



BIDEN & GHANI



ON TRACK TO END  
LOCKDOWN ON 19 JULY:  
UK HEALTH MINISTER

P6

P10



BJP'S SILENCE HURTS:  
CHIRAG PASWAN

SHAPOVALOV PULLS  
OUT OF OLYMPICS  
DUE TO COVID FEARS

P5

P12



## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 40 and 28 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 81% Min: 31%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 39.8°C (1) Min: 27.4°C (-1)  
SUN RISES SUN SETS  
05:25 hrs 19:23 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS  
18:01 hrs 04:36 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Former Union minister Vijay Goel and ex-Mayor Jai Prakash along with supporters stage dharna against Delhi government over water crisis at Bar Tooti Chowk, Sadar Bazar, in the Capital on Tuesday. SNS

**Jet Airways to be back in skies?** Describing the NCLT nod for resolution plan of Jet Airways as one of the biggest turnaround events for the beleaguered aviation sector, the airline's Resolution Professional Ashish Chhawchharia on Tuesday hoped that the carrier will be back in the skies by the end of this year provided everything goes well. Jet Airways is expected to see a revival with the NCLT approving the resolution plan.

P8

**Passenger held for ruckus at IGI Airport:** A 36-year-old passenger from Uttar Pradesh was arrested for creating ruckus at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here after allegedly being denied boarding by the airline for not carrying a mandatory RT-PCR test report, police said on Tuesday. Suraj Pandey, a businessman from Rudrapur in Uttar Pradesh, was arrested on Monday based on a complaint received from Deepak Chadha, Deputy Manager of Vistara Airlines, they said.

P9

## Reforms by conviction & incentives amid Covid: Modi

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the economic response to the Covid-19 pandemic was formulated to ensure that solutions do not follow a 'one size fits all' model, and asserted that "reforms by conviction and incentives" were undertaken on the back of "Centre-state bhagidari (partnership)".

In a post on LinkedIn, he said in the backdrop of global financial crunch, Indian states were able to borrow significantly more in 2020-21.

"It would perhaps pleasantly surprise you that states were able to raise an extra Rs 1.06 lakh crore in 2020-21," the prime minister said. "We had faith in the robustness of our federal polity," he said in his post titled "Reforms by Conviction and Incentives".

Modi noted that in May 2020, as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat pack-



age, the Centre announced that state governments would be allowed enhanced borrowing for 2020-21.

An extra 2 per cent of GSDP was allowed, of which 1 per cent was made conditional on the implementation of certain economic reforms, he said.

Asserting that this nudge for reform is rare in Indian public finance, Modi said it was a nudge, incentivising the states to adopt progressive policies to avail additional funds.

"The results of this exercise are not only encouraging but also run contrary to the notion that there are limited takers for

sound economic policies."

Modi said in his LinkedIn post on "innovative policy making in the time of COVID-19".

The four reforms to which additional borrowings were linked with 0.25 per cent of GDP tied to each one had two characteristics—they were linked to improving the ease of living to the public and particularly the poor, the vulnerable, and the middle class and second, they also promoted fiscal sustainability.

Modi pointed out that the first reform under the 'One Nation One Ration Card' policy required state governments to ensure that

all ration cards in the state under the National Food Security Act (NFSAct) were seeded with the Aadhaar number of all family members and that all Fair Price Shops had Electronic Point of Sale devices.

He highlighted that 17 states completed this reform and were granted additional borrowings amounting to Rs 37,600 crore. He said the second reform, aimed at improving ease of doing business, required states to ensure renewal of business-related licences.

While pointing out that the 15th Finance Commission and several academics have emphasised the salience of sound property taxation, Modi said the third reform required states to notify floor rates of property tax and of water and sewerage charges, in consonance with stamp duty guideline values for property transactions and current costs respectively, in urban areas. He said that 11 states completed

these reforms and were granted additional borrowing of Rs 15,957 crore.

Modi said the fourth reform was the introduction of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in lieu of free electricity supply to farmers.

Additional borrowing of 0.15 per cent of GSDP was linked to this, he added.

Modi said 13 states implemented at least one component, while 6 implemented the DBT component, and as a result, Rs 13,201 crore of additional borrowings was permitted.

"Overall, 23 states availed additional borrowings of Rs 1.06 lakh crores out of a potential Rs 2.14 lakh crores.

As a result, the aggregate borrowing permission granted to states for 2020-21 (conditional and unconditional) was 4.5 per cent (initially estimated GSDP)", he said. India has seen a model of "reforms by stealth and compulsion". This is a new model of "reforms by conviction and incentives", he asserted.

The top court refused to hear three appeals including that of the state government challenging the high court's denial for filing of affidavits by Banerjee and Ghatak in their role on the day of arrest of four Trinamul leaders on 17 May by CBI in the case.

It has been alleged that the state ruling party leaders played a key role in stopping the CBI from performing its legal duty after arresting four leaders in the case.

Initially, the state government and the law minister had moved the top court with their appeals and later the chief minister filed her plea against the 9 June order of the high court.

The top court on 18 June had requested the high court to hear the case a day after the apex court considered the appeals of the state government and Ghatak against the order.

The bench then enquired from Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, and senior

Advocates Rakesh Dwivedi and Vikas Singh, whether they will be able to conclude the arguments on Friday. The lawyers answered in the affirmative.

The top court was scheduled to hear three appeals including that of the state government challenging the high court's denial for filing of affidavits by Banerjee and Ghatak in their role on the day of arrest of four Trinamul leaders by the CBI in the Narada case.

As soon as a vacation bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and Bose assembled to commence the day's proceedings, Justice Gupta said his brother judge is recusing himself from hearing these appeals.

Justice Gupta, presiding over the bench, said the issue would be now placed before Chief Justice N V Ramana who may take the decision and the pleas may be listed for hearing during the day itself.

decide later on considering the affidavits by Banerjee and Ghatak.

## SC quashes Oli's appointment of 20 Cabinet ministers

KATHMANDU, 22 JUNE

In a major blow to beleaguered Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, the Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that the appointment of 20 ministers by him was unconstitutional, invalidating his two recent Cabinet expansions after the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

A division bench of Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana and Justice Prakash Kumar Dhungana ruled that Cabinet expansions after the dissolution of the House were unconstitutional and hence, the ministers cannot discharge their duties, a report in the Kathmandu Post said.

Two deputy Prime Ministers, Rajendra Mahato from Janata Samajwadi Party and Raghbir Mahaseth from Oli's CPN-UML were among those who lost the posts. Mahaseth was also the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

With the order, there are only five ministers left in Oli's Cabinet, including the PM.

The ministers include Deputy PM and Finance Minister Bishnu Poudel, Education Minister Krishna Gopal Shrestha, Physical Infrastructure Minister Basant Nembang and Law Minister Lilanath Shrestha.

The court passed the judgment on petitions filed on 7 June demanding the Cabinet expansions by the caretaker government be quashed.

## Pawar hosts Opp leaders' meet

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Leaders of several opposition parties including TMC, SP, AAP, RLD and the Left assembled at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's residence on Tuesday and discussed various issues facing the country, amid heightened speculation about the possibility of a third front against the ruling BJP.

CPI-M leader Nilotpal Basu, who attended the meeting, said it was not a political meeting but an interaction among like-minded people.

"Issues like Covid man-

agement, 'attack' on institutions and unemployment were discussed at the meeting," he said. The meeting lasted for over two hours.

Former finance minister and TMC leader Yashwant Sinha, Samajwadi Party's Ghanshyam Tiwari, RLD president Jayant Chaudhary, Sushil Gupta from the AAP, Binoy Viswanath from the CPI were among those present at the meeting.

National Conference leader and former Jammu and Kashmir CM Farooq Abdullah, former Congress leader Sanjay Jha and former JD-U leader

Pavan Verma also participated.

Other prominent personalities who arrived at Pawar's residence to attend the meeting were Javed Akhtar and KC Singh.

Earlier in the day, a senior NCP leader, on the condition of anonymity, said though Pawar is hosting the meeting, it has been organised by Sinha, convenor of the Rashtriya Manch, a political action group, in 2018 that targeted the BJP-led government's policies.

(DETAILS ON PAGE 5)

## SC refuses to tinker with CBSE, CISCE evaluation scheme for Class XII students

### SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to interfere with the assessment scheme propounded by both CBSE and CISCE for evaluation of Class 12 students, whose board exams have been cancelled due to the pandemic.

The top court rejected the objections raised by a parents' body as well as students and said that it is not possible to have a second guess approach with regard to various aspects of the assessment scheme.

A special bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh

Maheshwari said, We accept the scheme as propounded by both the boards-(CBSE and CISCE).

The bench also noted the submission of Attorney General KK Venugopal that UGC will issue directives to all the colleges and varsities that admissions be made after the declaration of results by all the boards.

The top court, which dealt with all the major objections of the intervenors-Uttar Pradesh Parents' Association, and second compartment and private students-said the scheme propounded cannot be doubted on the mere apprehension of manipulation of marks by the CBSE schools to favour their own students.

The bench rejected the submission of senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for UP Parents Association, Lucknow, that option to students for external examination as given in the CBSE's scheme should be offered at the very initial stage to both the school and the students and the results should be declared together.

It said that after hearing the views of Venugopal, We are of the view that this suggestion cannot be taken forward. This would result in denial of an option to the students and also result in increasing the uncertainty until the exam of improvisation is conducted and the results are declared".

The bench said that if students are given the option of internal assessment then as per the schemes, their results will be declared by 31 July and thereafter they can opt for improvisation.

Therefore, the suggestions given cannot be accepted, the bench said.

It said that on the suggestion that the results (of both physical examination and internal assessment) be declared on the same date to

avoid students missing the opportunity in admissions to colleges, the Attorney General has made statement on instructions that UGC will direct all universities to complete the process of admissions after declaration of results by all the boards.

In view of the above we hold there is no reason to interfere with the scheme propounded by CBSE and CISCE, the bench said.

With regard to compartment and private students, the bench said they will be allowed to take physical exam to be held by CBSE between 15 August and 15 September 2021.



The state has set up Uttarkanya, the govt branch secretariat, but it is now simply a tourist spot

ANANDAMOY BARMAN, MATIGARA-NAXALBARI MLA, BJP

ON HOW, HE SAID, PEOPLE IN NORTH BENGAL WERE A DEPRIVED LOT

# Capital records 134 fresh corona cases, 8 fatalities

Positivity rate stands at 0.20 pc; over 76K people get Covid shots in the city in 24 hours

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

**T**he national capital today recorded 134 fresh coronavirus cases with a positivity rate of 0.20 percent while 8 more people succumbed to the pathogen, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The fresh fatalities pushed the city's death toll to 24,933, the health bulletin said. The case fatality rate stood at 1.74 percent.

Delhi's Covid caseload increased to 14,32,778. Of this, over 14,05,927 patients have recovered so far. As many as 467 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours, the bulletin stated.

The fresh cases were detected out of 67,916 tests, including 43,850 RT-PCR tests.

The number of Delhi's active cases decreased to 1,918 from yesterday's 996, according to the bulletin.

The number of patients under home isolation in the city declined to 541 from 563 a day ago, while the number of con-



A medic administers a Covid vaccine to a girl at a government school at Pandav Nagar in the Capital on Tuesday.

94 people were diagnosed with the Covid infection, that the number of single-day infections dropped below the 100-mark in the national capital.

Delhi had on Sunday reported 124 Covid cases and 7 coronavirus-linked deaths while the positivity rate was 0.17 percent.

On Saturday, it had recorded 7 deaths due to the infection and 135 cases while the positivity rate was 0.18 percent.

The city had recorded 212 Covid cases and 25 deaths and a positivity rate of 0.27 percent on 16 June. On 17 June, 158 cases with a positivity rate of 0.20 percent and 10 deaths were reported. The cases had stood at 165 with a positivity rate of 0.22 percent while the death count was 14 on 18 June, according to official figures.

Delhi had yesterday reported 89 coronavirus cases—the lowest this year so far—and 11 Covid-related deaths while the positivity rate had dipped to 0.16 percent—also the lowest this year. This was the first time since 16 February, when

Since April both daily cases and death count in the city had been on upward spiral.

On 20 April, Delhi had reported 28,395 cases—the highest in the city since the beginning of the pandemic. On 22 April, the city's positivity rate was 36.2 percent—the highest so far. The highest single-day count of Covid fatalities—448 deaths—was reported on 3 May.

Despite a sharp fall in daily cases over the last few weeks, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has however cautioned the people that the possibility of the third Covid wave is "quite real", even as he asserted that his government was making preparations on a "war-footing" to combat it.

The ongoing "unlockdown" and attendant relaxations of restrictions in the national capital have again led to overcrowding in markets and other places, prompting doctors and experts to issue fresh warnings about possible hastening of the third coronavirus wave due to people's continued violations of Covid safety protocols.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, according to police.

## Focus on providing adequate jabs for youths: Sisodia to Hardeep Puri

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday asked Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri to focus on providing enough vaccines for the youth rather than "just abusing" Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

He was responding to Puri's tweet criticising Kejriwal over his Punjab visit and Delhi's pace of administering vaccines on Monday when more than 84 lakh people were inoculated across the country.

"On a day India vaccinat-

ed more than 84 lakh people, Delhi administered only 76,259 out of more than 11 lakh doses available. Why? Instead of focusing on health & welfare of people of Delhi, Kejriwal Ji is busy in Punjab searching for a Sikh CM face for his party" Puri tweeted.

