Pa Ranjith.

Army chief: LAC situation normal since disengagement in E. Ladakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The talks between India and China on the border row in eastern Ladakh have helped "build trust" and the situation in the region has been normal since the disengagement in the Pangong Tso areas in February. Chief of Army Staff Gen MM Naravane said on Thursday, exuding confidence of resolution of the "remaining issues".

In a virtual interactive session at a think-tank, Gen Naravane, at the same time, said that the developments along the northern borders in the past year are a "stark reminder" that the armed forces need to continually prepare and adapt to the exigencies of modern wars to preserve India's sovereignty.

General Naravane said that the developments along the northern borders in the past year are a "stark reminder" that the armed forces need to continually prepare and adapt to the exigencies of modern wars to preserve India's sovereignty

encies of modern wars to preserve India's territorial integrity. "The situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is normal ever since the disengagement took place in February this year from the northern and southern banks of Pangong lake as well as the Kailash ranges," he said.

"Since then, both sides have strictly adhered to the letter and spirit of the disengagement that was agreed upon. We are engaging the Chinese at various levels at the political level, at the diplomatic level and of course at the military level," Gen Naravane added.

The Army Chief was asked on the situation in eastern Ladakh. "This talk between us is going on and this has helped build trust between the two sides. And going ahead, we are sure that we will be able to resolve all the remaining issues," he said.

The comments came three days after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that India believes in resolving disputes with neighbours through dialogue but it will not tolerate if provoked or threatened.

Gulshan case: HC upholds Taurani acquittal, convicts other co-accused

MUMBAI, 1 JULY

Nearly 24 years after the crime that shocked the Hindi film industry, the Bombay High Court on Thursday upheld the acquittal of film producer and Tips Industries co-founder Ramesh Taurani in the 1997 murder case of music baron Gulshan Kumar, but confirmed the conviction of co-accused Abdul Rauf Merchant.

A High Court division bench also quashed the acquittal of Rauf's brother, another accused in the case, Abdul Rashid Merchant, and sentenced him to life imprisonment noting Rashid was one of the persons who shot at Kumar. (See Page 5)

SC seeks Centre's response on PIL seeking Prez rule in Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear a plea seeking direction to the Centre to impose President's Rule in West Bengal in view of deteriorating law and order situation due to the post-poll violence which started on 2 May, the day of Assembly election results.

The plea also sought direction to the Centre to deploy armed/paramilitary forces in the aid of the administrative authorities to bring normalcy in the state and to save it from internal disturbances.

Besides, the PIL has sought setting up of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) for prob-

The PIL has sought setting up of a Special Investigation Team for probing the causes and reasons of post-poll violence in Bengal

ing the causes and reasons of post-poll violence in West Bengal. A bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari issued notice to the Centre, West Bengal and Election Commission of India on the plea, which also sought to Central and state governments to award compensation to the victims and their family members after ascertaining the nature of loss sustained by them in post-poll violence

in the state. Advocate Hari Shankar Jain – appearing for petitioners Ranjana Agnihotri, a UP based practicing lawyer and social worker Jitender Singh – said that the plea is against post-poll violence in West Bengal.

The bench, however, did not issue notice to Mamata Banerjee as the president of Trinamool Congress Party.

The plea filed through advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain said that the PIL has been filed in extraordinary circumstances as thousands of residents of West Bengal are being terrorized, penalised and tortured by the workers of TMC for supporting the Opposition party (BJP) during the Assembly polls.

Akhil Gogoi freed after 18 months in jail



GUWAHATI, 1 JULY

After over 18 months in jail, firebrand activist turned legislator Akhil Gogoi was released today as a special National Investigation Agency court acquitted him in the last case pending against him this morning.

Gogoi, who won the last State Assembly polls from Sivasagar constituency, was arrested in December 2019 and since then he was behind the bars. The 45-year-old RTI activist turned anti-CAA protester set up a new political party named Rajor Dol ahead of the Assembly election in March-April and won the electoral battle without personally campaigning in the constituency as he was locked up in jail following his arrest under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"Let's celebrate our independent judiciary. The BJP-led government wants to rule the country (also Assam) under an undeclared emergency. But the judiciary has shown the most waned ray of hope," said Gogoi soon after his release, adding that the UAPA is a draconian law and it should be scrapped.

Three of his associates, namely Dhariya Konwar, Manas Konwar and Bittu Sonowal, were also cleared of the charges against them.

Maintaining his strong opposition to CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act), Gogoi said that it is no way acceptable to the people of Assam.

SNS

Won't be bullied by foreign forces: Xi on CPC centenary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 1 JULY

Any "foreign force" trying to "bully" China will encounter a "great wall of steel" erected by over 1.4 billion Chinese people and its powerful military, President Xi Jinping warned on Thursday, as the ruling Communist Party celebrated its centenary with a massive show of strength at the historic Tiananmen Square here.

In his keynote address at a highly-choreographed ceremony from the balcony of Tiananmen Gate, which also adorns a giant size photo of 'Chairman' Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China, Xi underlined that the "reunification" of Taiwan with the Chinese mainland is an "unshakable commitment" of the Communist Party of China (CPC).



Xi, who is also the General Secretary of the CPC and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, warned that any foreign force will not be allowed to bully China, an apparent reference to the US. China has repeatedly accused the US of trying to curb its "peaceful rise", amidst concern in the neighbourhood about the growing assertiveness of the Chinese military in the strategic Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere.

Both former US president Donald Trump and his successor Joe Biden have pursued a hardline policy towards China, targeting it on several fronts including trade, human rights and the origins of the Covid-19, which first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

"We Chinese are a people who uphold justice and are not intimidated by threats of force. We have never bullied, oppressed, or subjugated the people of any other country, and we never will," Xi said.

"By the same token, we will never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress, or subjugate us," the 68-year-old leader said.

"Anyone who would attempt to do so will find themselves on a collision course with a great wall of steel forged by over 1.4 billion Chinese people," he said.

Over 70,000 party workers and schoolchildren who took part in the event cheered Xi over an hour-long speech which was telecast live.

About 71 aircraft participated in the flypast which also included China's most advanced J-20 stealth fighter jets, helicopters, fighter jet trainers and others.

In a show of unity, some of the top party leaders of the past and present including Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao and former premier Wen Jiabao attended the celebration.

Designated as the core leader of the CPC, Xi, who is regarded as the most powerful leader after Mao with lifelong tenure at the helm appeared in a grey Mao suit, sported by the party founder 100 years ago.

Xi also warned against underestimating China's resolve to integrate the self-administered island of Taiwan with the Chinese mainland stating that it is a historic mission of the ruling party.

No life term for kidnapper if he treats victim properly: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

If an abducted person is not assaulted or threatened to be killed and treated well, then the kidnapper cannot be sentenced to life imprisonment under Section 364A of Indian Penal Code, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy made the observation while setting aside the conviction of an auto driver in Telangana who had kidnapped a minor and demanded a ransom of Rs 2 lakh from his father.

The top court said that there are three essential ingredients to convict an accused under Section 364A (kidnapping for ransom) which need to be proved.

It said the three essential ingredients are - kidnapping or abduction of any person or keeping him in detention; threatening to cause death or hurt to such person, or the kidnapper's conduct gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that victim may be put to death or hurt in order to compel the Government, foreign State or any Governmental organization or any other person to pay a ransom.

The top court said, "In addition to the first condition either condition (ii) or (iii) has to be proved, failing which conviction under Section 364A cannot be sustained."

The top court was hearing a plea filed by a Telangana resident, challenging a high court order, which had dismissed his plea against conviction under 364A.

paper.thestatesman.com



The problem of unemployment in the Hills is growing

BIMAL GURUNG, LEADER, GORKHA JAN MUKTI MORCHA

IN A LETTER HE HAS SENT TO THE CM ABOUT RECRUITING MORE TEACHERS IN THE GTA AREA

Covid 3rd wave: Civic bodies to set up dedicated care facilities for children

PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The three municipal corporations of Delhi will set up dedicated Covid care facilities for children as part of their preparations to deal with a possible third wave, officials said on Thursday.

It is being anticipated that the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic will majorly affect children, so arrangements are being made to avoid any crisis-like situation and provide better care to kids, municipal officials said.

According to civic authorities, the North Delhi Municipal Corporation has decided to convert its Mrs Girdhar Lal Maternity Hospital into a dedicated child COVID-19 care facility.

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) is exploring the possibilities of setting up special child care wards at its Tilak Nagar Hospital. The East Delhi civic body will create two dedicated child Covid care wards at its Swami Dayanand Hospital in Dilshad Garden.

"We have decided to convert Mrs Girdhar Lal Maternity Hospital into a dedicated COVID-19 facility for children. Initially we will dedicate 70 beds to Covid care of children. All these beds will be equipped with oxygen support. Out of these 70 beds, 10 will be reserved as NICU beds for infants

and another 10 will have ICU facilities, an official of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation said.

Mrs Girdhar Lal Maternity Hospital is a 200-bed facility located near Ajmeri Gate in Old Delhi.

It is likely to take a month to make the hospital a dedicated child Covid care facility and regular meetings are being held for the purpose, the official said.

"We will also set up an oxygen plant there which will cater to the needs of the hospital. Other maternity services which are currently being offered at the hospital will be shifted to Kasturba Hospital near Jama Masjid," he said.

A senior official of the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) said the civic body would allot two wards at Swami Dayanand Hospital for child Covid care.

"Chances of children getting infected in the third wave are high so we are planning to dedicate two wards with a capacity of 30-40 beds to child care. All these beds will have piped oxygen supply. These two wards will come up in the recently renovated building of the hospital, the official said.

A senior SDMC official said that though it is anticipated that the third wave will hit the city after September, preparations have been started in advance to avoid any crisis-like situation.

Ensure HIMS implementation by March'22: CM to officials

Kejriwal reviews progress of an ambitious project aimed at issuing e-health cards to all Delhi'sites

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today reviewed the progress of his government's ambitious Health Information Management System (HIMS) project under which digital health cards will be issued to the city's residents.

The CM directed the officials concerned to ensure the implementation of this project by March 2022. He said along with the HIMS project, delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a Health Helpline would also be started and special surveys would be conducted for issuing e-health cards.

Delhi's nodal minister for Covid-19, Manish Sisodia, and health minister Satyendar Jain were also present on the occasion along with senior officials.

Kejriwal later tweeted: "Reviewed the progress of Health Information Management System (HIMS). We are creating the most modern health information



system in Delhi. Due to corona(virus), there are some delays. Hopefully, it should start by March."

According to officials, the health cards, to be issued in the names of all the residents of Delhi, will ensure the availability of the benefits of the government's health-care services to everyone living in the city.

The system seeks to target the healthcare delivery process. All the patient care services, hospital

administration, budgeting and planning, supply chain management and back-end services and processes will be brought under the HIMS. As far as the deployment model is concerned, the entire system will be cloud-based and digitised. This will enable the citizens to avail themselves of information on a single platform, which will help them in emergency cases. With the help of their registered card number entered in the system, hospi-

tals will be able to access all of the patients' health-related information and past registry, the officials added.

The system is also supposed to include a 24x7 call centre or a Health Helpline to provide health-related information to the patients seeking consultation and other kinds of assistance. The centralised call centre will provide two levels of help — one, an operator will receive people's calls and messages and provide them requisite information and, two, doctors and experts will provide appointments based on the problem or immediately provide solutions for emergency cases.

The officials said with this, Delhi will become the only state in the country to have a cloud-based health management system. This facility will also be extended to private hospitals in the future.

Meanwhile, on the National Doctors' Day today the CM said that the debt of doctors who served people day and night during the coronavirus pandemic

could not be repaid. The National Doctors' Day is observed in honour of noted doctor and former West Bengal chief minister Bidhan Chandra Roy, whose birth and death anniversaries fall on 1 July.

"Our doctors served people day and night during the pandemic. We cannot repay their debt throughout our lives. Salute to all the doctors on National Doctors' Day who saved lives of lakhs of people and prevented their families from crumbling," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

As many as 730 doctors have succumbed to the Covid infection during the second wave, according to data available with the Indian Medical Association (IMA) in mid-June.

Bihar saw the maximum number of 115 such deaths, followed by Delhi at 109, Uttar Pradesh 79, West Bengal 62, Rajasthan 43, Jharkhand 39, and Andhra Pradesh 38, as per the IMA data.

According to the IMA, 748 doctors had died in the first wave of the Covid pandemic last year.

AIIMS docs among 4 hurt in clash

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

Four persons, including two doctors working at AIIMS here, were injured during a clash in south Delhi's Gautam Nagar, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday, they said.

According to police, a few doctors from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) went to the shop of Bhagat Singh Verma Panthanewali in Gautam Nagar and allegedly consumed alcohol there.

"A heated argument broke out between the doctors and the shopkeeper following they allegedly assaulted each other," Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said.

The doctors went to eat parathas at the dhaba (shop)

near AIIMS at night. Junior doctors of Safdarjung Hospital also came with them. When they reached there, the owner of the dhaba allegedly started saying that the coronavirus is spreading because of the doctors, police said. Soon a heated arguments ensued between them, police said.

The Resident Doctors Association of AIIMS said that they have registered a complaint with the local police station, however, no FIR has been registered in this case.

Two doctors and shopkeeper Bhagat Singh Verma and his son Abhishek sustained injuries in the incident, police said.

The statements of both the parties are being recorded and legal action will be taken accordingly, the DCP said. Police said the doctors have visited the shop earlier as well.

Delhi adds 93 virus cases, 4 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The national capital today detected 93 fresh Covid cases out of 76,468 tests conducted in various parts of the city, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The number of coronavirus cases detected yesterday was 94 and the figure was 101 on

Tuesday. The cumulative count of Covid patients now rose to 14,34,281, the health bulletin stated.

The positivity rate stood at 0.12 per cent, which was the same yesterday too, the bulletin said.

Four fresh deaths in Delhi were attributed to Covid. This took the city's coronavirus toll to 24,981, the bulletin said.

There were now 1,357 active cases in the national capital and the patients under home isolation numbered 314.

The total number of containment zones in the city was 1,349, the bulletin stated.

There were 16,733 hospital beds vacant out of a total of 17,760 beds reserved for Covid patients in the city.

Sisodia lays foundation stone of school building in village

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday laid the foundation stone for a school building in Nasipur village, South-West Delhi. The land for the school was given to the DDA by the Gram Sabha, and then the DDA handed over the land to the Education Department to construct a school building, but it was unlawfully captured by the land mafia. The Delhi government recently reclaimed the land

from the land mafia.

Sisodia stated, "The Delhi government will complete the construction of this school within nine months, having state-of-the-art facilities. Along with providing excellent education, the school will also have outstanding sports-related facilities, including a swimming pool. The aim is to provide quality and holistic education to all children. At present, the nearest school in the area hosts 6,000 students. With the construction of this school, the pressure on the other school will also decrease."

Shahdara fire case: Building owner, nephew arrested

PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

A 50-year-old man and his nephew have been arrested in connection with a fire incident in Delhi's Shahdara that led to the death of four members of a family, police said on Thursday.

They were identified as Atma Ram Goyal and Manoj Goyal (26), the police said.

According to the Delhi Fire Service, the fire broke out at a house in the Farsh Bazaar area due to an LPG gas cylinder leakage Tuesday midnight, resulting in the death

of Munni Devi, her two sons, Om Prakash (22) and Nares (23), and daughter Sunita (18) due to suffocation, while another son, Lal Chand (29), suffered burns.

A senior police officer said, "The building was owned by Atma Ram Goyal. The front portion of the house was turned into a shop which was used by his nephew Manoj Goyal for repairing gas stoves and cylinders."

The house did not have proper ventilation, which made it difficult for the victims to breathe as the fire spread, he said.

Classified

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

LOST & FOUND

TENDERS

UNIVERSITY OF KALYANI
Notice for E-tender
E-tender is invited against Tender ID No.: 2021_UOK_334937_1 through <http://wbtenders.gov.in> & www.katwamunicipality.info
Chairperson Board of Administrators Katwa Municipality

E-TENDER
E-tenders are invited against NIE No. 09/G-I vide Memo No. 246/G-I Dated: 30.06.2021. For more details please visit website www.klyuniya.com (for viewing only) and <http://wbtenders.gov.in> / Office Notice Board Executive Officer Goalpokheri Panchayat Samity Uttar Dinajpur

e-TENDER — The Chairperson, Board of Administrators, Katwa Municipality has invited e-tender against N.I.E. No.: WBMAD08DEV / 15THFINCOM / M20-21. N.I.E. No.: WBMAD09DEV / DMA(KM) / 2021-2022.

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with students of Delhi Government Schools

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Founder & Executive Vice Chairman of InfoEdge (India) Ltd (Naukri.com) and Co-Founder of Ashoka University

Presided by

MANISH SISODIA

Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi

Friday, July 2, 2021 at 12:30 pm

YouTube Live at: SCERT Delhi Channel



Directorate of Education
Government of NCT of Delhi



Extending my heartfelt gratitude to the entire medical fraternity
who are tirelessly serving in these trying times

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE
IN A TWITTER POST ON DOCTORS' DAY

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 02 JULY 2021

03

Punjab to upskill over 1 lakh street vendors

They'll be given training by PGIMER Chandigarh that'd ensure safe street food for public



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 1 JULY

Over one lakh street vendors in Punjab will be given training for improving their skills so that safe street food could be ensured for the public.

For this objective, Punjab's department of local government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the department of community medicine and

school of public health, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh.

An official spokesperson said the aim is to orient the street vendors on aspects such as their rights and responsibilities, specific policy or laws related to street vendors, food safety, maintenance of hygiene, waste disposal etc. More than one lakh street vendors will be trained by the PGIMER Chandigarh teams. In this series, the street

vendors training programme was conducted at district Rupnagar from 3 June to 30 June. In this programme street vendors from six urban local bodies (Rupnagar, Nangal, Sri Anandpur Sahib, Morinda, Sri Chamkaur Sahib and Sri Kiratpur Sahib) participated.

