

SHORT TAKES

5 injured after 2 groups clash in N-E Delhi

New Delhi: Five people were injured after a fight broke out between two groups in northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura area, police said on Saturday. The incident took place late on Friday night, they said. An argument took place between a man named Vipin and the security guard over opening the entrance gate of the society, police said. The altercation escalated further when Mohd Yasin (38), whose house was near the entrance gate of the block, came out with some of his family members and assaulted Vipin, police said. Vipin, who is a resident of the area and a contractual employee of the Delhi Transport Corporation, later returned to the spot with his relatives and both the groups clashed. During the scuffle, some of them received injuries, a senior police officer said. Legal action has been initiated against both the parties, police said and denied any communal angle to the incident. However, to avert any untoward incident, a meeting with the respectable citizens of the area and concerned 'Bhaichara' committee members has been held, police added. — PTI

Over 1,200 people fined for flouting Covid guidelines

New Delhi: More than 1,200 people have been fined in Delhi for violating Covid-19 guidelines, police said on Saturday. Of the 1,260 challans issued on Friday, 1,068 were for face mask violations and 192 for not adhering to social distancing norms. As many as 1,29,590 challans have been issued by police from April 19 to June 11, the data showed. Police said, 1,09,075 challans were issued for mask violations, 18,790 for flouting social distancing norms, 1,532 for holding large public gatherings and congregations, 72 for spitting and 121 for consumption of liquor, pan and tobacco, it stated. The Delhi government has allowed all standalone and neighbourhood shops to function, including liquor vends. However, establishments like cinemas, theatres, restaurants (except home delivery and take away) remain closed till further orders. — PTI

3 men drown in outer Delhi's Bawana canal

New Delhi: Three men drowned while taking a bath in the Bawana canal in outer Delhi's Shahbad dairy area, police said on Saturday. The deceased have been identified as Tara (40), Raju (32) and Sukhdev (23), they said. The incident took place on Friday when the three men had gone to take a bath in the canal, police said. All emergency help, including the fire brigade, were called on the spot and the bodies were fished out of the canal. They were taken to a nearby hospital where they were declared brought dead, a senior police officer said. No foul play has been suspected and the bodies have been handed over to respective families after post-mortem, the police said. — PTI

Delhi court denies bail to 'kingpin of Kasana gang' in MCOCA case

New Delhi, June 12: A Delhi court has denied bail to an alleged kingpin of an organised crime syndicate, who is facing charges under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), saying the nature of allegations against him are serious. Bhubender Kasana was slapped with MCOCA in 2017 after being found involved in several cases of attempt to murder, attempt to culpable homicide, riots and those registered under the Arms Act and Uttar Pradesh Gangsters Act. Additional sessions judge Vinod Yadav junked his bail plea after relying on the statement of the prosecution that his role in conspiring, assisting and managing the organised crime syndicate has prima facie been established. The nature of allegations

3 nabbed for robbing Pizza Hut on gunpoint at Dwarka

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

With the arrest of three persons, the Delhi Police has claimed to bust a gang of dacoits who on gunpoint allegedly robbed a Pizza Hut outlet near Dwarka Mod area. According to the police, manager of the outlet complained that on June 3 five unknown persons entered forcefully and allegedly

against the applicant is very serious. If released on bail at this stage, the possibility of the applicant threatening or intimidating them (witnesses) cannot be ruled out. The bail applica-

robbed ₹28,000 cash, laptop bag and purse at gunpoint. A case was registered at Mohan Garden police station and investigation was taken up. Following this a trap was laid and the accused were arrested from Uttam Nagar area, the police said.

The accused have been identified as Santosh Kumar Sahni (25) Sajjan Kumar (23) and Mohd. Rashid (22).

tion accordingly stands dismissed, the judge said, denying him the relief. Additional public prosecutor S.K. Tripathi, representing the Delhi Police, told the court that Kasana,

along with his two co-accused brothers, was engaged in committing unlawful activities continuously for gaining pecuniary benefits.

The prosecutor further argued that Kasana is the main kingpin of Kasana gang and his two brothers duly assist him in the operation of the syndicate and have now enlarged the gang by including several persons from their native village. He pointed out that 19 cases have been registered against Kasana and sought dismissal of the bail application on the ground that he is a flight risk.

Advocate J. P. Bansal, counsel of Kasana, told the court that his client is being falsely implicated and the case was registered against him and his brothers by the police out of vengeance. — PTI

■ Indications of a 3rd wave coming from UK where corona cases are rising again, says CM

Chances of 3rd Covid wave quite real, preparation on war-footing: Kejriwal

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday cautioned that the chances of a third Covid wave were quite real, and asserted his government was preparing on a "war-footing" to combat it. He said that the indications of a third wave are coming from the UK where coronavirus cases are rising again despite "45 per cent of its population" being vaccinated.

"So, we cannot afford to sit idle," he told an online event to inaugurate 22 new PSA oxygen plants at nine hospitals across Delhi. He said these plants have a total production capacity of 17.3 MT, and they will strengthen the preparations to fight Covid. As many as 17 more oxygen plants will be started by July, he said.

The Delhi government is also procuring oxygen tankers to aid the fight against a third wave, he said, adding that the previous wave, which in on the wane, was "very danger-



We cannot afford to sit idle and our government is preparing on a war-footing to combat the third Covid wave

— Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM

ous". Expressing gratitude towards industries for their help in fighting the second wave, he also said the people of Delhi came together to combat it with struggle and discipline, and have "succeeded in controlling it".

He prayed that a third

3 O2 plants inaugurated at Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

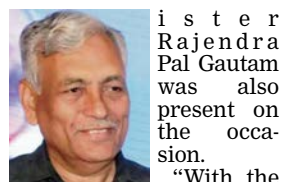
Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel inaugurated three oxygen plants at Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital on Saturday and said the national capital will no longer have to depend on anyone for the life-saving gas.

"With the installation of these oxygen plants, the shortage of oxygen in the hospital will be met to a great extent. Delhi hospitals will no longer have to depend on anyone for oxygen," he said.

Delhi social welfare min-

ister Rajendra Pal Gautam was also present on the occasion. "With the installation of three oxygen plants in the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH), 80 per cent of the oxygen requirement will be met," Goel said. "It will be reviewed again later."

Goel said the RGSSH is the biggest hospital in east Delhi and patients also come here from nearby states.



Ram Niwas Goel

Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital (RGSSH), 80 per cent of the oxygen requirement will be met," Goel said. "It will be reviewed again later."

Goel said the RGSSH is the biggest hospital in east Delhi and patients also come here from nearby states.

HCL provides 17 oxygen plants to Delhi govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

IT firm HCL Technologies on Saturday announced that it has provided 17 ready-to-use imported oxygen plants to the Delhi government.

The oxygen plants have been imported from France and are now deployed across seven hospitals in the city, the company said in a statement.

The total combined capacity of the 17 plants is 7,300 litres per minute (LPM).

The national capital recorded 213 Covid-19 cases, the lowest in over three months, and 28 fatalities on Saturday. According to the latest health bulletin, the new fatalities pushed the death toll to 24,800. The positivity rate dipped to 0.30 per cent.



A firefighter attempts to douse a blaze in a showroom at Lajpat Nagar's Central Market area in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

Fire damages 5 showrooms; no casualties

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

Five showrooms were damaged in a fire that broke out in a market area here on Saturday morning, officials said, adding no injuries were reported.

The incident took place in south Delhi's Lajpat Nagar Central Market area, they said.

According to the fire department, a call about the blaze was received around 10.20 am, following which 16 fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"When fire tenders reached the spot, four showrooms were on fire and later (the blaze) spread to the fifth shop. It must have started early morning in one of the shops and then spread to the rest, Delhi Fire Service Director Atul Garg said, adding its origin and cause were

unknown.

He said the firemen were able to prevent the blaze from spreading further with a timely response to the call.

"Our firemen showed

great presence of mind and saved the fire from spreading to residential areas behind the showrooms, Garg said the operation to douse the blaze began from a lane

between the rear gates of the showrooms to residential quarters. A total of 30 fire tenders and over 100 firefighters were on the spot to bring the fire under control, he said.

Fake cop held for confiscating mobiles, wallets from people

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

A 26-year-old man was arrested for allegedly impersonating himself as a police officer and taking away the mobile phones and wallet from another man in Southeast Delhi's Lajpat Nagar area, the police said on Saturday.

The accused, Mahender Pal alias Sandeep, works as a private guard at an outlet near the Udyog Vihar Metro Station and was found to be previously involved in a case of cheating, it said.

According to the police, the incident took place on June 9 when Rajender Kumar Tiwari, along with his friends, was going to his residence from the market. At about 10.40 am,

▶ **THE ACCUSED** disclosed that he is addicted to alcohol and drugs. To fulfil his drug requirements, he started to cheat passers-by with the identity of a police officer

near Moolchand flyover, one person on motorcycle wearing khaki pants, khaki shocks, and black shoes overtook and stopped them. He took their mobile phones and wallet to check their identity and fled from the spot.

A case under Sections 419 (punishment for cheating by personation) and 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) of the Indian Penal Code was registered, said DCP (Southeast) R.P. Meena.

He said that teams were

constituted and CCTV footages were installed in the nearby vicinity of the incident.

"With the help of ownership details of the offending motorcycle, the suspect was identified as Mahender Pal, a resident of Mundka in Outer Delhi. The team raided the location and nabbed him. Three mobile phones, one wallet, the offending motorcycle, and clothes worn at the time of the incident were recovered from his possession," the DCP said.

During sustained interrogation, the accused disclosed that he is addicted to alcohol and drugs. To fulfil his drug requirements, he started to cheat passers-by with the identity of a police officer, he said.