Responding to it, Sisodia said: "Hardeep ji: pls focus on providing enough vaccines for the youth, rather than just abusing Arvind Kejriwal all the time. Central Govt's vaccination flip-flops have created a crisis situation all over the country."

Kejriwal, who was in Amritsar on Monday, announced

that the party's chief ministerial face for the 2022 Punjab assembly polls will be from the Sikh community.

According to the Union Health Ministry, more than 84 lakh vaccine doses, the highest in a single day, were administered across the country on Monday as the revised guidelines for Covid vaccination came into effect.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that all citizens aged 18 and above will be vaccinated free of cost from June 21 with the central government distributing doses to states.

## BJP workers hold protest against city's water crisis

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE



He said that the Delhi Jal Board also admitted that the water crisis has increased due to ammonia pollution and

algae, due to which the production of water in Wazirabad, Chandrawal, Okhla has been adversely affected.

## Delhi trader bodies say managing crowds beyond their control, onus on enforcement agencies

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

With Delhites thronging markets once again after the easing of lockdown in the nation-

al capital and not maintaining social distancing, the city's trader bodies on Tuesday said it is not possible for them to control crowds and the onus is on the administration and enforce-

ment agencies.

The Delhi High Court had on Friday taken cognisance of the violation of COVID-19 protocols in various markets in the city and observed that such

breaches will only hasten the third wave of coronavirus, which cannot be permitted at all.

It had asked the Centre and the Delhi government to take strict measures, sensitise shopkeepers and hold meetings with markets and vendor associations in this regard.

The representatives of several market associations, however, said that the responsibility of controlling crowds in markets lies with the

administration and enforcement agencies.

Brijesh Goyal, chairman of the Chamber of Trade and Industry, said traders can only ensure compliance of Covid norms inside their shops, godowns or offices.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, according to police.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, according to police.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, according to police.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, according to police.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited to only a few of the 950 major markets in Delhi.

As part of the gradual easing of restrictions in Delhi, markets were initially allowed to open from June 7 on an odd-even basis. They were allowed to open fully between 10 am and 8 pm from June 12.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, too, said shopkeepers can't be expected to manage crowds outside their shops.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, according to police.

Charred remains recovered from west Delhi shoe godown which caught fire

PTI

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Charred human remains were found on the first floor of a shoe godown in west Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday where a major fire broke out a day ago, police said.

"But it is the administration and the police who have to ensure that the protocols are followed in streets and other public spaces," he said.

He said the authorities should hold meetings with market associations to find ways to control crowds.

Goyal claimed crowding is an issue limited

# VACCINE FOR ALL FREE FOR ALL

## Thank You PM Modi!



**Jai Ram Thakur**  
Chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh

## Now, World's Largest Free Vaccination Campaign

### Corona Will Lose, India Will Win

- Free COVID-19 vaccination for everyone above 18 years of age begins in India
- So far, vaccines were free for people of 45 years age and above
- Vaccines will be available free of cost in government-run vaccination centres
- Government of India is providing free vaccines to all states
- Central government has provided 30 crore vaccine doses so far
- Three vaccines approved in India so far, several new vaccines in approval process



### Get Vaccinated, Stay Safe

- Vaccines are safe, ignore rumours
- Visit [www.cowin.gov.in](http://www.cowin.gov.in) to register and get full details on vaccination centres and vaccines
- Follow COVID-appropriate behaviour even after vaccination



**“**Central Government is providing Free Vaccination under a special campaign to every Indian from now. The biggest beneficiary of this phase of India's vaccination drive shall be the poor, the middle class and the youth of the country. All of us should pledge to get ourselves vaccinated. Together we will defeat COVID-19.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

**”**

**TOGETHER LET US DEFEAT COVID-19,  
GET YOURSELF VACCINATED AS PER YOUR TURN**

**INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH**

[www.himachalpr.gov.in](http://www.himachalpr.gov.in) [HimachalPradeshGovtIPRDept](#) [DPR Himachal](#) [dprhp](#)

## THUMBNAILS



A security personnel during the 16th Tamil Nadu Assembly session, at Kalavai Arangam, in Chennai, on Tuesday. ■ AGENCIES

**Kotkapura firing:** Former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal was on Tuesday questioned at his official residence in Chandigarh by SIT probing the 2015 Kotkapura police firing incident in Faridkot. ■ PTI

**TN local body polls:** Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Tamil Nadu State Election Commission to conduct by 15 September local body polls in nine new districts carved out of four existing ones. ■ PTI

**Ambubachi:** Ambubachi rituals at Assam's Kamakhya Temple began on Tuesday, with priests symbolically closing the doors of the shrine for four days. ■ PTI

## Karnataka Congress divided over CM face

MLA Zameer Khan projects Siddaramiah as next CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, 22 JUNE



Zameer Khan

Even as the Assembly elections in the state are two years away, senior Congress leaders here have got involved in a controversy over the next chief minister from their party, forcing its central leadership to step in.

All started with legislator and Siddaramiah loyalist Zameer Ahmed Khan repeatedly projecting the former as party's man for the post in 2023. While Siddaramiah (*In photo*), a former chief minister, claimed these were the MLAs' personal views, other senior leaders and aspirants to the important chair, were not too amused, going by their sharp reactions.

No did the All India Congress Committee take the matter lightly, warning the leaders and workers alike against projecting a future chief ministerial face as it was imperative, first, to win the polls.

Immediate response to Zameer's remarks, however, came from former state party president G Parameshwara, and D K Shivakumar (*In photo*), who is holding the post at present. Parameshwara,



Zameer Khan

incidentally was pipped to the post by Siddaramiah in 2014 even as Shivakumar wears his ambition on his sleeves and makes no secret of that. Especially after being appointed as Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president.

Both read more into the MLAs' comments, with their supporters claiming in private, that "there is more to it than meets the eye." Largely, as Zameer has been going public by saying "my heart refuses to call Siddaramiah a former chief minister as for me, he is the next CM".

Accordingly, both Parameshwara and Shivakumar were quick to assert that while the Siddaramiah loyalist may have echoed his personal views, the issue was irrelevant as "the Assembly elections are still a long way off. The chief minister's position cannot be decided so early." Shivakumar, seen as a contender for the CM's post if the Congress wins the 2023

Zameer Khan

Assembly polls, on his part, issued a dictat, as the KPCC chief, directing his party men to refrain from "projecting chief ministerial faces as Siddaramiah, Mallikarjun Kharge, G Parameshwara, others, and I, will have aspirations and expectations." He added that the immediate objective, however, was to bring the Congress to power and that the party would go to the polls under a collective leadership.

Importantly, ever since becoming KPCC president, he and Siddaramiah have been engaged in scoring points over each other. The Congress MLA's remarks, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation as these seem to come in response to comments that were made on Twitter by the state party. The tweet, which was deleted as soon as it appeared, claimed that had Shivakumar been in the CM now, he would have tackled the Covid pandemic better.

## After territory should not be used for terror attack: Jaishankar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

In an indirect attack on Pakistan, external affairs minister S Jaishankar today asked the international community to ensure that the territory of the war-torn nation was not used by terrorist groups to threaten or attack any other country.

"Those providing material and financial support to terrorist entities must be held

accountable," he said addressing the UN Security Council during a debate on the "UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan". Jaishankar said for enduring peace in Afghanistan, terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries must be dismantled immediately and terrorist supply chains disrupted. "There needs to be zero tolerance for terrorism in all its forms, including its cross-border one."

He said India has been sup-

portive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, including the intra-Afghan negotiations. "If the peace process is to be successful, then it is necessary to ensure that the negotiating parties continue to engage in good faith, eschew the path to find a military solution, and fully commit towards reaching a political solution. A tangible demonstration of this commitment is required," he added.

The remarks came amid reports that an Indian delegation had met representatives of the Taliban during Jaishankar's recent visit to Qatar.

Jaishankar said India would welcome any move towards a genuine political settlement and a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Afghanistan. "We support a leading role for the UN, since that would help improve the odds for a lasting outcome."

Kerala HC issues interim stay on two controversial reforms in Lakshadweep

KOCHI, 22 JUNE

Kerala High Court on Tuesday issued interim stay on the operation of two controversial orders passed by the Lakshadweep administration under its new administrator Praful Patel.

Advisory bench of Chief Justice S Manikumar and Justice Shaji P Chaly stayed the orders related to the closing down of the dairy farms run by the administration in the island and the decision to remove non-vegetarian items, including beef, from the midday meals in schools.

The stay order came in a PIL filed by one Ajmal Ahmed, a native of Kavaratti in Lakshadweep. The bench has asked the administration of the archipelago to file counter-affidavit to the PIL within two weeks. The PIL will be considered again next week.

The order on closing down of dairy farms was passed by the director, department of animal husbandry on 21 May. In his petition, Ajmal alleged that the measures being implemented in Lakshadweep under Praful Patel's administration are aimed at destroying "the culture and ecology of the island" and that these were "in blatant violation of principles of natural justice and even without allowing the islanders to raise their objections to such unconstitutional reforms being implemented."

The national experts like Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

SNS

## Mamata forms expert panel to tackle third wave

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 22 JUNE

The 10-member expert committee is all set to sit on its first meeting on Wednesday to discuss issues related to prevention and monitoring of the third wave of Covid pandemic in Bengal.

The state health department, headed by chief minister Mamata Banerjee, has formed the committee comprising experts in virology, medicine, hepatology, gastroenterology, hepatology, critical care, paediatric medicine among others.

The experts include doc-

tors Gopalkrishna Dhali, Moitrayee Banerjee, Soumitra Ghosh, Abhijit Chowdhury, Asutosh Ghosh, Mrinal Kanti Das, Bibhuti Saha, Jagiraj Roy, Jaytirmoy Pal and Dilip Pal. All are medical teachers attached with state-run teaching hospitals like SSKM, RG Kar, School of Tropical Medicine and BC Roy Memorial Hospital for Children.

All are medical teachers attached with state-run teaching hospitals like SSKM, RG Kar, School of Tropical Medicine and BC Roy Memorial Hospital for Children.

Experts fear that the third wave of the Covid strains is more virulent and children

are vulnerable to this deadly virus than the first and ongoing second waves respectively.

Considering the outbreak of the third wave state government has already directed all state hospitals and medical colleges in the city and districts to get prepared by increasing number of beds and other infrastructure arrangements for child patients.

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.

The national experts like

Dr Randeep Guleria, director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi has already alerted saying: "The third wave of the Covid-19 is expected to hit the country within six to eight weeks."

The KMC has decided to set up a 60-bed safe home for children at

Harekrishna Sett Lane in the Sinthee area. Mothers will also be allowed to stay with their Covid-affected children at the safe home.

A nearby private hospital will provide treatment facilities to the children at the safe home, it is learnt.



*So, I am not going to distract you or myself by getting into ... what is going on in the politics...*

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

ON OPPOSITION LEADERS' MEETING AT SHARAD PAWAR'S RESIDENCE

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021

THUMBNAILS



Monkeys roam around amid low footfall at the Taj Mahal in Agra on Tuesday.

■ AGENCIES

**MP seeks Nusrat's disqualification:** BJP's Badaun MP Sanghamitra Maurya has written to the Lok Sabha speaker, demanding disqualification of TMC MP Nusrat Jahan for allegedly giving a false affidavit over her marital status to Parliament.

PTI

**Toycathon-2021:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will interact with participants of Toycathon-2021 on Thursday via video-conferencing, his office said. It was launched on 5 January to crowd-source innovative toys and games ideas.

PTI

**Hepatitis B free testing:** Punjab government has introduced free testing and treatment of Hepatitis B in all government health institutions, health minister Balbir Singh Sidhu said on Tuesday.

PTI

**'Shooter Dad':** As a mark of respect to women power, the shooting range at the Noida stadium will be named after 'Shooter Dad' Chandro Tomar, UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday. Tomar was 60 plus when she picked up the gun for the first time.

PTI

**Akhil Gogoi CAA case:** A NIA court on Tuesday cleared Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi in one of the two cases against him for his alleged role in violent protests against Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Assam.

PTI

**SC relief for Amravati MP:** In a relief to Lok Sabha MP Navneet Kaur Rana, the Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed Bombay High Court verdict cancelling the caste certificate of the independent lawmaker representing Maharashtra's Amravati constituency, reserved for scheduled castes.

PTI

**AP HC recalls order after IAS officers promise to implement it**

HYDERABAD, 22 JUNE

Andhra Pradesh High Court today sentenced two senior bureaucrats to imprisonment for a week for ignoring its orders over regularisation of 36 employees. However, the court recalled its order after the two officers gave undertaking to implement the orders.

Two senior IAS officers, Girija Shankar and Chiranjeevi Chowdary, were sentenced to a week in jail today for failing to implement an order of the High Court issued in April. The orders of the court were ignored by citing various reasons.

While Girija Shankar belongs to AP cadre of IAS, Chiranjeevi Chowdary belongs to the All India Service. After some of the employees moved court on the issue of contempt of its orders the two officers were summoned today. The two officers gave an undertaking that the court's order of regularising 36 employees will be implemented after which the High Court recalled its earlier order.

SNS

TENDER

राजस्थान सरकार  
विकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य सेवा  
कार्यालय मुख्य विकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी, बोकानेर  
दूरभाष: 0151 2226341

**NOTICE INVITING BID**

Bids for Various Medical Equipments & Instruments for Covid-19 are invited from interested bidders up to 4:00 p.m. 28-06-2021. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in/>)

UBN No. MHS2122GLRC00913  
DIPR/C/5865

मुख्य विकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य अधिकारी, बोकानेर

# BJP's silence hurts: Chirag Paswan

Says father stood by Modi like a 'rock' but BJP was not there when he expected their intervention during 'difficult times'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE



split in the LJP.