This programme was conducted in collaboration with the department of community medicine and school of public health, PGIMER, Chandigarh. In technical sessions, the lectures were delivered by

eminent experts from various fields, to encourage and ensure the operation of Punjab street vendors to help them work more efficiently by following strict quality norms during this Covid pandemic.

Dr Poonam Khanna and Dr Vaishali Soni highlighted the importance of precautions to be taken while purchasing and ordering food, preparing and handling food during the Corona pandemic. She referred to other aspects as well such as precautions to be taken

while disposing of leftover food, personal hygiene practices and practice for keeping street food vendor carts disinfected. The vendors were given free 'Street Food Vendor's Hygiene Kit' which include apron, gloves, head covers and easy to understand IEC material and certificates from PGIMER, Chandigarh.

Concluding the session, street vendors took pledge to follow guidelines and norms of avoiding transfat in food and maintaining food hygiene.

HP govt committed to develop all areas: CM



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 1 JULY

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday said the government is committed for balanced and all round development of all areas of the state.

Special focus is being laid on those areas which remained neglected in the matter of development for one reason

or other, he said while inaugurating developmental projects worth about Rs 9.20 crore in Seraj Vidhan Sabha area of Mandi district.

Thakur said during his visit to his constituency today, he dedicated developmental projects worth Rs 9.20 crore.

In the Covid-19 pandemic, it is not possible to actually hold public meetings, therefore, he has virtually

interacted with people of almost all the areas of the state, he added. He stated that Seraj Vidhan Sabha area was one of the most difficult areas of the state and when he was elected for the first time from the area, only 17 panchayats had road connectivity.

But today almost all the 77 panchayats of the constituency were connected with roads, the CM added.

APPOINTMENT

RATHINDRA KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRA

Palli Siksha Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Srimiketan

Advertisement No. RKVK-1/2021

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the advertisement No. RKVK-1/2021 published on 29-06-2021 in The Statesman, it is to be noted that "No Objection Certificate" has to be produced within 27th August, 2021 i.e. one month from the last date of application or at the time of interview whichever is earlier.

Palli Siksha Bhavana
Visva-Bharati

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3	Concept Developer	B.Sc in Physics/ Chemistry/ Biology/Mathematics/ Geography from any recognized Institution/University
4	Office Assistant	B.Com from any recognized Institution/University
5	Assistant Production Engineer	Diploma in Computer Science Engineering from any recognized Institution/University
6	Technician	Higher Secondary and ITI in the following trade: Carpenter/ Painter/ Sheet Metal/ Welder

Further details of this advertisement (age, qualification, specialization, experience) is available on our website: www.cmdncsm.in Interested candidates may apply online within July 9, 2021 midnight.

Kolkata
02.07.2021

Managing Director

Doctors recount struggle of their lives in fight against pandemic

PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

Not seeing their family members for days on end, losing patients and working overtime to save lives — the COVID-19 pandemic has not only brought physical pain but also caused mental agony for doctors.

On National Doctors Day, these frontline warriors recount their experiences, which for some was the "worst in their life", while for others, it was so mentally upsetting that they had to consult psychiatrists.

Neha Rastogi Panda, Consultant, Infectious Disease, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon says she could not visit her father, who is hypertensive and stays in Delhi's Rohini, for two months. Her mother passed away two years ago and she hasn't seen her mother-in-law, who lives in Odisha, for over a year.

"During the peak of the second wave, my husband and I, who is a lab person, hardly got any time for family, our loved ones. It would always be only a 10-second call to tell them that I am fine and ask if they were doing okay."

"For patients, we are always there, either in person or on the phone. But our parents manage on their own. It is too difficult to express the stress and emotions. And, of course, there is nothing called a personal life for the past one and a half year. Most of the time, either I am working or my husband is. We are never home together," she said. Dr Pankaj Solanki of

Dharamveer Solanki Hospital in Rohini said he and his doctor wife packed their bags and shifted to the hospital when lockdown was announced last year and only returned home in July last year when cases came down. "I took a two-day leave in January, else most of the time my wife and I are at the hospital attending to my patients. We have a five-year-old child, who usually does not get to see us. My mother and mother-in-law have been taking care of him," he said.

During the peak of the second wave of coronavirus, when Delhi was battling an unprecedented oxygen crisis, Dr Solanki slept for only "20 hours" in 10 days.

"We made the hospital our home. I would run around to arrange oxygen. I was so stressed that I would sometimes yell at my staff. It was a nightmare. I was mentally upset. Now, I have been consulting a psychiatrist for the last five-six weeks," he recalled said.

Suresh Kumar, medical director of LNJP, Delhi government's largest healthcare facility, has not taken a leave since February last year.

"Me and my colleagues have been working non-stop. It's been a challenging time for all of us. My family members, including my father and my wife, contracted COVID-19 too. Families of doctors have been dealing with a lot of stress during these times," he said.

Medical facilities like Jaipur Golden Hospital and Batra Hospital saw patients losing their

lives allegedly due to the lack of life-saving medical oxygen.

Batra Hospital also lost one of its doctors to the oxygen crisis along with eleven other patients during the peak of the second wave.

Dr SCL Gupta, medical director of Batra Hospital called it one of the "worst experiences of his life" as one felt helpless for things that were not in their hands.

"Doctors were sent to the battlefield without any weapons. There was a shortage of medicines, beds and oxygen. We worked really hard and even provided a healing touch to the attendants of patients.

"Patients getting admitted to hospitals would believe that they won't survive since many people were dying.

What kept us going were the blessings of the 10 patients we cured even as we lost one patient which was saddening," he recalled about those days.

Recalling the fatigued day on which 12 patients died due to shortage of oxygen, including his own colleague, he said it felt as if something had happened to me".

"I could not see the ICU. I could not meet my colleague's wife and tell her what had happened because I could not bring myself to answer her," he said.

Gupta's wife is a doctor at the same hospital and his son is a doctor at Safdarjung Hospital.

HC asks Delhi Police to protect woman who converted to Islam on free will

PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The Delhi High Court Thursday granted interim protection till July 5 to a woman who claimed that she and her family are facing life-threats and being witch hunted by the UP police, media and vigilante groups after her wilful conversion from Hinduism to Islam.

Advocate Tanya Agarwal, representing the woman, said due to the apprehensions, she had to frequently change her residence and added that she would email her present address to the counsel for the police.

The court was hearing the plea by the woman, who is working in Delhi. She is from Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh and seeking 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, said the petition, filed through advocate Kamlesh Kumar Mishra and Nitin Kumar Nayak.

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 a meeting which she refused.

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.

The plea further sought direction to the media not to publish or broadcast any malicious content regarding her and not to divulge her personal details and also remove the contents already shown.

It sought to direct the UP agencies not to harass the woman or any other person who has not converted in the state of UP and on whom the provisions of the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020 does not apply.

Health department to anticipate the health infrastructure required to treat Covid-paediatric cases and make necessary arrangements accordingly. He asked the officers to expedite the process of appointment of doctors, nurses and paramedics as ensuring superlative health services to the people of the state is the priority of the government. During the meeting, the CM was apprised that the state has a testing capacity of 24500 per day in 20 existing government testing laboratories and a testing capacity of 71900 per day in 22 private laboratories in the state. The CM was also apprised that

the health department to anticipate the health infrastructure required to treat Covid-paediatric cases and make necessary arrangements accordingly. He asked the officers to expedite the process of appointment of doctors, nurses and paramedics as ensuring superlative health services to the people of the state is the priority of the government. During the meeting, the CM was apprised that the state has a testing capacity of 24500 per day in 20 existing government testing laboratories and a testing capacity of 71900 per day in 22 private laboratories in the state. The CM was also apprised that

Sentinel Surveillance (a surveillance which aids in the development of a real-time practical framework to tackle the ongoing, fast evolving pandemic challenge) was started in April 2021. As a part of which 15 samples of each sentinel site are sent fortnightly for

Whole-genome sequencing. He was apprised that Genome Testing Laboratory will soon be set up in PGIMS, Rohtak. During the presentation it came to light that the COVID-19 fatality rate of Haryana is 1.23 percent so far while the National Fatality rate is 1.6 per cent.

E-homes Infrastructure Private Limited			
CIN: U45303DL2008PTC173249 Regd. Office: DASNAC Annexure - I ECE House, 29-A, Sector 10, Chandigarh - 160011 Tel: 011-43751199, E-Mail ID: investors@e-homes.com			
Audited Financial Results for the year ended as on 31st March, 2021 (Rs. in Lacs)			
Sr. No.			Particulars
			Half year ended 31.03.2021
			Half year ended 31.03.2020
			Year ended 31.03.2021
			Year ended 31.03.2020
1.	Total Income from Operations		
	11,720.53	5,168.93	12,672.33
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items		
	182.41	135.35	189.49
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)		
	182.41	135.35	189.49
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)		
	135.27	97.66	143.08
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		
	136.55	100.48	144.36
6.	Paid up Equity Share Capital		
	297.41	297.41	297.41
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves)		
	4,985.81	4,843.27	4,985.81
8.	Net worth		
	5,283.22	5,140.68	5,283.22
9.	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt		

THUMBNAILS



Security personnel try to stop members of Tibetan Youth Congress protesting outside the Chinese Embassy, as Chinese Communist Party celebrates its centenary, in New Delhi, on Thursday. ■ AGENCY

First case of Delta+ variant reported in Himachal: The first case of Delta plus variant of Covid-19 has been reported in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, chief medical officer Dr Gurdarshan Gupta said on Thursday.

SNS

New IAF Vice-Chief: Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari on Thursday took over as Vice-Chief of the Air Staff. The Air Marshal has a flying experience of over 3800 hours on a wide variety of fighter and trainer aircraft, including missions flown during Op-Meghdoot and Op-Safed Sagar. ■ SNS

EMERGENCY VEHICLE



An emergency enforcement vehicle ~ to be used to stop waste dumping in Vrishabhawathi River~ during its launch in Bengaluru on Thursday. ■ IANS

No discussion yet on CM face for 2023 polls: Siddaramaiah

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, 1 JULY



Former chief minister and Congress leader Siddaramaiah, asserted today that the party has not taken any decision on its chief ministerial candidate for the 2023 Assembly polls.

"Elections have to take place first for electing new MLAs. Based on their opinion, the high command will take the call." Therefore, why should the subject be discussed now, he wondered.

Siddaramaiah was apparently seeking to put an end to the recent controversy over the party's chief ministerial face for the 2023 elections. The row started after his supporters proclaimed him as their man for the top post. This had prompted other influential party men also to chip in, arguing against such claims. This apart, a section of other lead-

ers began making attempts to hold a convention of their castes and communities, if only to mobilise support in their favour.

While rubbishing the storm on the issue, Siddaramaiah was also quick to dismiss all talk of groupism in the party, claiming there was no issue of migrants vs natives in the state Congress.

This was underlined in his case itself, he exclaimed, "I came to the Congress from the JD-S. Yet I went to become the chief minister." Siddaramaiah had left the JD-S in 2006 to join the Congress and went on to become the state chief minister in 2013. Siddaramaiah's attempt to end



Sasikala reaching out to old guard

Police files case against ex-AIADMK gen secy, 500 loyalists

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 1 JULY

The internal problems in AIADMK reached another stage with Sasikala reaching out to old guards in the party in her fight against EPS and OPS, after speaking to cadres for several days, while the state police registered a case against her and about 500 cadres based on complaint from former minister CV Shanmugam.

Sasikala's camp released yet another audio on Wednesday, of her telling former MLA Kathirkamal that she stopped the expulsion of 11 MLAs in 2017, including OPS.

Further, Sasikala is heard saying she was told that plans are being made to expel OPS and 10 other legislators in Tamil Nadu Assembly for voting against the EPS government.

Despite being on her way to prison, she sent word to the Speaker that the MLAs should not be expelled and that the party needs to be together. She also added that after the death of former Tamil Nadu chief minister and founder of AIADMK MG Ramachandran,

the party had faced a similar situation and she had then also advised J Jayalalithaa to keep the MLAs together.

Sasikala's increasing overtures to party leaders and cadres had the AIADMK in a huddle, even expelling those who were in touch with her. On Wednesday former chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said her telephonic conversations will not impact the 1.5 crore cadre based organisation a wee bit.

But the complaint from former minister Shanmugam and subsequent registration

case against Sasikala implies that the present leadership of the party is serious in taking on against her. The complaint alleged that Sasikala's supporters had issued death threats to him through phone and social media.

Police registered the complaint and after inquiry, a case was filed against Sasikala and 500 unidentified supporters. Police booked her and others under five sections, including IPC 506(1) for criminal intimidation, IPC 507 for criminal intimidation by an anonymous communication and section 67 of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act 2008.

Sources close to Sasikala say that she is trying to gain the trust of the leaders who are not active in AIADMK currently, but was very close to Jayalalithaa and MGR.

Sasikala reportedly called Karupp Maya Thevar, the 83-year-old leader from Dindigul who had first won an election on an AIADMK ticket in 1973.

She has also called Pulavar Pulaipathan, a Tamil scholar and lyricist who had worked closely with MGR.

Cinematography Act: CPM asks govt to withdraw retrograde amendments

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The CPI (M) politburo today asked the government to withdraw the "retrograde" amendments to the Cinematography Act which constitute an all-out assault on the creative talents of film makers and the Constitutional right of freedom of expression.

In a statement, the politburo said by the proposed amendments, the Central government wants to add a provision to give it the right to "revisionary powers" on account of violation of Section 5B (1) (principles for guidance in certifying films) of the Act.

"This is tantamount to withdraw films already certified and closed. Recently we have seen the right-wing forces led by the Hindutva brigade and casteist groups indulging in mob censorship of films not to their liking. Now the government itself wants the powers to stop films critical of its ideology," the party said.

As it is, the autonomous powers of the Film Censor Board have been subverted in various ways by the I & B Ministry, the CPI (M) said. In April the Appellant body to which film makers could appeal against cuts by the Censor Board to their films was arbitrarily dissolved by the ministry.

Incidentally, this issue apart, Shivakumar and Siddaramaiah also find themselves at crossroads over the ensuing problem in the Youth Congress. The rivalry between its president Raksha Ramiah and arch rival M Nalapad, has come to the fore, with the two senior leaders coming out with their own suggestions to end the stalemate in the youth wing of the Congress.

This was underlined in his case itself, he exclaimed, "I came to the Congress from the JD-S. Yet I went to become the chief minister." Siddaramaiah had left the JD-S in 2006 to join the Congress and went on to become the state chief minister in 2013. Siddaramaiah's attempt to end

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T'PURAM, 1 JULY

Kerala, which was successful in combating the virus initially, is now struggling to contain its Covid numbers. The state was hailed as a success model for controlling the pandemic during the first wave.

A robust health infrastructure and quick intervention at the government level helped to

keep the number in check. However, in the second wave Kerala witnessed a massive rise in cases, and hospitals were overstretched. Kerala now has the 2nd highest number of confirmed Covid cases in India after Maharashtra. Maharashtra has the highest number of active cases at 1.19 lakh followed by Kerala at 1.01 lakh and Karnataka at 76,528. ■ SNS

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Engineer/Constr.- Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-

1 Name of work and location	Construction of Rest House with 50 rooms for attendants of indoor patients and other allied works including Electrification works in Northern Railway, Central Hospital, New Delhi (Composite work).
2 Completion period of the work	15 (Fifteen) months from the date of issue of acceptance letter.
3 Approx. Cost of Work	Rs. 477.04 Lakh (Rupees Four hundred seventy seven lakh & four thousand only)
4 Earnest money amount (to be deposited Online)	Nil
5 Date, Time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Tender may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs. on 26.07.2021 on IREP'S website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in . The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 26.07.2021
6 Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document :	Above tenders document will be available on IREP'S website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 03.07.2021 to 26.07.2021. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender No.220-Acs/1/1170/50/Rooms/NRCH DL 01.07.2021

1473/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Water war: Andhra, T'gana deploy additional police force

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 1 JULY

As tension has escalated between the two Telugu states

over sharing of Krishna river water both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have resorted to deploying additional police forces at irrigation projects

and hydel power projects across the river.

The water war between the two states once again reared its ugly head after Telangana took

strong exception to the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project by neighbour Andhra Pradesh stating its interests are being harmed.

TENDER

Government of Himachal Pradesh Jai Shakti Department "Notice Inviting e-Tender"

The Executive Engineer Jai Shakti Vibag Division Nalagarh invites online tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work (s) through e-tendering process:-

S/No	Description of work	Estimated cost	Earnest Money	Cost of tender forms	Stipulated Time period
1	Construction of Chak Dam on 4,49,38,16/-	481882/-		250/-	One Year

1. Last date of filing / uploading the tender through e-tendering: - 14-07-2021 upto 11:00 AM. The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website www.hppwd.gov.in.

Executive Engineer,
JSV Divn. Nalagarh,
1988/2021-2022 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

**HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Electrical Division No.1, HPPWD, Shimla-9
Web:www.hppwd.gov.in E-mail: ee-elet1-hp@nic.in Phone/Fax No.0177-2621398
"Notice Inviting Tender"

Sealed percentage rate tenders on form No. 6 & 7 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No.1, HPPWD Shimla-9 for the following works on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HPPWD Electrical, so as to reach in this office on or before 14/07/2021 up to 10.30 AM and will be opened on the same day at 11.30 AM in the presence of the intending contractors or their authorized representatives.

The tender form will be issued from this office against cash payment (Non-refundable) to 01.00 PM on dated 13/07/2021.

The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time Deposit Account/Saving Account in any of the Post Office in HP duly pledged in favour of undersigned must accompany with each tender at the time of issue of tender form. Conditional tenders and the applications for tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 90 days. The undersigned reserves the right to reject the tender without assigning any reason. It is further added that the rates be quoted both in words and figures for proper checking to avoid any complications. No tender form will be issued to those contractors who are not registered under HP GST Act 1968. The contractors shall show their registration/renewal of enlistment to the undersigned before issue of tender form. If the date of opening of will be holiday, the tender will be opened on the next working day at the same time.

