

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | WEDNESDAY 23 | JUNE 2021

## WEATHER



**Max:** 33°C  
**Min:** 22°C  
**Rainfall:** 6%

## ASTROGUIDE

**Pilava:** Aani 9  
**Tithi:** Sathurthasi  
**Star:** Anusham  
**Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm  
**Yamagandam:** 7.30 am to 9 am

### PRAYERS

**Fajar:** 4.25 am  
**Luhar:** 12.16 pm  
**Asar:** 3.37 pm  
**Maghrib:** 6.38 pm  
**Isha:** 7.57 pm

**SUNSET TODAY** 6.47 PM  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 6.01 AM  
**MOONRISE TODAY** 5.26 PM  
**MOONSET TOMORROW** 6.19 AM

## CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+50,784)	(+1,359)
3,00,27,850	3,90,691

covid19india.org

### STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+6,895)	(194)
TN: 24,36,819	31,580

### WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

17,96,97,906
<b>DEATHS</b>
38,91,347
<b>COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES</b>
219

worldometers.info

## Carnatic musician Parassala Ponnammal passes away

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Legendary Carnatic musician and Padmashree awardee, Parassala B. Ponnammal, who enthralled classical music lovers for the last eight decades through her incredible concerts, passed away at her home in Valiyasala here on Tuesday, family sources said. She was 96 and was suffering from age-related ailments for some time, they said. ‘Guruvayur Puresa Suprabhatham’, ‘Trisrivapuresa Suprabhatham’, ‘Ulsava Prabhandam’, ‘Navarathri Kriti’, ‘Meenambika Sthothram’, and compositions of Irayamman Thampi were among her famous vocal renditions.

## Congress to participate in PM’s all-party meeting

**New Delhi:** The Congress will attend the all-party meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday, its Jammu and Kashmir unit spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said on Tuesday. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, he said.

## COUNTER

## POINT



**Leaders who didn't get the invitation for this meet are going to form the Fourth Front!**

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**Squirrels running on power cables led to outages: Minister**



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**Those refusing vax go to India: Duterte**

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**Shami bowls Kiwis out for 249**



# TN to pass resolution against CAA, farm laws

## Budget session will pass resolution, says Stalin

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JUN 22

Tamil Nadu’s opposition to the three controversial Agricultural Laws and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, (CAA) will be expressed through Assembly resolutions when the house meets for its budget session soon.

Announcing this on the floor of the House, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said the resolution against the agricultural laws would be a reflection of the sentiments and aspirations of farmers, not just in the state but throughout the country.

Referring to the demand, made by DMK member A. Tamilarasi, for a resolution against the agricultural bills, Mr Stalin said



**The DMK had expressed its opposition to the three bills on agriculture passed in Parliament in several ways.**

**M.K. STALIN, Chief Minister**

the DMK had expressed its opposition to the three bills passed in Parliament in several ways.

Though the government was committed to seeking their repeal, it would not be appropriate to move a resolution in the present session, devoted to discussing the motion for thanks to the Governor’s

address, he said, adding that it would definitely be done in the budget session.

He said the CAA has affected the interest of minorities and has caused fear among them, the government would seek its repeal.

Mr Stalin’s statement assumes significance in the backdrop of his recent

visit to the nation’s capital and meeting with the leaders of the opposition parties where he shared the need for a forming a common front against the BJP dispensation. He raised the topics on which there is a convergence among the opposition parties, which include the repeal of the CAA and the agricultural bills, even in the memorandum he submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The assemblies of several opposition-ruled states, including Kerala, Punjab and West Bengal, had passed resolutions against the central laws but the previous AIADMK government had refused to toe the opposition line after it forged an alliance with the BJP.