2 cops assaulted at farmers' protest site on Singhu border

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

Two Delhi Policemen on duty were assaulted allegedly by a group of people at Singhu Border where farmers have been protesting against the centre's farm laws for over six months now, police said on Saturday.

The two policemen on duty in civil clothes are Assistant Sub Inspectors (ASI) posted with the Special Branch of Delhi Police, they said.

The incident took place on June 10, when the two policemen in civil clothes deployed at the Singhu Border to oversee the security arrangements

allegedly beaten up by the group of people present at the spot, police said.

It is alleged that the two policemen were allegedly found clicking pictures at the protest site when they were allegedly assaulted by the group.

During the incident, one of policemen got a fracture in his wrist while the other ASI sustained severe injuries on his leg. Both of them have been discharged after treatment, a senior police officer said.

"They were beaten up by people present at the spot. Some of them involved in the incident have been identified but we are yet to find

out who they were," the officer said.

Police said the nature of job of the policemen posted with Special Branch is different.

"They are regularly deployed to keep an eye on the situation and security arrangements in place. To report on the appropriate action taken by the local police," the officer said.

A case has been registered under IPC sections of assaulting public servant while on duty, voluntarily causing grievous hurt and other relevant sections including Delhi Disaster Management Act at Narela police station, police officer said.

Covid: IWPC organises counselling session

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

"There could not be any uniformity about what the Covid-19 has taught us or what lesson we had learnt from the traumatic experience during the pandemic. It varies individual to individual", said Adithy, a counselling psychologist.

The Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) organised an interaction online with Adithy on Saturday. The psychologist said that there are various means of coping with personal suffering or loss of lives of friends or relatives.

The victim can also talk to relatives and friends and thereby adjust to the trauma of pandemic. We all have emotions inside us like anger, sadness, or guilt and every such emotion is a call for help, the psycholo-

gist said while interacting online. She also shared different human behaviors in different circumstances and suggested ways and means to deal with it.

She also further suggested that one can deal with anxiety and trauma through physical activities and breathing exercises like 'sighing or straw breathing'. Small physical exercises help a lot in such situations.

Adithy is a Pune-based counselling psychologist involved in education, prevention and intervention in the field of mental health for 20 years. She takes the approach of trauma healing in her psychotherapy.

SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Fully Reserved Special Trains as per the schedule given below:-

02583/02584 Hatia-Anand Vihar Terminal-Hatia Special (Tri-Weekly) (Via Barkakana)					
Train No. 02583			Train No. 02584		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
---	13:40	HATIA	19:40	---	
13:10	---	ANAND VIHAR (T)	---	20:45	

Days of Run : 02583 Ex. Hatia from 15.06.2021 to 29.06.2021 on every Mon, Tue & Thu and 02584 Ex. Anand Vihar Terminal from 16.06.2021 to 30.06.2021 on every Tue, Wed & Fri.

Stoppage: Ranchi, Muri, Ramgarh, Barkakana, Patratu, Tori, Daltonganj, Garwa Road, Garhwa, Nagar Untari, Renukut, Chopan, Sonbhadra, Chunar, Prayagraj & Kanpur Stations.

Accommodation : 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper and 2nd Seating.

02585/02586 Santragachi-Anand Vihar Terminal-Santragachi Superfast Special (Weekly)					
Train No. 02585			Train No. 02586		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
---	10:00	SANTRAGACHI	16:15	---	
08:40	---	ANAND VIHAR (T)	---	13:25	

Days of Run : 02585 Ex. Santragachi from 14.06.2021 to 28.06.2021 on every Monday and 02586 Ex. Anand Vihar Terminal from 15.06.2021 to 29.06.2021 on every Tuesday

Stoppage: Kharagpur, Tatanagar, Purulia, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Gomoh, Gaya, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Prayagraj, Kanpur & Aligarh Stations.

Accommodation : 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper and 2nd Seating.

02579/02580 Hatia-Anand Vihar Terminal-Hatia Superfast Special (Tri-Weekly) (Via NSCB Gomoh)					
Train No. 02579			Train No. 02580		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
---	14:35	HATIA	16:45	---	
13:10	---	ANAND VIHAR (T)	---	20:45	

Days of Run : 02579 Ex. Hatia from 16.06.2021 to 27.06.2021 on every Wed, Fri & Sun and 02580 Ex. Anand Vihar Terminal from 17.06.2021 to 28.06.2021 on every Thu, Sat & Mon.

Stoppage: Ranchi, Muri, Bokaro Steel City, Chandrapura, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Gomoh, Koderma, Gaya, Guraru, Rafiganj, Anugraha Narayan Road, Dehri On Sone, Sasaram, Bhabua Road, Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Prayagraj & Kanpur Stations.

Accommodation : 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper and 2nd Seating.

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

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

RailMadad Helpline No.: 139 Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Please join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/railmadad) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/railmadad) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/railmadad) Download RailMadad app.

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SHORT TAKES

65 kids test +ve for Covid in Osmanabad

Osmanabad: At least 65 children have tested positive for coronavirus in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra over the last four days, as per the data shared by the district civil hospital. As per the data, the Covid-19 positivity rate and fatality rate are falling in the Osmanabad district but Covid-19 patients in the age group of 0 to 18 years are found in the district for the first time. Out of the 119 patients found in the district on June 9, 25 were children between the age group of 0 and 18. Of the 109 patients found on June 10, 19 were children. On June 11, 123 infections were detected, of whom 21 were children. This shows that on an average 18% of children tested positive. However, no child suffering from coronavirus in the district has died, as per the data shared by authorities. — PTI

'Corona mata' temple in UP razed

Pratapgarh, UP: People at Juhi Shukulpur village here built a "corona mata" temple, seeking divine grace to stay clear of the infection. However, the temple built on Friday night. Villagers alleged that it was demolished by police, which denied the charge, saying it was constructed on a disputed site and one of the parties involved in the dispute razed it. Villagers said the temple was constructed five days ago by Lokesh Kumar Srivastava with the help of donations from local residents. He installed the idol of the "corona mata". Radhey Shyam Verma of the village was appointed its priest, after which people started offering prayers there. Lokesh, who lives in Noida, jointly owns the land with Nagesh Kumar Srivastava and Jai Prakash Srivastava. — PTI

Ex-BSP MLC held for attempt to murder

Deoria, UP: The police has arrested a former BSP MLC and three others in a decade-old attempt to murder case, an official said on Saturday. The former Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) in the state, Sanjeev Dwivedi, is accused of a murderous attack on a liquor trader, identified as Sanjay Kedia. Deoria SP Sripati Mishra told reporters that the others arrested in the case are Manish Mishra, Kamal Mall and Ashwini Mani. Sanjeev Dwivedi, also called Ramu Dwivedi, was arrested from Lucknow on Friday and produced in a Deoria court, from where he was taken to the district jail. Sanjay Kedia had filed a case against the MLC in the Deoria Sadar Kotwali police station about a decade ago. — PTI

Bus, train services hit after waterlogging at many places Rain brings Mumbai to a halt

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, JUNE 12

Mumbai and its surrounding districts are likely to get extremely heavy rainfall on June 13 and 14. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has issued a high alert asking Mumbaiers not to move out from their homes on these days.

According to Mumbai's regional meteorological centre, the metropolis will receive thunderstorm with lightning, gusty winds and extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places for the next couple of days. In addition to this, a "red alert" has been issued for Raigad and Ratnagiri districts,

Varsity scraps jogging fee plan after flak

Pune, June 12: A day after the Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) issued a circular proposing a monthly fee for joggers using its green campus, authorities Saturday suspended the scheme following flak. The suspension of the "SPPU Oxy Park" scheme was announced by Maharashtra minister Uday Samant on Twitter. On Friday, the varsity's registrar Praful Pawar issued a notification for the scheme which was to be launched on the International Yoga Day on June 21. The varsity proposed to charge fees of ₹1,000 per month, ₹5,500 for six months, and ₹10,000 annually as a member for the SPPU Oxy Park for those who wish to visit the campus regularly for morning jogs and evening walks. — PTI



Children play on flooded road after heavy rain in Mumbai on Saturday. — PTI

whereas Thane, Palghar and Sindhudurg districts will also receive heavy to very heavy rains.

Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar has issued a high alert in the city appealing to people to venture out only if it is absolutely necessary. The

BMC has asked people not to visit the beaches and its nearby places.

She also said that strict action would be taken against those who are found dumping garbage in the drains and gutters, due to which clogging of drains takes places lead-

ing to waterlogging. Mumbai has been witnessing heavy rains since Wednesday.

The train services between Dadar and Kurla stations on Central Railway were suspended in the afternoon after the water rose above the track level. The Central Railway official said, "Due to more than 61.21 mm rainfall in the last one hour, coupled with a high tide of 4.34 metres at 1.32 pm and closing of Mithi river floodgates, the water level has been rising on track between Kurla and Sion."

A BEST official said that several of its buses had to be diverted at 17 locations due to waterlogging on roads.

SAD, BSP stitch alliance for Punjab Assembly polls

Chandigarh, June 12: The Shiromani Akali Dal and the Bahujan Samaj Party formed an alliance on Saturday for the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, coming together after a gap of 25 years.

Under the tie-up, the BSP will fight 20 of the 117 Assembly seats while the rest will be contested by the SAD, said Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal while announcing the alliance here.

The SAD-BSP alliance had contested the 1996 Lok Sabha polls together and won 11 out of 13 seats in Punjab. While three seats were won by the BSP and the rest were won by the SAD.

BSP chief Mayawati dubbed the alliance between the SAD and her party as a "new political and social initiative" which will usher

in progress and prosperity in Punjab.

SAD stalwart and former CM Parkash Singh Badal described the formation of the SAD-BSP alliance as "the beginning of a secular, federal democratic revolution in the state and the country for a total socio-economic and political revamp of polity".

Punjab has 31.94 per cent Dalit population, mainly concentration in Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr and Kapurthala districts.