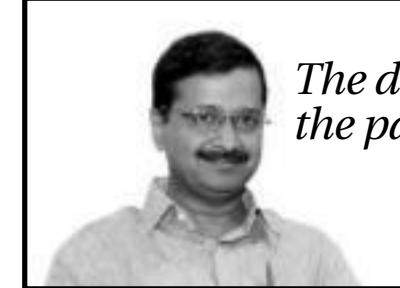
**HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**
Notice inviting Tender

Sealed item rate tenders on form 6&8 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Gohar Division, H.P.PWD: Gohar for the following works from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in H.P.PWD so as to reach in his office on or before 13/07/2021 up to 11.00 AM, and will be opened on the same day at 11.30 AM in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The D.N.I.T./tender documents can be had from this office against cash payment (Non refundable) up to 4.00 P.M. on 9/07/2021. The applications for issue of tender forms will be received up to 4.00 P.M. on 9/07/2021.

The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time Deposit Account/Saving Account in any of the Post Office in HP duly pledged in favour of undersigned must accompany with each tender at the time of issue of tender form. Conditional tenders and the applications for tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tenders shall be kept open for 90 days. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject the tenders without assigning any reason. It is further added that the rates be quoted both in words and figures for proper checking to avoid any complications. If the date of opening will be holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day at the same time.

Sr. No. **Name of Work** **Estimated Cost** **EMD** **Time** **Cost of Tender** **Class of contractor Eligible**

1	Providing Special Repair to E.I. and replacement of old CFL light with energy efficient LED lights in Ground floor of administrative Block of state institute of Health and family welfare, Parimala Shimla-9.	Rs. 2,57,497/-	Three Months	350/-	C&D
2	Providing Special Repair to E.I. and replacement of old CFL light with energy efficient LED lights in 1st floor of administrative Block of state institute of Health and family welfare, Parimala Shimla-9.	Rs. 3,92,347/-	Three Months	350/-	B&C
3	Providing special repair to E.I. in the office of Director Youth services & Sports graig garden Chotta Shimla-2.	Rs. 1,95,436/-	Three Months	350/-	C&D
4	Providing special repair to E.I. in room No. 103,312,G/Floor control room,218,213, PWD elect. Plant 321,212,11,224 main gate Ellerslie G-9,G-7,HCM Pantry, 3rd floor ladies toilet, Fwing 331, 1st/Floor toilet, 313 in Ellerslie Bldg HP Sectt. Shimla-2.	Rs. 1,28,840/-	Three Months	350/-	C&D
5	Providing Energy recovery ventilation (ERV) system in the office of Hon'ble Chief Minister's office at Oak Valley Shimla (HP).	Rs. 1,45,469/-	Three Months	350/-	Others



The debt of doctors who served people day and night during the pandemic cannot be repaid

DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL
SPEAKING ON THE NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 02 JULY 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Congress workers during a protest march against rising prices of petrol, diesel, in Kulu on Thursday. IANS

J&K train services resume: Having remained suspended for about seven weeks due to the pandemic, train service was partially resumed in the Kashmir valley on Thursday. Passengers in large numbers were seen proceeding towards the railway stations to catch the train. The train service will operate between Banjhal and Budgam stations. SNS

UP trafficking: About 40 children were taken off a Punjab-bound train at Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad on Thursday after local police was tipped off a suspected case of human trafficking. All children were below 15 years of age and were taken off the Karambhoomi Express. PTI

Heat wave in North India: Northern India is unlikely to get any relief from the sweltering heat as the IMD on Thursday said heat wave conditions are likely over Punjab, Haryana, De- Ihi, Rajasthan and UP in the next two days. It said heat wave to severe heat wave conditions were observed in isolated places over Jammu on Wednesday. PTI

Diana Award: Satyam Mehta, a 16 year-old student from Noida in Uttar Pradesh, has been felicitated with the 'Diana Award'. The 'Diana Award' recognises Satyam for his efforts in empowering rural investment, sustainable management of e-waste, and promoting better menstrual health and hygiene management. The award instituted in memory of the late Princess of Wales is meant for young people involved in social action or humanitarian efforts, said the Press release. SNS

Ex-BJP MP passes away: Former BJP MP (49) from Sant Kabir Nagar Sharad Tripathi died due to prolonged illness at Medanta hospital in Haryana's Gurgaon, family sources said. Tripathi died on Wednesday night due to liver-related ailment, they said. PTI

J&K man acquitted of terror charges after 11 years

AHMEDABAD, 1 JULY

A computer professional from Kashmir has just returned home after spending eleven years in jail simply because the police thought he was laying a terror network in Gujarat.

Incidentally, he is not the first one to have spent eleven years in Gujarat jail before being acquitted.

Mufti Abdul Qayyum Ahmed, accused by the Gujarat Police to be the mastermind behind the 2002 Akshardham attack, was acquitted by the Supreme Court after eleven years being in captivity.

Not only that, when Mufti penned down the autobiographical account of his torture in jail, the Gujarat Police had coerced him to call off the public launch of the 225-page book titled "Behind the bars for eleven years".

The local police had also ensured that the lawyers who had secured his acquittal from the apex court were not felicitated at any public function.

Srinagar-based Bashir Ahmad Baba was in Gujarat in March 2010 to attend a four-day session on post-cancer care through an NGO Kimaya Foundation that works in Kashmir valley.

More than decade later, Baba has been acquitted by a court following which he returned home last week. SNS

HC upholds acquittal of Taurani in Gulshan case

Bombay HC confirms conviction of co-accused Abdul Rauf Merchant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 1 JULY



Nearly 24 years after the crime that shocked the Hindi film industry, the Bombay High Court on Thursday upheld the acquittal of film producer and Tips Industries co-founder Ramesh Taurani in the 1997 murder case of music baron Gulshan Kumar, but confirmed the conviction of co-accused Abdul Rauf Merchant.

A division bench of Justices SS Jadhav and N R Borkar also quashed the acquittal of Rauf's brother and another accused in the case, Abdul Rashid Merchant, and sentenced him to life imprisonment noting that Rauf was one of the persons who shot at Kumar.

Gulshan Kumar, known as 'Cassette King', was shot dead outside a temple in suburban Andheri on 12 August, 1997. The high court in its judgment noted that it was "a

cold-blooded murder. We have no doubt whatsoever that the prosecution has proved that the appellant (Rauf) has caused the homicidal death of deceased Gulshan Kumar by firing and causing bullet injuries beyond reasonable doubt, the HC said.

Rauf had no personal animosity or grudge against Kumar but "committed the ghastly act as he was hired by (music composer) Nadeem Saifee and Abu Salem who wanted to satisfy their personal vendetta against the deceased," the division bench said.

Nadeem Saifee and gangster Abu Salem were shown

as absconding accused in the case and the trial against them did not proceed. Salem was later deported to India from Portugal.

Confirming the acquittal of Taurani, the bench said there is no cogent and convincing evidence to establish that Ramesh Taurani had conspired with music director Nadeem Saifee or Abu Salem and hence the acquittal of Ramesh Taurani does not call for any intervention. The court also commended the testimony of eyewitnesses.

It is a case of direct evidence. In the present case, we need to appreciate the conduct of the eyewitnesses who had not just claimed that they are witnesses but without showing any apathy had helped the deceased (Kumar) and the driver by taking them to the hospital, reporting the matter to the police and did not hesitate to stand true to the test of scrutiny, the court said.

According to the prosecu-

tion, Nadeem Saifee and Taurani had paid money to Abu Salem to eliminate Kumar.

On April 29, 2002, a sessions court acquitted 18 of the 19 accused. The trial court only convicted Rauf under Indian Penal Code sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 120(b) (criminal conspiracy), 392 (robbery) and 397 (causing grievous hurt in robbery) and section 27 (possession of arms) of the Indian Arms Act.

Rauf subsequently appealed against the conviction, while the state government filed an appeal against the acquittal of Taurani.

The bench upheld the conviction of Rauf and also the life sentence imposed on him, but quashed and set aside his conviction under IPC sections 392 and 397. The bench also said Abdul Rauf Merchant would not be entitled to remission (reduction of sentence) considering his "criminal antecedents".

Lone: PM's meet with J&K leaders will start phase of reconciliation

JAMMU, 1 JULY

Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Lone on Thursday expected that the recent All Parties meeting of J&K leaders convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi starts a phase of reconciliation between Delhi and Srinagar.

Talking to media persons in Srinagar, Lone said that we have to make an enabling environment for facilitating delivery of the issues discussed in the meeting in which the home minister Amit Shah was also present.

He urged the leaders who participated in the meeting to realize that restoration of statehood for J&K is a long process and asked them not to create hurdles. Lone refused to divulge the deliberations of the meeting but said, "I don't think there was any single leader who did not make their people proud. All parties especially from Kashmir region made their people proud. All spoke well and reflected the pain of the people."

NEW OPPORTUNITIES



► For the first time, the vast majority of applicants to the Graduate route will be able to apply in a fully digital way, using the UK Immigration: ID Check smartphone app.

► Successful applicants will be issued with an eVisa, and be able to conveniently access this status whenever needed to prove their rights in the UK.

► This change stands to benefit tens of thousands of students from India.

of business, science, technology and the arts."

She said: "Once they've received their world-leading qualification from one of our fantastic education institutions, this new visa will give them the freedom to fulfil their aspirations and advance their careers."

Jan Thompson, Acting British High Commissioner to India, said: "The numbers show that UK universities are already a popular destination for Indian students, who contribute immensely to the unique living bridge that exists between the UK and India."

We, Yogesh Dugar and Pratibha Dugar of Flat No. 802, Block 7, Fort Oasis, 368 Pandita Road, PS Rabindra Sarobar, Kolkata-700029, have changed the name of our minor daughter from Mishika Dugar to Disha Dugar for all purposes, vide Affidavit dt. 25.06.2021 sworn before the Court of Ld. 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore.

Bihar: Vax crisis hits mega jab campaign

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 1 JULY

As per the day-wise plan, more than three lakh people were supposed to be inoculated at the 3,000 vaccination centres across the state but the plan has run into rough weather due to vaccine shortage

each month to check spread of the infection. As per the day-wise plan, more than three lakh people were supposed to be inoculated at the 3,000 vaccination centres across the state from today but the plan has run into rough weather due to vaccine shortage.

"When I finally reached today on the completion of the dead-

had been administering roughly around 50,000 doses to the people. The people hoped things would improve during the mega vaccination campaign beginning today but the same old story got repeated even on the first day of the campaign.

"When I finally reached today on the completion of the dead-

line here for the second dose today, I was told the vaccination has been stopped here," an elderly person said. Many citizens said they reached the vaccination centres well before time but were not lucky to get the vaccines.

The fact that many districts in Bihar didn't have even a single dose of vaccines. At least nine districts out of Bihar's total 38 were such where not a single dose could be administered to the people yesterday as the vaccination centres remained closed. Then nine districts which drew a blank

included Gopalganj, Khagaria, Begusarai, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Sheikhpura, Sitamarhi, Lakhisarai and Arwal. Another four districts were such where a maximum of just 10 people could be vaccinated.

In Saharsa, only 17 persons could be vaccinated while the number of beneficiaries in Bhagalpur and Kishanganj remained only 30 each, indicating the seriousness of the campaign. In all, the vaccination took place at only 769 centres across the state yesterday out of a total 3,000.

UP govt trying to resolve issues of stalled projects in Noida, Greater Noida: Mahana

PTI & SNS
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The 340.82-km-long Purvanchal Expressway would start from next month as 95 per cent of the work has been completed'

homebuyers' interest.

Many builders, including Amrapali, Jaypee Infratech and Uitech, have defaulted in delivering their projects in Noida and Greater Noida, causing huge distress to thousands of homebuyers whose investments are stuck for about a

decade now. He said some proposals have been received such as pledging of units with the authority and others and all these possibilities are being explored and looked upon.

When asked about the progress in the development of expressways, Mahana said the 340.82-km-long Purvanchal Expressway would start from next month as 95 per cent of the work has been completed. Work on the Ganga Expressway is expected to start from September, he said adding that the target to complete the project is 36 months.

IRSDC launches Aquatic kingdom in Bengaluru



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU/NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

country, the release added.

Meanwhile, according to SK Lohia, managing director and chief executive officer, IRSDC, the aquatic kingdom will entice passengers and visitors while educating them about the marine life. With strict Covid related protocols, about 25 people can visit the aquarium at a time, fornow.

The IRSDC said that it would redefine passenger experience besides setting a benchmark in development, redevelopment, operation and maintenance of railway stations in the country.

The 12-feet long Aquatic Kingdom is Indian Railway's first freshwater tunnel aquarium opened here today at the city station for the general public. A joint initiative of the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd (IRSDC) and the HNI Aquatic Kingdom, the Paludarium provides a glimpse into marine life, including dolphins, aquatic animals including alligator gar, sting rays, eels up to 31 feet, sharks, lobsters, snails and shrimps. according to the IRSDC.

The corporation has been tasked with taking up facility management at five railway stations including Bengaluru, Pune, Delhi, Chandigarh and Secunderabad, to enhance customer experience.

Overall, it is expected to cover 90 more stations, across the

CS row: SC rejects coplea against HC order for testimony copy to Delhi CM

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The Supreme Court Thursday dismissed the police plea against the Delhi High Court order asking it to supply the copy of statement of a witness to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and others in a case of alleged assault on the then chief secretary Anshu Prakash in 2018, saying it may be a hot potato politically but there was nothing much legally.

A bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said the high court's order supports liberty and we support it and moreover, as per the basic principle of natural justice, there must be a robust common sense that the accused must have the copy of the witness statement.

It rejected the vehement submissions of Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, appearing for police, that if the high court order was not set aside, it will have some serious repercussions. Not worth it. It may be a politically hot potato, but in a legal sense it is nothing at all, the apex court said.

At the outset of the hearing, the bench said that the police must abide by the duty of being fair and the copy of the statement must be given to the accused. It is a statement of a person which was there in the case diary, the bench said, adding that such a statement must be given.

PTI

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STATEMENT OF CONSOLIDATED AND STANDALONE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER & YEAR ENDED 31.03.2021

(Rs. in lacs)

Sl. No.	Particulars	CONSOLIDATED				
		Quarter Ended 31.03.2021 (Audited)	31.12.2020 (Unaudited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)	31.03.2021 (Audited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)
1	Total Income from Operations	12,377	11,557	8,309	45,059	27,331
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	818	(72)	(2,664)	174	(6,973)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	856	(72)	169	212	(4,140)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items from continuing operations)	856	(72)	(566)	212	(4,875)
5	Net Profit / (Loss) from discontinuing operations	307	(1)	(21)	291	(61)
6	Share of Profit/(Loss) of associates	(1)	(6)	(2,297)	(13)	477
7	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after discontinuing operations , minority interest and share of Profit/(Loss) from associates)	1,162	(79)	(2,884)	490	(4,459)
8	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	1,236	(79)	(3,117)	564	(4,737)
9	Equity Share Capital					

Voice of sanity

The Myanmar junta has proven over the past four months that a grotesque fantasy is easily brought to fruition in the absence of a moral compass among those who seek to impose their will on a people. As the world watches idly, making noises which amount to nothing, the more surreal aspects of February's military coup highlighting an absence of even elementary humanity have come to the fore, which have resulted in a brutal army crackdown that has included shooting unarmed protesters, arresting suspected dissidents in night raids, shutting down news outlets, and rounding up journalists. More than 880 civilians have thus far been killed, estimates a local monitoring group. The Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy (NLD), which won the general election by a landslide last year, has been the main target of both the junta's ire and, quite literally, its line of fire. On Tuesday, 76-year-old Ms Suu Kyi, Nobel laureate and daughter of independence hero General Aung San, appeared in a junta court - she has been largely invisible to the outside world save a handful of courtroom appearances and remains under house arrest ~ to answer a raft of *prima facie* trumped-up charges laid against her by the authorities for which she could spend over 10 years in prison if convicted. Her only message to her fellow citizens was to stay "consistent and united". In the face of an unrelenting, and seemingly unending night of the generals, Ms Suu Kyi has in her words and actions once again underlined her commitment to the national interest and shown that her spine is made of steel. Whether taking on her nation's rogue army sans violence or the fickle liberals of the woke West who turned on her viciously when she was willing to look at both sides of what went down in Rakhine state, she has been the constant gardener planting the seeds for a democratic, accommodative and liberal country. India has, despite the urging of informed quarters, till now missed the chance to play honest broker in resolving the crisis in Myanmar. However, given New Delhi's close working relationship with the military nurtured over two decades and its traditionally warm relationship with the NLD leadership, it is perhaps still not too late to get involved. Especially, as Beijing is seen as being far too pro-junta to play a constructive role. If the world is to come around to Ms Suu Kyi's decade-long position of working with the military while incrementally democratising institutions in Myanmar, which may really be the only realistic way forward, India's role could be vital. In the interim, Myanmar's military rulers would do well to keep a window open for reconciliation. A repressive regime can down its shutters to the world for only so long.