# States warned against spread of Corona virus’ Delta Plus variant

**VINEETA PANDEY | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Just as it was recovering from the sting of the mutated ‘Delta’ variant of SARS-CoV-2, another mutated variant of the virus -- ‘Delta Plus’-- has been found to be making inroads in India. So far, 22 cases of the ‘Delta Plus’ variant have been found in genome sequenced samples from Maharashtra’s Ratnagiri and Jalgaon; Palakkad and Pathanamthitta in Kerala; and Bhopal and Shivpuri districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Maharashtra alone has 16 of these cases which Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan has said is a “variant of concern”. Sources in the government said, however, that the actual number of Delta Plus cases are higher than 22 as some other states too have ‘Delta Plus’ infections. They said the only thing was that in MP, Maharashtra and Kerala these cases are found in clusters. ■ **P4**

## CHARRED BODY OF MISSING IGCAR SCIENTIST FOUND

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The burnt body of a 26-year-old trainee scientist at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) in Kalpakkam who went missing on Sunday was found in Veppenchery cemetery on Tuesday. The police suspect it to be case of suicide.

The category-I scientist P. Sathya Sairam of Godavari in Andhra Pradesh was staying in the IGCAR hostel from February 2020 and went missing on Sunday morning after his routine cycling. Police said Sairam’s colleague Siva Krishana alerted his father Pasumarthy Nageswara Rao who lodged a complaint with the Kalpakkam police on Monday.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday afternoon, the Kalpakkam police got an alert from the locals that a half-burnt body of a man was found in Veppenchery cemetery which Mr Rao later identified as his son’s.

The police which registered a case and scrutinised the CCTV footage near the IGCAR. They spotted Sairam buying a can of petrol from a petrol bunk early on Sunday.

Mr Rao told police that Sathya’s engagement was scheduled to take place back home on June 27. Further investigations are underway.

## Centre’s Covid fight a disaster: Cong paper

## HAVE YOU TAKEN JAB, RETORTS BJP

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Comparing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with a “circus’s clown”, the BJP on Tuesday claimed that whenever the country was at a crossroads in its battle against Covid-19, Mr Gandhi and the opposition party try to derail the efforts by playing politics.

Hitting back at Mr Gandhi, the BJP said ever since the global pandemic hit India, the Congress has “really worked tirelessly to create hurdles and obstacles” to the Covid-19 management efforts and once again questioned whether or not the “Congress’ first family” has been vaccinated.

# Amarinder plays his card well, makes panel happy

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday met the high powered committee constituted by the Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

The committee consisting of Mallikarjun Kharge, Harish Rawat and J.P. Agarwal was briefed by the Punjab chief minister over the turmoil prevailing in the Punjab Congress. This was his second meeting with the high-powered

committee in the last couple of days. Insiders claim that Capt. Singh explained all the issues raised against him.

After the meeting committee member Mr Harish Rawat said, “the party is satisfied with whatever was told to us by the Punjab Chief Minister and action taken and enquiry in the sacrilege case and drug case.”

The problem arose in Punjab when former state minister and Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu

opened a front against Captain Amarinder Singh charging him with not keeping his promises to the people of the state.

Congress leader Mr. Rahul Gandhi has also been meeting MPs and MLAs from the state to come to an amicable solution to the problem. Mr Singh is also expected to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi soon.

Insiders claim that utterances of Mr Sidhu have not gone down well with many in the party.

Guwahati, June 22: A National Investigation Agency (NIA) court on Tuesday cleared Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi in one of the two cases against him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 for his alleged role in violent protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in Assam. NIA Special Judge Pranjal Das did not frame charges against Mr Gogoi, who was arrested in December 2019, in connection with the case registered in the Chabua police station.

### THE ULTIMATUM

The bench said that if the order of the court is not complied with, then the poll body will be liable for contempt action.

manner,” the bench said.

The top court was hearing an application filed by Election Commission seeking extension of six months to hold elections to the local bodies in the nine-newly carved out districts of Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, Vellore, Thirupathur, Ranipet, Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Tirunelveli and Tenkasi.

It noted the order of the top court passed on December 6, 2019 and said that instead of four months given to hold the elections, the poll panel has taken 18 months.

“Instead of four months” time, the respondents’

have taken a little more than eighteen months and now seeks six months’ time to complete the exercise of conducting elections,” the bench said.