Asked why he kept mum on the BJP while targeting another NDA constituent JD(U), Paswan said it was the saffron party that has kept mum on him. He alleged that Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's party played a "visible" role in splitting his party and has had a history of doing so.

Underlining that he retains his faith in Modi, Paswan said, "But if you are cornered, pushed and forced to take a decision, then the party will consider all probabilities... The LJP will have to take a decision about its political future based on who stood by it and who did not."

Asked if he still sees himself as a constituent of the BJP-led NDA at the national level, he said, "I don't know. It is for the BJP to decide whether I am part of the alliance or not. I have proven my honesty as an ally with them... But this relation cannot be one-sided forever."

"If in return you do not recognise me, you help those who have separated from my

MANOJ CHAURASIA  
PATNA, 22 JUNE

Conflicting statements from two senior Janata Dal United (JD-U) leaders have raised confusions over induction of the ruling party into Prime Minister Narendra Modi cabinet during the cabinet expansion likely to be held shortly. The JD-U had earlier stayed out of the Modi cabinet citing "raw deal" in matter of awarding cabinet berths.

The whole confusion has got created once again with two party parliamentarians Ramchandra Prasad Singh, more popular as RCP, and Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh speaking in different tones at this crucial moment.

RCP, a Rajya Sabha member and fellow caste man of chief minister Nitish Kumar happens to be the national president of the JD-U whereas the other Singh, a Bihari by caste, represents Munger seat in the Lok Sabha. JD-U president has goes

party or are seen standing with them directly or indirectly, then I cannot remain in this

on claiming that the JD-U will be joining the Union cabinet as and when it is expanded although deciding over the name of the ministers is the prerogative of the chief minister.

"There are no confusions about joining the Union cabinet. It will join as and when the cabinet expansion takes place," JD-U president told news yesterday.

He also denied any confusion about the number of ministers joining the Union cabinet saying there is no "formula" for everything.

He claimed that the inclusion of the JD-U in Union cabinet would also improve the relations between the two allies and increase the people's faith in NDA.

"The people keep on asking now is that why the JD-U is not a part of the Union cabinet despite being in the NDA? So, inclusion of the JD-U in Union cabinet will result in between coordination between the two allies," RCP explained.

Lalan Singh, considered

very close to the chief minister, however, has rejected all such speculations.

"The continuing talks about the cabinet expansion and JD-U to be part of it are only media speculations," Singh explained, adding "Atkalbazi par rajnitii nahin hoti (Politics has nothing to do with speculations)". He also denied the chief minister's visit to the national capital had anything to do with the cabinet expansion and described Kumar's tour to Delhi as a purely "personal visit".

The developments amply indicate the prevailing situation in the JD-U although a particular camp is strongly batting for the party being a part of the Modi cabinet at all costs. This has put pressures on the chief minister who refused to join the Union cabinet earlier. The Modi government had taken the oath of office and secrecy for the second term on 31 May, 2019 but the JD-U decided to stay away from it as was

capacity forever. If you do not give me recognition and respect, then I will eventually as

offered only one cabinet berth as a "token representation" despite the party winning as many seats from Bihar. The JD-U was hopeful of getting least three cabinet berths but was offered only one. The JD-U had won 16 of the 17 LS seats it got in share whereas the BJP emerged victorious from all the 17 seats it contested.

The chief minister had also asserted at that time that there was no question of joining the Modi cabinet in future.

The chief minister had added, "No one should have any confusion that the victory which was registered by the NDA in Bihar, it's the victory of the people of Bihar. If somebody is claiming that this is his personal victory, then they are delusional." The chief minister had also then rejected the idea of joining the Modi's cabinet in future saying "No need as the BJP has overwhelming majority".

It is to be seen now if the chief minister is going for a change in his stand now.

party president I will have to take a decision in future," Paswan said.

Rajiv Gandhi assassination case: SC to hear convict's plea after 3 weeks

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The Supreme Court Tuesday said it will hear after three weeks a plea of AG Perarivalan, serving life sentence in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, seeking grant of parole. A vacation bench of justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari took note of the fact that the lawyer for Perarivalan has circulated the letter seeking adjournment of hearing in the case.

There is a letter (for adjournment). List after three weeks before an appropriate bench, the bench said in its order. On 23 November last year, the top court had extended by a week the parole of Perarivalan for undergoing the medical check-up and had directed the Tamil Nadu government to provide police escort to him during his visit to doctors at a hospital.

The CBI, in its affidavit of 20 November, 2020, had told the apex court that the Tamil Nadu Governor has to take a call on grant of remission to Perarivalan.

The top court is hearing the plea of 47-year-old Perarivalan seeking suspension of his life sentence in the case till the MDMA probe is completed.

MOMENTS OF JOY



Children take bath with their buffaloes on a hot summer day, in Amritsar on Tuesday. ■ AGENCY

## Govt should prepare for Covid third wave, vaccinate on war-footing: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday urged the government to prepare for the third wave of Covid by improving medical infrastructure and vaccinate on a war footing to protect all Indians.

He also released a "white paper" by the party on the Centre's Covid handling, saying, "It is pretty clear that the management of the first and second wave was disastrous."

Gandhi also took a swipe at the prime minister for turning emotional while talking about Covid deaths in his address to the nation, and said the deaths have been needless and could have been avoided.

Releasing the "white paper", Gandhi said it was clear that the government's management of Covid-19 was "disastrous".

Hours after Gandhi released the document, BJP national spokesperson Sam-

## Rahul playing politics over Covid crisis: BJP on Cong's 'white paper'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The BJP on Tuesday accused Rahul Gandhi of playing politics over the coronavirus crisis after the Congress leader released a "white paper" on the Centre's handling of the pandemic.

Releasing the "white paper", Gandhi said it was clear that the government's management of Covid-19 was "disastrous".

Hours after Gandhi released the document, BJP national spokesperson Sam-

"The prime minister's tears cannot wipe the tears of those who lost the lives of their kin. The PM's tears did not save the lives of those who died, but oxygen could have saved them," he said.

He alleged the prime minister did not take the second wave seriously and was fighting elections in Bengal and his focus was elsewhere.

Rahul further said there were some central reasons as to why the first and second waves were disastrous and added that the party has "tried to point out those reasons in our white paper". The purpose of this white paper is not to finger point at the Government, but to help the nation prepare

for the third wave that is going to come. "If the second wave was bad, the third wave would be worse," Gandhi said, noting that the virus is smart and is mutating fast.

**ASHIANA AGRO INDUSTRIES LTD.**  
No.792/5, Eswari Hotel Complex, Bangalore High Road, Sungevakkaram, Superambudhur, Kanchipuram Dist., Pin - 602106, Tamil Nadu.

**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing, Regulations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that a Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held at the Corporate Office at Chennai on 28th June, 2021 at 3.00 PM to take on record the Audited Financial Results of the Company for the Quarter and Year ended 31.03.2021.

For ASHIANA AGRO INDUSTRIES LTD  
Date 21.06.2021  
Place: Chennai  
Company Secretary

## Two-day monsoon session of Maha legislature from 5 July

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 22 JUNE

A two-day monsoon session of the Maharashtra legislature will begin from 5 July amid the coronavirus outbreak, the state government said on Tuesday.

Slamming the government over the short duration of the session, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis alleged the MahaVikas Aghadi (MVA) dispensation is trying to "run away" from the issues concerning the common people and also from the democratic process.

The decision on the session was taken after a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) was held in the Vidhan Bhavan which was attended by leaders from the ruling and opposition parties, a statement from the chief minister's office (CMO) said.

It said a temporary schedule for the session on 5 and 6 July was discussed, and it will be finalised in the next meeting of the BAC. The meeting was attended by Maharashtra Legislative Council chairman Ramraje Nimalkar, deputy chairperson

Many prominent regional parties like Shiv Sena, DMK and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, which is in power in alliance with the Congress in Jharkhand, were not part of the regional parties.

General public for the vaccine.

According to state government, more than 16.5 lakh people were administered the vaccine on a single day at the 7,000 vaccination centres set up across MP.

The government said 42 out of 52 districts achieved more than 100 per cent vaccination. It also informed that till now about 1.66 crore doses of vaccine have been administered in the state.

At least 10 districts achieved more than 150 per cent of the targeted vaccination figures.

In the state capital Bhopal, about 1.51 lakh people were

administered the vaccine.

CM Chouhan said that the vaccine is a panacea to defeat the global pandemic of Covid and keep everyone safe. At the same time, Chouhan also cautioned people that the virus has not yet been contained fully and everyone must continue taking precautions and following Covid safety norms.

The CM lamented that many people lost their loved ones during the corona waves, and so it should be everyone's endeavour that such times do not come again.

The CM said that a three-day statewide special drive for vaccination would be held

again from 1 July to 3 July. Indore hospital records 49 black fungus deaths:

The state-run Maharaja Yeshwantrao Hospital (MYH) in Indore in Madhya Pradesh has seen 49 deaths due to Mucormycosis or black fungus infection in the past 40 days, a senior official from the facility said on Tuesday.

While the mortality rate from the rare and dangerous fungal infection stands at 8 per cent in the MYH, Dean Dr Sanjay Dixit said this rate in hospitals in other parts of the country was in the 40-50 per cent range.

RO NO - 14/D/P/EAST/2021-22

EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303

Assistant Commissioner

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to change the timings of the following Trains effective from 26.06.2021 as per the details given below:-

01061 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Jaynagar Express Special

**STATION** Existing Timings Revised Timings

Arrival Departure Arrival Departure

**BHULANPUR** 12:12 12:13 12:08 12

## Biden & Ghani

President Biden has chosen an explosive juncture for his initiative, preferring diplomacy as a curtain-raiser to the US troop withdrawal from embattled Afghanistan. Transcending the recent jaw-jaw in Quetta, he is scheduled to meet Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, at the White House on Friday to discuss the pullout ~ a momentous development by any standards ~ amidst a surge in fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban across the country. Ergo, the core issue is ever so festering. In their first face-to-face meeting, Biden will seek to reassure Ghani and Abdullah of US support for the Afghan people including diplomatic, economic and humanitarian assistance, the White House said in a statement. Biden will also iterate his pledge to ensure that the country never becomes a safe haven for armed groups. That pledge, on the face of it, could seem to be a tall order given the tormented narrative of a fractious country. Ever since Biden's decision in April to pull out all US troops before September 11, to end America's longest war after nearly two decades of conflict, the Taliban have fought daily battles with government forces and claims to have captured 40 districts. The militant group is trying to expand its influence across the country ever since the US began withdrawing troops on May 1, closed some bases and handed them over to the Afghan government. The Afghan President has replaced his security ministers amid the Taliban advance. The Biden administration remains decidedly optimistic about the upshot of the talks. "The visit by President Ghani and Dr Abdullah will highlight the enduring partnership between the United States and Afghanistan as the military drawdown continues," the White House said. At another remove, the Taliban said the visit would be "useless". "They (Ghani and Abdullah) will talk with the US officials for preservation of their power and personal interest," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said. "It won't benefit Afghanistan." There was no immediate reaction from President Ghani's office but a senior Afghan official said the President would be seeking assurances from the US over its continued support for Afghan security forces in the aftermath of the withdrawal. The visit of Ghani and Abdullah to Washington comes in the face of slow progress in talks between the Taliban and Afghan government representatives in Qatar, indeed negotiations in which the Afghan government was not represented. US intelligence analysts have released an assessment that the Taliban "would roll back" much of the progress made in Afghan women's rights if the group regained national power. The Taliban has said it will remain committed to peace talks but has simultaneously insisted that a "genuine Islamic system" in Afghanistan was the only way to end the war and ensure rights, including for women. Ahead of the pullout, the outlook is bleak, indeed as fragile as an Afghanistan without US troops.

## Intrigue & Royalty

The drama in the palace in Jordan, unprecedented as it is, is now headed for the courts. A relative of King Abdullah II and a former chief of the royal court will this week be led to the defendants' cage at the state security court to face charges of "sedition and incitement". Further afield, the crisis is bound to impact politics in the Middle East in the wider canvas, though Saudi Arabia has promptly denied that it has any role in the raging controversy in Amman. The accused have been charged with conspiring with a senior royal, notably Prince Hamzah, a half-brother of the King to stoke unrest against the monarch even while seeking foreign assistance. The drama being enacted in the palace in Amman erupted into the open in early April when Hamzah was placed under house arrest. Over the past two months, it has sent jitters through foreign capitals with Western powers rallying behind Abdullah, rated as an indispensable ally in a chronically unstable region. The bitter controversy has served to expose rivalries within Jordan's traditionally discreet Hashemite dynasty, provoking unprecedented public criticism of the monarch. The defendants are the most senior establishment figures to appear in court, which generally appears to rein in drug offenders and suspected militants. "As far as I know, there has not been a case this big in the history of Jordan," is the perception of Ala Khasawneh, the defence lawyer.

The 41-year-old Hamzah is the central figure among the dramatis personae, though he is not facing any charges. The narratives inherent in the controversy are somewhat contradictory. He has been portrayed as a champion of ordinary Jordanians suffering from economic mismanagement and corruption. At another remove, he is considered as a disgruntled royal who never forgave King Abdullah for depriving him of the title of Crown Prince in 2004, in favour of the King's eldest son. The indictment, as revealed to the state-controlled media, is explicit on the allegation that Hamzah "was determined to achieve his personal ambition of becoming king". It turns out to be a conflict of personal interests, between the King of Jordan and the man who could not be king. The indictment states that the prince and the defendants ~ Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a royal, and Bassem Awadallah, a former royal adviser ~ had conspired to stoke unrest that has now convulsed the palace. They had been monitored since mid-March amidst the general anger over "oxygen outage" at a hospital in the town of Salt. No fewer than eight coronavirus patients had perished at that juncture. Hamzah met the bereaved families just after King Abdullah visited Salt. The indictment has alleged that the prince "took advantage" of the tragedy to advance a popular message. Jordan showcases a cocktail of royal ambition and deaths on account of Covid. The plot thickens.