Struggle in the Sea

A maritime struggle is raging in the Black Sea with Russia firing warning shots at a British destroyer in disputed waters off Crimea. This is yet another confrontation between the Kremlin and Western powers in the wake of the imprisonment of dissident Alexei Navalny. The last time Russia fired on a British warship was in 1919, when a Bolshevik submarine torpedoed a destroyer in the Gulf of Finland. The last time it happened in the Black Sea was during the Crimean war over 165 years ago. It was a surprise, therefore, when Russia declared that it had not only fired warning shots at HMS *Defender*, a British destroyer passing through Crimean waters on June 23, but had also dropped bombs in its path. The sequence of events has been contested, but the Kremlin has almost certainly upped the ante. Russia claims that the British warship crossed 3 kilometres into its territorial waters off Crimea, near Cape Fiolent. When the Soviet Union broke up in August 1991, Crimea became part of Ukraine. Russia occupied and annexed the country in 2014. It thus claims the patch of sea in question, even though most countries, including Britain, regard the annexation as illegal. Russia said it "halted the violation" with warning fire and, 11 minutes later, with bombs dropped from Su-24 bombers. The maritime tussle has escalated, though there are indications that the ship did indeed transit Crimean waters, arguably to show that it still considers the area a part of Ukraine. Britain's defence ministry said that *Defender* carried out a "routine transit" from Odessa to Georgia through Ukrainian waters. There were no shots fired at the ship, it says, nor bombs dropped in its path, only a previously announced Russian gunnery exercise nearby. The shots were suitably audible, though presumed to be "out of range" of the ship, and more than 20 Russian planes flew overhead. Predictably, Russian state television has played up the incident, portraying it as part of an American plot to encircle and undermine Russia. The Kremlin initially cited Nato aggression as justification for the annexation and subsequent fortification of Crimea. It may be sometime before the world gets to know exactly what happened. There is little doubt though, that it was extraordinary. Western countries routinely decry Russia's occupation and annexation of Crimea and the European Union has extended economic sanctions on Russia after the annexation and for the eighth successive year. The cache of curbs was imposed as recently at the Nato summit on June 14. On June 23, the European Union extended economic sanctions on Russia stemming from the annexation. Britain's move was bold, yet risky. Russia has built up a large military presence in Crimea, including advanced missile, air-defence and jamming systems. HMS *Defender* was a considerable distance from HMS *Queen Elizabeth*, the aircraft-carrier that she escorts, currently on the other side of the Bosphorus in the Mediterranean. Britain's willingness to run the risk reflects its sour relationship with Russia, which has not recovered from Russia's attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer, on its soil three years ago.

Pursuit of Excellence

The practice of killing excellence by rating everyone as 'outstanding,' starting with schools, is continued right up to the higher levels of bureaucracy, where most employees, even the undeserving ones, get the 'outstanding' tag, resulting in bad eggs making it to the top echelons and damaging the venerable institutions which they serve



Excellence is a word that is anathema to the Indian psyche. We revel in mediocrity and worse. If we see anything outstanding, we try to destroy its uniqueness; we have some of the world's most beautiful monuments but instead of trying to preserve them, we revel in defacing them by writing inane messages on their walls. The same is true for Government offices which are often housed in the most beautiful buildings, but have the most ill-kept interiors.

Also, we cannot digest excellence of other people; many of us get pleasure in vilifying iconic figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. No wonder few Indians try to achieve excellence; an Indian getting a medal at the Olympics is a rarity, while far smaller countries collect Olympic medals by the bucketful. The same holds true for Nobel prizes, probably because mediocrity informs all walks of our life.

Though we have one of the largest number of technically qualified personnel in the world almost all our indigenous products are poor copies of Western ones. Even this trend is ebbing, rather, with liberalisation of the Indian economy, most of the goods in our markets are imports from China, including statues of our gods and goddesses. This trend continues even at a time when Atmanirbhav Bharat is the official policy and China is no longer a friendly country.

Our dogged pursuit of non-excellence has stood us in good stead so far; adaptations of branded Western products satisfied the appetite of poor and middle-class people in India, while not-so-bright graduates from run-of-the-mill colleges provided a sufficiently literate work force for our emerging economy. However, with India joining the big league, the requirement now is more for quality than quantity.

The eclipse of once-popular brands like Premier Padmini or Tata Nano and the tepid response to our manufactured products in foreign markets demonstrates that poor quality products no longer sell ~ even at rock bottom prices.

So far as our human capital is concerned, the presence of a vast army of unemployed engineers, post-graduates and managers, while millions of jobs fitting these very skill-sets remain

vacant, convince one that the present competitive environment requires only the best qualified young men and women.

Most Government initiatives come to nought because of shoddy implementation by Government employees, who give no thought to excellence and discharge their duties in the most superficial manner.

Just imagine the change if Government employees start working with a will: we would not have collapsing bridges, trains would run on time, crime would come under control, Air India would not need to be sold etc. Perhaps, if Government functioning improves significantly, India would soon join the ranks of the great powers, effortlessly achieving milestones like becoming a \$5 trillion economy. Admittedly, excellence is difficult to foster. The easy way is to continue doing things as they were done earlier. Precedents, however flawed, are the holy cows of our mediocre officiandom.

The mantra in Government is: "Look back and move forward" which results in perpetuation of earlier mistakes. Lower staff in Government offices thrive on their knowledge of the contents of office files; with appropriate incentive subordinate staff would dig out some precedent either supporting or opposing some action.

Tailor-made, well-thought-out solutions that would really address the problem at hand are almost unheard of. Excellence in Government functioning would definitely enhance the quality of governance, affecting all citizens positively.

Presently, the anti-excellence exercise starts right from a child's school days, aided by educational boards, like the CBSE, that rank millions of students as 'excellent' by doling out more than 90 per cent marks to them.

One may argue that such high marks are now being awarded because the standard of education has gone up phenomenally in recent times. But this is not the case; independent evaluation often punctures such extravagant

claims.

For example, JEE-Advanced 2018, saw eligible candidates drop to their lowest level since 2012 ~ which was insufficient to fill the seats at the IITs, belying the stellar performance of lakhs of students who had bagged almost full marks in their Board examinations.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development soon came to the rescue of the beleaguered students by requesting the Joint Admission Board to lower the cut-off by 10 per cent, that had the effect of increasing the number of eligible candidates by more than 80 per cent. A relevant question that was never asked was: "If the examining Boards were not profligate in their evaluation, then how did JEE-Advanced 2018 see only 33,000 odd students qualifying,

even with the liberalised cut-off, when lakhs had scored above 90 per cent in the Twelfth Board examinations?"

One can say that educational boards have murdered excellence by mis-labelling the mediocre as excellent. Most examining Boards have lost their credibility in other respects also; Bihar Board achieved widespread notoriety when photographs of parents scaling walls to "help" their wards were published.

This notoriety was reinforced when videos of Bihar top-players fumbling to answer basic questions went viral. The once respected UP Board did not lag behind; one sixth of the examinees dropped out when the UP Government decided to go tough with the copying mafias.

Excellence cannot be expected from students coming out from such flawed education system that annually churns out a large number of educated but unemployable youth who are a problem for themselves as well as the society at large. The denouement of this sordid story is the unedifying spectacle of thousands of engineers, post-graduates and MBAs vying for menial Government jobs.

The practice of killing excellence by rating everyone as 'out-

standing,' starting with schools, is continued right up to the higher levels of bureaucracy, where most employees, even the undeserving ones, get the 'outstanding' tag, resulting in bad eggs making it to the top echelons and damaging the venerable institutions which they serve.

We can achieve excellence only if we give up our love for quick-fix solutions, and embrace quality consciousness instead. Undoubtedly, a great effort would be required, because it is not easy to change a mindset developed over the years.

The Government that has till now fostered the culture of mediocrity has to lead the change which may mean motivating Government employees to give up their *chalta hai* attitude and their love for *chai panis*.

Then, we have to change our value system that promotes mediocrity. A corrupt politician is rated much above a competent civil servant, who counts for more than a top scientist, who, in turn, ranks above a successful businessman.

This inflexible hierarchy ensures that good engineers never work on the shop floor but get MBA degrees and join finance companies and the brightest students opt out of research and academics preferring to become second-rate administrators and business executives. In the result, both the academic world and governance lose out on excellence.

More than the result of some random actions, excellence is a state of mind, a habit to be cultivated. Most people fail to achieve excellence because they have little passion or commitment to the job they do.

Perfection is in the hands of God, but we can definitely achieve excellence by passion and commitment. As Martin Luther King Jr. had said: "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry."

He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, "Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well." ("Facing the Challenge of a New Age" speech at the Holt Street Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama in 1956).

A MEMBER OF THE



ASIAN VOICES

Top auditor resigns

In revealing to reporters that he had tendered his resignation earlier in the day, the head of the nation's state audit agency said he'd have time to deliberate on what role he should play in the future of South Korea.

When asked whether he would run for president next year, he declined to answer but said there would be opportunities to speak about it later.

Choe appears to be considering entering the political arena. Most politicians see his resignation as a sign of his intention to run for president.

The board chairman's term is four years and is guaranteed by the Constitution. Choe was set to serve till January, but he resigned with about six months remaining.

If he were considering running in the presidential election, slated for March 9 next year, it would probably have been hard to put off his decision any further.

For the head of the top audit agency, political neutrality and independence in carrying out one's official duties are crucial. The same is true for the prosecutor general. It is not desirable for them to fail to fulfill their terms to run for president.

Ruling party lawmakers and their supporters condemn Choe and former Prosecutor General Yoon Seok-youl for hiding their political ambitions while running the prosecution and the board.

But this is misleading. It is the regime of President Moon Jae-in that caused the situation that effectively

H The Korea Herald

drove them into politics. One of the key roles of both the prosecution and the board is to find corruption in officialdom and root it out.

It is unavoidable that they will be on uncomfortable terms with those in power. For precisely this reason, the independence of both agencies is essential.

But Cheong Wa Dae and the ruling party did not respect their independence. They perceived the natural execution of duties by the prosecution and the board as challenges to their power and tried to tame them.

Last year Justice Minister Choo Mi-ae took a spate of unreasonable steps to expel Prosecutor General Yoon from his post. Her successor, Justice Minister Park Beom-kye, took action to effectively block the prosecution from investigating allegations against those close to Moon.

The pressure was more dramatic in Yoon's case, less so in Choe's. Not as much about the pressure Choe faced was revealed to the public, either. But from what came out, it looks serious.

At the request of the National Assembly, the board audited the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy over the early suspension of the Wolsong-1 Nuclear Power Plant. It found that the economic profitability of the reactor was unreasonably undervalued and the ministry had deleted 444 files with a view to obstructing the audit. At the time ruling party lawmakers attacked Choe, saying, "If you are uncomfortable with the direction of the president's administration of state affairs, you should step down."

Last month, the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office embarked on an investigation into Choe over the audit of the Wolsong-1 reactor after a civic group supportive of the current administration filed charges.

IN MEMORIAM

ROY GOURI — Left us for Heavenly Abode on July 2, 2000. May her soul Rest in Peace, remembering your presence always. — Bulai, Mumi, Kalu, Buju, Kutu.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Debate tradition

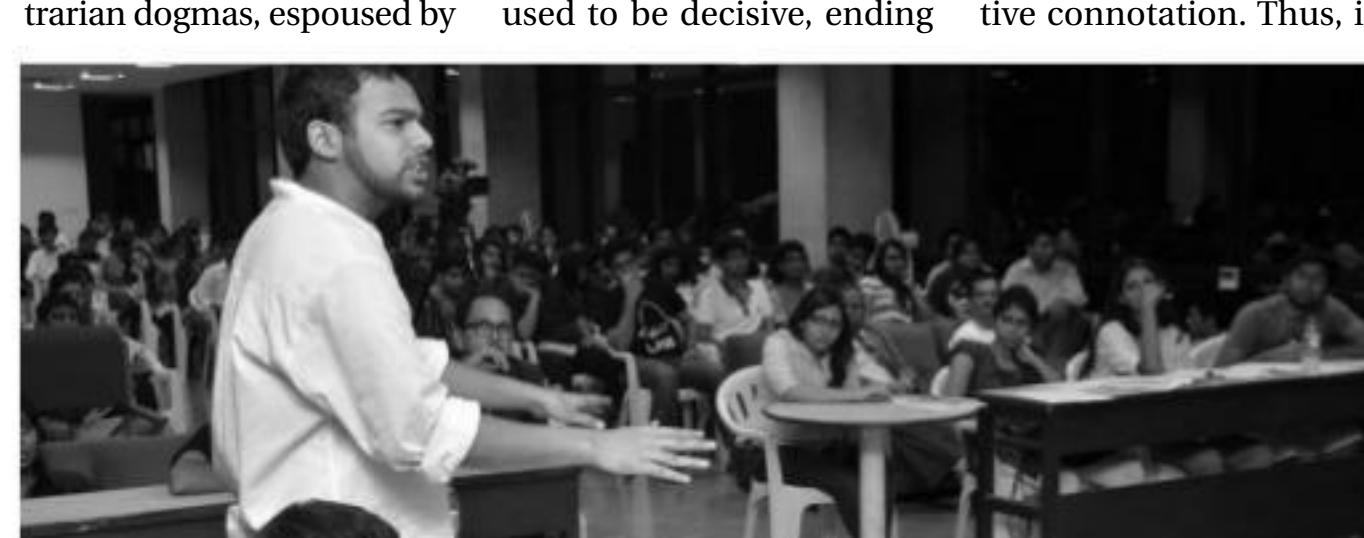
SIR, Apropos the article "Exchanging fire" (21 June) by Manish Nandy, debating has a long history in India. Once upon a time it used to be a battle for prestige ~ like a duel ~ between two contrarian dogmas, espoused by

two eminent scholars of the time. Unlike in modern times, debates were no annual, monthly or weekly events patronized by academic or other institutions as a formality. Earlier, debates used to be decisive, ending

with a winner and a loser. The winners were often bestowed prestigious titles such as "Tarkalankar" and "Tarka-ratna". They used to be Sanskrit scholars in a bygone era of Bengal. "Bitarika" in Bengali is the term for debate, "Tarka" is the term for argument, with a negative connotation. Thus, it is

no wonder that debate should gradually descend to diatribe, name-calling and ultimately acrimony and violence. The spirit of debating can be traced to once popular tradition of "Kabi-gaan" ~ an avatar of debate ~ in Bengal. Two individuals, with medals dangling from their shirts as a mark of decoration, engaged in a musical exchange with each other. They sang self-composed lines impromptu, responding to their rivals. "Kabi-gaan" became popular among ordinary people for its entertaining and straightforward way. But in most cases, it digressed to personal attacks, vulgarity and gradually disappeared from the fray.

Yours, etc., Prasenjit Baidya,
Subhasgram, 23 June.



DIFFICULT SWITCH

SIR, French Open finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas's first round exit in Wimbledon shows the age-old pattern of many seeded players ~ barring of course some top-ranked ones ~ who play well on clay but are unable to replicate their skill on grass.

This is mainly because of the short interval during which players have to switch from clay to an entirely different surface. This makes it the most difficult challenge in tennis.

In fact, this year the gap between the two majors is even shorter as the start of the French Open was delayed by a week due to Covid concerns.

For the record, since the open era of tennis began in 1968, only six women ~ from Margaret Court to Serena Williams ~ have pulled off the French-Wimbledon sweep in the same year, and it is even rarer on the men's side, where Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer have done it. Maybe it is Djokovic's turn this year.

Yours, etc., Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai, July 1.

BHARAT DOGRA

A significant number of people in India live below the poverty line, or just on the margins. They are unable to meet their basic needs in a satisfactory way. Any sudden adversity can lead to deprivation of essential needs including food, or intensity such deprivation. The most frequent such adversity in the past has been any event requiring high medical expenses. The last 15 months of Covid and accompanying lockdowns, restrictions and reverse migration have increased the distress of these households significantly.

The difficulties of these weaker sections are to a considerable extent caused by injustices and inequalities at several levels of economy and society. Hence policy level changes as well as political mobilisation are needed to change this. While these are most important, it may be useful to look also at some of those problems which can be reduced significantly even at the level of small communities, or at the level of households and individuals with sincere efforts.

One such problem which has been increasing significantly relates to increased consumption of tobacco and alcohol, the former particularly in the form of Gutka. These substances have been examined for their serious impacts on health. Suffice it to say that these are stated to be responsible for 8 million deaths in a year at world level (incidentally three times the stated Covid mortality for one year) and over 100 health problems and diseases are linked to these.

As gutka is a relatively recent product, we may also add that this has serious implications for several health problems but most seriously for oral cancer and oral sub-mucous fibrosis which impacts the ability to open the mouth. Spitting is an additional health and hygiene hazard for gutka, and such spit with its various ingredients may be more harmful than paan (betel leaf) spit. Hookah is a shared form of smoking, and hence more likely to spread infection. Smoking in congested narrow housing conditions leads to more passive smoking, threatening non-smokers including children as well. These local aspects should be included in studies of specific countries to understand important emerging trends such as the emergence of South Asia as a leading hub of oral cancer.

However, in world literature these problems have been examined for their health impacts, but not so much in terms of their impact on the subsistence of people from economically weaker sections. This deserves more importance in the context of countries like India. Traditional objections to consumption of alcohol have been reducing in times of economic liberalization. More and more liquor

Hence, in a single household

outlets are being opened. Governments seem to be happy if they earn tax from increased sale. Liquor, tobacco and gutka manufacturers have close political connections.

Gutka use has spread widely despite efforts to ban or restrict consumption. One escape route for manufacturers has been to circumvent regulations by selling tobacco and other ingredients in separate pouches. Tobacco continues to be consumed in the form of cigarette, cigar and the cheaper bidi and hookah, but perhaps on a larger scale (60 per cent or so according to frequently quoted data) in non-smoked forms including gutka. Another aspect of the rapid spread of gutka use is that it is spreading among women and teenagers, adding to total household expenditure on such products.

But the economic cost of these

daily consumption of ten small pouches of gutka, a quarter pouch of country-made liquor, and a packet of bidis or a few cigarettes has become quite frequent. This can lead to a daily expenditure of around Rs. 150. In a household with excessive addiction of one or more members, this expenditure can easily double.

In addition, there are households

that may even be driven towards eco-

nomic ruin because of excessive con-

sumption of these products, or that

may spend on more expensive forms

of tobacco or liquor.

Even if we estimate average daily expenditure of Rs. 100 for a household on these items, this may be just what is needed to end malnutrition in a family, as milk, vegetable and fruit could be purchased for this amount.

But the economic cost of these

substances is actually much higher. Just calculating for one sub-disease, the Tata Memorial Centre recently calculated that Rs. 2,386 crore is spent annually in India on treatment of oral cancer. The predominant cause of oral cancer is tobacco plus gutka and the second cause is alcohol. Over 100 health problems and in addition a lot of accidental injuries are associated with the consumption of various tobacco products and alcohol.