It also noted that the tenure of the local bodies expired in 2018-19 and since then there were no new elected representatives.

The bench said that if the order of the court is not complied with, then the poll body will be liable for contempt action.

Senior advocate P.S. Narasimha, appearing for the Election Commission of India, said the 2019 order could not be implemented as priority was given to assembly elections in the state and later the focus shifted to West Bengal assembly election.

The bench said local body polls are conducted by State Election Commissions and not by the ECI.

# Gupkar alliance ready for talks

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC**  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 22

The impasse seems to be breaking and the frozen political process in Kashmir may restart with the People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), a major component of the former state’s mainstream camp, on Tuesday agreeing to participate in the all-party meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his official residence on Thursday.

As reported by this newspaper last week, the PAGD is more than ready to bury the hatchet and in an apparent strategic flexibility or change of strategy wants to move away from the path of confrontation and fight on the

issues confronting J&K within the existing system.

However, its leadership on Tuesday sought to dispel the notion that it has divorced or even veered off from its basic plank -- to seek restoration of the erstwhile state’s special constitutional status which was revoked by the Centre on August 5, 2019.

Former J&K chief minister and PAGD president Farooq Abdullah, while announcing the alliance’s decision to attend the all-party meeting on June 24, said: “Our stand is clear and all of you know what our stand is.” He added there was no fixed agenda for the meeting and, therefore, “we can talk on any and every issue”. ■ **P4**



A health worker escorts an elderly woman to receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination centre at Central stadium in Thiruvananthapuram, Tuesday.

— **PTI**

## COURT DROPS UAPA CHARGES ON AKHIL GOGOI

## NO PLAN TO SEEK INFO ON FLASH SALES: CENTRE

New Delhi, June 22: The Centre on Tuesday said it will not seek disclosure of flash sales from e-commerce players to regulate the fraudulent sale of goods and services but will take appropriate action as per the law on consumer complaints.

Discount sales that benefit maximum to consumers will continue, but not fraudulent flash sales on the e-commerce platforms, the government said. Ban on fraudulent flash sales and mis-selling are part of the proposed Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules, 2020. — **PTI**

# SC clears marks criteria for CBSE examinations

**New Delhi, June 22:** 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 examinations have been cancelled due to the Covid-19 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 A.M. 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 K.K. Venugopal, assisting the court in individual



capacity and also appearing for the Centre, that University Grants

Commission (UGC) will issue directives to all the colleges and varsities that admissions be made after the declaration of results by all the boards -- CBSE, CISCE and state boards.

The top court, which dealt with all the major objections of the 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 Mr 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”. — **PTI**



## OTHER STORIES

### Chennai customs seize gold

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The customs officers at the Chennai airport seized gold worth ₹19.78 lakh from a Chennai resident.

According to Chennai customs, based on intelligence, Mohamed Abubacker Jainulabdeen (62) of Chennai, who arrived from Dubai by Emirates flight EK 544 was intercepted at the exit.

The passenger was in a wheelchair and appeared to be nervous. On questioning, he gave evasive replies. On personal search, 4 gold bars of foreign marking weighing 465 grams were found concealed in the pant's inner pocket.

Total, 465 grams of gold valued at ₹19.78 lakh was recovered and seized under Customs Act. Further investigation is in progress.

### Sniffer dog in Thanjavur dead

G. SRINIVASAN | DC  
THANJAVUR JUNE 22

Rajaram, sniffer dog, one of the prime investigators in the dog squad of Thanjavur police, died due to age factor on Tuesday.

The dog was added in the dog squad in 2011, when it was six months old. It was given training in various aspects and used by the police to investigate crimes.

The police could unearth many details in a crime case with the help of Rajaram. The dog served for 10 years in the squad.

The carcass of the dog was buried in the crime branch police office complex with due police respect. A 21 gun salute was given and police officers and men took the carcass in procession and buried. Rajaram belonged to doberman variety.