# Bear's Embrace ~ II

Vladimir Putin probably had this grandeur in his mind when he described the breakup of the Soviet Union as the 'greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century', when Russia lost its power and influence in the world, especially in Eastern Europe, besides losing territories it had controlled for centuries



Russia, "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" as Churchill described it, has the largest territory in the world ~ six million square kilometres spread over eleven time zones. Most of it is however flat and open without a natural barrier like a mountain, and hence easy for an army to advance. While the east is protected by the barren Siberian wilderness, Russia had to face numerous invasions from the West through the open North European plains that stretch from the French Atlantic coast right up to St. Petersburg.

Three-fourths of its territory lies in Asia, mostly in mineral-rich Siberia, a harsh and unforgiving landscape of swamp, taiga and frozen soil where hardly anything grows ~ and hosts only 22 per cent of its population. Russia lacks the connectivity infrastructure or manpower to project its power over China in the south across Siberia; in fact, it is the other way around. The Chinese are slowly making inroads into the depopulated wilderness of Siberia and establishing their cultural control over it, which may translate into political control someday.

Russian history dates back to the 9th century, with a loose federation around Kiev of Eastern Slavic tribes known as Kievan Rus. But by the 13th century, attacks by invading Mongols had forced the fledgling state to relocate to the north-east around Moscow. This Principality of Muscovy, as it was known then, lay in the open flatland vulnerable to easy invasion by the Mongols. Ivan the Great (1480-1505) drove them away, but the only way to protect the Empire was to expand outwards so that the centre, which included the capital and the main cities, could be protected by the sheer distance from the outermost periphery.

His grandson, Ivan the Terrible (1547-1584) – the first Czar – did that precisely, expanding the territory to Urals in the east, Caspian Sea to the south and Arctic Circle to the north. The process of expansion was carried forwards further by the Romanov Czars, and by 1689 when Peter the Great ascended the throne, the Russian empire had expanded far beyond the Urals, incorporating the vast Siberian Plain and Plateau right up to the Pacific coast, till the Bering Sea across North America. It would be virtually impossible for an invading army to stretch its supply lines over thousands of kilometres, both on the East and the West, in order to advance to the capital, as both Napoleon and Hitler would learn at great cost.

Peter the Great (1689-1725)

and Catherine the Great (1762-1796) would carry forward this process of expansion and by the 19th century, the Russian empire commanded a vast territory spread over two continents, from the Black Sea, Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea in the south to Bering Sea in the east, and from the Baltic Sea and Carpathian Mountains in the east to Arctic Ocean in the north. Russia now was a major world power no one could ignore. After the Second World War, it emerged as one of the two superpowers.

Vladimir Putin probably had this grandeur in his mind when he described the breakup of the Soviet Union as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century", when Russia lost its power and influence in the world ~ especially in Eastern

Europe, besides losing territories it had controlled for centuries ~ Ukraine, Crimea, Belarus, Moldova, Estonia, Lithuania, Georgia, Azerbaijan and the other Central Asian Republics like Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan ~ which are rich sources of oil, gas and other minerals. As George Friedman pointed out, the territory lying between Ukraine and Kazakhstan which is only 300 miles wide is a lifeline for Russia; much of its oil and gas pipeline to Europe passes through this gap. At the centre of the gap is Vologorod, formerly Stalingrad, to protect which a million people had laid down their lives during World War II, so as to prevent the Germans from closing this gap.

Journalist Tim Marshall described an interesting incident at the Urals, when, at the point where Europe becomes Asia, he had asked his Russian cameraman if he was European or Asian. The gentleman replied, "Neither, I am a Russian". Indeed, a century before Samuel Huntington proposed his theory on clash of civilisations, the historian Nikolay Danilevsky wrote that Russia was primarily a Slavic civilization, distinct from the European. Russia could not be a part of Europe, despite its European culture and institutions, because it is a Eurasian country with a unique destiny. Putin holds that breakup of the USSR had made Russia one of the largest divided nations in the world. For him, in the post-Soviet era also, Russia remains a territory where ethnic Russians continue to live, needing the support of the Russian Federation. Language determined how div-

ers peoples were integrated into the Russian nationality ~ the Russian-speaking people, according to Russian understanding, belonged to the Russian nation, and the Russian State has a moral right and obligation to protect them. Thus, a major focus of Russian foreign policy has always been countries or areas with a concentration of Russian-speaking people. Russia also has a law that obligates the Government to protect ethnic Russians. Russia used this pretext to annex Crimea which has 60 per cent of ethnic Russians; actually, it needed Crimea to gain absolute control over Sevastopol. The concept of a "Russian World" is at the core of Putin's world view and foreign strategy.

Many academics like Sergey Karaganov believe that Russia should look to the east and south of the Eurasian continent. For historical reasons, in the post-Soviet space, Russia has very few allies in the world, and they are not countries with much geopolitical or economic heft, countries like Cuba, Vietnam, Syria and Libya, leaving aside India and Pakistan. With

its neighbours, for historical reasons again, it has complicated relations and disputes. It has a Eurasian Economic Union with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, but these small countries do not contribute to Russia's power, Russia remains the core of the Union. Similarly, it has a collective security treaty akin to NATO with the Commonwealth of Independent States which were once part of the USSR ~ but they again do not add to Russia's power ~ Russia remains the core of this alliance too.

Russia is a continental power, and predominantly a land power. Lacking warm water ports, it has always struggled for access to the sea from the very beginning of its history. For centuries, it has also occupied what the British geographer Halford Mackinder called the "Heartland". In his acclaimed 1904 thesis "Geographical Pivot of History", Mackinder postulated that the immense natural resources of Central Asia ~ the 'Great Pivot' ~ could be the most powerful geopolitical instrument to propel any state that controls them to become virtually the "Empire of the World". The Heartland comprised Russia and the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia, with the latter constituting core of the Pivot, and hence pivotal to the geopolitical strategy of Rus-

(Concluded)

sia, the undisputed hegemon of the Heartland through history. Surrounded by mountains and deserts, the Heartland was also impregnable to invasion except through Eastern Europe ~ the only gateway to penetrate it. Russia therefore needed to control East Europe for its security, which is did with ruthless domination during the Soviet era. All the Warsaw Pact countries, save Russia, have since joined NATO. This is what repression does, and Putin should take this important lesson from history.

Heartland was safe but isolated, and isolation also deprived Russia from access to international trade, communication and alliances, whereas the countries surrounding the Heartland, in what the American theorist Nicolas Spykman called the "Rimland", were located along the coastlines in Europe and Middle-East and Southeast Asia, whose access to the sea had made them develop as great naval and economic powers through trade. They also became challengers to the Heartland. The Rimland area of the EU today is one of the strongest alliances in the world. Of course, much of the drawbacks in combination and transportation that Russia had faced earlier could be overcome in the present century, but some still remain, and one of this is the absence of strong and dependable allies. As Czar Alexander III had said, "Russia has only two allies, its army and its navy." Even the navy is constrained due to the absence of warm water ports, as the Arctic to which it has free access remains frozen for most of the year. That is why it is now increasingly turning towards China ~ another country with an atrocious record of repression of its own people. The two countries are converging on an increasingly deepening symbiotic relationship ~ China is using Russia to fill gaps in its military and technological capabilities, while Russia sells sophisticated weaponry to China and uses China to mitigate the effects of US sanctions. Together the two are challenging the global US dominance. Both have few allies and both lack the trust of all their people.

Trust is at the heart of all alliances, whether at home or abroad, to build which it needs a big heart, the ability to take criticism and strengthening, not decimating, institutions which alone make a country powerful, rather than military power. As he loses support, Vladimir Putin is growing ever more repressive in order to survive, stifling all opposing voices, which as history teaches, is the surest way to doom. Maybe some in our own country need to learn that lesson too.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Unqualified condemnation

What could Kieth Absalon have become had his life not been snuffed out on June 6 in Barangay Anas in Masbate City? He is buried now, "finis" so abruptly stamped on his 21-year life, at that point when, in an ideal world, hopes and dreams are just beginning to be realized and promise to open new doors, each more thrilling than the last. When he went out biking on that morning with his cousin Nolven Absalon, 40, and the latter's 16-year-old son, along with other relatives, Kieth was in the thick of training for a biking race in Masbate in July.

Who knew that this strapping, constantly smiling midfielder of the Far Eastern University men's football team would have easily crunched, even topped, the race? His experience would have made it possible, having been named most valuable player of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines in 2016 and seen action in the 2018 ASEAN Football Federation Championships in Indonesia as part of the Under-19 Philippine team. But all that is now a painful memory for those who love this young man. An improvised explosive device planted by and command-detonated by New People's Army (NPA) fighters killed him and his cousin Nolven ~ a father of four and himself a great ~ injured Nolven's son.

The NPA, armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has since taken responsibility and expressed "deep remorse" for the crime. Still the family's grief cannot be eased. The death certificates indicate that the cousins died due, not only to "blast injuries" but also to "gunshot wounds."

The tragedy is exacerbated by the fact that, but for some perverse quirk, it could not have occurred at all. Early

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

on, Kieth's father Nathaniel Absalon said his son and nephew had been "mistakenly identified as military" by the insurgents. Maj. Maria Luisa Calubaquib, spokesperson of the Bicol Regional Police, said: "This might be a mere accident."

They ran into the IED recklessly planted (by NPA rebels). Their targets (were) probably the uniformed personnel." The NPA itself said as much; Raymundo Buenfuerza, spokesperson of the Romulo Jaloros Command operating in Bicol, said the detonation of the land mine was a mistake for which the rebel force "ask[s] for forgiveness [from] the family and the public."

This is why the killing of Kieth and Nolven Absalon demands unqualified condemnation. The use of land mines is an act so deliberate, so final, that any claim of an accident or a mistake, even if true, becomes inconsequential in the face of the lives instantly lost or ~ a fate deemed worse than death ~ grievously maimed. Kieth's mother Vilma Absalon lamented how he was lovingly raised and how he strove to attain his dreams, "and he would die just like that."

The law is clear: Person-activated land mines are prohibited under the 1997 Ottawa Treaty (or the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction). Command-detonated land mines directed at civilians are banned under the 1996 Amended Protocol 2 of the 1980 Conventional Weapons Convention.

And international humanitarian law (IHL) forbids it. "Not only," said Commission on Human Rights spokesperson Jacqueline de Guia, "do (land mines) cause exceptionally severe injuries, suffering and death, [they] also fail to distinguish between civilians and combatants, such as what happened in this case."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Analyse mortality data

SIR, Thanks to *The Statesman* for publishing my article 'Accurate data needed to measure Covid mortality' (June 17). I would like to bring to the attention of readers data which became available after this article was written. This indicates that from March 2021 onwards there is a discernible rise in mortality and by May it took the form of real mayhem with an extremely high rise being recorded in some places, as seen in terms of deaths recorded in the civil registration system (CRS).

In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, the number of deaths recorded in CRS in May 2021 has been between 4 and 5 times higher than the norm during this month in

the previous 3 years (around 160,000 compared to around 31,000). If we see the figures from the beginning of 2021, we see that mortality figures have doubled, but in May



there is absolute mayhem. In Gujarat, the CRS data for a period of 71 days from March 1 to May 10 2021 indicates that the mortality during this period was about double compared to the previous year. The response from the Gujarat government has

been that some deaths may have been recorded more than once. Other analysts have argued that the base figure in Gujarat should have been higher for purpose of comparison, but even with this change a 50 per cent rise is seen.

On the whole, however, there is enough indication of May mayhem being a reality and this situation should be carefully analyzed for its policy implications. These excess deaths are likely to have been caused by a mix of factors, but only rigorous

analysis will reveal the contribution of various factors at play. The government should play a leading role in making clear the correct position. As highlighted in my article, transparency based on best available data is a key factor for effective policy intervention.

Yours, etc., Bharat Dogra, New Delhi, 17 June.

## UNDEMOCRATIC

SIR, Apropos your report 'Literary Naxals: Guij writers flay Akadem' (June 18), I feel it would be a real danger to democracy if a citizen cannot say or write about things seen or witnessed by himself or herself. Let us hope that the glory of Indian democracy will not be marred by a few.

Yours, etc., AK Deb Biswas, Hooghly, 18 June.

All three activists have been in jail for over a year and face charges under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in connection with 2020 February riots in Delhi and the anti-CAA protests. The court has again underlined some fundamental principles of a constitutional democracy. It is not protests but the use of a sledgehammer against them that will harm the country.

Yours, etc., Shovanlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 18 June.

# Culture wars that stir India and America

SUNIL SHARAN

One of the challenges free and heterogeneous societies like India and the United States face is culture wars. I was listening to a Chinese-American student of Stanford University on a radio programme she was broadcasting. She was using terms like "yellow fever" and "rice king".

She then went on to explain. Yellow fever is the apparent attraction that a white man feels for the East Asian woman. The same man is referred to as a rice king apparently because he loves exotic rice dishes served up by the East Asian woman. Anywhere you go in America it seems that yellow fever is raging.