Consumption of alcohol and tobacco leads to lower capacity to work and earn, in extreme cases to loss of job and livelihood. This consumption with all its impacts leads to domestic discord and violence, with the resulting economic costs as well. Women and children suffer a lot due to the addiction of adult male addicts. Many addicts are driven towards

unethical practices and subsequently towards crime. Hence there is a very strong case for community reform campaigns aimed at reducing the consumption of alcohol and tobacco including gutka. This writer has initiated such discussions in several communities and received very good response. This should be a campaign based on unity of all people and should get adequate support at the level of government policy. If such a national campaign is able to halt the increase in consumption of these items and achieve a 50 per cent reduction within five years, then this will be a significant achievement indeed.

The writer is Honorary Convener Save the Earth Now Campaign. His recent books include Planet in Peril and Protecting Earth For Children.

Nepal needs an old friend



LEX LIMBU

The secretary-general of Amnesty International has written an imploring letter to a British newspaper pointing out their utter failure in vaccine diplomacy. On June 24, the organisation called upon the United Kingdom government to reflect on the historic relationship with Nepal, and the contribution of hundreds of thousands of Nepali Gurkha soldiers in their battles over the years, and provide 1.4 million doses of AstraZeneca (AZ)

vaccine to the country effective immediately. In Nepal, 1.4 million people over 65 are waiting for their second dose of AZ.

Support from the UK has been miserly at best in monetary terms - the latest emergency relief was just over 600,000 pounds. As the son of a Gurkha soldier who served the British crown for 28 years, I find the aid embarrassing. My grandmother, 80, who is still in Nepal, has not had a single dose of the vaccine. My aunts, whose sons and brothers have been loyal to the crown, are still vulnera-

ble. More than 9,000 Nepalis have died unnecessarily. To tout the 200-year-old relationship as being 'special' is nothing but platitudes.

But there is a moment now that could spell redemption. On Twitter and on camera, the UK Embassy in Nepal has been working hard to put its brightest spin on what few scraps of aid the UK government has thrown in the direction of Nepal. The shiny videos, the self-congratulatory tweets, the pomp and celebration over what amount to paltry pieces of aid really stick in the craw. Make no mistake,

there has been no concerted emergency response from the UK befitting either the level of the crisis or the supposed esteem in which the UK holds Nepal-UK relations.

Behind the scenes, the truth is that British medical institutions spent weeks trying to get the UK government to agree to take their donated continuous positive airway pressure therapy (CPAP) ventilators to Nepal. Out of a possible 5,000 ventilators, only 130 were shipped in the end. The much-lauded oxygen plant installed at the Nepal Police Hospital was part of a pre-planned programme, and was not going to be anywhere near enough to avert the crisis. The fanfare around the donation of 2,000 units of personal protective equipment (PPE) beggars belief, and is so embarrassingly small it would have been better left unsaid.

More than a month after two UK medical experts were sent to 'assess' the situation in Nepal, their findings have not been released and the UK has taken no follow-up action. In that same squandered month, the virus has had time to mutate, leading to more deaths in Nepal and spreading within and beyond the country, including to the UK.

Is the UK government more concerned about the potential political fall-out from exceeding its own recent hefty international aid budget cut than actually standing up and responding to the crisis? Saving face over saving lives appears to be the

order of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's day. It is sad to see a proud nation that claims to be a global leader reduced to a mere spectator as its allies pay the ultimate price during the pandemic. Recent developments provide a glimmer of hope despite these challenges. Having refused to consider bilateral vaccine donations before, following the United States at the G7, Johnson announced vaccine donations from the UK to countries that need them.

So, back to that redemption. If the UK were to send 1.4 million doses of AstraZeneca to Nepal within the next week for a vaccine roll-out as Amnesty has called for, it would be a start towards rebuilding the relationship with Nepal and restoring the UK's reputation as a global leader.

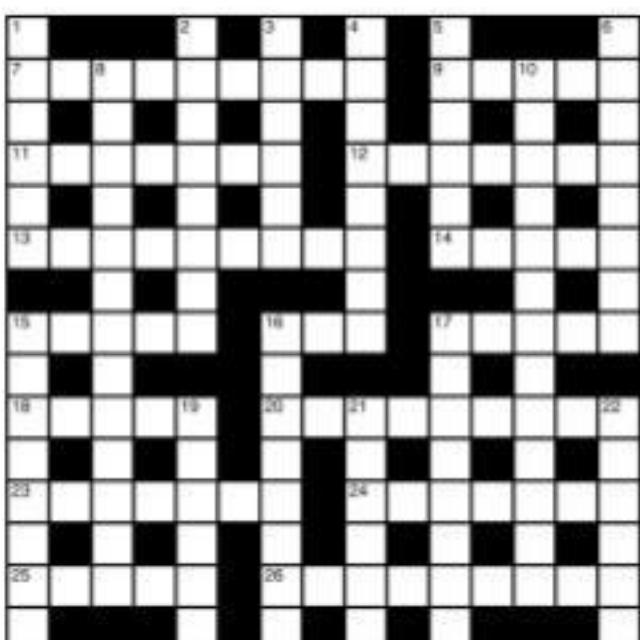
This would still need to be followed by the real work: Getting at least 40 million further doses of vaccine (of any brand) into the country soon so that the government of Nepal can reach its 72 per cent vaccination target rate required to quell the virus, and with it, the death and suffering and risk of further mutations.

Health is a human right, and the UK still has the opportunity - just to make amends and end on the right side of this friendship and our shared history. Enough with the frippery and fanfare. The world is watching alongside our Nepali friends; we need to at least end this story well.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28960

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



ACROSS

- 7 Perhaps add water to ferns here, wilting (9)
- 9 Different person subject to order, abandoned by British (5)
- 11 US city enveloped in love for Little Italy in the future (3,4)
- 12 Head off bits of film by Young Conservatives adopting new dubbing technique (5-4)
- 13 Began list laying out these assets? (9)
- 14 Commotion surrounding American element of flight (5)
- 15 Restrained but losing head in hurry (5)
- 16 Vehicle not working? Not quite (3)
- 17 Line is circling party venues supporting swimming (5)
- 18 Severe depression doing head in (5)
- 20 Setter accommodating pilots aboard special flying machine (9)
- 23 French ready with enthusiasm to dismiss a German cracker (7)
- 24 Learned to ignore first repeat (7)
- 25 Increasingly aristocratic, avoiding hard question (5)
- 26 Unusual heat burns - me? (9)
- 1 French port receiving a quantity of chicken (6)
- 2 Wasting time, I exported nasty bleach (8)
- 3 Fixed line limiting height for Jewish settlement (6)
- 4 Obsessive year is involving special research (8)
- 5 Elects Conservative - I'm sorry about
- 6 that ultimately (6)
- 7 Unusual stir about hackneyed items, things in the 'old hat' category? (8)
- 8 Evidence of an out-of-this-world domestic bust-up? (6,7)
- 10 Grass needing protection with snug covering in Sussex town (8,5)
- 15 Corner resident nearly securing spot for dance (8)
- 16 Lizard I left is found in lounge (8)
- 17 Position King overlooked in a certain European subject (8)
- 19 A lot of mist on a road is a concern for drivers (6)
- 21 Foreigners giving misinformation in answer (6)
- 22 Carefully examine including old film as example of literature (6)

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

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

An article on the Rajputana salt industry, published in the Journal of Indian Industries and Labour is about the last place where one would look for a romantic legend. Mr. P.C. Scott O'Connor, Deputy Commissioner, Northern India Salt Revenue, who writes the article, has enlivened a somewhat arid subject by telling the local tradition of the salt lake at Sambhar, the largest lake of its kind in India. The tradition ascribes the formation of the lake to a gift from the tutelary goddess of the Chauhan Rajputs. In return for milk supplied to a religious ascetic in A.D. 551, the goddess converted a forest into a vast plain covered with gold and silver. The inhabitants regarded the gift rather as a curse than as a blessing, fearing it would excite the cupidity of the neighbouring clans, and the goddess therefore turned the precious metals into salt, which the rain dissolved and washed into a natural hollow, forming a lake. It is a pretty story, as Mr. O'Connor says, and he tells us that it is still credited by the simple-minded country people. He relates a curious incident which occurred in 1870 and which greatly excited the people of the locality because they thought the means had been discovered of winning back the original gift of the goddess. A village goldsmith assisted, and the workers were astonished to see a white mass reduced to molten silver in the crucible.

NEWS ITEMS

RANGOON'S EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Rangoon, July 1
On the proposal of the Director of Public Instruction the Local Government has approved the revision of the terms on which scholarships for University education tenable for five years are held. The alterations will have the effect of standardising payments on a higher basis than at present, and will place the Anglo-Vernacular and the European scholarships on the same footing. The additional cost to Government will be Rs. 8,280, the value of the Anglo-Vernacular scholarships being increased from 7,680 to 15,000 and that of the European from 8,160 to 9,000 and that tenable at the Engineering College from 480 to 600. The schemes are in full operation there will be 180 students in receipt of scholarships or stipends directly or indirectly provided by Government.

FATAL FIRE IN OIL WORKS

Rangoon, July 1
A serious fire occurred at the Burma Oil Company's works at Syriem last evening resulting in the death of two workmen and serious injuries to Mr. Ross and thirteen coolies. At the time the fire broke out a number of workmen were carrying out repairs and the fire was caused by the mistake of a bench operator who closed a valve instead of opening it, thereby causing the pressure to rise in a pro-heater containing about 2,000 gallons of oil. The safety valve of this section did not operate properly. The material damage done was small but one Hindu and one Coringhi workmen were burnt to death, thirteen coolies were seriously burnt and Mr. Ross had his hands badly burnt and had a narrow escape.

INVESTIGATIONS OF PLANT LIFE

Interesting experiments are shortly to be carried out by Sir J.C. Bose at his research laboratory where in response to the requests of scientific societies, investigations of plant life under European conditions will be undertaken. The laboratory, which is to be fitted up with the latest apparatus, is situated at a commanding height, and the entire hillside has been turned into a unique natural park, to be maintained as far as possible in a state of nature. The vandalism of tourists has practically denuded the district of its wonderful orchids. These will be replanted in the nature garden and others introduced from Sikkim and Tibet. Wild flowers of the district will also be a subject of study.

INDIA'S FISCAL POLICE

Bombay, July 1
The Government of India intend if practicable to avoid appointing as Chairman anyone who has publicly committed himself to definite convictions either in favour of protection or of free trade, and for this reason the name of the gentleman whom the Indian Merchant's Chamber had in mind was never considered either as Chairman or even as a Member of the Fiscal Commission. The question of appointment will not go before the Cabinet at all, as it will be made by the Government of India on its own authority, and the Indian Members of the Executive Council could be trusted to see that the appointments made were such as did not prejudice India's claim to Fiscal Autonomy and India's right to use protection in her own immediate interests.



Telecom industry is in a tremendous amount of stress. I hope the government, the authorities and telecom department focus on this issue.

SUNIL MITTAL
CHAIRMAN, BHARTI AIRTEL

THUMBNAILS

Relief for exporters: The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday said a scheme providing interest subsidy for post and pre-shipment export credit has been extended by three months till September, a move that will provide relief to exporters. Exporters get the subsidy under the Interest Equalisation Scheme for pre and post-shipment rupee export credit. Earlier in April, the scheme was extended till 30 June 2021.

PTI

Indo-Bangla trade: West Bengal is now getting ready with fully equipped and state-of-the-art infrastructure to facilitate business with Bangladesh, said Janab Firhad Hakim, minister, department of transport & housing, Government of West Bengal, while addressing a meeting organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC). The minister informed that West Bengal transport department would be introducing Roll-On-Roll-Off (RORO) services between Kolkata Port and Howrah, which could be extended to any part of Bangladesh.

SNS

GAIL plan: GAIL (India) Ltd will invest about Rs 5,000 crore to build a portfolio of at least 1 gigawatts of renewable energy and set up compressed biogas as well as ethanol plants as it steps up efforts to expand the business beyond natural gas. As part of a push to embrace cleaner forms of energy, GAIL will be laying pipeline infrastructure to connect consumption centres to gas sources and spend as much as Rs 4,000 crore on renewable energy, GAIL chairman and managing director Manoj Jain stated.

PTI

Mynta event: Mynta on Thursday announces the arrival of the 14th edition of its flagship event ~ End of Reason Sale (EORS) ~ slated to be held between 3 and 8 July. The biggest-ever edition of the mega fashion carnival brings with it over 9 lakh styles from over 3000+ brands and is expected to cater to the fashion and lifestyle needs of over 50 million visitors, according to the company.

SNS

Udaan sales: B2B e-commerce platform Udaan on Thursday said that the platform witnessed a five-fold surge in demand for Covid safety essentials like protective masks, face shields and PPE suits during the second wave of the pandemic. Nearly 15 million "Covid safety essentials" catering to over 23,000 orders from over 400 sellers across 5,000 pin codes were sold on the platform, the company said.

SNS

Vivo smartphone: Smartphone maker Vivo on Thursday announced the launch of 6GB variant of Vivo Y51A in the country. The phone has been priced at Rs 16,990, said a Press release from the company.

SNS

Economic activities looking up: RBI Guv

2nd wave took a 'grievous toll' on India

FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT



"...while the recovery is underway, new risks have emerged on the horizon and these include the still nascent and mending state of the upturn, vulnerable as it is to shocks and future waves of the pandemic; international commodity prices and inflationary pressures; global spillovers amid high uncertainty; and rising incidence of data breaches and cyber attacks."

SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR

The second wave of the pandemic took a 'grievous toll' on India, but the dented economic activity has started recovering from late-May, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said today.

In a first, Das flagged the rising data breaches and cyber attacks as a risk facing the economy, along with others like firming global commodity prices.

"The recovery that had commenced in the second half of 2020-21 was dented in April-May 2021, but with the wave of infections abating as rapidly as it had set in, economic activity has started to look up in late May and early June," Das wrote in his foreword to the bi-annual Financial Stability Report prepared by the RBI.

The report said the gross non-performing assets of banks have been stable at 7.5 per cent in March 2021 - the same level as six months ago - but are expected to go up to 9.8 per cent in March 2022, as per its baseline scenario.

Das said the dent on balance sheets and performance of financial institutions in India have been much less than what was projected earlier, but was quick to add that a clearer picture will emerge as the effects of regulatory reliefs fully work their way through.

He also said capital and liquidity buffers at financial institutions are "reasonably resilient" to withstand any future shocks.

The financial system is on the front-foot to aid recovery, but the priority is to maintain and preserve financial stability, he said.

Domestic financial markets are also boosted by the strengthening signs of the pandemic's abatement, the growing pace and breadth of the vaccination drive and renewed hopes of the economy clawing back lost ground as it unlocks, he said.

"...while the recovery is underway, new risks have emerged on the horizon and these include the still nascent and mending state of the upturn, vulnerable as it is to shocks and future waves of the pandemic; international commodity prices and inflationary pressures; global spillovers amid high uncertainty; and rising incidence of data breaches and cyber attacks," he said.

The Governor emphasised that sustained policy support accompanied by further fortification of capital and liquidity buffers by financial entities remain vital to tackle the risks.

The financial system can take the lead in creating the conditions for the economy to recover and thrive, he said, adding that stronger capital positions, good governance and efficiency in financial intermediation will be the touchstones of this endeavour.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

On the fourth anniversary of goods and service tax (GST) rollout, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said higher GST collections should now be the new normal with the steps taken by the government to make it easier to do business and enforce tax compliance.

In a message to tax officers, the minister informed in last four years, the tax base has almost doubled from 66.25 lakhs to 1.28 crores.

"For eight months in a row GST revenues crossed Rs 1 lakh crore mark and we have seen record GST revenue collections of Rs 1.41 lakh crore in April 2021," said Sitharaman.

A nationwide GST, which subsumed 17 local levies like excise duty, service tax and VAT and 13 cesses, was rolled out on 1 July 2017. Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) will be issuing certificate of appreciation to 54,439 GST payers for timely filing of returns and cash payment of GST in the last four years. More than 88 per cent of these taxpayers

should now be the new normal," Sitharaman said.

Expressing satisfaction on overcoming most of the GST implementation challenges, including two waves of the Covid-19 pandemic, the minister also thanked taxpayers for their support in making GST a reality.

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are from micro, small and medium enterprises.

In the message, the minister also said any reform of this scale, in a large and diverse country like India, can be highly challenging. "The GST Council has shown immense sagacity and wisdom in redressing legitimate concerns of taxpayers and citizens by course correction whenever needed. This has manifested itself not just in measures to ease the compliance burden on taxpayers, especially MSMEs, but also reducing the tax burden on the common man," Sitharaman added.

In a separate message, minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur said that the record high GST collections in the past few months despite the pandemic show India's economic resilience and the sincerity of businesses towards nation building. "Timely compliance by the taxpayers during difficult times of Covid-19 pandemic are really worth appreciation," he said.



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Room for improvement, says Nitin Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

With support of stakeholders," he said at an event organised by the Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) on GST Day.

Gadkari, who is known for expressing his frank views, also lamented that some problems related to GST are still troubling the MSME sector. The minister said when MSMEs bill any material and give them to firms, then it remains the responsibility of MSMEs that whether they receive payments or not, they are required to deposit tax.

"And in the government, particularly with the MSME, there are a lot of problems, their delayed payments are a big problem for us. And all small MSMEs are already facing the problems," he said.

Coal India logs 33% growth in off-take

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 1 JULY

State-run coal major Coal India today reported a 33 per cent growth in coal off-take in April-June quarter of financial year 2021-22.

Coal India's (CIL) overall coal off-take has risen up to 160.4 million tons (MTs) during the first quarter of the current fiscal ending June 2021. This represents 33 per cent growth compared to 120.8 MTs in the same quarter of last fiscal, the increase in volumes terms being a robust 39.6 MTs, said a Press statement issued by CIL.

CIL's April-June 2021 off-take was also close to 7 MTs higher than 153.5 MTs of pre-covid quarter April-June'19, clocking a 4.5 per cent growth, it said.