"Though many dogs like Sachin, Ceaser were in the squad, service of Rajaram could not be forgotten. It attended Republic Day and Independence Day parades. Normally dogs will be kept for eight years. But due to the ability of Rajaram it was kept in service for ten years," policemen associated with the dog recalled.

### Special Silver Needles tea fetches record price at auction

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC  
OOTY, JUNE 22

Two varieties of a new speciality tea called ₹15 Silver Needles Tea" produced by the Billimalai Tea Estate near Coonoor fetched over ₹15,000/- per kg in the special auction held at Coonoor, thus creating a kind of history in tea auction in the hills.

It may be recalled that the century old Billimalai estate, which markets its tea under the brand name of "Avataa", had already pocketed many national as well as international awards for Nilgiri based speciality teas. Avataa, now an iconic brand in speciality tea manufacturing, had stunned the speciality tea arena by producing the 'Silver Needles' tea. While the normal variety of Silver Needles fetched ₹15,300 per kg in the auction, the Silver Needles Excel speciality tea variety fetched ₹16,400 per kg.

G. Udayakumar, CEO, Billimalai tea estate, said that these two varieties of the Silver Needles tea evolved from the Silver Tips speciality tea, which is otherwise called White tea for its silvery appearance. He said that his estate produced the Silver Needles tea targeting the auction for special teas to commemorate the International Tea Day.

"Silver Needle tea is hand cured from tender buds plucked from earmarked clones and is a very precious and delicate tea characterised by white hairs on the leaf. The buds have enjoyed the winter sun and emanate natural flavour leaving a pleasant after-taste. The buds produce a rich body and nice aroma. This speciality tea is rich in antioxidants, as well as other extremely healthful minerals and its light and smooth flavour makes it ideal for accompanying food or soothing in the evening due to its lower level of caffeine" he noted. S.P.Siddarth, a young director of the estate, has been making special efforts for innovation in speciality tea production for quite some time and they are yielding results now.

ENR Vejayashekara, chief production executive, said that the estate invented innovative technology which helps the tea leaves to retain their character and aroma intact which is helpful in making new varieties in speciality teas with a distinct taste and flavour; and, of course, fetching premium prices in the auction.

# Two constables, involved in drunken brawl, suspended

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

Two police constables attached to Teynampet police station were placed under suspension for involving in an alleged drunken brawl with an auto driver on Sunday.

According to police, the incident happened on Sunday night at Thiru Vi Ka quarters.

The constables placed under suspension have been identified as Gnanasekaran and

Constables placed under suspension have been identified as Gnanasekaran and Manikandan. Sources said Manikandan recently returned to Teynampet police station after he was transferred from the station due to his alleged connection with rowdies in the jurisdiction

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nection with history-sheeters and rowdies in the jurisdiction.

The victim identified as Pugazhesan (24) of Teynampet was an auto driver. Police said Pugazhesan was consuming liquor on the roadside in his house, when the two constables in an inebriated condition were passing by, allegedly developed a quarrel with Pugazhesan. The quarrel got heated and the cop duo attacked Pugazhesan. The victim reportedly suffered

injuries and was treated at the hospital.

After the incident, the residents allegedly walked into Anna Arivalayam to report about the police behavior, however senior police officers rushed to the spot and pacified the protesters.

Meanwhile, Pugazhesan's wife Vadivukkarasi lodged a complaint with the police against the two cops, after which they were placed under suspension. An inquiry into the matter is underway.

### Fake sanitation products seized in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The Chennai unit of Intellectual Property Right Enforcement Cell (IPREC) on Tuesday seized fake sanitation and cleaning products in Mylapore.

Based on a tip off regarding the illegal production and sale of fake products being used in cleaning and sanitization, a raid was conducted by IPREC Chennai unit on June 18 at a house on Rajasekaran Street in Mylapore.

During the raid fake and duplicate products being marketed in the brand names like Dettol, Lizol, Vim, Fem, Harpic, Odonil, Pril worth Rs 6 Lakh were seized. A case under section Cr. No. 31/2021 u/s 468, 420 IPC and Sec. 51 (b)(i) r/w 63 Copyright Act, 1957 was registered.