I sometimes wonder about the families of the East Asian women. Are they not concerned that so many of their women are miscegenating with people from outside their culture? It does not seem so. My best friend is a Chinese-American. His only sister fell in love, not with a white man, but a black one. All hell broke loose in his family. Finally, the sister put her foot down and married her man and is quite happy.

I was seated next to a Black British man on the train. We got talking about yellow fever. He raised an eyebrow and asked me if the attraction that the East Asian woman held was restricted only to the white man. I got his point.

Jungle fever was a term coined in America to describe the apparent attraction that a white woman had for a black man, a supposed jungle, a man from the jungle that is supposedly Africa. One of the central causes, no, the central cause of the American Civil War, was the fear of Southern white men that if their black



slaves were freed, how those black slaves would then carry away their white women.

Postage stamps in fact were issued to this effect. Nowhere was it mentioned that in fact many white women might have liked to be carried away by black men.

The white man still ruleth in America. There is no pushback in American society to yellow fever. White men freely consort with East Asian women and procreate with them. There apparently is not much racial prejudice faced by the issues of such mingling.

A couple of white women have expressed their ire to me as to what their men see in East Asian women, but by and large that criticism is muted.

Not so when it comes to jungle

fever. White women are still not allowed by white men to freely consort with black men. A tremendous of racism is experienced by the children of such inter-racial mingling, who are automatically considered black. In many parts of the US such as Silicon Valley where there are a large number of East Asian women present, white men go for them and there are not enough eligible men for white women to marry because these men would prefer to be of "colour".

The East Asian population in the US is slated to grow dramatically and so should the consequent yellow fever. How will white women handle it? Will they defy societal pressure and go with "coloureds" or will they prefer to stay single?

India faces a similar culture war

in the supposed love-jihad. I was talking to the ex-chief secretary of Gujarat who happens to be a Muslim man and who is dating a Hindu woman. He told me that many Muslim women stay restricted to the home, while many Hindu women are much more outgoing. It is this gregarious nature of Hindu women that Muslim men find so attractive.

But was there any attraction that a Hindu woman had for the Muslim man? I thought not, until a Hindu woman disabused me of the notion.

She claimed that Muslim men were so handsome. I did not ask her why although I suspect that she meant the Muslim men who were fair and well-built. But was there any shortage of fair and well-built Hindu men in the country?

Sex, that old dirty topic, of course plays a massive role but is seldom talked about. The East Asian woman is supposed to be submissive, even in bed. The Muslim man in India is supposed to be more sensuous, and even more virile, than the Hindu man. The black man's sexual prowess is perceived to be almost legendary.

It has to be said that many Hindu men too are attracted to Muslim women, and perhaps even vice versa, but there, religion provides a barrier. Indian wokes insist that it is okay for Muslim men to miscegenate with Hindu women, but see red whenever the topic of love-jihad is mentioned. Hindu men thus sometimes feel emasculated in their own land.

It is hypocrisies such as that people of one community seek to marry outside the faith, but prevent their own women from doing so, that has led the majority community in India to feeling discriminated against.

Unless the playing field is leveled, this grievance, which is not altogether imagined, will not go away. Grievances such as love-jihad have led masses of moderate Hindus to subscribe to the Sangh Parivar's ideology, even if they do not wholly subscribe to it.

Unless the opposition like the Congress does not come out to fully and squarely address hypocrisies inherent in culture wars like love-jihad, the Hindu right-wing will continue to rule India. The Constitution of India provides equality for all religions in theory and practice, not just in theory but not in practice.

The writer is an expert on energy and contributes regularly to publications in India and overseas.

## Hardball diplomacy a welcome change

MOSTOFA SARWAR

The contentious Biden-Putin summit ended inconclusively on 16 June 16 in the tranquil 18th century villa La Grange, surrounded by rose bushes, overlooking the serene waters of Lake Geneva.

Before the meeting, the rhetoric between Presidents Biden and Putin was heated. On 16 March 16, in an interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC, Biden said that Putin is "a killer" without a "soul," and Putin recalled his ambassador in angry response, insinuating that Biden was a hypocrite. The United States also withdrew its ambassador.

Ten years before that, Vice President Biden, at the Kremlin, told then Prime Minister Putin that he thought he had no soul.

Biden's stance prior to the meeting was chilly. He opted for a solo press conference, an unusual practice at a summit between countries - even for adversaries. Per Biden's wishes, the summit handlers also did not arrange any joint meals between the men, despite ample time and opportunity. And Putin himself lowered expectations for any diplomatic breakthroughs.

Puttily, the summit began with pessimistic undertones. Biden's wish list included setting up "red lines" against interference in US elections and ransomware extortion of American businesses. Agenda items also included nuclear arms control, discussions of Russian violations of human rights (including the jailing of political dissident Alexei Navalny), Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military operations in industrialised Eastern Ukraine, and Russia's military and political interference in Syria and Belarus.



ment agencies and corporations, including the Department of Homeland Security, the Pentagon, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Energy and Microsoft Corporation. After a few weeks of tone-deaf silence of "The Stable Genius," and after US intelligence agencies concluded that there was likely a link between the hack and Russia, Trump deflected the blame to China via a December 19 tweet. Trump's tweets and actions during his presidency included a curious, consistent pattern of Russian appeasement.

In Syria, for example, Trump abandoned America's most loyal regional ally in the fight against the Islamic State, the Kurds, defying the recommendations of his security experts and military generals. This allowed Russia to secure the rule of Bashar al-Assad, ally of the United States' perennial foe, Iran.

Trump regularly turned a blind

eye to (and seemingly facilitated) Russia's persistent, illegal attempts to extend its hegemony into Ukraine beyond its annexation of Crimea and into Donbas, defying the advice of his administration's own experts and America's European allies.

Trump acted like a paper tiger in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions and its regional hegemony, accomplishing nothing beyond wrecking the treaty that sought to hold Iran's nuclear programme in check - perhaps because Iran is a Russian ally. He made a lot of noise about the Maduro government in Venezuela. Much ado turned into nothing, once again: Maduro and Putin are close buddies. And in Libya, Trump made a friendly phone call to Russian surrogate General Haftar, despite the American State Department's support for the UN-recognised Fayed Sarrat government.

The pattern is clear. In crises,

Putin flexed his muscles and Trump

retreated to the corner, especially when it came to Russian interests. Trump may not be a Russian asset. But his inaction was.

Biden's approach is different, and it already shows. Before meeting with Putin, Biden built rapport and consensus with the G7, NATO and European Union allies. This placed him in a position of strength on his way into talks with Putin - and conveyed a sense that America had at least the potential backing of the West. Trump, in contrast, shunned European allies and seldom laid any groundwork for diplomacy.

Putin apparently noticed the difference, pointedly acknowledging that "care" was needed to work with Biden, who was a "focused" "professional," "skillfully" capable of achieving America's goals. And reports indicate that Biden's communications with Putin were clear-cut. If American interests are violated, there will be consequences. There were few such reports during the Trump administration; they often spoke alone.

During Trump's presidency, Russian interference in US elections was ignored because the interference favoured Trump. In most other cases, appeasement of Russian interests was the order of the day. This damage will be hard to overcome. Nevertheless, Russia is shrinking like the magic piece of shagreen from Honore de Balzac's novel, *La Peau de chagrin*. All of Putin's mischief reduces Russia's credibility and exhausts her resources, accelerating the drift into rising China's shadow. Depending on how desperate Putin gets, that drift may start to have unanticipated effects on the world stage, including Bangladesh - triggering Cold War de ja vu.

The Daily Star/ANN

NO 28951

100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

The extraordinary prices asked, and apparently paid, for seats at the Anglo-American polo matches, and at the Wimbledon lawn tennis championship contests, as shown in our special cable service, afford further proof of the passion for out-door sports to which the British public would seem just now to be wholly given over. Twenty-five pounds for a seat, even for a whole series of matches, surely indicates the high-water mark of this enthusiasm. As evidence of the superb self-possession with which the British public is bearing the troubles of the day, this absorption in sports is a sign to be welcomed. A period of intense national strain is always apt to be followed by a reaction. It is no small matter for congratulation that this reaction in Great Britain after the long agony of the war has taken no less wholesome a form than a craze for open-air games. Another less pleasant reflection is suggested when we consider that the money and energy that are being lavished on sports are sorely needed for the economic and industrial restoration of the country. Unfortunately the trade union policy of the day is not such as to tempt anybody to engage in new industrial enterprise. How much money has been diverted from industry, and how much has been lost in this way which might have given the means of employment.

NEWS ITEMS

### PROGRESS OF EDUCATION IN MULTAN

MULTAN CITY, JUNE 22

During the year 1920-21 the number of schools in the Multan Division increased to 1,565 as compared with 1,483 last year. The secondary schools for boys rose from 188 to 203. There are seven industrial schools for boys and one for girls in the division. The number of Hindus in the schools has increased by 11 per cent, Sikhs by 18 per cent and Mahomedans by 8 per cent. Thirteen schools in the division are directly managed by the Government, 1,376 schools by local bodies. One hundred and seventeen are aided institutions and only five are unaided. The expenditure on education in this division was Rs 21,41,933. The new educational scheme insures a more thorough inspection, closer control and more intimate knowledge of educational requirements.

### BRAHMINS IN MYSORE ASSEMBLY

mysore, JUNE 22

In bringing the birthday session of the Mysore Representative Assembly to a close yesterday evening, Sir M. Kantaraj Urs, the Dewan, in the course of his concluding address deprecated the attitude of the Brahmin members, who, owing to their dissatisfaction over some of the parts of the rules recently issued regarding the conduct of business in the Assembly and other reasons which they did not explain signified their resentment by the summary withdrawal of the subjects appearing against their names and refraining from taking part in discussions. The Dewan characterized this as a breach of faith on their part with the people by whom they were elected, and was, he said, bound to reflect on the reputation for good sense and sobriety which the Assembly had all along maintained.

### LIQUOR TRAFFIC IN THE PUNJAB

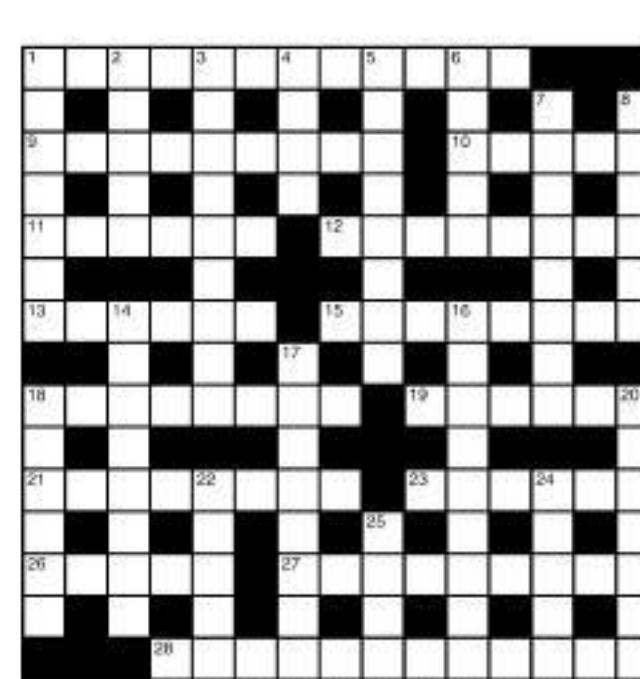
Simla, JUNE 22

In pursuance of a resolution passed by the Punjab Legislative Council in the question of local option exercisable by District Boards and municipalities with regard to the sale of liquor, the Punjab Government appointed a Local Option Committee, presided over by Lala Harkishan Lal, to consider the question in all its bearings. After discussion with persons interested in the matter the committee drafted a report which is now under consideration of the Government, mainly suggesting that in the case of municipalities local option could be exercised with regard to two-thirds of the number of shops, and that a referendum be taken in respect of the remaining one-third. The question of the modification of the Excise Act will be considered along with the recommendations of the committee.

### ALLEGED ILL-TREATMENT OF A GIRL

Mr. A. J. Chotzner, Additional Sessions Judge presiding over the Alipore Criminal Sessions, had before him a charge of kidnapping a married Mahomedan girl, Noorjan Bibi, residing at Jhawtalla. The story of the girl was that while she was staying at her father-in-law's house, her aunt Fulljan Bibi, and latter's husband, Shaik Muakbul, gagged and carried her away to their house. After two days she was removed in a gharry to the house of one Kabbut, at Balliaghata where the uncle and aunt sold her for Rs 60 to Kabbut who is alleged to be in the habit of purchasing girls for immoral purposes. On her refusal to fall in with Kabbut's wishes she was kept under lock and key and beaten. The police arrested uncle and aunt.