"So far in the current fiscal, coal-based power generation is yet to get into a steady rhythm having a bearing on our supplies to power sector. After an encouraging spurt in April, coal-fired electricity generation slowed down in May. It started accelerating during the last ten days of June



again," the company said.

CIL supplied 126.3 MTs of coal to power sector during April-June quarter, a jump of 34 per cent compared to 94 MTs in the same period last year.

Loading through rail mode logged a steep 40 per cent growth during Q1. CIL loaded an average of 296.7 rakes/day during the referred quarter against 211.6 rakes in the same quarter last year, including private washeries and goods sheds.

Coal India produced 124 MTs during the first three months of the ongoing fiscal, logging 2.4 per cent growth compared to 121 MTs in the same quarter last year.

Manufacturing sector shrinks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

FIRST TIME IN 11 MONTHS



"Out of the three broad areas of the manufacturing sector monitored by the survey, capital goods was the worst affected area in June. Output here declined at a steep rate due to a sharp fall in sales. The sector also saw the fastest contraction in buying levels and was the only to post job shedding."

POLLYANNA DE LIMA
ECONOMICS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, IHS MARKIT

the month, job shedding continued, the survey said.

Covid-19 restrictions also curtailed international demand for Indian goods and new export orders decreased for the first time in ten months.

The latest reading highlighted renewed contractions in factory orders, production, exports and quantities of purchases. Moreover, with business optimism fading over

chasing was interrupted in June as containment measures aimed at bringing the pandemic under control restrained demand," Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said.

Lima, however, noted that in all cases, rates of contraction were softer than during the first lockdown.

Business confidence was dampened in June by uncer-

tainty over when the pandemic can be brought under control. Companies were at their least optimistic for almost a year. "As a result of subdued optimism, jobs were shed again in June," Lima said.

On the price front, input costs increased further in June, with firms reporting higher prices for chemicals, electronic components, energy, metals and plastics.

Additional cost burdens were again transferred on to clients, with goods producers hiking their fees for the tenth straight month, the survey said.

"Out of the three broad areas of the manufacturing sector monitored by the survey, capital goods was the worst affected area in June. Output here declined at a steep rate due to a sharp fall in sales.

"The sector also saw the fastest contraction in buying levels and was the only to post job shedding," Lima said.

RInfra in talks for sale of four road assets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

Reliance Infrastructure Ltd (RInfra) is in talks with Singapore-based Cube Highways for the sale of its four road assets for an enterprise value of Rs 1,430 crore, sources said. RInfra will use the proceeds from the sale to reduce debt.

Cube Highways is promoted by ISquared Capital - a wholly-owned arm of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, International Finance Corporation and a consortium of Japanese investors, including Mitsubishi Corporation and Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation.

Confirming the development, a senior company official said that Cube Highways has shown interest in Reliance Infra's four road assets - DST Toll Road Pvt Ltd, NK Toll Road Pvt Ltd and SU Toll Road Pvt Ltd located in Tamil Nadu, and JR Toll Road Pvt Ltd located in Rajasthan.

With a total length of 283 kilometres, the four road assets are under operation with the balance available concession period of up to 12 years.

Cube Highways has pegged the enterprise value for the four projects at Rs 1,430 crore and the proceeds from the deal would help in reducing RInfra's debt, the sources said.

If the deal materialises, it would be the second one between RInfra and Cube Highway. In January, RInfra had successfully completed the sale of its entire stake in Delhi-Agra Toll Road to Cube Highways for an enterprise value of over Rs 3,600.

Starlink's 227-260 kg satellites orbit at 300 km altitude compared to 36,000 km from Earth of high altitude satellites.

"The Internet access shifts automatically from one satellite to another nearest satellite orbiting overhead in microseconds," he said during a video-conference interview at the Gran Via conference centre in Barcelona on Tuesday. A subsidiary of SpaceX that Musk founded in 2002, Starlink awaits approval from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) to begin operations in India. Trai has not stopped Starlinks from selling installation kits, following a complaint from the Broadband India Forum that includes Starlinks competitor OneWeb.

On the day Musk turned 50

years old on 28 June earlier this week, the London-based OneWeb had a new majority shareholder in Bharti with an additional \$500 million (approx. Rs 3,700 crore) investment. The Sunil Mittal-operated Bharti Group and the UK government had rescued OneWeb from bankruptcy last year. Amazon's Project Kuiper features among Starlink's competitors in the emerging low-orbit satellites-Internet industry in rapidly evolving online technology.

Musk's idea of evolution has at its core a space-faring civilisation, and Internet-providing Starlink and satellites launching SpaceX are stepping stones in his plans to take his customers as tourists to the Moon and then as inhabitants of planet Mars.

Sebi bars Biocon V-P from stock market for 3 months

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has restrained an official of Biocon Ltd from accessing the securities market for three months and also levied monetary penalty for contravening insider trading norms.

Biocon had announced information relating to its collaboration with Sandoz and the period of unpublished price sensitive information (UPSI) was from 20 December 2017 to 18 January 2018, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) noted in an order passed late on Wednesday.

Senior vice-president of Biocon, Shreehan P Tambe, being an insider traded in the shares of the firm between 19 and 27 December 2017, in violation of market norms.

Besides, Tambe also failed to make the timely requisite disclosures to Biocon pertaining to the trade for the sale of shares on 19 and 20 December 2017, where the sell value was more than Rs 10 lakh.

As part of mandatory obligation under Prohibition of Insider Trading norms, Tambe was required to make disclosure within two trading days from the date of sale of shares but failed to do so within the prescribed time limit.

In addition, it was found that at the time of applying for pre-clearance of trades from a compliance officer, Tambe gave a declaration that he is not in possession of UPSI.

As Tambe did possess UPSI, he had given a false declaration to the compliance officer.



Because of our extreme proximity and relationship with China, we actually accept the Chinese version.

PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN
ON THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE TREATMENT OF UIGHURS MUSLIMS IN CHINA

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 02 JULY 2021

Hong Kong bans handover protest as official defends law

Large-scale demonstrations have been banned & number of pro-democracy activists arrested

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG, 1 JULY

Marking the anniversary of Hong Kong's return to Chinese control, a top city official defended the national security law imposed by Beijing to crush pro-democracy rallies and said Thursday it would be used further in the coming year to ensure stability.

Police sealed off Victoria Park - until recently the site of annual pro-democracy rallies marking the 1997 handover - and put up flags warning people that they could be prosecuted if they enter or remain in the enclosed area. They said there were online calls encouraging people to take part in an unauthorized protest.

The security law was implemented one year ago as authorities cracked down on dissent in Hong Kong after the terri-



tory was rocked by massive anti-government protests in 2019. Critics say Beijing has reneged on a promise to keep the special privileges for Hong Kong for 50 years - the autonomy of its courts and legal system, civil liberties that include a free press, freedom of speech and the leeway to take to the streets to protest.

Hong Kong Chief Secretary John Lee said the national security law stipulates that human rights are respected and allows

residents to enjoy freedom of the press and free assembly.

However, large-scale demonstrations have been banned and a number of pro-democracy activists and journalists have been arrested, ceased public activities or have left Hong Kong.

For two years in a row, authorities banned an annual June 4 candlelight vigil commemorating the bloody 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in

Beijing's Tiananmen Square, and the July 1 handover protest, citing pandemic social distancing restrictions.

Police have arrested seven journalists and executives of the now-defunct Apple Daily, a pro-democracy newspaper that was a vocal critic of Hong Kong and China's governments. Authorities also froze \$2.3 million in assets linked to Apple Daily, forcing it to cease operations last week.

Lee was speaking at a reception commemorating the 24th anniversary of the former British colony's return to China. It coincides with the centenary of the Chinese Communist Party on the mainland, where Hong Kong's top leader Carrie Lam has been attending. Lee said Hong Kong was on the rebound as the national security law restored social and political stability.

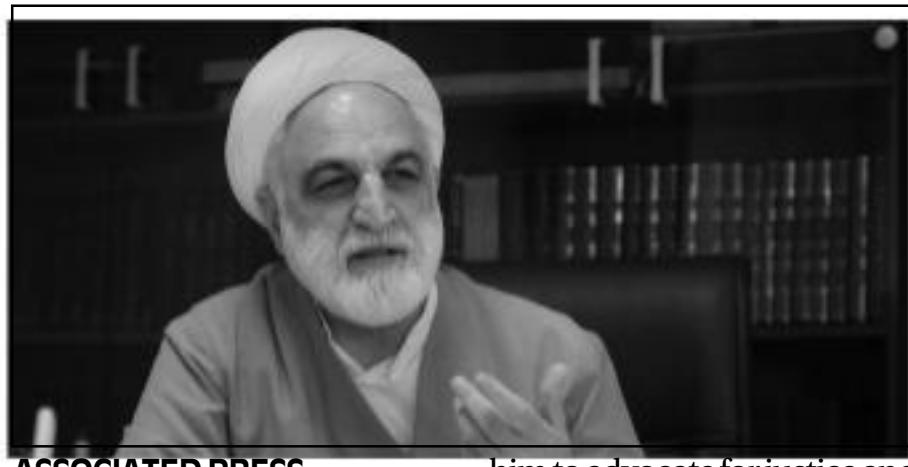
Our team has more con-

fidence than ever in Hong Kong's prospect. In the coming year, we will continue to uphold national security with determination and improve the implementation of the one country, two systems principle, he said.

In Beijing, Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a keynote address during a celebration of the party centenary that China will uphold the one country, two systems framework in Hong Kong and Macao to ensure full sovereignty, social stability and maintain prosperity in the two regions.

On Thursday morning, amid heavy police presence, a group of four activists including Raphael Wong, the head of the League of Social Democrats political party, marched through the streets of Wan Chai carrying a banner that called for the release of political prisoners.

Iran's supreme leader appoints new hard-line judiciary chief



ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, 1 JULY

Iran's supreme leader on Thursday appointed a hard-line cleric sanctioned by the West as the country's new judiciary chief, state media reported, replacing the president-elect who previously held the powerful post.

The new chief, Gholamhosseini Mohseni Ejehi (photo), 64, takes the reins from Ebrahim Raisi, who will ascend to the country's highest civilian position after his election victory earlier this month.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say on all state matters in Iran, announced Ejehi's appointment, urging

him to advocate for justice and fight corruption. In a decree, he praised Ejehi's valuable experience, shining records and legal competence.

Ejehi takes over a judiciary widely criticized by international rights groups for being one of the world's top executioners, as well as conducting closed-door trials of dual nationals and individuals with Western ties.

Raisi, the previous judiciary chief and a protege of Khamenei, was sanctioned by the United States in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, as well as over his tenure at the judiciary.

Thursday's announcement was widely expected as Ejehi, considered close to Khamenei, had served as deputy judiciary chief after a long history in the branch, including as prosecutor general.

In that post, from 2009-2014, he pushed to further limit access to the internet and popular social media apps, sparking worries among his opponents over the increase of social oppression.

From 2005-2009, during the first term of hard-line populist former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Ejehi served as intelligence minister, following decades of deep involvement in the services dating back to his role as head of the ministry's recruiting office in the 1980s.

The conservative cleric landed on the U.S. Treasury Department and European Union sanctions lists over allegations of severe human rights abuses linked to Ahmadinejad's disputed reelection in 2009.

Pak Army inducts China-made VT-4 battle tanks

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAIROBI, 1 JULY

The Pakistan Army has formally inducted the first batch of the China-made VT-4 battle tanks into its armoury.

Produced by Chinese state-owned armoured vehicle manufacturer, Norinco, the delivery of VT-4 tanks from the manufacturer began in April last year.

Pakistan is the third country to have bought these tanks from China after Thailand and Nigeria.

The Army's media affairs wing in a statement said that Commander Mangla Corps, Lieutenant General Shaheen Mehmood, on Wednesday visited the Armoured Division and inspected the first batch of VT-4 tanks.

Major General Rashid Mahmood briefed the commander about ongoing post shipment inspections of the first batch of tanks, the statement said. General Mehmood also witnessed the mobility and maneuverability test of the tanks.

Earlier, the Army after its on field tests in September last year had said the tanks would be employed in an offensive role by strike formations after induction.

The VT-4 is compatible with any modern tank in the world integrating advanced armour protection, maneuverability, fire power capabilities and state-of-the-art technology, the Army had said.

Africa's Covid-19 envoy blasts EU, COVAX over vaccine crisis

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAIROBI, 1 JULY

The African Union special envoy tasked with leading efforts to procure Covid-19 vaccines for the continent is blasting Europe as Africa struggles amid a crushing third surge of infections, saying Thursday that not one dose, not one vial, has left a European factory for Africa.

Strive Masiyiwa also took aim at the global effort meant to distribute vaccines to low- and middle-income countries, accusing COVAX of withholding crucial information including that key donors hadn't met funding pledges. He didn't name which donors.

The situation could be very different had we known back in December that Listen, this help is not coming, do for yourselves,' Masiyiwa told reporters, adding that many countries were just sitting back saying, the vaccines are coming. ... We as Africans are disappointed.' The criticism revealed African leaders' sheer exasperation at the world's dramatic vaccine divide, with Masiyiwa describing vaccinated, unmasked Europeans attending football matches while just 1% of Africans are fully vaccinated against Covid.

He stressed that Africa has purchased 400 million vaccine doses and can buy more, but he challenged donors: Pay

up your money ... We will no longer measure pledges, we will measure vaccines arriving at our airports. The African continent of 1.3 billion people is now in the grip of a third surge of infections that is extremely aggressive, the head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, John Nkenga-

song, told reporters. Health officials have described overflowing Covid-19 wards, dangerous oxygen shortages and a growing spread of the virus to extremely vulnerable and unequipped rural areas.

Masiyiwa said COVAX had promised to deliver 700 million vaccine doses to Africa by December. But at mid-year,

Africa has received just 65 million doses overall. Less than 50 million doses via COVAX have arrived.

'We are very far away from our target. We don't want to be seen as the continent of Covid ... (In Europe) the stadiums are full of young people shouting and hugging. We can't do that in Africa', Nkenegasong said. However, Nkenegasong and Masiyiwa announced that the first shipments of Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer vaccines with U.S. support will begin arriving next week. It was not clear how many doses would be in those first shipments. Meanwhile, more African-purchased doses will arrive in August, Masiyiwa said.

Pandemic tourism: Thailand launches Phuket 'sandbox' plan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PHUKET, 1 JULY

Thailand embarked on an ambitious but risky plan that it hopes will breathe new life into a tourism industry devastated by the pandemic, opening the popular resort island of Phuket to fully vaccinated foreigners from lower-risk countries.

As the first flight arrived, airport fire trucks blasted their water canons to form an arch over the Etihad jet from Abu Dhabi as it taxied to its gate.

The Phuket sandbox programme comes as coronavirus infections are surging in Thailand, including a significant number of cases of the

Delta variant, and many have questioned if it's too early to woo tourists back, and whether they'll come in significant numbers in any case due to the restrictions they'll still face.

But the number of new

cases on the island itself is extremely low, in the single digits daily, and more than 70% of its residents are fully vaccinated. The government is gambling that travellers will be willing to put up with coronavirus-related regulations for the opportunity for a beach holiday after being cooped up in their home countries for months. Before the pandemic, the tourism sector made up some 20% of Thailand's economy, and 95% of Phuket's income. The resort island off the southern coast saw fewer than a half million visitors in the first five months, and almost no foreigners, compared to more than 3 million

during the same period last year including some 2 million foreigners.

In a nod to the importance of the sandbox plan, PM Prayuth Chan-o-cha flew to Phuket to be on hand in person for the launch. He emphasized that the sandbox was just the first step toward his goal announced in June of having Thailand completely reopened within 120 days. 'This reopening is related to not only Phuket but also the whole country, he said.

Last-minute hitches in some of the program details and cautions from authorities that if cases start to rise on the island more restrictions may

be needed or it may have to be shut down entirely meant some cancellations before it even began. Fewer than 250 international travelers were expected on the first day compared to the initial target of 1,500. But as the kinks are worked out and people report their first-hand experiences, authorities are hopeful for a steady increase in the numbers. From 1 to 15 July, there are currently 1,101 hotel bookings for a total of 13,116 room overnights.

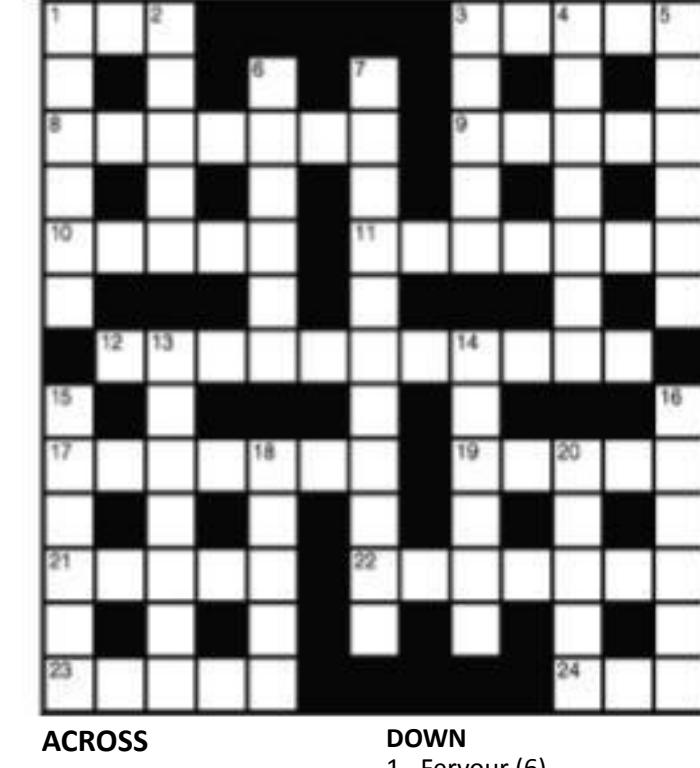
Travellers to other parts of Thailand are subject to a strict 14-day hotel room quarantine, but under the sandbox plan, visitors to Phuket will be allowed to roam the entire island the country's largest where they can lounge on the white beaches, jet ski and enjoy evenings eating out in restaurants, although clubs and bars remain closed. After 14 days, visitors can travel elsewhere in Thailand.