The border state has the highest percentage of Scheduled Castes population in the country.

At a joint press conference with BSP's general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra, Sukhbir Badal said, Today is a new day in Punjab's politics, a historic day...a day of big

turn in Punjab's politics."

The BSP will contest seven seats in Malwa, five in Majha and eight in Doaba regions of Punjab, said Badal, adding that the two parties will soon form a coordination committee to jointly chalk out various programmes ahead of the polls.

The leaders of the two outfits claimed that the alliance will "sweep" the 2022 polls and oust the "non-performing" Congress from power. The SAD earlier had a tie-up with the BJP and the Badal-led party walked out of the NDA over the farm laws issue last year.

About the new alliance, Mr Mishra said, "Today is a historic day. The BSP, which is a national party, has entered into an alliance with Punjab's strongest party SAD." — PTI

3 indigenously-built advanced light copters inducted Coast Guard adds teeth to aviation arm

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 12

In a major boost to its aviation fleet, three advanced light helicopters (ALHs) Mk-III, built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), were inducted into the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on Saturday. These choppers, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment like surveillance radar, electro-optic pod, medical intensive care unit, high-intensity searchlight, SAR Homer, Loud Hailer and machine gun, can perform other key roles also.



State-of-the-art advanced light helicopters Mk-III

Based in Bhubaneswar, Porbandar, Chennai and Kochi they will be part of different ICG aviation squadrons. The induction took place in the presence of defence secretary Dr Ajay Kumar at a virtual programme held simultaneously at the

ICG headquarters in New Delhi and at the helicopter MRO division of HAL in Bengaluru.

Dr Kumar said, "The state of the art helicopters with advanced sensors will enable ICG to take up challenging tasks. This is for the first

time performance-based logistics (PBL) is being introduced in the Indian aviation sector which is a modern management practice and will increase operational and maintenance efficiency."

ICG director-general K. Natarajan, who also attended the induction ceremony said that these choppers would usher a paradigm shift in the capability in ship-borne operations and enhance coastal surveillance. ICG is also the first service to have PBL management system introduced in aviation to ensure helicopter availability at four bases, he added.

Man lynched on suspicion of being cow thief in Assam

Tinsukia (Assam), June 12: A 28-year-old man was beaten to death at a village in Tinsukia district of Assam by a mob that suspected him as a cow thief, while his companion managed to escape on Saturday, the police said.

The incident took place at Korjong Borphathar village under Baghjan police station during the wee hours when the two were allegedly found inside the cowshed of a house. Tinsukia superintendent of police Debojit Deuri said.

The police has formed a special investigation team (SIT), headed by additional SP (headquarters), to probe the case and have already picked up 12 suspects from the village, he said.

The victim has been identified as Sarat Moran (28), who hails from No. 1 Kordoiguri village. The man who escaped has not been traced yet, Mr Deuri said.

According to villagers, the owner of the house spotted the duo at his cowshed at around 1.30 am and raised an alarm.

People then gathered at the spot and started beating them up.

The SP said that the police was informed of the incident at around 4.30 am. They took the man to Doomdooma Civil Hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

"When we handed over the body to the family after post-mortem examination, some people from his village tried to create a law and order issue. However, when they came to know that we took action and already picked up 12 people, the cremation happened peacefully," he added. — PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROPERTY No. E-128, Terrace rights of the Second floor (Third floor & there above) situated at Kalkaji, New Delhi-19.

Be it known to the general Public at large that We, (1), Dr Ajay Kumar Singh & (2), Dr Rajeev Singh both sons of Late Shri Kanchhi Singh the owners of the aforesaid Property, do hereby represent ourselves to be the absolute owner of the same by virtue of the last Will & Testament left by our father vide Will dated 09.05.2014 duly Registered as Doc No. 561 Book No. III Volume No. 2043 pages 60 to 61 dated 17.05.2014 in the office of Sub-Registrar, New Delhi. The Original Sale Deed of the said Property favouring our father is misplaced and is not traceable despite of our best efforts.

Any other person(s) having any claim against into or upon the said property by virtue of Sale, Inheritance, Agreement (of any kind), Contract, Mortgage, Liens, Charges or otherwise is hereby required to notify the same in writing along with supporting documentary evidence to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publication of this notice failing which it will be presumed that no valid claim or objections subsists therein and we shall conclude the transaction of the said property and any claim or any objection of any nature if any shall not be binding upon us for future. (A.K.Singh/Rajeev Singh) 011-23016279

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of Rail Passengers that Railways have decided to divert the route of Train no. 09805/09806 Kota - Udhampur - Kota Special Express with revised timings and stoppages.

09805/09806 Kota - Udhampur - Kota Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No. 09805		STATIONS	Train No. 09806		
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.	
--	16.40	KOTA JN	12.40	--	
12:10	--	UDHAMPUR	--	18.40	

Days of Run : 09805 Ex. Kota on Every Wednesday from 16.06.2021 to till further advice & 09806 Ex. Udhampur on Every Thursday from 17.06.2021 to till further advice.

Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Reserved Second Seating.

Stoppages : Indargarh, Sawai Madhopur, Gangapur City, Hindaun City, Bayana Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Mathura Jn., Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin Jn., New Delhi, Rohtak Jn., Jakhali Jn., Dhuri Jn., Ludhiana Jn., Jalandhar Cantt, Pathankot Cantt, Kathua and Jammu Tawi Stations.

For any kind information such as timings and stoppages enroute passengers are advised to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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

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

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The key dates, as published on 21-05-2021 & 23-05-2021 for inviting online (through) rates bids for the works "Dismantling of existing Surface Penstock fabricated from SAILMA 550 HI Steel, Complete Detailed Design & Fabrication. Drawings for its replacement, Supply of steel plates, Storage, Fabrication, Testing, Painting, Transportation to Project site, Erection and commissioning of Surface, Steel Lin-Liners, Cladding work of Penstock and its specials, complete in all respect including execution of allied civil works (Design/Construction Drawings) for Uhl-Stage-III-(100MW) HEP, Joginder Nagar, Distt-Mandi, Himachal Pradesh". (Tender No. -BVPCL/MD/Uhl Stage-III/Penstock/2021-01) are extended on the request of bidders in the Pre-bid meeting as detailed below:-

- Last date & time of submission of online bids = 29.06.2021 (5.00 PM)
- Date of opening of Techno-commercial bids = 03.07.2021 (10.30 AM)

Other terms & condition of NIB shall remain the same/ unchanged.

Managing Director,
BVPCL, Uhl Stage-III, (100MW), Joginder Nagar,
Distt. Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, Ph.: 01908-224412
Email: mdbvpcl_jnr@yahoo.com

SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one girl, (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Shikha, D/o: Dharmender, R/o: H.No. 1/4650/10C, Gali No. 11, New Modern Shahdara, Delhi. Aged: 19 years** has been missing since 01.06.2021 from her house. In this Regard DD No. 68A, Dated 02.06.2021, has been registered at P.S. Mansarovar Park, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:

Height: 4'6" Feet., **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Build:** Medium, **ID Mark:** A tattoo of "ॐ" on left hand, **Clothing:** Blue Colour Shirt, Printed Salwar and Red Colour Plastic Chapple in her feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Mansarovar Park, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No.: 011-24368638 or 24368641

S.H.O
P.S. Mansarovar Park, Delhi
DP/464/SHD/2021. Ph. 011-22599374, 22599375, 7065036029

BJP slams Diggy's remark on Art 370, seeks NIA probe

RABINDRA NATH CHOUHURY
BHOPAL, JUNE 12

The BJP took a serious exception to the purported remarks by Congress veteran Digvijay Singh on the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K and demanded a probe by National Investigation Agency (NIA) into his "activities" in the wake of stands taken by him on several sensitive issues in the past.

State BJP president and Lok Sabha member Vishnu Dutt Sharma shot a letter to Union home minister Amit Shah demanding a probe into Mr Singh's "activities" by NIA "urgently" while drawing his attention to the former chief minister's clubhouse conversation in which a Pakistan-based journalist was reportedly present, criticising abrogation of Article 370.

"Mr Singh's stand on several sensitive issues have not only proved detrimental to the interest of India, but also helped Pakistan strengthen its anti-India campaign. It was high time the Centre initiated a probe into all his activities 'before it is too late'," Mr Sharma said in his letter.

He cited how Mr Singh had made a shocking statement in the aftermath of the 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai, seeking to portray it as a conspiracy by the RSS and how



Digvijay Singh

he defended the accused in the Batla encounter who were later convicted by the court.

"Mr Singh's stands on many sensitive issues were found to be similar to those of Pakistan. This is a matter of serious concern for the country," Mr Sharma said.

Mr Singh has made a "fashion" of attacking the sovereignty of India for appeasement and votebank politics, he added.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh also lambasted Mr Singh for describing abrogation of Article 370 as a "sad" decision by the Centre. "Kashmir is an integral part of the country. It was Congress which committed a sin by imposing article 370 in J&K," Mr Chouhan said.

He called upon Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to come out with a clarification on the issue. "If Sonia Gandhi keeps mum on the issue, then it will be assumed that she is in agreement with Mr Singh on it," he added.

Government of Haryana

The people of Haryana Salute
Maharana Pratap Ji
on his
Birth Anniversary
13th June, 2021

"Maharana Pratap Ji was an eternal patriot, symbol of valor and courage who died for the motherland. He was a great warrior and ruler who sacrificed his life to protect his homeland. The strength and bravery of Maharana Pratap Ji will inspire generations to come."

- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana www.prharyana.gov.in @Cmohry @DiprHaryana

SHORT TAKES

Fake Favipiravir seized in Cuttack

Bhubaneswar: In a major crackdown on unscrupulous fake Covid drug peddlers, the special squad of drug controller (DC) of Odisha on Friday evening seized a huge quantity of counterfeit medicines, including Favipiravir, during a raid on a wholesale medicine store in Cuttack, the state DC Annada Sankar Das said on Saturday. Acting on an intelligence input from Haryana, the special squad raided the medicine store and seized 170 boxes containing around 17,000 fake Favipiravir tablets and seven other varieties of medicines used for treating diseases like cough, cold and fever. The Favipiravir drug is prescribed for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. The DC Mr Das said the counterfeit medicine stocks were seized just before they were supposed to be released in the open market in Odisha.

Assam forms 2,000 teams to jab 3L daily

Guwahati: Assam health minister Keshab Mahanta on Saturday said that the state government has formed 2,000 teams to vaccinate three lakh people every day provided an adequate number of doses are available. He said the administration has an adequate stock of Covaxin for administering the second dose to people in the 18-44 years age group. "We have kept ready 2,000 teams who could vaccinate 4 lakh people every day. But, for now, we are targeting to inoculate 3 lakh people daily if we get the vaccines. We hope that the availability of vaccines will increase in the coming days," he said. Mahanta had said that the state has a total stock of 3,80,900 vaccines, including 2,43,460 for those above 45 years of age and 1,37,440 for the 18-44 years. CM Himanta Biswa Sarma had earlier said that the state had a capacity to inoculate 1 lakh people every day but it had to vaccinate less than half its capacity on most days since the beginning of the vaccination drive due to a shortage of supply. — PTI

YouTuber gets bail in racial slur case

Itanagar: A court in Itanagar granted bail to social media influencer Paras Singh who was arrested last month for making a racial comment, targeting an Arunachal Pradesh lawmaker. The chief judicial magistrate (CJM) court here granted bail to Singh on Friday. The court allowed Singh's plea for bail on the execution of a personal bond of ₹10,000 and a set of other conditions, including not permitting him to leave the country. The YouTuber was also asked to stay away from interfering into the investigation process. Public prosecutor Rotom Vijay said, "The bail was granted to Singh as the investigation was almost over and all necessary statements were recorded by the state police during his time in judicial custody here." — PTI

ODISHA MAN ATTEMPTS TO KILL 4 KIDS, WIFE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 12

A man hailing from Odisha's Sambalpur district on Saturday attempted to kill his four little daughters and wife by slitting their throats. While his three-year-old baby succumbed to her injuries, others are battling for life at Sundargarh District Headquarters Hospital. According to reports, the incident occurred at Joutukbahal village under Govindpur police limits. The accused was identified as Suku Oram. The victims are all aged between 2 and 15 years. The reports said, Suku, the father of four daughters attempted to kill his children by slitting their necks with a sharp knife. While a 3-year-old baby died on the spot, three others sustained critical injuries. Source said that the accused also attacked his wife Atebari Oram with the knife. After attacking the children and wife, Suku also attempted to kill self. He has also been seriously injured. "The exact cause behind the incident is yet to be ascertained. However, we have started investigation into the case," Pratap Rana, inspector of cleared Govindpur Police said, said.

1 earth, 1 health, says PM at G7

Calls for global unity, leadership and solidarity to prevent future pandemics

New Delhi, June 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday called for adopting a "one earth, one health" approach to effectively deal with the coronavirus pandemic globally during a virtual address at a session of the G7 summit.

Calling for global unity, leadership and solidarity to prevent future pandemics, Modi emphasised the special responsibility of democratic and transparent societies to deal with the challenge.

The Prime Minister also sought support of the G7 for a proposal moved at the WTO by India and South Africa for patent waiver on Covid related technologies.



Narendra Modi

► **PRIME MINISTER** also sought support of the G7 for a proposal moved at the WTO by India and South Africa for patent waiver on Covid related technologies

► **THE GROUP** of Seven (G7) comprises the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States

"The Prime Minister committed India's support for collective endeavours to improve global health governance. He sought the G7's support for the proposal moved at the WTO by India and South Africa, for a TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) waiver

on Covid related technologies," an official statement said.

"Prime Minister Modi said that today's meeting should send out a message of 'One Earth, One Health' for the whole world," it said about his address at the outreach session. The Group of Seven (G7)

comprises the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

As chair of the G7, the UK invited India, Australia, South Korea and South Africa to the summit as guest countries.

India first participated in the Outreach Session of the G7 Summit in 2003. This is the second time that the Indian Prime Minister will be participating in the G7 meet. India had been invited by the G7 French presidency in 2019 to the summit as a goodwill partner and the PM participated in these sessions on climate, biodiversity on oceans as well as on digital transformation. — PTI



Cadets participate in the Passing out Parade of Indian Armys Technical Entry Scheme (TES) course at Secunderabad in Hyderabad on Saturday. — PTI

Hazardous waste-generating units in India increase by 3.5%

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR/NEW DELHI, JUNE 12

Even as biomedical waste (BMW) generation in India grew from 559 tonnes per day to 619 tonnes per day between 2017 and 2019, the percentage of treated BMW dropped from 92.8 per cent to 88 per cent, CSE director general Sunita Narain said on Saturday.

With 69 per cent untreated BMW, Bihar remained the worst offender. Similarly, with 47 per cent untreated BMW, Karnataka emerged as the second worst offender, Ms Narain said.

"During the same period, the number of authorised healthcare facilities in the country almost doubled to 1,53,885 from 84,805. But the number of unauthorised healthcare facilities also rose from 57,010 to 66,713. "On the other hand, while the number of hazardous waste generating units in the country increased by 3.5 per cent,

hazardous waste generation has gone down by almost 7 per cent," she said, quoting statistics brought to light in CSE's (Centre for Science and Environment) e-publication.

The publication highlights the challenges posed by improper disposal of dangerous wastes—in particular biomedical waste—in the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic.

'State of India's Environment in Figures 2021,' as the e-publication is titled, is an annual compendium of data and statistics on key issues of environment and development. The report also shows a significant increase in Covid-19 related biomedical waste generation during the second wave. It says, "India produced 139 tonnes per day of Covid-19 related biomedical waste in April 2021 as the country braced against the second wave. In May 2021, the figure escalated to 203 tonnes per day, an increase of 46 per cent."

Suspected China spy sent to jail for 6 days

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 12

The Chinese national, Han Junwe, arrested by the BSF for sneaking through the India-Bangladesh border in Malda on June 10, was sent to 6 days custody by a district court on Saturday.

The 36-year-old man from Hubei was handed over to the district police following his marathon interrogation by various central agencies. He was booked under the Foreigners Act, said SP (Malda) Aloke Rajoria.

On Saturday when Han was produced at the Malda district court, the police sought a seven-day remand for him. Gyanendra Dewang, lawyer of the accused, however, opposed the plea submitting that his client failed to find the border between two countries in absence of fencing.

Fake docs employed in MP Covid hospitals, says police

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JUNE 12

The special task force (STF) of Madhya Pradesh police, on Saturday, launched a drive to identify imposters serving as doctors in private Covid hospitals in the state.

The move comes in the wake of the arrest of two 'fake' doctors employed by two private Covid hospitals in Jabalpur.

The two imposters, identified as Neeraj Sahu (26) and Jatindra Singh Thakur (26), were arrested on charges of involvement in black marketing of life saving drug Remdesivir recently.

They were serving as doctors in two private Covid hospitals, Life Medicity Hospital and Ashish Hospital, in Jabalpur.

"We have found that the two 'doctors' have no genuine medical degree certificates. We have ordered the district chief medical health officers to verify the medical degrees of doctors serving in private Covid hospitals following the development," STF superintendent of police Neeraj Soni said.

Investigation by the police has led to disclosure that while Sahu was never a student of any medical college, Thakur dropped out after his fourth year in

K'taka cops bust ₹290 crore scam

Bengaluru, June 12: Karnataka police on Saturday said they have busted a ₹290 crore plus scam that involved duping people through a mobile app after promising attractive interest on investment and two Chinese nationals were among the nine arrested. The scam, aided by shell companies, is linked to money laundering and the suspected kingpin is a Kerala based business man with proximity to Chinese 'hawal' operators, they said.

Cyber crime division of CID said it has arrested accused persons, including two Chinese nationals, two Tibetans and five others acting as directors of

the companies involved, and a search is on for the rest. A complaint from Razor pay Software Private Limited said accused persons availed 'payment solutions' from them, claiming that they are in gaming, social and e-commerce businesses.

They, however, defrauded the company by using computer resources and by deviating from their original, registered line of business, the plaintiff said.

They started routing their transactions to collect payments from a different business named "Powerbank", an app listed in Google Playstore, cyber police said in a release. — PTI

► **THE TWO** imposters, identified as Neeraj Sahu (26) and Jatindra Singh Thakur (26), were arrested on charges of involvement in black marketing of life saving drug Remdesivir recently

► **THEY WERE** serving as doctors in two private Covid hospitals, Life Medicity Hospital and Ashish Hospital, in Jabalpur.

MBBS.

The two imposters, along with a nurse of a private hospital in Jabalpur, were allegedly involved in the racket of stealing the antiviral drug from the hospitals and selling them in the black market when the demand for the lifesaving drug was at its peak in April-May this year.

Meanwhile, the probe into the 'disappearance' of Remdesivir injections from the store room of a government hospital here in April this year has hardly progressed, raising many eyebrows in the official circle here.

Around 850 vials of the antiviral drug had disappeared and later surfaced in the store room when the state government ordered a probe into it.

The 'undue' delay in the investigation has given birth to suspicion that efforts were being made to shield the culprits, sources said.

■ **New Delhi seeks to be impleaded as party in Choksi case**

India approaches Dominica HC

New Delhi, June 12: India has approached the Dominica High Court seeking to be impleaded as a party in the case filed by lawyers of absconding businessman Mehul Choksi whose bail was rejected by the High Court after a five hour long hearing, sources said here.