### CROSSWORD



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

#### ACROSS

- 1 Worth a shot, before waving, to blow one's top (5,1,6)
- 9 Celestial phenomenon results from celestial object bearing a second ring (9)
- 10 old lecturer to sing (5)
- 11 who prohibits placard? (6)
- 12 Constant exercises put on to keep wife quiet (4,4)
- 13 Discredit official before cup tie? Only occasionally (6)
- 15 Briefly pass around gossip, enthusiastically at first, to canvass opinion (3,1,4)
- 18 Minute area covered by

#### DOWN

- 1 Icons strip naked: start to
- 5 minute juvenile cow? (8)
- 19 Dreams of Delia's cooking (6)
- 21 Quietly returned cigarettes and beer of old Greeks (8)
- 23 Georgia possibly claiming Union is bust? (6)
- 26 Modify a flat over time (5)
- 27 Behind or up-to-date? Behind, stopping behind mostly (2,7)
- 28 Retiring salesman's short trip in car helping to produce sweat (12)

- request top of bottom is covered (7)
- 2 Yorkshire city's scam? Quite the opposite (5)
- 3 Decayed flesh concealed by dodgy owner (4-5)
- 4 Coat left next to court (4)
- 5 Extremely lazy attempt by the French to conserve unity (4,4)
- 6 Caught breaking convoluted rule for money (5)
- 7 One is entertained by member running around rubbing glasses (8)
- 8 Stroke German weapon (6)
- 14 Absolutely nothing on main road and train back is

- routine (8)
- 16 Song embracing nakedness - having no clothes, nothing - may be heard here (9)
- 17 Suspect seen smuggling monkey bodies (8)
- 18 It cuts, it stings, and it rubs, primarily, when the wrong way round (6)
- 20 Dance-pop band playing for new partner's child (7)
- 22 Composer runs out of parody (5)
- 24 Meal ultimately consumed by Asian? (5)
- 25 Imagine cuddling old priests (4)

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

We are going to include green hydrogen  
in renewable purchase obligation.R K SINGH  
POWER AND NEW & RENEWABLE ENERGY MINISTER

## THUMBNAILS

**BASL membership:** All existing registered investment advisers will have to obtain membership of BSE Administration and Supervision Ltd (BASL) before 31 August, leading stock exchange BSE said on Tuesday. BASL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of BSE, has been granted recognition as Investment Adviser Administration and Supervisory Body (IAASB) for a period of three years from 1 June, 2021 under investment advisers rule. PTI

**Sebi approvals IPO:** Three companies – Clean Science and Technology, Shriram Properties and GR Infraprojects – have received markets regulator Sebi's to raise funds through initial public offers (IPOs). The three firms had filed their preliminary papers with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in April. Clean Science and Technology, Shriram Properties and GR Infraprojects have obtained Sebi's observations on 12 June, 15 June and 16 June respectively, according to an update with Sebi. PTI

**PNB Housing Finance:** Shares of PNB Housing Finance bounced back on Tuesday, gaining 5 per cent, as setting aside Sebi's direction, the Securities Appellate Tribunal allowed the company to go ahead with the shareholders' meet to consider a proposed Rs 4,000-crore investment by private equity firm Carlyle and others in the mortgage firm. The stock jumped 4.99 per cent to close at Rs 737.45 on the BSE. PTI

**Will bring Mi 5G model in India:** Chinese smart devices company Xiaomi will bring the 5G variant of its lightest and slimmest smartphone M11 Lite after 5G network is available in the country or it gets sufficient demand for the handset, a top official of the company said on Tuesday. The company unveiled two 4G models of Mi 11 Lite each weighing 157 gram for Rs 21,999 and Rs 23,999 which will go on sale. PTI

# 'Hope to see Jet Airways flying again by year end'

After being shuttered for more than two years, Jet Airways is expected to see a revival

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 22 JUNE

**D**escribing the NCLT nod for resolution plan of Jet Airways as one of the biggest turnaround events for the beleaguered aviation sector, the airline's Resolution Professional Ashish Chhawchharia on Tuesday hoped that the carrier will be back in the skies by the end of this year provided everything goes well.

After being shuttered for more than two years, Jet Airways is expected to see a revival with the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approving the resolution plan of a consortium of UK's Kalrock Capital and UAE-based entrepreneur Murari Lal Jalan.

Chhawchharia is managing the affairs of the grounded Jet Airways since the resolution process started under the insolvency law in June 2019. "We are delighted with the go-ahead to the plan. Certainly, we are quite hopeful of the airline's revival. And if all goes well, we hope that by the end

In a separate statement, Chhawchharia said NCLT approval will pave the way for the revival of Jet Airways 2.0 even as there are a few concerns related to the availability of routes/slots for the airlines to fly again.



of this year, we can see some Jet Airways flights in the skies again," Chhawchharia said.

Though it is difficult to say by when the issues of slots will be resolved, he said he was hopeful since the effective date for implementation of the plan is 90 days from the date of approval.

"Everyone will work towards that (resolution of the slot issue as well)," he noted.

In a separate statement, Chhawchharia said NCLT approval will pave the way for the revival of Jet Airways 2.0 even as there are a few concerns related to the availability of routes/slots for the airlines to fly again.

Noting that the developments are one of the biggest turnaround events for the beleaguered aviation sector, Chhawchharia in the statement said that "we will now work together with the Jalan-Kalrock consortium to facilitate a smooth implementation of the plan in the coming weeks".

The NCLT Mumbai bench, chaired by Mohammed Ajmal Khan and V Nallasenapathy, has

approved the resolution plan for Jet Airways that will have to be implemented in 90 days starting from June 22.

"Our hard work over the last two years has paid off and today's order will pave the way for the revival of Jet Airways 2.0... We are grateful to the NCLT for this favourable order," Chhawchharia added.

While acknowledging that there are a "few concerns" related to the availability of routes/slots for the airlines to fly again, he said none of them is unsurmountable. "I am confident that the DGCA and Ministry of Civil Aviation will duly take into account all issues and give a fair consideration to the business proposal for Jet's revival".

On preliminary analysis, Chhawchharia said that apart from airports such as Delhi and Mumbai, it appears that other airports have sufficient slots whereas some are likely to expand their capacity.

Noting that the airline has been a national icon and flyers have been eagerly waiting to see it in the skies again,

Chhawchharia said a successful resolution will add value to customers, improve the competitive landscape and create jobs across the value chain.

"Over the course of the resolution process, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the DGCA and the airport authorities have been incredibly cooperative, and we are confident that they will continue to support us in helping the airline fly again," he noted.

Chhawchharia also thanked the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for their guidance in resolving several complex issues arising during the process. In a filing, Chhawchharia informed stock exchanges that NCLT has approved the resolution plan.

Disclosures regarding detailed financial proposal and treatment of shareholders of the company under the resolution plan will be made following receipt of NCLT's written order, the filing added.

representatives attended the meeting on Tuesday.

The portal launched on 7 June continued to face glitches, including longer logging in time, inability to generate OTP for Aadhaar validation, non-availability of ITRs for past years. Several stakeholders have submitted written inputs highlighting the issues facing the portal as well as areas that need to be fixed. The stakeholders have also highlighted weak user interface, inability to view old demand, grievances and intimation orders as the issues that need to be fixed.

The ICAI in a statement issued after the meeting said that it has been asked to provide its continuous support and inputs to CBDT and Infosys, in resolving the issues, as early as possible. The Income Tax Department said the new portal was aimed at making compliance more taxpayer-friendly, however the technical glitches shall be addressed fast, for convenience of all, the ICAI statement said.

The e-filing portal was launched on 7 June, which the tax department as well as the government said was aimed at making compliance more taxpayer-friendly.

## India to host 9th Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable next year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE



India has agreed to host the 9th Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable (AMER9) next year, the International Energy Forum (IEF) said on Tuesday. The 9th Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable, dates of which will be announced later, will take forward the understandings reached in the previous meeting in Abu Dhabi during 2018, which was co-hosted by India. That meeting focused on global energy security in the age of change.

India agreed to host the 9th roundtable after a virtual meeting between IEF Secretary-General Joseph McMonigle and Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the IEF said in a statement.

Chief executive officers of

Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum Corp, in addition to senior officers from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, were also present at the meeting.

"This demonstrates the value of the IEF as a neutral platform to convene the world's energy powers and support dialogue to balance the

interests of energy market participants and minimise the risks of economic shocks," said McMonigle.

He added that India is expected to account for the largest share of energy demand growth of any country in the world over the next two decades. "So, their decisions on energy and the transition will be critical in determining the future of energy markets and climate change for everyone."

Pradhan said India appreciates the role of the IEF as a unique, neutral body of energy producers and consumers. "We held discussions on global oil markets and transition pathways, and I conveyed our concern on rising crude prices and its negative impact on the fragile global economic recovery and the need for price stability," he said.

## Indian cos' m-cap grew fastest last year, presents financial stability risk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 22 JUNE



Indian companies' market capitalization has grown at the fastest pace last year among major economies despite contraction in GDP, economists from SBI said, flagging the risks to financial stability it poses.

Further, retail investors have shown higher interest in markets and their numbers have increased by 1.42 crore in FY21 and another 44 lakh in April and May, they said in a note, wondering if this will be a lasting behavioural change or is transitory.

The economists at the country's largest lender attributed the growth in equity markets to lower returns on other financial instruments amid a low rates regime,

increase in global liquidity, and even a tendency to spend more time at home because of mobility restrictions which led many to trade more.

The 30-share benchmark index BSE has rallied from 28,000 points in early April 2020, to over 52,000 points at present. "The rise in the stock market without significant development in the real economy may raise the issue of financial stability which as per

our financial stability index shows modest improvement in April 2021, but lower than the peak witnessed in December 2020. However, it is expected to have declined in May 2021," it warned.

It can be noted that in the past, the Reserve Bank has also expressed risks of financial stability because of the fast growth in stock markets.

The note said the 30-share benchmark of BSE grew 1.8 times in the last year, which was the fastest among major economies, beating others like benchmarks in Russia (1.64 times), Brazil (1.60) and China (1.59).

A sector-wise analysis of Nifty-50 reveals that financial services are the clear winners with Rs 157 lakh crore increase in their market cap during the past one year. IT is another

major sector whose market value has increased significantly, followed by oil and gas, consumer goods, automobiles, metals and pharma, it said. From a returns perspective, it said sector-wise one-year return indicates that IT and materials have performed better.

The increasing retail participation, if it becomes the norm, could also enable a larger resource pool for financing India's infrastructural requirements, the economists said.

They further pointed out that the share of savings in shares and debentures to total household financial savings at 3.4 per cent in FY20 is likely to increase in FY21 to 4.8-5.0 per cent or 0.7 per cent of GDP from 0.4 per cent of GDP in FY20.

## India's crude output slips 6.3 per cent in May, gas production jumps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

where the KG-D6 block is situated.

Reliance-BP has put into

production the second wave

of discoveries in the KG-D6

block, helping raise overall out-

put.

"Increase in gas production

is through contributions from

D-34 field of KG-DWN-98/3

(KG-D6) which commenced

from December 18, 2020 (and

wells from satellite cluster

(commenced with effect from

April 25, 2021)," explanatory

notes to the data said.

ONGC's gas production

at 1.64 bcm was 9.08 per cent

lower than the previous year.

This is because of "reduced

gas production in western off-

shore due to cyclone Tauktae"

and less production from

eastern offshore fields. As

demand picked up with eas-

ing of Covid restrictions,

refineries processed 16 percent

more crude oil in May at

about 19 million tonne.

## Govt revises timeline of coal mine auctions

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE

The coal ministry on Tues-

day announced revision in the timeline of the second tranche of auctions for commercial mining.

In a statement, the minis-

try said the last date for reg-

istration of bidders and sale

of tender documents on

the MSTC website and the

bid due date have been

revised. The last date for sub-

mission of bids has been

extended to July 8, 2021.

The revised timeline will

be uploaded on the MSTC

website, it added.

The government had in

March offered 67 coal mines

for sale, launching the sec-

ond tranche of commer-

cial coal mining auctions

and termed it a step towards

'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

This is the highest num-

ber of mines on offer in a par-

ticular tranche.

## Pvt hospitals to log 15-17 pc revenue growth in FY22 on higher occupancy due to Covid surge: Crisil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 22 JUNE



Higher occupancy due to

surge in Covid-19 cases would

help private hospitals post 15-

17 per cent revenue growth this

fiscal year, a shade higher

than what they attained in

2020-21, ratings agency Crisil

said on Tuesday.

The growth will aid recov-

ery of operating margin by 100-

200 basis points to 13-14 per</



*This visit should be a friendly visit, rather than to pursue a so-called investigation with the presumption of guilt.*

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN ZHAO LIJIAN  
WHILE INVITING THE HIGH COMMISSIONER TO COME TO CHINA TO VISIT XINJIANG.

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021

# Pak won't host US bases fearing 'revenge attacks'

PM Imran Khan said Pakistan is looking forward to a negotiated peace from the US, and not civil war

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 22 JUNE

Prime Minister Imran Khan has ruled out hosting American bases in Pakistan for military action inside war-torn Afghanistan, fearing it might lead to his country being "targeted in revenge attacks" by terrorists.

In an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* newspaper ahead of US President Joe Biden's meeting with top Afghan leaders at the White House later this week, Khan also questioned the efficacy of such US bases in Pakistan.

"We simply cannot afford this. We have already paid too heavy a price," Khan said, amid reports that the US continues to focus on Pakistan for a military base in the region.

Elaborating the reasons for not giving the nod to the US to have bases in Pakistan, which were earlier allowed after



9/11 to coordinate operations in Afghanistan, the prime minister said, "If Pakistan were to agree to host US bases, from which to bomb Afghanistan, and an Afghan civil war ensued, Pakistan would be targeted for revenge by terrorists again."

According to media reports, the US used the Shamsi airbase in Balochistan to carry out hundreds of drone strikes since 2008. The drone strikes focused primarily on suspected Al Qaeda operatives in mountainous tribal areas, but also crossed the border into Afghanistan.

If the United States, with the most powerful military machine in history, couldn't win the war from inside Afghanistan after 20 years, how would America do it from bases in our country? Khan asked.

Khan, however, underlined that Pakistan and the US have the same interests in Afghanistan: a political settlement, stability, economic development and the denial of any haven for terrorists. "We want a negotiated peace, not civil war," he wrote.