Only visitors from countries considered no higher than low or medium risk a list currently including most of Europe and the Mideast, the U.S., Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand are permitted,

and they must fly in directly to Phuket, though plans are in the works to allow carefully controlled transfers through Bangkok's airport.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



CROSS
1. Say forever (3)
3. Stopping device (5)
8. Greatly feared (7)
9. Footwear (5)
10. Not illuminated (5)
11. Cut glass (7)
12. Racetrack (11)
17. Alligator pear (7)
19. Raised strip of land (5)
21. Evaluation (5)
22. Expected (7)
23. Requirements (5)
24. Possess (3)

DOWN
1. Fervour (6)
2. Reside (5)
3. Tall fur helmet (5)
4. Disciple (7)
5. Without difficulty (6)
6. Chief journalist (6)
7. Instructive (11)
8. Couple (7)
14. Lasso (6)
15. Border (6)
16. Heavy and inert (6)
18. Deep gorge (5)
20. The above (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

1 Law, 13 Zealous, 17 Umbre, 18 Frugal, 19 Friend, 20 Brink.
3 Double, 21 Big, 22 Examining, 23 Annual, 24 Kid.
9 Faggio, 10 Cactus, 11 Elegy, 12 Tyranny, 13 Potting shed,

14 Evasion, 15 Frivolous, 16 Zebra, 17 Ego, 18 Brink.

19 Faggio, 20 Brink.

21 Examining, 22 Big, 23 Annual, 24 Kid.

25 Possess, 26 Potting shed,

27 Faggio, 28 Brink.

29 Examining, 30 Big, 31 Annual, 32 Kid.

33 Possess, 34 Potting shed,

35 Faggio, 36 Brink.

37 Examining, 38 Big, 39 Annual, 40 Kid.

41 Possess, 42 Potting shed,

43 Faggio, 44 Brink.

45 Examining, 46 Big, 47 Annual, 48 Kid.

49 Possess, 50 Potting shed,

51 Faggio, 52 Brink.

53 Examining, 54 Big, 55 Annual, 56 Kid.

57 Possess, 58 Potting shed,

59 Faggio, 60 Brink.

61 Examining, 62 Big, 63 Annual, 64 Kid.

65 Possess, 66 Potting shed,

67 Faggio, 68 Brink.

69 Examining, 70 Big, 71 Annual, 72 Kid.

73 Possess, 74 Potting shed,

75 Faggio, 76 Brink.

77 Examining, 78 Big, 79 Annual, 80 Kid.

82 Possess, 83 Potting shed,

85 Faggio, 86 Brink.

88 Examining, 89 Big, 90 Annual, 91 Kid.

93 Possess, 94 Potting shed,

96 Faggio, 97 Brink.

99 Examining, 100 Big, 101 Annual, 102 Kid.

104 Possess, 105 Potting shed,

107 Faggio, 108 Brink.

110 Examining, 111 Big, 112 Annual, 113 Kid.

116 Possess, 117 Potting shed,

119 Faggio, 120 Brink.

122 Examining, 123 Big, 124 Annual, 125 Kid.

128 Possess, 129 Potting shed,

131 Faggio, 132 Brink.

134 Examining, 135 Big, 136 Annual, 137 Kid.

140 Possess, 141 Potting shed,

143 Faggio, 144 Brink.



San Francisco has been a national leader in our response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and in our efforts to get to zero new infections.

SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR LONDON BREED
UNVEILING ITS HIV/AIDS HOUSING FIVE-YEAR PLAN

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26
HONG KONG	29	27
TOKYO	23	20
LONDON	24	15
DUBAI	39	31
SAN FRANCISCO	18	14
NEW YORK	26	17
MOSCOW	21	16

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

THUMBNAILS



A member of Waldoboro United Methodist Church sings a hymn during a service in Waldoboro, Maine. The drop in attendance at the church, in part due to Covid-19, forced its closure. ■AP

Sweden's caretaking PM asked to form a new govt: Sweden's caretaking Prime Minister Stefan Lofven was tasked on Thursday with trying to form a new government, hours after the head of the center-right opposition Moderates party said he failed to secure enough support from lawmakers on his side to do so. He must answer by Monday. ■AP

Russian agency says it exposed terror plot: Russia's domestic security agency said on Thursday that it has discovered a plot by followers of the Islamic State group to conduct terror attacks in Moscow and southern Russia, and killed one suspected conspirator. It said that two Russian nationals were plotting the attacks with firearms and knives in crowded areas in Moscow and the southern city of Astrakhan. ■AP

16 injured during blast of illegal fireworks in LA: At least 16 people were injured during a blast in a Los Angeles neighbourhood as the police were attempting to safely detonate illegal fireworks that were seized from a home. They had been transported to local hospitals. ■AP

Trump Org. CFO surrenders ahead of expected charges

Weisselberg's lawyers said he intends to plead not guilty and he will fight these charges in court



In a statement, Weisselberg lawyers Mary Mulligan and Bryan Skarlatos said he intends to plead not guilty and he will fight these charges in court.

The Trump Organisation's longtime chief financial officer, Allen Weisselberg, surrendered to authorities early Thursday ahead of an expected court appearance on the first criminal indictment in a two-year investigation into business practices at Donald Trump's company.

Weisselberg was photographed walking into the complex that houses criminal courts and the Manhattan district attorney's office at around 6:20 am with his lawyer.

New York prosecutors were expected to announce an indictment on Thursday accusing Weisselberg and Trump's namesake company of tax crimes related to fringe benefits for employees.

The case against Weisselberg, a loyal lieutenant to Trump and his real estate-developer father, Fred, could give prosecutors the means to pressure the executive into cooperating and telling them what he knows about Trump's business dealings.

The people were not authorised to speak about an ongoing investigation and did so on condition of anonymity.

There was no indication Trump himself would be charged at this stage of the investigation, jointly pursued by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. and New York Attorney General Letitia James, both Democrats.

Trump did not respond to reporters' shouted questions about the New York case as he

remained sealed but were to be unveiled ahead of an afternoon arraignment at a state court in Manhattan, according to two people familiar with the matter.

Vance, who leaves office at the end of the year, has been conducting a wide-ranging investigation into a variety of matters involving Trump and the Trump Organisation.

His office has looked into hush-money payments paid to women on Trump's behalf and truthfulness in the company's property valuations and tax assessments, among other matters.

Vance fought a long battle to get Trump's tax records and has been subpoenaing documents and interviewing company executives and other Trump insiders.

visited Texas on Wednesday, but earlier in the week, the Republican had blasted the New York prosecutors as rude, nasty, and totally biased and said his company's actions were standard practice throughout the US business community, and in no way a crime. The planned charges were said to be linked to benefits the company gave to top executives, like the use of apartments, cars and school tuition, the people familiar with the matter told the AP. The Manhattan district attorney's office declined to comment.

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Weiss

Etched with empathy

Swatilekha Sengupta's performance in Nandikar's play *Shanu Roy Choudhury* will remain her most memorable and impactful

SHOMA A CHATTERJI

In 1998, a beautiful play called *Shanu Roy Choudhury* premiered in Kolkata and went on to draw full houses for a considerable length of time. Produced by Nandikar, it was beautifully conceived and remains an archival piece of theatre in Bengali. It offers an ideal tribute to the recently deceased multi-talented theatre personality Swatilekha Sengupta (1950-2021).

Shanu Roy Choudhury was inspired by and adapted from a Willy Russell play called *Sister Valentine* and presented as a one-woman performance by Sengupta. The play opens on a woman, 42-year-old Shanu Roy Chowdhury. She has two grown-up children who have moved away from home and a husband who wants his dinner served just so.

Shanu is so lonely that to relieve herself of loneliness and boredom, she talks to the walls of her room. As she describes her husband, son and daughter, she acts those roles out herself, imitating them with the intelligence of a gifted mimic. While rolling out puffed puris for her husband's dinner, she talks about her life after marriage and dreams of going back to her maiden life and name, Majumdar.

In the second half, Shanu is a changed person, complete with jeans, tee-shirt, scarf and glares, relaxing in the luxury of a guest house in Kathmandu where she has arrived on holiday with her divorced friend. ("I bet you won't recognise me now. Can you, now? Frankly, I can't recognise myself, when the first rays of the sun reflect on me from the snowy peaks of *Macchhapuchhare*" she says.) This friend, however, has ditched her and gone off on a romp with a male friend they met on board the flight from Calcutta. By the end of the play, Shanu stays on in Kathmandu, living off odd jobs at the guest house, as she waits for her husband to arrive. She asks her invisible husband, "Can't I ask you to sit beside me by this lake, watching the mountains, and sip with me, though not officially, some Pepsi?" The play ends where it began — Shanu's life has turned full circle.

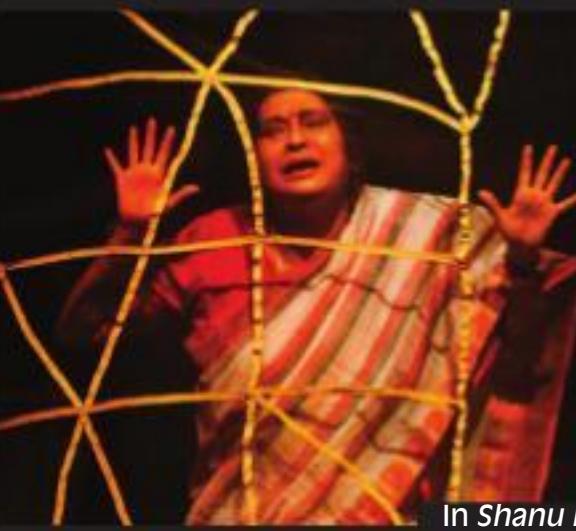
Asked about her response to the play, Sengupta said, "I have reason to be happy with my performance in and as *Shanu Roy Choudhury*", as she unspooled the story of her struggles as a woman in a Calcutta, which was then alien to her. The play evolves as the "collective voice" of middle-aged, bored, exploited, and lonely housewives across the world, bent under the burden of a creative process called housework that patriarchy has reduced to a chore.



Swatilekha Sengupta (1950—2021)



Sengupta in *Ajnatobaash*



In *Shanu Roy Choudhury*

Sengupta plays a woman who is craving simple things like approval, companionship, a little love, the freedom to express themselves, and last, but never the least, to live as independent individuals. They yearn for their own little islands of sunshine from a life essentially spent in the shadows of other people. There is a Shanu Roy

Chowdhury hiding in all women everywhere, crossing barriers of age, time, class, race and place. It is precisely why the play finds easy identification with the audience, many of whom are women like Shanu herself.

There are lightning changes in the "mood", ambience and setting of the play, dividing it vertically between the

two halves, before and after the interval. In her cloistered room, Shanu is surrounded not only by the walls she talks to, but also by angularly fixed netting, symbolic, perhaps, of her cloistered, caged life.

At Kathmandu, the "mood" is more open — there is a tree, an open lawn, a table set under an umbrella. The music

and light design also change.

The awakening of Shanu to her filial imprisonment is just too sudden and this is the only thing that rankles in this performance. The monologue spans the entire gamut of worldly events from Kashmir and Hindi cinema to pop songs and buying bikinis for a holiday, injected with heavy doses of humour and satire. That prevents boredom from setting in.

At one point in the play, in one of her many monologues, Shanu says, "Dear walls. How long have I talked to you, and to you alone! My husband, son, daughter, even neighbours, have all been walls. I hate the joke of it! But then, you alone knew how I dreaded life beyond the four walls. As a child, jumping from the high walls was just child's play to me. What has happened since then? Slowly, inexorably, Shanu Roy Chowdhury was buried in the shadows of the 42-year-old Shanu Majumdar. You asked me 'how are you?' I said, 'I am okay. Okay because the vegetables are fresh. Okay, because we are all keeping well. Okay, because the children are physically intact. So, we merrily carry on. And then, before we can discover ourselves, we cease to exist, crushed by an unspent energy and unrealised dreams.' This underscores the central idea of *Shanu Roy Choudhury*.

Sengupta summed up the play and her performance by saying, "Finally, in a pool of dazzling light, Shanu Roy Chowdhury will cry, laugh, stumble, romp and try to transcend her gravitational pulls. But deep inside, while performing all by myself, I shall be happy in the knowledge that my friends from far and near are all keeping me company."

"Since I began to perform this one-woman play, I realised that I have a responsibility towards women who are less fortunate. I have complete faith in the lines I deliver. And since I deliver them day in and day out, I believe them to be the absolute truth. I must, in whatever small way, help in pouring a little sunshine into their lives.

"It was, I must confess, a long, hard journey through the formative phases of the play. Often, I'd feel thrilled. I thought to myself, this is one play that would be mine, entirely mine! But at the same time, I was deeply apprehensive — would I be able to bear the cross all by myself, in rehearsals as well as on stage?

"Suggestions from friends would hurt my pride. If, on the contrary, they stood aloof, I'd feel like a forlorn child. Conflicting as such pulls always are, they bring their rewards as well. The one precious lesson I have learnt from the experience is — not in isolation, but only in communion you discover your true self."

I watched many of her performances and the plays she directed independently, such as *Ajnatobaash*, *Kanyadaan* and *Madhabi*, among others, but *Shanu Roy Choudhury* remains etched in my mind forever.

The writer is a senior film and theatre critic

SNIPPETS

Power of art



Kreative Minds organised a talk show called "Art as Mindspa". Four panelists — Amrita Tiwary, founder of Kreative Minds; Vandana Kashyap, art enthusiast and homemaker; Ishita Sen Mahato, classical vocalist, and Dipali Chackravarty, Kathak and Bharatanatyam dancer — were present. Through the show people were made conscious about different forms of art that would help to overcome stress and bring more focus and concentration.

Tiwary said that art is her passion. After working in the corporate field, she started Kreative Minds in 2016. She shared that art helps many people in many ways.

While Sen Mahato said that music is not just a hobby or a subject to learn, but it is a support system, Kashyap said that there is no age to learn new things or adopt new hobbies. She said that any kind of art, be it painting, dancing or music, always relaxes the mind.

Chackravarty said dance in general and art in particular always make one disciplined. To her art is like cooking, hence she enjoys her cooking while listening to music or any classical dance form. She ended up saying that art gives one positivity, strength and good vibes.

First glimpse



Rian Johnson has shared a first photo of the production of *Knives Out 2*, which has just begun in Greece.

The director posted the image on social media recently, writing, "Aaaaaaaand WE'RE OFF! Day one of filming on the next Benoit Blanc mystery. Thanks to all the lovely patient people here in Greece for letting us do all this murdering on their peaceful shores (sic)."

Benoit Blanc is Daniel Craig's character in the film series. The first *Knives Out* came out in 2019 and was a surprise box-office hit as well as a critical success. The upcoming sequel, *Knives Out 2*, was first announced in February 2020. It was reported in 2021 that Netflix had spent around \$465m for two sequels.

Craig will reprise his role as Blanc. Dave Bautista, Janelle Monáe, Edward Norton, Kate Hudson, Leslie Odom Jr, Kathryn Hahn, Madelyn Cline, and Jessica Henwick have all reportedly joined the cast. In addition to Craig, the first film starred Chris Evans, Ana de Armas, Jamie Lee Curtis, Toni Collette, Lakeith Stanfield, Christopher Plummer, Katherine Langford, and more.

The movie followed Blanc as he investigated the death of Plummer's character, mystery novelist Harlan Thrombey.

Knives Out 2 is expected to be released in 2022.

—The independent

TAPATI CHOWDHURIE

The Natya Tarangini Institute of Kuchipudi Dance — spearheaded by veterans Raja and Radha Reddy — recently celebrated their 45th anniversary in a virtual programme. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, artists have moved on to pastures new to keep feeding their creativity, and online events have become the order of the day.

It was a Kuchipudi concert in which performers from across the world took part. At the start of the festival, Lord Ganesha was paid obeisance in *ragas Revati* and *Gaula* and *tala Misra Chapu*

by Jayshree Khemka for the success of the innovative recital. Genuflecting to the Guru in a *Bhudevi Vandana* or prayer dance followed soon after in *raga Hamsadhwani* and *tala Adi*.

The next presentation was called *My Heart is a Temple*, which transcended all boundaries and conveyed a universal language. Taken from the Holy Bible, it was versed in English but choreographed in Kuchipudi style.

A *Tillana* in *Thaya ragamalika*, inclusive of more than one *raga*, was performed soon after, displaying the sheer joy of movement. As a musical composition, it broke new ground. Set in *raga Kalyani*, the *Tillana* switched to

other *ragas* by shifting the tone of the base note. As a result, *ragas* like *Kanada* and *Hindolam* emerged from and merged into *Kalyani*. The piece provided the dancers ample scope to weave a well-knit texture of rhythmic variations. It was a composition by Carnatic vocalist Balamurali Krishna.

Nothing illuminates a choreographer more than Jayadeva's *Ashtapadi*, especially if the performer has a talent for emoting the various shades of love games, in this case after a pleasant union. Radha, the mortal lover of Lord Krishna, lovingly asks him to put back kohl around her eyes, which has become smudged from his kisses. Per-

GROUND-BREAKING PRESENTATIONS

Celebrating their 45th anniversary, Natya Tarangini rendered Kuchipudi performances of untold beauty

Nia Qureshi's expressional rendition of the *ashthapadi* called *Kuru Yudu Nandana* was delightful to watch.

Abhinaya and *nritta* went hand in hand when a group of performers broke into a *Jathiswaram*. Woven in *raga Atana*, its melodious beats and notes were given a unique visual form that only a discerning and creative choreographer can give, that too in the absence of any literature. Captivating facial movements coupled with imitable footwork gave it an enviable character, thereby creating untold beauty.