Four accused identified as Sagar Patel, Ramesh Pharma Bhavadiya, Pavan Kumar, and Prakash were arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

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### Vaccination drive picks pace



Youngsters and elderly people stand in a queue to receive Covid vaccine at Chittilapakkam on Tuesday.

— DC

# All car manufacturing units must follow Directorate of Industrial Safety norms: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The Madras high court has said the guidelines recommended by the Directorate of Industrial Safety in the letter of June 18, 2021, should be followed by all the passenger car manufacturing factories till the lockdown is in place and the conditions imposed by the state are not relaxed.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy gave the directive while passing

further interim orders on a petition filed by Workmen of Renault-Nissan (India) Pvt.Ltd.

The bench said in particular, the management of Renault-Nissan will strictly enforce the guidelines and ensure that they are put in place by July 3, 2021, so that the inspecting team from the Directorate of Industrial Safety may assess the same on July 3, 2021.

During such time when the inspecting team visits the manufacturing facility of Renault-Nissan on July 3, 2021, such team will be entitled to interact

with the members of the workmen's union or the individual workmen for the purpose of assessing whether the guidelines are being adhered to. The Directorate of Industrial Safety will file a further report based on the inspection conducted on July 3, 2021, the bench added and posted to July 6, 2021, further hearing of the case.

The bench said the principal bone of contention between the management and the workmen has been the maintenance of a pitch ratio of 3:1 in the assembly lines.

### Timely help



All masjids situated in and around Chepauk distribute food provisions to Imams of mosques in Triplicane area. Rice and necessary items are distributed by masjid committee.

— DC

## Fresh stock of Covaxin arrives in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The Tamil Nadu health department on Tuesday received 3,10,000 doses of the Covaxin vaccine. On Tuesday morning, 62 parcels with 3,10,000 doses of Covaxin vaccine manufactured by Hyderabad-based Bharath Biotech arrived here at Chennai airport in a private flight.

The processing of the shipment at the Chennai airport was completed quickly and it was handed over to Department officials, airport sources said.

In all, 2, 21,090 doses were sent to the Directorate Of Medical And Rural Health Services in Teynampet in Chennai, while the remaining 88,910 doses were sent to be stored at the drug storage unit in Periamet.

## Greens hail TN's 'no' to ONGC exploratory wells

OP ARUL | DC  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

Environmental activists have hailed the decision of the state Government for not granting permission to the ONGC to set up hydrocarbon extraction projects in Ariyalur and Cuddalore districts. Recently the ONGC had sought permission to set up pilot borewells in districts from State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA).

Industries minister Thangam Thennarasu in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Tues-

Industries minister Thangam Thennarasu in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Tuesday reiterated that the state government would not give permission to coal bed methane and shale gas projects that would cause problems for the environment and farmers

day reiterated that the state government would not give permission to coal bed methane and shale gas projects that would cause problems for the environment and farmers. He also said applications of the

ONGC for digging 10 wells in Ariyalur district and 5 wells in Cuddalore district were rejected on June 21. He said the SEIAA had rejected the applications of ONGC since they lacked details about the projects' socio-economic and environmental impact.

He said the government would not grant permission for new oil and gas projects in Tiruvallur, Nagapattinam and Thanjavur districts that had been covered under the Tamil Nadu Protected Agriculture Zone Development Act, 2020 and Kattumannarkoil, Melbhuv-

nagiri, Keerapalayam, Parankipet and Kumaratchi taluks in Cuddalore district and Aranthangi, Avudaiyarkoil, Mannelkudi, Tiruvallur and Karampakkudi in Pudukottai district.

Reacting to the announcement G. Sundarrajan of Povulagin Nanbargal, a NGO, has expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin for rejecting the ONGC's proposal. Citing the government move to set up an expert committee to assess the damage caused by oil, natural gas and hydrocarbon projects

in places in other districts and to obtain the views of the public on the impact on their livelihood and food security, he said the government has taken a bold move in this juncture.