The prime minister said Pakistan is ready to be a part-

ner for peace in Afghanistan with the US but we will avoid risking further conflict after withdrawal of American troops.

Amid the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the US is looking for options to keep a close eye on the region and is talking to other countries about it. Pakistan, however, has told the US that it will not give its bases and reiterated Islamabad's commitment to Afghanistan peace.

Biden's talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and the Chairman of Afghanistan's High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah on Friday will discuss US troop withdrawal amid a surge in fighting between Afghan forces and the Taliban across the country.

Khan said Pakistan in the past had made a mistake by choosing between warring Afghan parties, but it learned from that experience.

We have no favourites and will work with any government that enjoys the confidence of the Afghan people. History proves that Afghanistan can never be controlled from outside, he said.

Khan said Pakistan suffered much from the wars in Afghanistan. More than 70,000 Pakistanis have been killed. While the United States provided \$20 billion in aid, losses to the Pakistani economy have exceeded \$150 billion.

He said tourism and investment dried up and after joining the US effort, Pakistan was targeted as a collaborator, leading to terrorism against our country from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and other groups.

He also questioned the use of US drone attacks, which I warned against, didn't win the war, but they did create hatred for Americans, swelling the ranks of terrorist groups against both our countries.

## Myanmar anti-junta militia vow to take on army in major city

AGENCIES

YANGON, 22 JUNE

Myanmar security forces backed by armored vehicles clashed on Tuesday with a newly formed militia group in the second-biggest city of Mandalay, resulting in at least two casualties, according to members of the group and media reports.

"The fight has started. There will be more fights," a member of the militia identified as Capt. Tun Tauk Naing said by telephone. The sound of repeated gun fire could be heard in video footage taken

nents of the coup known as people's defense forces have sprung up across Myanmar.

Up to now, fighting involving lightly armed militias has been mainly confined to small towns and rural areas, but a group claiming to be Mandalay's new People's Defence Force said its members responded after the army raided one of its bases.

"The fight has started. There will be more fights," a member of the militia identified as Capt. Tun Tauk Naing said by telephone. The sound of repeated gun fire could be heard in video footage taken

by a resident of the area.

About 20 soldiers had carried out the raid on the group sparking a gun fight with the military which deployed three armored cars to the area, Myanmar Now reported.

Another official from the militia group told the Mizima news portal that six of its members had been arrested and two soldiers had been killed.

Security forces had raided a house and "armed terrorists" had fought back with small weapons and bombs, according to a report broadcasted in a state-run television.

## Iraq sentences senior IS leader to death

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

BAGHDAD, 22 JUNE

The Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council has issued four death penalties and a life imprisonment against a senior Islamic State (IS) leader for involvement in various terror crimes in Salahuddin province north of the capital Baghdad.

A statement by the Council issued on Monday said the convicted terrorist was known to be a judge in Islamic law for the extremist group, reports Xinhua news agency.

The terrorist, whose name was not revealed, was found guilty in several cases, including the killing of five Iraqi soldiers in a roadside bombing; complicity with other convicts in the kidnapping of a civilian; and carrying out attacks with other IS militants in the town of Amerly, some 150 km north of Baghdad, according to the statement.

A separate statement by the media office of the Iraqi Joint Operations Command said intelligence forces arrested an IS militant in Abu Ghraib area.

## Iran's election unsettles Biden's hope for a nuclear deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 22 JUNE

Biden administration officials are insisting that the election of a hard-liner as Iran's president won't affect prospects for reviving the faltering 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran. But there are already signs that their goal of locking in a deal just got tougher.

Optimism that a deal was imminent faded as the latest talks ended Sunday without tangible indications of significant progress. And on Monday, in his first public comments since the vote, incoming Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi rejected a key Biden

goal of expanding on the nuclear deal if negotiators are able to salvage the old one.

At the same time, Raisi is likely to raise Iran's demands for sanctions relief in return for Iranian compliance with the deal, as he himself is already subject to US human rights penalties.

"I don't envy the Biden team," said Karim Sadagopan, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace who has advised multiple U.S. administrations on Iran. "I think the administration now has a heightened sense of urgency to revise the deal before Raisi and a new hard-line team is inaugurated."

President Joe Biden and his team have made a US return to the deal one of their top foreign policy priorities. The deal was one of President Barack Obama's signature achievements, one that aides now serving in the Biden administration had helped negotiate and that Donald

Trump repudiated and tried to dismantle as president. Despite Raisi's impending presidency, Biden administration officials insist prospects for reaching an agreement are unaltered. They argue that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who signed off on the 2015 deal known as the Joint Compre-

hensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, will make any final decisions regardless of who is president.

"The president's view and our view is that the decision leader is the supreme leader," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday. "That was the case before the election; it's the case today; it will be the case probably moving forward."

"Iran will have, we expect, the same supreme leader in August as it will have today, as it had before the elections, as it had in 2015 when the JCPOA was consummated for the first time," State Department spokesman Ned Price

said.

But hopes for substantial progress fizzled last week ahead of the Iranian election amid a flurry of speculation about the impact of the vote on the indirect talks between Iran and the US in Vienna. Diplomats and others familiar with the talks had thought the last round, the sixth.

Now, that round has ended and a seventh round has yet to be scheduled as Raisi, Iran's conservative judiciary chief, brandished an absolute rejection of anything more than Iran's bare minimum compliance with the 2015 agreement in exchange for a lifting all of US sanctions.

## Kim sister derides US official, dismisses chances for talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, 22 JUNE



The Biden administration, for its part, doesn't want to budge either, he said.

Both parties are locked in a waiting game -- North Korea wants the United States to make concessions first, and the United States has no intentions to match a level of action the North is demanding, Shin said.

On Monday, during a visit to Seoul, Sung Kim, the top U.S. envoy on North Korea affairs, said Washington is willing to meet the North anywhere, anytime without preconditions. But he stressed that the Biden administration would continue to pressure North Korea with sanctions over its nuclear and missile ambitions.

Just before Kim Yo Jong's statement was released on Tuesday, Sung Kim met South Korean Unification Minister Lee In-young and said Washington and Seoul remain committed to seeking the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy.

## Hong Kong leader says US 'beautifying' security offences

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 22 JUNE



beautify these acts of endangering national security, which the foreign governments have taken so much to their heart," Lam said.

Lam took particular aim at comments made by US State Department spokesman Ned Price saying Hong Kong authorities were using the law to suppress the media and silence dissent. Price said that exchanging views with foreigners in journalism should never be a crime. "What we are talking about is not exchanging views between foreigners and journalists," Lam said.

## Sri Lanka temporarily lifts nationwide travel restrictions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

COLOMBO, 22 JUNE

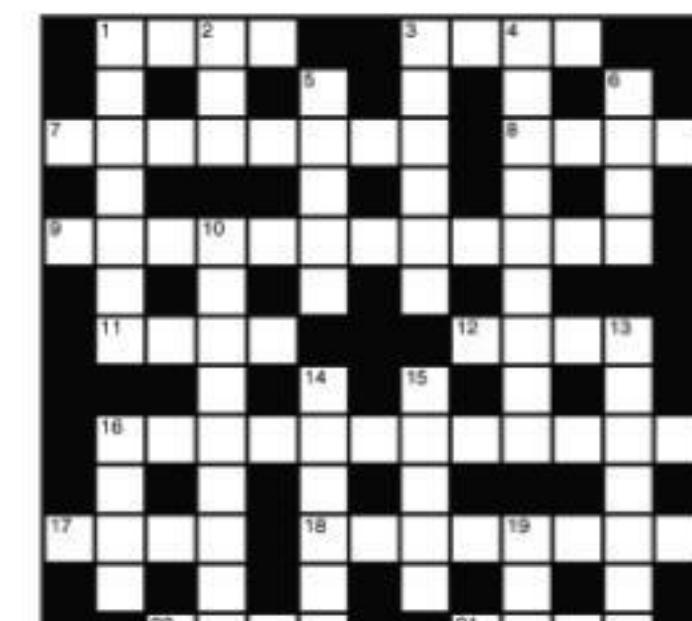
essential work while private and state-owned companies were urged to operate on very minimum staff.

Silva said Sri Lanka continued to report a very high number of Covid patients and deaths, calling the public to behave responsibly till the nationwide travel restriction is re-imposed again on Wednesday night.

As per fresh guidelines issued by the Health Ministry on Sunday, supermarkets across Sri Lanka can function on a 25 per cent capacity per time while grocery stores will be allowed to take in only three people per time.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



### SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Drop (4)
- 3 Ova (4)
- 7 Spell of hot weather (4,4)
- 8 Narrow road (4)
- 9 Bewildering (informal) (4-8)
- 11 Deep cut (4)
- 12 Distort (4)
- 16 Inferior person or thing (4,8)
- 17 Palm fruit (4)
- 18 Tool accessory (5,3)
- 20 Sort (4)
- 21 Malaria fever (4)

- 1 Sensation (7)
- 2 Ignited (3)
- 3 Vitality (6)
- 4 Gad about (9)
- 5 Civic dignitary (5)
- 6 Cosy (4)
- 10 Find (9)
- 13 Side view (7)
- 14 Grievance (6)
- 15 Small and charming (5)
- 16 Summit (4)
- 19 Piece of tree trunk (3)

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

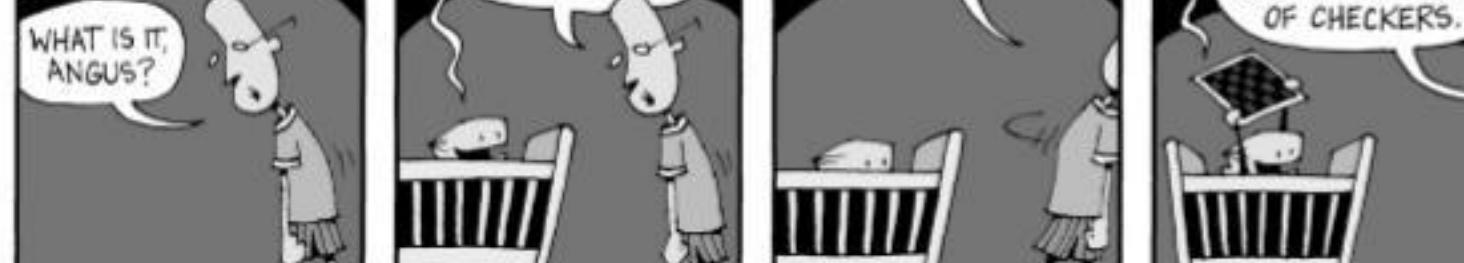
### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

• AIIMS 26588500, 26589000

• Meenachil Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 8-24-hour

• Chettai Shop 42000447

• Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Sciences 26924300, 26924304

• Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280,

29958747

• Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

• Guru Tegh Bahadur 2317473, 23325320

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

• Toll Free Nos. 1800125115

• SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

• ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

• Haryana Roadways 23861262

• Himachal Roadways 0991038388, Reservation 41528181

• Jammu & Kashmir 23861262

• Punjab Roadways 23867842, port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377

• Air Canada Flight Inquiry 25656421/25656431

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 0991038388, Reservation 23466226 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

• Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

FIVE RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

JUDD'S TOTAL 214

PAR SCORE 210-220

BY JUDD



# Coffee & climate

**Lovers of coffee would be alarmed to know that their favourite bean is in danger**

S ANANTHARAYANAN

Even if the world contains global warming to two °Celsius, global vegetation would be far different from what it is. While there would be an increase in tree cover in some places and drying up at others, specific crops may not survive the rise in temperature. And one such is the Arabica coffee bean.

Aaron P Davis, Delphine Mieulet, Justin Moat, Daniel Sarmu and Jeremy Haggard, from Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the University of Greenwich, in the United Kingdom, Diade (Diversity-Adaptation-plant Development) Institute in Montpellier, France and Welthungerhilfe, an independent German non-governmental organisation working in Freetown, Sierra Leone, however, have some good news. They write in the journal, *Nature Plants*, that there is a wild variety of coffee, which matches the current leading variety, and could do well in a warmer world.

There are two main strains of coffee that are cultivated -- the most popular is Arabica and the second is Robusta. Arabica is known for its fine flavour and accounts for 60 per cent of the coffee grown. The Arabica plant, however, is delicate and needs care to bring home the crop. Robusta is not as high in flavour, but it is a hardier plant, and accounts for nearly all the remaining 40 per cent.

Arabica was grown at higher altitudes in Ethiopia, Africa, for several centuries. But the trade shifted to Yemen, and, from the port city, Mocha, the coffee travelled to all parts of the world. And as Yemen lies in the Arabian Peninsula, the variety got the name, Arabica. It is a mild coffee, rich in natural sugars and fats, moderate on caffeine and can be brewed to have much sought-after nuances of flavour and aroma. The Arabs tried protectionism, but seeds or seedlings were soon smuggled out to other lands and the Dutch grew coffee in plantations in Ceylon, Sumatra and Java. Coffee is now grown in many places, Brazil and India being important centres, and, in value of international trade, it is the world's largest agricultural product.

The coffee plant needs reasonable warmth, and plentiful rainfall. The ground should be well drained. Coffee is hence grown in the belt between 30 °north and south of the Equator, at places with hill slopes, for efficient drainage. Areas in Africa, South America and Asia were well



suit and Arabica coffee was widely cultivated. The industry, however, hit a roadblock with the emergence of Coffee Leaf Rust, a fungus that forms on the leaves. It makes the leaves wither and the plant produces less berries and hence, less coffee.