Dashavatara in *raga Mohana* and *tala Misra Chapu* told the story of how Lord Vishnu incarnated himself in various figures across different eras from *Satya Yuga*, *Treta Yuga* and *Dvapara Yuga* to the present *Kaliyuga*, where *Kalki* avatar waits with bated breath to redeem mankind from the evils that plague us.

Mandoorka Shabdam composed by the Reddys in *raga Mohana* tells the story of Gajendra, the king of elephants. Once he was thirsty and wanted to drink water from the lake, but the frogs warned him about the presence of a crocodile. He went ahead anyway and was trapped when the mighty crocodile got hold of his leg. The high drama in the fight that ensued could only be stopped by Lord Vishnu's holy discus — at the behest of the elephant king, who was his devotee — which annihilated the crocodile. It was a powerful story, ably put forth in the language of Kuchipudi.

Mandoorka Shabdam's blood and gore made way for yet another *shabdam*, which was however, of a romantic variety. The *Krishna Shabdam* presented by Sanjana Jain and Shalu Jindal was all about the heroine's complete surrender to her lord, symbolising the union of the *atma* with the *paramatma*. *Shab-*

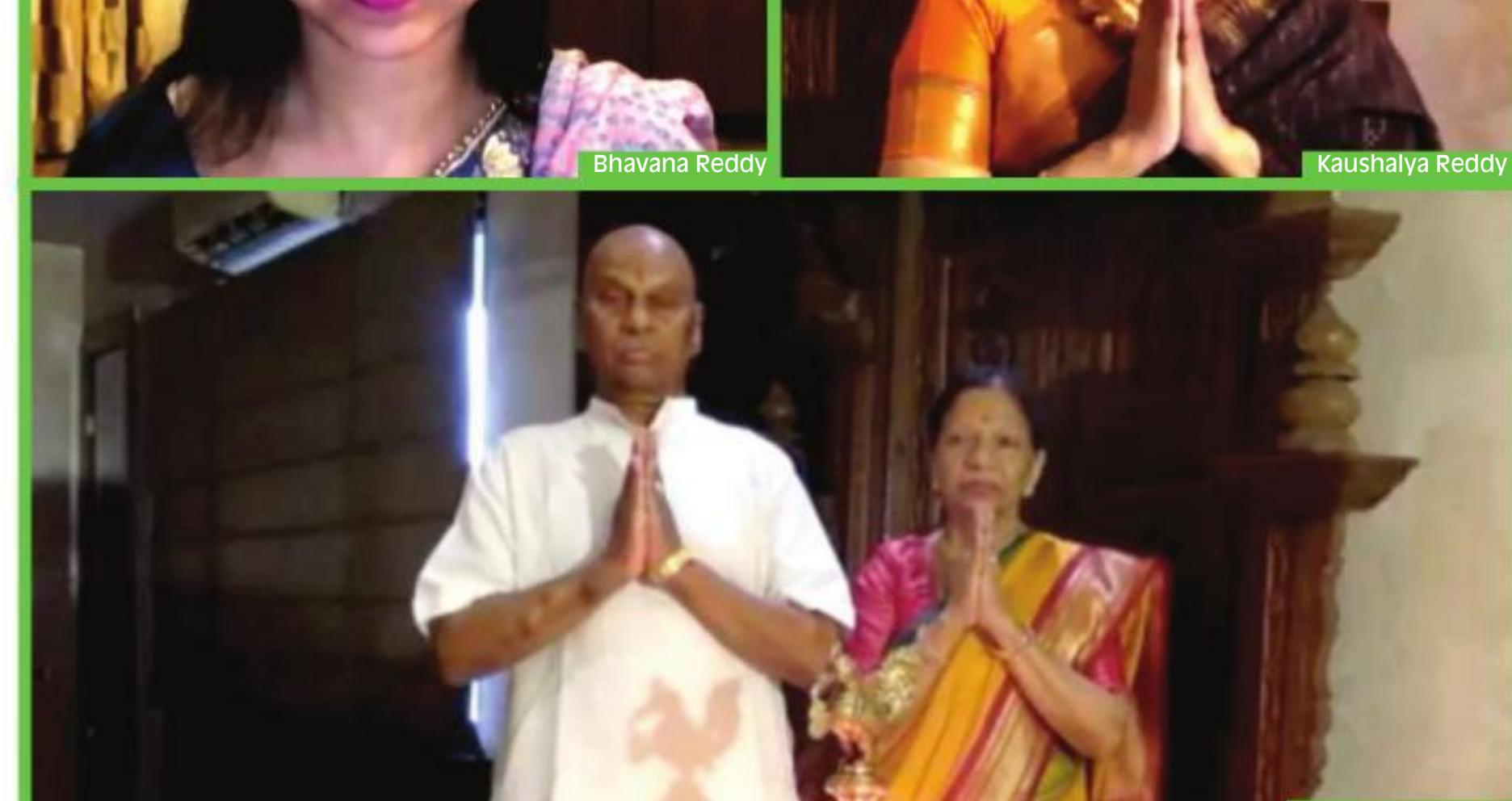
dams were basically *salam jathis* to start with. It was Sri Veerabhadrayan, the poet during King Pratap Simha's time, who gave it a place in the classical dance repertoire of South India.

Rajarishabdham, which honours the king, describes the qualities of his head, heart, wealth and might. After three *shabdams*, dance *rasikas* were treated to a *padam* called *Evade* in *raga Sankarabharanam* and *tala Misra Chapu*. It showcased a *parikya nayika*, a woman who is in love with another while married. Though she tells her companion about her romance with Krishna, she pretends not to know him when she actually sees him. To mislead her friend, she shows mock anger on seeing the so-called stranger.

The programme ended with a *Tarangam* which is the climax of any Kuchipudi function. Presented in *raga Mohana* and *Adi tala*, it depicted the story of Lord Krishna's childhood. No matter how familiar those episodes are with audiences, one never tires of them if done by a good production. The piece was a display of exquisite virtuosity as the dancers executed intricate footwork patterns on the rims of brass plates with perfect coordination.

The event's musical accompaniment was excellent as ever with Kaushalya Reddy as the *Nattuvanar*. She coordinated the ensemble with confidence and dexterity. Vocalists Sai Bhavani and Deevi Ravikanth were at their best. The *mridangam* was played by B Bhaskar Rao who, along with ghatam player Ramamurthy Kesavan, was unparalleled. Flautist Prasanna and violinist V S Kannanadurai did their parts to add to the rich music accompanying the dances.

The writer is a senior dance critic



Bhavana Reddy
Kaushalya Reddy



Raja-Radha Reddy

by Jayshree Khemka for the success of the innovative recital. Genuflecting to the Guru in a *Bhudevi Vandana* or prayer dance followed soon after in *raga Hamsadhwani* and *tala Adi*.

The next presentation was called *My Heart is a Temple*, which transcended all boundaries and conveyed a universal language. Taken from the Holy Bible, it was versed in English but choreographed in Kuchipudi style.

A *Tillana* in *Thaya ragamalika*, inclusive of more than one *raga*, was performed soon after, displaying the sheer joy of movement. As a musical composition, it broke new ground. Set in *raga Kalyani*, the *Tillana* switched to

other *ragas* by shifting the tone of the base note. As a result, *ragas* like *Kanada* and *Hindolam* emerged from and merged into *Kalyani*. The piece provided the dancers ample scope to weave a well-knit texture of rhythmic variations. It was a composition by Carnatic vocalist Balamurali Krishna.

Nothing illuminates a choreographer more than Jayadeva's *Ashtapadi*, especially if the performer has a talent for emoting the various shades of love games, in this case after a pleasant union. Radha, the mortal lover of Lord Krishna, lovingly asks him to put back kohl around her eyes, which has become smudged from his kisses. Per-

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SO BE IT

Canadian basketball player Kim Gaucher (photo, left), breastfeeding her infant daughter, can bring the baby to the Tokyo Olympics. High-ups say nursing mothers will now be allowed to bring their babies to Tokyo. The move comes after Gaucher made an emotional plea via *Instagram* to have three-month-old Sophie travel with her to the Games.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Santo hired: Tottenham's chaotic search for a manager ended with the hiring of Nuno Espírito Santo as Jose Mourinho's successor. Santo is quickly back in a Premier League job after leaving Wolverhampton at the end of last season, signing a two-year contract.



\$100m move: Jadon Sancho appears finally headed to Manchester United from Borussia Dortmund after a long-running pursuit of the winger. United have agreed to a deal in principle to sign Sancho for \$100 million, a person with knowledge of the deal said.

Khel Ratna: B Sai Praneeth and Kidambi Srikanth have been nominated for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award by the Badminton Association of India, which has recommended HS Prannoy, Pranav Jerry Chopra and Sameer Verma for the Arjuna Award.

Soccer roster: Olympic soccer rosters will be expanded from 18 players to 22 for the Tokyo Olympics. Teams can include 22 players in squads, but must stay with 18 on team sheets for individual matches. The change results from teams' troubles during the pandemic.



Semenya fails: Caster Semenya failed in her bid to achieve the qualifying time for the 5,000 m at the Tokyo Olympics during a meet in Belgium. Semenya was taking part in a race at Liege which was held after an Olympic qualifying deadline of 29 June had already expired.

Sisters excluded: Coco Gauff and Jennifer Brady will lead a US Olympic tennis team that will go to the Tokyo Games without any of its two highest-ranked women. The list excludes Serena and Venus Williams, the owners of a combined nine Olympic medals.

2022 Cup: Denmark's culture minister criticised Fifa's bid process that had allowed Qatar to host the 2022 World Cup, saying it raised questions of corruption in international sports organisations. Joy Mogensen said it had undermined the values and integrity of the sport.

Oz plan: Cricket Australia wants big crowds for the Ashes series later this year, with venues being sold to full capacity despite widespread current concerns about Covid-19. Tickets go on sale on Monday with all stadiums other than Melbourne sold to their limit.



Khan's charge: Former Pakistan skipper Younis Khan has claimed that a 2009 players' revolt against him had its roots in the captaincy ambitions of seniors like Shahid Afridi. He claimed it had not been as if the players were unhappy with his captaincy style.

Assistant coaches: Cricket Australia on Thursday appointed Michael Di Venuto and Jeff Vaughan as assistant coaches for the men's national team, a year after cutting down on support staff to cope with the adverse financial impact of the Covid-19.

AGENCIES

LONDON, 1 JULY

AGENCIES

LONDON, 1 JULY

Sania Mirza and her American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands stunned sixth seeds Desirae Krawczyk and Alexa Guarachi to make the second round of the women's doubles event at the Wimbledon here on Thursday.

Mirza and Mattek-Sands were a bit rusty at the start but once they got their rhythm, they dominated the match and won 7-5 6-3 against the American-Chilean combination in one hour and 27 minutes.

However, Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan made an early exit after losing their men's doubles first round 6-7 (6) 4-6 to Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Henri Kontinen.

The Indians had paired up to prepare for the Tokyo Games but could not make the cut.

The pressure was on Mirza and Mattek-Sands early in the match when the American served the third game that featured seven deuce points.

Mattek-Sands served three double faults in a slow start but eventually held on after saving three break points.

Mirza and Mattek-Sands too had two opportunities to break their rivals but the American fluffed a volley from the net before the left-handed Desirae served extremely well to hold.



Guarachi hit a forehand wide at 15-30 to hand two set points to their rivals in the 12th game. It was a chance that the Indo-American pair did not squander, with Sania finishing off the set with an overhead smash.

In the second set, Mirza and Mattek-Sands opened up a 3-1 lead when they broke Guarachi again.

Matte-Sands' low backhand return washed back up and Mirza latched on to that with an unreturnable smash.

With a 3-1 cushion at hand, Mirza and her partner never looked back.

With Ankita Raina taking the court later in the day with American partner Lauren Davis,

Shikha could never make the Grand Slam main draw again

and after that it was Mirza who kept representing India on the WTA tour.

Nirupama Vaidyanathan was the first to crack a singles Grand Slam main draw in 1998 at the Australian Open. She also played Wimbledon doubles with Rika Hiraki in 2001 while Nirupama Mankad played the 1971 Wimbledon mixed doubles with Anand Amritraj.

Barty wins

World number one Ash Barty moved into the third round at Wimbledon but not without a battle as she overcame spirited Russian Anna Blinkova and her own inconsistency in a 6-4 6-3 win on Thursday.

The top seed never looked in danger against the 89th-ranked Blinkova, but it was still not plain sailing for the Australian scrapper.

Herserve, so often a dependable weapon, was at times wayward, as she hit nine double faults and was broken three times, while her 33 unforced errors suggest she has some way to go to get fully sharp on the grass.

Barty, whose sole Grand Slam title came at the 2019 French Open, has never gone beyond the last 16 at Wimbledon.

She ultimately had too much fire power for Blinkova, however, and wrapped up victory after

an hour and 30 minutes when her opponent swiped a forehand long.

Murray enters third round

Home favourite Andy Murray who had been practising with Roger Federer ahead of the Wimbledon Championships, won a five-setter 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 against German Oscar Otte to reach the third round here.

Murray, 34, was granted a wild card for this year's Wimbledon as the three-time Grand Slam champion had been suffering setbacks galore while trying to return to the tour after hip surgeries.

The former world No 1 spent three-and-a-half hours to see off 24th seed Nikoloz Basilashvili in the first round on Monday and needed to fight 20 minutes longer on Wednesday against Otte, who played at the grass-court Grand Slam for the first time.

Murray said the win meant a lot to him as he had been suffering many setbacks while trying to return from injuries.

"It's tough obviously going out and playing matches of that length when you know you have not had many matches, no loads of preparation and not played a whole lot of grass court tennis in four years," said Murray.

Djokovic, Federer, Osaka, Barty on Tokyo Olympic entry lists

ACGENIES

WIMBLEDON, 1 JULY

Serbia's Novak Djokovic, Switzerland's Roger Federer, Japan's Naomi Osaka and Australia's Ash Barty are on the entry lists for the Tokyo Olympics that were announced Thursday by the International Tennis Federation.

As the ITF noted, though: "The entry lists are still subject to change."

Federer, for one, said last weekend he would wait until after Wimbledon ends on July 11 to decide whether he will head to Japan.

Djokovic has made clear he'd like to pursue a Golden Slam, something only Steffi Graf has done, in 1988: winning all four major tennis tournaments and an Olympic singles gold medal in the same year.

Women who are missing: Romania's Simona Halep and Americans Serena Williams and Sofia Kenin.

Williams said before Wimbledon she wouldn't be going to the Tokyo Games, and then injured her right leg during her first-round match on Centre Court and had to stop playing.

Men who weren't listed: Spain's Rafael Nadal and Roberto Bautista Agut and Austria's Dominic Thiem.

On the list: Two-time defending Olympic champion Andy Murray of Britain, who was granted a special exemption because he has the most Olympic and Grand Slam titles of the players whose ranking was not good enough to earn direct entry.

Sania and Mattek-Sands stun sixth seeds to enter 2nd round

AGENCIES

LONDON, 1 JULY

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'15 athletes in individual events and two relay teams qualify for Olympics'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 1 JULY

berth after reaching the final of the World Athletics Championships in 2019.

Long jumper M Sree-shankar, shot putter Tajinder Pal Singh Toor, discus throwers Kamalpreet Kaur and Seema Punia qualified for the Olympics this year while the remaining have done so either in 2019 or last year.

However, the women's 4x400m relay team missed out as it was placed at 17th spot while 16 were to get the Olympic slots.

The Olympic qualification period for all stadium events finished on June 29 and World Athletics' Olympic qualification system has now been finalised, the World Athletics said in a statement.

"...showing that about 70 percent of the athletes in individual events have qualified by entry standard and 30 percent by world ranking position, while 100 university places have been awarded."

"Some 1900 athletes from

more than 190 countries will compete at the Tokyo Olympic Games when the athletics programme begins on 30 July."

The qualification of Dutee (both in 100m and 200m), Rani and Jabin was on expected lines as they were within the bracket to make it to the Games in the Road to Tokyo list.

The men's 4x400m relay team was placed at 13th out of 16 to compete in Tokyo based on the timing of 3:01.89 clocked during the National Inter-State Championships on Friday last.

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"Some 1900 athletes from

England ready to move on from rotation policy, says Root

THE INDEPENDENT & AGENCIES

LONDON, 1 JULY

Joe Root (in photo) has signalled that England are ready to shelf the rotation policy that has left him captaining weakened Test teams for the past six months. England's international schedule is punishing at the best of times and the added pressures of competing against the backdrop of a pandemic have led to difficult decisions being made to protect the players' physical and mental well-being.

As a result, Root has had to take the field without senior men such as Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Chris Woakes and Moeen Ali, who have all been granted rest periods in the first half of 2021. He has overseen four defeats in the past five Tests, culminating in his first home series defeat as captain at the hands of New Zealand, but believes things are about to change ahead of two huge contests for his red-ball side.

A five-match series against

matches we'll be trying to play our strongest side, or have our strongest squad available for those games.

This is what you do for, to ready yourself for this lead-in and in particular for the Ashes, to make sure everyone's peak for that, and these big games," Root said. More immediately, Root's job is to help his side put away beleaguered Sri Lanka side in the one-day series, which England led 1-0 heading into Thursday's clash at the Oval. The tourists have lost all four matches on their white-ball trip so far and are missing a handful of key players due to fitness and disciplinary issues.

For reigning world champions England, the plan is to get back to number one in the global rankings having slipped to fourth place in a congested table. "We worked very hard to get to the top of the world and were very proud of that achievement," Root said, adding: "We want to show the rest of the world we're there to stay and it wasn't just for a short time, it's some-

thing we want to do for a long period. Having a block of games is a great opportunity to push that again and to remind everyone that in the 50-over format we are a very strong side. There is sometimes a little bit of transition and a bump in the road, but I don't think that the quality of our team or the ability is lacking or has gone down."

Root top-scored with a typically measured 79 not out in the first One-Day International at Durham, once again asserting his quality after being overlooked for the Twenty20 team a week earlier. At present, he looks certain to play no part in the T20 World Cup in October and he is clear about where