The CBI and external affairs ministry have sought to implead in the Habeas Corpus matter, which seeks return of Choksi to Antigua and Barbuda, by filing two affidavits in Dominica High Court, officials said here.

The central agency is likely to focus on establishing criminal culpability of

Choksi, his fugitive status, pending warrants against him, Red Notice and charge sheets while the external affairs ministry will argue that Choksi continues to be an Indian citizen, they said. The affidavits, if admitted by the HC, will pave way for noted lawyer Harish Salve to plead India's case in Dominica, they said.

On Friday, Dominica High Court, in a separate matter, had denied bail to Choksi calling him a flight risk after a five-hour-long court proceeding through video conferencing.

Justice Wynante Adrienne Roberts ruled that "the court cannot impose any



Mehul Choksi

condition that will assure Choksi will not abscond," Dominica News online reported from the island country.

Choksi's lawyers vehemently sought bail arguing that allegations of "illegal entry" should be discarded because as "a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) citizen, he is entitled to

such benefits since his allege offense is not of a serious nature", the report said. The team was ready for stringent bail conditions to be imposed by the High Court besides offering "any amount" for bail set by the Court, it said.

The counsels also cited poor health condition to argue that he was not a flight risk. Dominica government's legal team led by the acting Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) Sherma Dalrymple cited pending Interpol Red Notice, extradition proceedings in the Antiguan court as reasons which could see Choksi fleeing the island nation. — PTI

GST reduced on Covid, black fungus medicines

■ **Continued from Page 1** The Council largely agreed to go with GoM's recommendation.... Ms Sitharaman said while briefing reporters after the 44th GST Council meeting here.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate on Covid vaccines was, however, retained at 5 per cent as the Council felt that majority of the vaccine procurement was being done by the Centre and given free to people.

"Central government is purchasing 75 per cent and is paying GST also. But the impact of this GST on people will be nil since people would be getting vaccines free of cost at government hospitals. Centre is purchasing and it is given free to people," Ms Sitharaman said.

Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said vaccines would continue to attract 5 per cent rate and the GST Council discussed that the Centre is purchasing all the vaccines—at least 75 per cent is being purchased by the Centre. "The GST will also be borne by the Centre. But out of the income from GST, 70 per cent will be shared with the states... As far as people are concerned who are coming to get their inoculation done, it is tax free. It is not an issue with the people, they are not paying any tax, cost of the vaccine. So it is free

for them," Bajaj said.

He said the notification of lower GST rates would be issued "tomorrow or day after". While GST on Tocilizumab and Amphotericin B is slashed to nil from 5 per cent, the rate on Remdesivir and anticoagulants like Heparin is lowered from 12 per cent to 5 per cent. GST rate on ambulance has been cut to 12 per cent from 28 per cent. Tax on medical grade oxygen, oxygen concentrator (including personal imports), ventilators, BiPAP machines and high flow nasal cannula (HFNC) devices has been cut to 5 per cent from 12 percent.

Also, tax on Covid testing kits, pulse oximeters (including personal imports) has been brought down to 5 per cent from 12 percent. Hand sanitisers, temperature check equipment, gas/electric furnaces for crematoriums too will attract a lower 5 per cent tax, compared to 18 per cent earlier.

In the previous meeting of the GST Council on May 28, taxes on Covid-19 vaccines and medical supplies were left unchanged after the BJP and Opposition-ruled states sparred over whether the tax cut benefits will reach the common man. An 8-member GoM, under Sangma, was set up to recommend a

► **GOODS AND** Services Tax (GST) rate on Covid vaccines was, however, retained at 5 per cent as the Council felt that majority of the vaccine procurement was being done by the Centre and given free to people

GST rate on Covid essentials.

The other members of the GoM are Gujarat Deputy chief minister Nitinbhai Patel, Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, Goa transport minister Mauvin Godinho, finance ministers of Kerala (K.N. Balagopal), Odisha (Niranjan Pujari), Telangana (T. Harish Rao) and UP (Suresh Kr Khanna). To a query on Congress saying that they were not made part of the GoM, Sitharaman said, "... I don't want to comment on what was said outside. In the Council, the three Congress ministers said that in the future at least you should consider having us in GoM. The selection into a GoM is never made on party basis, neither is the exclusion. There are several GoMs and several ministers are made members of the GoM. All states are given representation in one or the other GoM. Neither the inclusion, nor the exclusions happen on political party

affiliations." Industry chamber PHDCCI said the calibrated reduction in the rates of GST on Covid relief essentials will go a long way in treating Covid cases and to provide required relief for treatment of infections.

"PHDCCI looks forward to the continued reform measures by the government to mitigate the daunting impact of Covid on people and to make India free from the pandemic," it said in a statement. EY Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said the majority population will not be affected on account of no GST rate cut on Covid vaccines as most people are opting for free of cost vaccinations from the government.

"For the limited few considering getting vaccinated at the private hospitals, the 5 per cent GST will continue to be a cost," Jain added.

Deloitte India Partner Mahesh Jaising said with a growing demand for vaccines, while a deemed export option could have resulted in zero taxes for domestic vaccines, the GoM seems to have taken a balanced approach of retaining it at 5 per cent. "This is particularly as the GST credit chain is not broken and in any case, a significant portion of vaccine procurements is by the government itself," he said.

Govt approves declassification, publication of war records

■ **Continued from Page 1** The requirement of having war histories written with a clear-cut policy on declassification of war records was recommended by Kargil Review Committee headed by K. Subrahmanyam as well as the N.N. Vohra Committee in order to analyse lessons learnt and prevent future mistakes. After the Kargil War, GoM recommendations on national security also mentioned the desirability of authoritative war history.

The new policy mandates the constitution of a committee headed by a joint secretary in the defence ministry that will comprise representatives of the Services, external affairs, home affairs and other organisations and prominent military historians (if required) for compilation of war and operations histories. The committee should be formed within two years of completion of a war or operations.

"The committee will consider, and take a view on earlier wars and operations," said a senior official on the Henderson Brooks-Bhagat report.

Roy plotting 'ghar wapsi' of 10 BJP MLAs, 1 MP?

■ **Continued from Page 1** are very clever. They make moves judging the wind. But the BJP does not move on Ayaram-Gayaram. Time has come for the dust to go. We are now standing by those party workers who are facing attacks."

Meanwhile, Mr Mukul Roy and his son Shubhrangshu said that they have written to the Union home ministry to withdraw the Central forces' security cover offered to them. While Mr Roy was given Z-category protection by 22 CRPF commandos, his son was given Y-category cover.

They have been provided the same security cover by Mamata Banerjee's government after their return to the Trinamul Congress. However, the Central forces' cover was yet to be withdrawn from Mr Roy till afternoon.

In the evening, BJP leader Rajib Banerjee, who has been wanting to return to the Trinamul Congress and has slammed his present party for attacking chief minister Mamata Banerjee, met TMC general secretary Kunal Ghosh at his residence. He called the meeting a "courtesy" call.

Disgruntled Pilot parked in Delhi to get Cabinet dues

■ **Continued from Page 1** in charge of Rajasthan Ajay Maken said, "Vacant positions in the Cabinet, boards and commissions would be filled soon and we are in talks with all. I am speaking to Pilotji on a regular basis. Had he been angry, he would not be speaking to me."

The three-member high-powered committee included Ajay Maken, K.C. Venugopal and the late Ahmed Patel. The Pilot camp is upset that it is going to be a year and

yet no visible change has taken place in the state. The Congress found itself pushed into a corner last year when Jyotiraditya Scindia left the party and toppled the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh. This week another young turk of the party, Jitin Prasada, also quit the Congress to join the BJP. At this point the high command wants no more desertions, especially somebody of the level of Mr Pilot.

THE ASIAN AGE

13 JUNE 2021



Sanjeev Ahluwalia
Off the beaten track

The morality of stock markets

Indian stock markets look like “mushroom rocks”, top-heavy and delicately balanced, just waiting to be tipped over by bad news, of which there is plenty. Investors, whose stocks are part of the on-going bull-run starting February 2021, could not care less having gained ₹11 trillion, since May 24.

This bonanza of wealth accretion, for the less than 15 per cent of households who own stocks, contrasts with increasing penury for most others from the economic and health depredations of the second wave of Covid-19 and its mutants.

It is hypocritical, however, to wring our hands in anguish because a few have become richer whilst the majority, particularly those in the bottom three quintiles are struggling. Gunnar Myrdal “hash tagged” India as a “dual economy” in 1968, in his seminal work *Asian Drama*.

Admittedly, much has changed since then. The urban, modern part of the economy has expanded significantly but so has inequity. Rapid wealth accretion at the pinnacle — an outcome of the 1992 liberalisation which unleashed entrepreneurship and economic growth — remains unmatched by enhanced living standards for the middle class, though, till the pandemic struck, poverty in the bottom two quintile had reduced significantly.

The stock market is not a useful proxy for economic welfare. It tracks the well-being of an elitist minority in the formal sector, albeit with trickle down benefits. But it is a real-time, high visibility metric of government's performance in partially liberalised economies like India, where government continues to be an intrusive economic agent via state owned companies and financial institutions, administered pricing and capital allocation regimes.

India's exchange rate regulator — the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) — strives to keep the exchange rate stable, except for adjustments reflecting the difference across currencies in the rate of inflation, which, RBI is mandated to keep within a float of two percentage points below or above the norm of four per cent per year. Presently we are scraping the under-side of the upper bound.

Sound inflation management and economic growth attracts foreign investors, who have invested ₹Rs 25 trillion in India or 13 per cent of the market capitalisation. These funds are important. They help us plug the foreign exchange gap because we chronically export less than we import.