The answer was in a related variety, which could resist the fungus, and some other parasites too. The new variety was also hardier and could manage in less exacting conditions. Naturally, the variety is called Robusta, and it has become enormously popular. It has higher caffeine content, which is a reason for its resistance to pests, but it does not have the delicate flavour of Arabica. However, Robusta is cheaper, and the two varieties are almost equally popular, with some who prefer Robusta, and there is a market for blends.

#### Enter global warming

Rising global temperature, however, would now affect both coffee varieties. "Successful coffee farming occurs within a relatively narrow climatic envelope and is susceptible to weather perturbations throughout its growth and life cycle, rendering it sensitive to climate change," the paper in *Nature Plants* says. It is considered that by 2050, half the acreage under coffee would become unusable for quality coffee.

The paper says that there are

three possible solutions. The first, to relocate cultivation, would mean finding land in places with better conditions, and over 100 million livelihoods would have to be managed. The second is to adapt farming practices, like irrigation, providing shade or covering the soil. This has some potential but involves extra costs. And the third is to develop new, climate-resistant varieties. Efforts in this direction are on, but are in the early stages, the paper says. There are some 120 other varieties that would be able to survive warmer and drier conditions, but none of them has the flavour or other attributes of Arabica and Robusta.

This is the context of the attention shifting to a wild variety, known as *Coffea stenophylla*, found in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast, in West Africa. This, and other wild coffee varieties, which were studied and consumed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, had gone out of focus because of the overwhelming success of Arabica and Robusta. *Stenophylla* was a noted instance, the paper says, and it cites 19th century publications that say the species had "excellent taste, as good as the 'best mocha' and possibly superior to all other coffees, including Arabica." But such references died out by the 1920s, the paper says, probably because there was no cultivation and the species was rare

even in the wild. In 2018, however, field work revealed that *stenophylla* was still there in the wild, in Sierra Leone, in West Africa. In 2020, the current authors hence obtained sample *stenophylla* coffee beans. They were then brewed and evaluated by five professional panels, in a blind exercise, against a high-quality Arabica sample, from Ethiopia, a medium quality sample from Brazil and a high-quality Robusta sample from Indonesia.

The evaluation, across the five panels, and through detailed assessment of features and tasting notes, revealed that "*stenophylla* has a complex flavour profile, natural sweetness, medium-high acidity, fruitiness and good body, as in higher quality Arabica... These results credibly corroborate historical reports," the paper says.

But then, despite similarity in taste and aroma, the paper says, *stenophylla* differs widely from Arabica and Robusta -- evolutionary history is not shared, the areas of occurrence are widely separated, and environmental requirements are different. The paper estimates the mean temperature that suits *stenophylla* as 25.26 °C against 19.0 °C for Arabica. This is a margin of 6.8 °C, and there is a comparable margin in respect to Robusta.

It is said that a 16th century Sufi pilgrim smuggled coffee seeds from Mocha and brought them to Chikmagalur at the foothills of the Western Ghats. And since the 19th century, the potential for export led to vast areas under coffee in the hilly parts of south India.

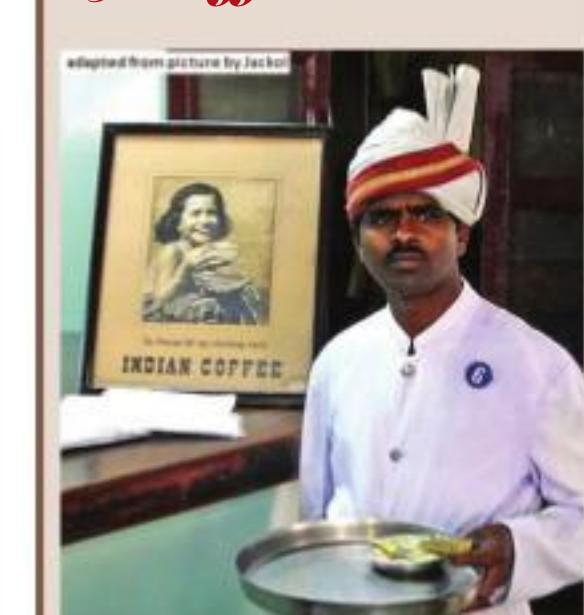
In 1942, the Coffee Board was set up to regulate coffee production. To popularise coffee outside south India, the Board opened Coffee Houses in most cities in India. These became iconic centres, where aromatic coffee and quality snacks were served by turbaned waiters.

In 1957, it was considered that Coffee Houses had served their purpose and should be shut down. And the staff, mostly from Kerala, were offered a termination bonus. A delegation, led by A K Gopalan, the Marxist leader, however, met Jawaharlal Nehru and it was decided that instead of shutting down, each of the Coffee Houses would be offered to the staff working there, if they agreed to form an association. About half the Coffee Houses hence continued, under an umbrella Association of Coffee Houses. In time, in the face of competition, most of them closed down, with the premises, which were at prime locations, fetching handsome returns. Only a handful of the original Coffee Houses are working now, except in the city of Jabalpur, in Madhya Pradesh, which has eight outlets and houses the headquarters of the Indian Coffee Workers' Cooperative Society.

The finding, that the new variety thrives at a higher temperature, opens the doors to developing an alternative to Arabica and Robusta in the face of climate change. But this apart, the paper notes that specialising the strains of Arabica and Robusta had effectively reduced the diversity of coffee strains. Crossbreeding, for flavour gains, resulted in loss of resilience. But with *stenophylla* entering the list of available species, this aberration could be corrected, the paper says.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

#### Indian coffee & Coffee Houses



#### PLUS POINTS

#### Delta blues



The Delta variant of Covid-19 is associated with approximately double the risk of hospitalisation compared with the Alpha variant, according to a new nation-wide study in the United Kingdom. Two vaccine doses still provide strong protection against the Delta variant -- which was first identified in India -- but it may be at a lower level compared with the Alpha variant, early evidence suggests.

Based on data analysed from 5.4 million people in Scotland, the Delta variant is now the dominant form of Covid-19 cases in the country, overtaking the Alpha variant, which was first identified in Kent. During the period studied -- 1 April to 6 June 2021 -- there were 19,543 community cases and 377 hospitalisations where a specific variant of Covid-19 was confirmed. Of them, 7,723 cases and 134 hospitalisations were found to have the Delta variant. People with underlying conditions were more at risk of being hospitalised, researchers said.

The researchers said that to increase confidence in these early findings, the research needs to be repeated in other countries and settings. The team also said that because of the observational nature of the study, data about vaccine effectiveness should be interpreted with caution and it is not possible to make a direct comparison between both vaccines.

Chris Robertson, professor of public health epidemiology in the University of Strathclyde's department of mathematics and statistics, and head of statistics at Health Protection Scotland, was a partner in the study. He said, "It is important to recognise that these are preliminary results using rapidly accessible data. A fuller understanding will come when the results presented are combined with similar analyses from other data sets in the UK."

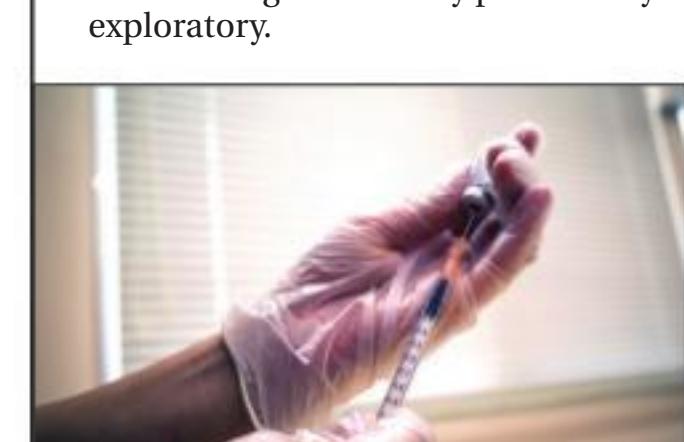
Jim McMenamin, Covid-19 National Incident Director for Public Health Scotland said, "These results provide early encouragement that two doses of either Pfizer-BioNTech or Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines significantly reduce the risk of infection against both the Alpha or new Delta variants. They also show the vaccines offer protection against the risk of hospitalisation with the new Delta variant. Though no vaccine can be 100 per cent protective, they provide the best protection against Covid-19 and it remains important to get both doses when offered."

Vaccines were found to reduce the risk of being admitted to hospital, but strong protective effects against the Delta variant were not seen until at least 28 days after the first vaccine dose. In community cases at least two weeks after the second dose, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was found to provide 79 per cent protection against infection from the Delta variant, compared with 92 per cent against the Alpha variant.

For the same scenario, the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine offered 60 per cent protection against infection with the Delta variant compared with 73 per cent for the Alpha variant. This lower vaccine effect may reflect that it takes longer to develop immunity with Oxford-AstraZeneca, experts say.

Delta variant cases were identified through initial polymerase chain reaction testing results, which reveal whether what is known as the S gene is present. Delta variant cases are positive for the S gene whilst Alpha variant cases tend to be S gene negative. The research team from Strathclyde, the University of Edinburgh and Public Health Scotland, analysed a dataset as part of the "Early Pandemic Evaluation and Enhanced Surveillance of Covid-19" project, which uses anonymised linked patient data to track the pandemic and the vaccine roll out in real time.

The results are published as a research letter in *The Lancet*. Research letters are externally peer-reviewed, and their findings are usually preliminary or exploratory.



## FUTURE BUILT ON THE PAST



**The first mobile phone call was 75 years ago. Here's what it takes for technologies to go from breakthrough to big time**

DANIEL BLISS

I have a mobile phone built into my watch. People now take this type of technology for granted, but not so long ago it was firmly in the realm of science fiction. The transition from fantasy to reality was far from the flip of a switch. The amount of time, money, talent and effort required to put a telephone on my wrist spanned far beyond any one product development cycle.

The people who crossed a wrist-watch with a mobile phone worked hard for several years to make it happen, but technology development really occurs on a timescale of

decades. While the last steps of technological development capture headlines, it takes thousands of scientists and engineers working for decades on myriad technologies to get to the point where blockbuster products begin to capture the public's imagination.

The first mobile phone service, for 36-kilogram telephones installed in cars, was demonstrated on 17 June 1946, 75 years ago. The service was only available in major cities and highway corridors and was aimed at companies rather than individuals. The equipment filled much of a car's trunk, and subscribers made calls by picking up the handset and speaking

to a switchboard operator. By 1948, the service had 5,000 customers.

The first handheld mobile phone was demonstrated in 1973, nearly three decades after the introduction of the first mobile phone service. It was nearly three decades after that before half the United States' population had a mobile phone.

#### Big history in small packages

As an electrical engineer, I know that today's mobile phone technology has a remarkable number of components, each with a long development path. The phone has antennas and electronics that allow signals to be transmitted and received. It has a spe-

cialised computer processor that uses advanced algorithms to convert information to signals that can be transmitted over air. These algorithms have hundreds of component algorithms. Each of those pieces of technology and many more have development histories that span decades.

A common thread running through the evolution of virtually all electronic technologies is miniaturisation. The radio transmitters, computer processors and batteries at the heart of your mobile phone are the descendants of generations of those technologies that grew successively smaller and lighter.

The phone itself would not be of much use without cellular base stations and all the network infrastructure that is behind them. The first mobile phone services used small numbers of large radio towers, which meant that all the subscribers in a big city shared one central base station. This was not a recipe for universal mobile phone service.

Engineers began working on a concept to overcome this problem at about the time the first mobile phone services went live, and it took nearly four decades to roll out the first cellular phone service in 1983. Cellular service involves interconnected networks of smaller radio transceivers that hand off moving callers from one transceiver to another.

#### Military necessity

Your mobile phone is a result of over a hundred years of commercial and government investment in research and development in all of its components and related technologies. A significant portion of the cutting-edge development has been funded by the military.

A major impetus for developing mobile wireless technologies was the need during World War II for troops to communicate on the move in the field. The SRC-536 Handie-Talkie was developed by the predecessor to Motorola Corporation and used by the US Army in the war. The Handie-

Talkie was a two-way radio that was small enough to be held in one hand and resembled a telephone. Motorola went on to become one of the major manufacturers of mobile phones.

The story of military investment in technology becoming game-changing commercial products and services has been repeated again and again. Famously, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency developed the technologies behind the Internet and speech recognition. But Darpa also made enabling investments in advanced communications algorithms, processor technology, electronics miniaturisation and many other aspects of your phone.

#### Looking forward

By realising that it takes many decades of research and investment to develop each generation of technology, it's possible to get a sense of what might be coming. Today's communications technologies -- 5G, WiFi, Bluetooth, and so on -- are fixed standards, meaning they are each designed for a single purpose. But over the last 30 years, the US's department of defence and corporations have been investing in technologies that are more capable and flexible.

Your phone of the near future might not only fluidly signal in ways that are more efficient, enable longer ranges or higher data rates, or last significantly longer on a charge, it might also use that radio frequency energy to perform other functions. For example, your communications signal could also be used as a radar signal to track your hand gestures to control your phone, measure the size of a room, or even monitor your heart rate to predict cardiac distress.

It is always difficult to predict where technology will go, but I can guarantee that future technology will build on decades upon decades of research and development.

The writer is professor of electrical engineering, Arizona State University, United States. This article first appeared on www.theconversation.com

to a switchboard operator. By 1948, the service had 5,000 customers.

The first mobile phone service, for 36-kilogram telephones installed in cars, was demonstrated on 17 June 1946, 75 years ago. The service was only available in major cities and highway corridors and was aimed at companies rather than individuals. The equipment filled much of a car's trunk, and subscribers made calls by picking up the handset and speaking