The eco-system within which stocks are traded and fortunes won or lost, is regulated by the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) since April 1992. On the demand side are 41 million registered investors — individuals and entities — of which 9,823 are foreign portfolio investors and 45,000 domestic companies. On the supply side 5,600 companies supply the bonds and equity traded publicly through 1,343 stockbrokers. Over 400 portfolio management entities and mutual funds, intermediate the flows.

The market capitalisation of ₹212 trillion was 107 per cent of the GDP in 2019-20 at current prices and around 2.4 per cent of the global market capitalisation (SEBI 2019-20).

The Bombay Stock Exchange was the first. It has operated from 1875. Since then, 20 other exchanges were established but have shut shop voluntarily or like the Calcutta Stock Exchange are under litigation to do so. Back then primary goods like opium, indigo and cotton were traded.

Today, Bombay is Mumbai, and the renamed BSE, no longer deals with commodities, for which there are specialised exchanges. 84 per cent of the capital raised in 2019-20, was by telecom, finance and electronics related firms. In 1992 the National Stock Exchange (NSE) became a competitor exchange for domestic trading.

Stock markets however remains a fairly “clubby” business. Of the ₹0.8 trillion of equity raised in 2019-20, just 12 companies accounted for 95.7 per cent while 64 others accounted for the residual 4.3 per cent.

Consider also, the constricted geographic spread from where the funds are sourced. BSE raises 51 per cent of funds from Mumbai, 17 per cent from the National Capital Region, 15 per cent from 18 other cities and the residual 17 per cent from the rest of the country. The newer National Stock Exchange is even more exclusive, relying on the twenty largest cities for 87 per cent for the funds.

Stock trading as an urban phenomenon is not unique to India. Happily, digital trading, allows anyone in remote areas with a smart phone, to link into licensed trading platforms. It already accounts for 12 per cent of the transactions and is the hope for democratising market access.

But democratising capital gains is tougher than democratising access. Capital intensive competitive “games” have a funneling effect where the biggest players benefit disproportionately. Savvy youngsters, with cash to spare, know this. They try and build capital through the volatile cryptocurrency exchanges worth \$750 million — an extra-legal play. Retail “crypto mining” requires spending ₹0.4 million. One computer — a tireless digital slave — can meet household expenses, in a throwback to the leisurely late 19th century, prior to slavery abolition.

Stock markets are as amoral as shopping malls. They make affordable money available for implementing business plans, make companies accountable and spread business gains widely, though transparency should be enhanced, and indiscretions sanctioned better. The trick is to keep regulation light-handed to attract more companies to the exchanges. The compulsory spend from profits on corporate social responsibility is bad regulation whilst taxing capital gains, to fund income redistribution to the have-nots, is good.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

Subhani



Curb your enthusiasm, someone tell Dhankhar



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Will somebody please tell His Excellency, Mahamahim, the governor of West Bengal, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, that he is crossing all the lines of Constitutional propriety? Dhankhar Sahab is under the mistaken impression, it would seem, that he is ensconced in the palatial Raj Bhavan as a representative of the BJP to which he belonged prior to being plucked out and made the Mahamahim. It is a lethal misapprehension, although to be fair to him, it has possessed other governors too in the past cutting across party lines. But, the degree to which Dhankharji appears to have become partisan, and the blatancy of his partisanship, sets a new benchmark of gubernatorial indiscretion.

Articles 155 and 156 of the Constitution lay down clearly where the loyalties of a governor should lie. Article 155 says: “The governor of a state shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.” Article 156 declares: “The governor shall hold office during the pleasure of the President.” The position is, therefore, crystal clear. A governor is the representative of the President of India. He has to then be, like the President, above all party politics, and independent of any political loyalties that may have guided him in the past. Dhankhar was an active member of the BJP for decades, and had represented the party both in the Rajasthan legislature

and the Lok Sabha. It is understandable then that his fidelity to his political alma mater is deep and abiding. However, once he assumed the office of the governor, he is bound, under the express provisions of the Constitution, to transcend such old loyalties and play his role with impartiality and dignity.

I have worked in Rashtrapati Bhavan as the press secretary to two Presidents of India, Shri R. Venkataraman and Shankar Dayal Sharma. I still remember that in very first meeting with President Venkataraman, his first instruction to me was that the President of India does not comment on the day-to-day functioning of government. “I do not want publicity,” he said to me, “especially that which brings into question my political impartiality.” Shankar Dayal Sharma also did not give — with one exception perhaps — a single interview to the media. These were stellar precedents. They reinforced the fact that the President remained resolutely above the political fray, and intervened only during a genuine Constitutional crisis, when — as Venkataraman used to say — the power of the presidency comes alive but only like an emergency lamp.

Governors, appointed by the President, and holding office only at his pleasure, must model themselves on this kind of principled restraint. However, Mr Dhankhar has almost become a continuous voice in the political discourse. He tweets much too frequently. He gives media interviews. And, he is

forever ready to go public on every issue, instead of resorting to the discreet back channel ways in which a Constitutional head should communicate with a duly elected democratic government. As per the conventions of the high office he holds, his actions border on the adventurous. In an unprecedented manner, at the time of the swearing in of Mamata Banerjee, the newly elected chief minister of the state, he launched into a speech, delivering a public homily — bordering on a reprimand — on the need for her to control law and order. This very message could have been conveyed — if he was so keen that it should — to the chief minister in a private conversation. Similarly, in spite of the express advice to the contrary of the elected government, he broke convention by going off on a tour of the areas where alleged violence had taken place against BJP workers. Dhankharji has also made it a habit to summon senior officers of the state government to brief him. Technically, he may be within his rights to do so, but doing so on every occasion, and then publicly berating the officers and the state government if they don't satisfy his exacting and peremptory flats, hardly appears to be becoming for the Raj Bhavan.

True, violence and lawlessness of any kind, including against BJP workers, needs to be unequivocally con-

Dhankharji's actions, to my mind, constitute a fit case for President Kovind to take suo motu initiative to counsel his state-level counterpart. The endeavour should always be to learn from the past...

demned. It is true also that the governor can legitimately be concerned about a deterioration in the law and order situation. But there is a sustainable perception that Governors *saheb* is only exercised on those issues which fit into the BJP agenda. His interventions, therefore, become a kind of partisan hectoring where it almost seems that he is batting for the BJP rather than following the impartiality code befitting his position.

Frankly, I am a little surprised that the President of India has not as yet taken cognisance of the unconventional, undesirable and unprecedented behaviour of his appointee. Dhankharji's actions, to my mind, constitute a fit case for President Kovind to take suo motu initiative to counsel his state-level counterpart. It is not as if governors in the past have not acted in a partial manner. But the endeavour should be to learn from the past, and ensure that in our maturing democracy such mistakes are not repeated in the future.

The BJP, on its part, has already done great damage to several of our institutions. It should seriously ponder on the advisability of justifying the behaviour of Mr Dhankhar. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Tomorrow, if they are on the other side of the fence, would they like a governor who in terms of both optics and substance has thrown all constitutional reticence to the winds, and is openly partial to those who rule at Delhi? The fire of wrong precedents must be doused. Otherwise, in the future, it can burn your house and mine, and the Constitution of India.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

LETTERS

SAIKIA DREAMING

Congrats to Shubho Paul, barefoot teenage footballer from Saikia, West Bengal, whose brother, Raja Paul, gave up his own soccer dream to support his talent. Shubho, who would go to training grounds on a borrowed cycle, is now set to travel to Bayern Munich to play against U-19 teams in the Bundesliga. It was his coach Tapan Karmakar who first took Shubho's talent seriously. Shubho counts among his fans Kolkata legend Chima Okorie who gifted him his first boots and none other than West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee. Go, Shubho!

Priyanka Mathur
Noida

INCREDIBLE DJOKER

IN THEIR 58TH career clash, Djokovic triumphed 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 against 13-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal and stayed on course to capture a 19th major and become the first man in over 50 years to win all four Slams twice. It is Nadal's third defeat in 16 years and 108 matches at Roland Garros. Will the Djoker make good? However, the real find of the tournament has been the Italian teenager, Lorenzo Musetti, who took two sets off the world no. 1 in the pre-quarters before forfeiting on a whim.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

DIDI TAKES A BOW

IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT those who defected to the BJP from the Trinamul Congress party are returning to the fold, the latest being BJP MLA Mukul Roy, national vice-president. Rumours are rife that BJP MP Shantanu Thakur and three more BJP MLAs, namely, Biswajit Das, Ashok Kitania and Subrata Thakur who stayed away from state BJP president Dilip Ghosh's district organisational meeting are rejoining the TMC. With this, Ms Banerjee has roundly snubbed the PM's ambitions to conquer her state and is now thumbing her nose at him.

Tharcus S. Fernando
Chennai

TRAITORS WILL PAY

THOSE TRAITORS who left the grand old Congress Party and joined the BJP should not be taken back if after the soon-to-be-held reshuffle they remain empty-handed. The ruling party at the Centre has a reputation of not favouring turncoats. The Congress, on the other hand, should hold inner-party elections to restore democracy in its ranks and redeem its faltering image before the people of the land.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

DILIP KUMAR HOME

IT IS WONDERFUL to know that Bollywood actor Dilip Kumar is back home after spending close to a week at a hospital in Mumbai. Undoubtedly, it's a great relief for all movie lovers as they were spending their days anxiously after the living legend of Indian cinema was admitted in the hospital with breathing issues. One hopes that the 98-year-old actor will be completely fit within a few days.

Sourish Misra
Kolkata

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

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



UP rumblings: Yogi's men bank on Modi to allay 2022 ticket fears

When the BJP dispatched senior leaders B.L. Santosh and Radha Mohan Singh to Lucknow earlier this month to get feedback about the handling of the coronavirus pandemic by the Yogi Adityanath government, it was expected that they would meet with all legislators. But Mr Santosh and Mr Singh met only a section of ministers and state party leaders after which CM Yogi Adityanath was given a clean chit for successfully tackling the second wave of Covid infections. Already upset with Yogi Adityanath's style of functioning, this led to further resentment among the BJP legislators who hoped to get an audience with the leaders so that they could apprise them of their grievances. The party's MLAs are unhappy as they feel neglected by the chief minister who, they maintain, depends solely on the bureaucracy. The MLAs have reason to worry as many of them were imported from other political parties before the last Assembly polls and with the next election coming up in early 2022, they are not sure if they will have to make way for fresh entrants. They were,

therefore, keen to apprise the BJP leadership about the hurdles they face in addressing the demands of their constituents, before they are axed for their non-performance. They are hoping Yogi's meetings with the Prime Minister and home minister Amit Shah will yield positive results.

Image management has been on top of the Modi government's agenda. The Centre first came in for severe criticism from the domestic and international media for not anticipating the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Even as the government's spin doctors were in the midst of handling this negative commentary, the government was pulled up by the Supreme Court which described its vaccine policy as “arbitrary and irrational”. Going into damage control mode, Prime Minister Modi announced a centralised procurement of vaccines and free doses to all in his address to the nation on June 7. Following this announcement, the government's spin doctors were again on the job. “Friendly” media-persons were informally told that the Prime Minister

had actually given in-principle approval for centralised free vaccine on June 1, two days before the Supreme Court's observations. Subsequently, the chosen journalists put out identical tweets giving the official version.

It is no secret that Gandhi loyalist Jitin Prasada was set to join the BJP two years ago but was dissuaded from leaving the Congress by Rahul Gandhi and other senior party leaders. According to the political grapevine, Mr Prasada decided to switch sides now as he had fallen out with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh, who did not include him in the state unit's activities. With Assembly elections coming up early next year, Mr Prasada apparently thought this was the most opportune moment to leave. When the young leader was given charge of poll-bound West Bengal earlier this year, everyone believed Mr Prasada was back in favour even though he was among the signatories to the letter seeking radical changes in the Congress organisation. But, it appe-

ars this appointment was meant to ensure Mr Prasada's absence from UP. Plus, he was deliberately given this “punishment” assignment in which he was bound to fail.

As Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh looks set to emerge victorious in the ongoing battle with his bete noire Navjot Singh Sidhu, he will have to thank his wife and Patiala MP Preneet Kaur for the final outcome. The chief minister or Captain, as he is called, deputed Preneet Kaur to speak with the dissident leaders. Unlike the Captain, Preneet Kaur is considered more approachable and consequently it was easier for her to talk to the rebels. If reports are to be believed, her efforts have paid off as the majority of state leaders who were summoned by the three-member panel set up by Congress president Sonia Gandhi to resolve the Punjab imbroglio, were not in favour of replacing Amarinder Singh. The rebels basically want their concerns to be addressed. The truth is that this rebellion was never about a change in leadership but it was to ensure

that those perceived to be in the anti-Captain camp were not ignored during ticket distribution in next year's Assembly polls.

Unable to travel due to the coronavirus pandemic, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has stepped up her presence on social media. She has, however, changed trajectory in recent months. Instead of focussing on issues pertaining to Uttar Pradesh, she has also started attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Centre's vaccine policy, the shortage of oxygen and general handling of the coronavirus pandemic. But her numerous tweets, video messages and Facebook posts taking on Mr Modi have been ignored by the BJP which is usually quick to respond sharply to Rahul Gandhi's tweets. The BJP obviously does not wish to take the focus away from Rahul Gandhi considering its campaign to project the Nehru-Gandhi scion as an immature leader has met with resounding success.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

**JAN. 6 CAPITOL
ATTACK: CHICAGO
COP CHARGED**

Chicago, June 12: A Chicago police officer has been charged with breaching the US Capitol and entering a senator's office during the January 6 insurrection. Karol Chwiesiuk, 29, was arrested on Friday and faces five misdemeanour counts, including entering a restricted building, disrupting government business and disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds with the intent to impede a congressional proceeding.

Prosecutors allege in a criminal complaint that Chwiesiuk was among a mob of people who broke into and damaged the office of Sen. Jeff Merkley, an Oregon Democrat. They say that days before he travelled to Washington to attend a rally of ex-President Donald Trump.

**BOMBS HIT 2
MINIVANS IN
KABUL, 7 DEAD**

Kabul, June 12: Separate bombs hit two minivans in a mostly Shiite neighbourhood in the Afghan capital Saturday, killing at least seven people and wounding six others, the Interior Ministry said.

The attacks targeted minivans on the same road about 2 kilometres apart in a neighbourhood in western Kabul, Interior Ministry deputy spokesman Ahmad Zia Zia, said.

It wasn't immediately clear what type of bombs were used and no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks. The Islamic State group has carried out similar bombings in the area, including four attacks on four minivans earlier this month that killed at least 18 people.

**13 HURT IN
DOWNTOWN
AUSTIN SHOOTING**

Austin (US), June 12: A shooting in a busy entertainment district in downtown Austin, Texas injured 13 people early Saturday, and police said the suspected shooter was not in custody.

Two of the injured people were in critical condition but as of the news conference at 4 am local time, no one had died, interim Austin Police Chief Joseph Chacon said. Gunfire erupted just before 1:30 am along 6th Street, a popular area filled with bars and restaurants. The street was barricaded to keep out vehicle traffic at the time of the shooting, Chacon said. Eleven of the injured people were taken to one local hospital, another person was taken to a different hospital, and the other person went to an urgent care facility with gunshot wounds.

**SAUDI CAPS HAJ
TO 60K, BARS
FOREIGNERS**

Riyadh, June 12: Saudi Arabia announced Saturday it will allow 60,000 residents vaccinated against Covid to perform this year's haj, but Muslims from abroad will be barred for a second straight year.

The haj — a must for able-bodied Muslims at least once in their lives — typically packs millions of pilgrims into congested religious sites and could be a major source of contagion amid the coronavirus pandemic. This year it would be "open for nationals and residents of the kingdom, limited to 60,000 pilgrims", the haj ministry said, quoted by the official Saudi Press Agency.

The pilgrimage, scheduled to be held in July, would be limited to those who have been vaccinated and are aged 18-65 with no chronic illnesses, it said.

Only up to 10,000 Muslims took part in the haj in July last year, a far cry from the 2.5 million who participated in the five-day annual pilgrimage in 2019 before the pandemic.

"In light of what the whole world is witnessing with the Coronavirus pandemic... and the emergence of new variants, the relevant authorities have continued to monitor the global health situation," the health ministry said.

"Considering the large crowds that perform haj, spending long periods of time in multiple and specific places... requires the highest levels of health precautions." Saudi Arabia said those wishing to perform the haj would have to apply online, without specifying how many foreign residents would be among the 60,000 pilgrims.

In 2020, foreigners were 70 percent of the pilgrims, while Saudis made up the rest.

The kingdom said later that it had informed other countries of the decision not to allow pilgrims from abroad. "There was great understanding," its deputy hajj minister, Abdulfattah bin Sulaiman Mashat, said.



Activists from the climate change protest group Extinction Rebellion, dressed in red robes and known as the Red Brigade, demonstrate in Falmouth, Cornwall during the G7 summit on Saturday. — AFP

G7 gives a taste of Nov. Glasgow climate meet

UK mobilising allies amid environmental groups' pressure

Carbis Bay, June 12: Britain is using its G7 summit to mobilise allies ahead of the COP26 conference in November in Glasgow amid pressure from environmental groups to make the meeting count.

The climate emergency, with the Covid-19 pandemic, is high on the agenda at the summit for wealthy nations in bucolic Cornwall in southwest England this weekend.

On Friday, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson restated his aim of a "green industrial revolution" to meet environmental challenges and create jobs after the global health crisis. Both the optics of the summit as well as its politics are important for Britain, which hosts the UN climate change conference in Scotland in November.

"The UK has a serious moral responsibility to lead the way on climate and nature both as a big historical emitter of carbon but also as the host of those big conferences," Greenpeace UK's head of politics Rebecca Newsom said.

"We need to see proper action, otherwise our world leaders are failing us," she said. Greenpeace released a striking video for the occasion, deploying 300 drones to form animal shapes in the sky and urge

action on biodiversity as well as the climate.

The summit also played host to a series of demonstrations with protesters vying for attention. Oxfam activists wore masks showing the faces of the summit's leaders while others, urging Japan to stop burning coal, dressed as giant Pokemon charac-

ter Pikachu.

Overwhelmingly, strict security measures kept the demonstrators away from the leaders' meetings in the seaside resort of Carbis Bay. Only Extinction Rebellion protesters briefly breached one police cordon.

"We're hopeful that (US) President Biden has changed the dynamic on climate change and that we will see the ambitious targets that we need from the G7," said Oxfam campaigner Max Lawson.

Johnson is pushing for G7 countries to halve their carbon emissions by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

— AFP

ed after meeting Johnson that Northern Ireland peace was paramount, and the binding Brexit agreement protected it.

We want the best possible relations with the UK. Both sides must implement what we agreed on. There is complete EU unity on this, she said.

The EU is threatening legal action if the UK does not fully bring in the checks, which include a ban on chilled meats such as sausages from England, Scotland and Wales going to Northern Ireland starting next month.

It says Britain must fully implement the agreement, known as the Northern Ireland Protocol.

— AP

PIO wins Pulitzer for exposing Muslims' detention in China

New York, June 12: Megha Rajagopalan, an Indian-origin journalist, along with two contributors has won the Pulitzer Prize for innovative investigative reports that exposed a vast infrastructure of prisons and mass internment camps secretly built by China for detaining hundreds of thousands of Muslims in its restive Xinjiang region.

Rajagopalan from *BuzzFeed News* is among two Indian-origin journalists who won the US' top journalism award on Friday. *Tampa Bay Times*' Neil Bedi won for local report-

ing. Bedi along with Kathleen McGrory has been awarded the prize for the series exposing a Sheriff's Office initiative that used computer modelling to identify people believed to be future crime suspects.

About 1,000 people were monitored under the programme, including children. Bedi is an investigative reporter for the *Tampa Bay Times*.

"What Kathleen and Neil unearthed in Pasco County has had a profound impact on the community," said Mark Katches, *Times* executive editor. "This is what the best investigative



Megha Rajagopalan

journalism can do and why it is so essential."

Rajagopalan's Xinjiang series won the Pulitzer Prize in the International Reporting category. In 2017, not long after China

began to detain thousands of Muslims in Xinjiang, Rajagopalan was the first to visit an internment camp — at a time when China denied that such places existed, *BuzzFeed News* said.

"In response, the government tried to silence her, revoking her visa and ejecting her from the country," *BuzzFeed News* wrote in its entry for the prize. "It would go on to cut off access to the entire region for most Westerners and stymie journalists. The release of basic facts about detainees slowed to a

colonization missions.

Batches were returned to Earth for fertilisation after the first nine months, then after two years, and finally after six years, leading to hundreds of births. Freeze-dried sperm was selected for the experiment because it can be preserved at room temperature, rather than needing a freezer.

The ampoules were also small and very light, about the size of a small pencil, further cutting launch costs. When the space mice reached adulthood, they

were randomly mated and the next generation appeared normal as well.

Wakayama, now director for Advanced Biotechnology Center at the University of Yamanashi, said he had been inspired by the science fiction of Heinlein and Asimov and once wanted to be an astronaut. Though he settled on becoming a scientist, the sense of wonder and whimsy about space exploration never left him.

"In the future, when the time comes to migrate to other planets, we will need to maintain the diversity of genetic resources, not only for humans but also for pets and domestic animals," Wakayama and colleagues wrote in their paper.

"For cost and safety reasons, it is likely that stored germ cells will be transported by spaceships rather than by living animals." Getting to other planets means leaving the safety of Earth's protective atmosphere and magnetic field — which also extends to the ISS.

— AFP

Delta variant may delay Britain's unlock process

Italy limits AZ vax to over-60s

London, June 12: The UK government is considering a delay of up to four weeks from the scheduled June 21 end to all lockdown restrictions amid a continuing rise in cases of the Delta variant of Covid-19, according to a media report on Saturday. It comes as the country reported 8,125 new Covid-19 cases in a 24-hour period, another record daily high since the end of February, and Public Health England (PHE) found that infections from the Delta variant — the B.1.617.2 variant of concern (VOC) first identified in India — rose by nearly 30,000 in a week to hit 42,323.

Downing Street sources said that no final decision has been made yet and that several options are being evaluated as the latest data is studied before UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson makes a scheduled announcement regarding lockdown on Monday. The British Medical Association (BMA) is among some of the leading public healthcare groups and officials calling for a delay to the planned easing of all lockdown restrictions on June 21, dubbed "Freedom Day" as it would see all legal limits on social contact removed. Pushing the date back by a few weeks is intended to allow the country's vaccination programme to take greater effect, as the rollout moves through to younger age groups and the older age groups get covered with their

Rome, June 12: Italy said Saturday it would restrict the AstraZeneca vaccine to the over-60s, with younger people who have already received one dose to complete the cycle with an mRNA jab.

The change follows an improvement in Coronavirus infection rates in Italy, which has been devastated by the pandemic but will next week lift restrictions in much of the country following a sharp decline in cases.

The EU's medicine agency in April drew a link between rare blood clots and AstraZeneca jabs but stressed that the benefits of the vaccines outweighed the risks.

"The changed epidemiological situation has led to a reassessment of the risk-benefit ratio for age groups less at risk of severe forms of Covid-19," the Italian government's Technical and Scientific Committee (CTS) said.

— AFP

Pandemic origin: China, US clash

Beijing, June 12: Top US and Chinese diplomats appear to have had another sharply worded exchange, with Beijing saying it told the US to cease interfering in its internal affairs and accusing Washington of politicising the search for the origin of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi and Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a phone call Friday that revealed wide divisions in a num-

ber of contentious areas, including the curtailing of freedoms in Hong Kong and the mass detention of Muslims in the northwestern Xinjiang region.

Calls for a more thorough investigation into the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19 are particularly sensitive for China because of suggestions that it might have have escaped from a laboratory in the central city of Wuhan.

— AP

In Russia, 47% spike in a week

Moscow, June 12: Russia's national Coronavirus taskforce on Saturday reported that the country's tally of daily new infections has risen by nearly 50 per cent over the past week and more than doubled in Moscow.

It said there were 13,510 infections recorded in the previous day, sharply higher than the 9,163 reported on June 6. Nearly half the new cases were in Moscow — 6,701 compared with 2,936 a week ago.

Faced with the spiking figures, Moscow authorities said enforcement of mask- and glove-wearing on mass transit, in stores and in other public places would be strengthened and that violators could face fines of up to 5,000 rubles (\$70).

For the entire pandemic period, the task force has reported nearly 5.2 million infections in the coun-

try of about 146 million people, and 126,000 deaths.

However, a report from the state statistics agency Rosstat on Friday found more than 144,000 virus-related deaths last year alone.

The statistics agency, unlike the taskforce, counts fatalities in which Coronavirus infection was present or suspected but is not the main cause of death.

The agency's report found about 340,000 more people died in 2020 than in 2019; it did not give details of the causes of the higher year-on-year death toll.

The higher death toll and a lower number of births combined to make an overall population decline of 702,000, about twice the decline in 2019, Rosstat said.

— AP

Keep Brexit word, France urges UK

Carbis Bay, June 12: France on Saturday told United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson to stick to the terms of the Brexit deal he signed with Europe, amid a standoff over new trading arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Johnson met French President Emmanuel Macron on the sidelines of the G7 summit in southwest England, with Brussels angered by Britain's failure to implement border checks on goods.

A source in Macron's office said he explained to Johnson in no uncertain terms that the UK should "keep its word" and abide by the terms of the deal he signed with the European Union just last December.

Other European leaders attending the summit, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, are expected to deliver the same message.

— AFP

UN CHIEF BACKS INDIA OVER WAIVING TRIPS

United Nations, June 12: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has extended support to India and South Africa's initiative at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to waive intellectual property protection for Covid-19 vaccines and products, though he cautioned that "technology transfer" must be backed up by "technical support". India has worked with South Africa and other partners at the WTO to seek a relaxation in the norms of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement to ensure quick and affordable access to vaccines and medicines for developing countries during the Covid-19 pandemic. "I support the initiative that was taken by South Africa and by India in relation to TRIPS, waving TRIPS regulations," he said.

— PTI

INDIA SAYS IT WANTS NORMAL TIES WITH PAK

United Nations, June 12: India has said it desires "normal" neighbourly relations with all countries, including Pakistan, and asserted that the onus is on Islamabad to create a "conducive atmosphere" and not allow its territory to be used for cross-border terrorism against India in any manner.

The remarks by Counsellor in India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, R. Madhu Sudan came at the United Nations General Assembly meeting on 'Report of the Security Council for 2020' on Friday.

"India desires normal neighbourly relations with all countries, including Pakistan. Our consistent position is that issues, if any, between India and Pakistan should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, in an atmosphere free of terror, hostility and violence," Sudan said in the General Assembly.

"The onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive atmosphere, including by taking credible, verifiable action to not allow any territory under its control to be used for cross-border terrorism against India in any manner," he added.

— PTI

SPACE | PUPS

Researchers wanted to know if radiation damages reproductive cell DNA

Mouse sperm on ISS produces 168 offspring

Washington, June 12: Turns out the comic books were wrong.

Japanese researchers found mouse sperm exposed to high levels of cosmic radiation for nearly six years produced a large brood of healthy, unremarkable "space pups." Their study was published Friday in *Science Advances* — which noted no signs so far of Mousezillas or rodent Hulks.

The sperm was stored in the International Space

Station in freeze-dried form. Once brought back to Earth and rehydrated, it resulted in the birth of 168 young, free of genetic defects.

Developmental biologist and lead author Teruhiko Wakayama said on Thursday that there was little difference between mice fertilised by space sperm and sperm that had remained confined to our planet.

"All pups had normal appearance," he said, and when researchers examined their genes "no abnor-

malities were found." In 2013, Wakayama and colleagues at the University of Yamanashi in Japan launched three boxes, each containing 48 ampoules of freeze-dried sperm, to the ISS for the long-term study.

They wanted to determine whether long term exposure to radiation in space would damage DNA in reproductive cells or pass mutations along to offspring.

That could be a problem for our own species in future space exploration and

colonization missions.

Batches were returned to Earth for fertilisation after the first nine months, then after two years, and finally after six years, leading to hundreds of births. Freeze-dried sperm was selected for the experiment because it can be preserved at room temperature, rather than needing a freezer.

The ampoules were also small and very light, about the size of a small pencil, further cutting launch costs. When the space mice reached adulthood, they

were randomly mated and the next generation appeared normal as well.

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other planets, we will need to maintain the diversity of genetic resources, not only for humans but also for pets and domestic animals," Wakayama and colleagues wrote in their paper.

"For cost and safety reasons, it is likely that stored germ cells will be transported by spaceships rather than by living animals."

Getting to other planets means leaving the safety of Earth's protective atmosphere and magnetic field — which also extends to the ISS.

— AFP

Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement but giving subtle meaning of "all lives matter".

England players were T. Holding, who is a passionate advocate for equality in cricket and the wider community, feels the gesture is akin to saying "all lives

"What you are doing there is, when I say, 'black lives matter', you are telling me 'all lives matter,'" — PTI

year-old added.

With Moore bandaged, the momentum swung towards Wales and they dominated the remainder of the half.

— *AFP*