Similarly, KV Elgangeeran, president of Cauvery Delta Farmers Federation, thanked the CM and the government. He said the government has initiated an historic step in protecting the livelihood of farmers and farming activities. If the farmers in the Delta region will be affected if hydrocarbon project implemented in the region, he added.

# Legal prescription to protect medical professionals



Sanjay Pinto

Viral and disturbing videos of doctors in the line of Covid duty being attacked by angry relatives of patients have caused outrage. Even if these crimes are not premeditated but unreasonable spur of the moment outbursts, they reflect a lack of awareness of laws meant to deter offenders and safeguard our medical saviours.

The Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Act, 2020 has a broad definition of "healthcare service personnel" under Section 1A (b) (i) (ii) (iii). It encompasses not just doctors and nurses but also paramedical, community health workers, and "any other

person" involved in the prevention of the outbreak or spread of the disease. So even the door-to-door fever survey workers will come under this protective umbrella.

Section 1A(a) looks at "violence" in 4 different forms - harassment, injury, obstruction and damage to property. The insensitive incidents of discrimination like attempts to evict medical professionals from their homes or clinics, has had a statutory echo. "Harassment" is listed as any act "impacting their living or working conditions or preventing them from discharging their duties." Injury or hurt or intimidation is considered not just within the premises of a clinical establishment but also any other place. Obstruction that causes hindrance to the discharge of their duties is also punishable.



Those who ransack premises of hospitals or clinics need to be aware that the term 'property' is covered under the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, and includes quarantine or isolation facilities and mobile medical units. There is a stiff provision for payment of compensation pegged at twice the fair market value of the damaged property or loss caused to be determined by the court. Failure to

cough up this amount will trigger recovery proceedings under the Revenue Recovery Act, 1890. Authorities like the Collector can, under Section 5, initiate recovery as if it were a land revenue, and also prohibit transfer of the property of the defaulter under Section 6 of the Act.

Under Section 3(2) the commission and abetment of violence against healthcare service professionals, or causing loss or damage to property, will face imprisonment for 3 months and up to 5 years, with fine between fifty thousand and to two lakh rupees. For a more aggravated form of this offence resulting in grievous hurt as defined in Section 320 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and includes disfigurement of the head or face or fracture or dislocation of a bone or tooth, will be punished with imprisonment

ment of 6 months and up to 7 years with fine of a lakh to 5 lakh rupees.

These offences are cognisable and non-bailable, to be investigated by an officer not below the rank of an Inspector, with the investigation completed within a month from the date of registration of the FIR. An endeavour must be made to wrap up the trial in one year. While on the ground, such timelines are seldom adhered to, at the very least, there is legislative intent to provide for a speedy trial.

Soon after the pandemic surfaced in India, the Supreme Court in Jerry Banait Vs Union Of India (2020) had directed States to provide police security to frontline medical warriors.

Three years ago, the Kerala High Court in Abdul Naser V State of Kerala (2018) had labelled violence unleashed on doc-

tors as an "epidemic" and took cognisance of the cascading effect of such attacks in hospitals leading to "a grinding halt" of their functioning, "jeopardising the health of many persons."

The court was referring to unrest and insecurity triggered by attacks on the medical fraternity. Prior to the present amendments in the Epidemic Diseases Act, healthcare professionals in various states have had a protective veneer in the form of local enactments. Here, we have had the Tamil Nadu Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss to Property) Act, 2008. As rightly observed by Justice P.N.Prakash of the Madras High Court in Dr.Uma Sundari.N Vs State (2015) it is the "duty of the Police to afford sufficient protection to them

against assault by disgruntled patients."

Strangely, the recent Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Act that seeks to address a more widespread and serious issue during the pandemic prescribes 6 months and upto 7 years imprisonment, less than Tamil Nadu's 2008 law that provides for a 3 to 10 year jail term. But it's not the quantum as much as the certainty of penal consequences that is the real deterrent.

Dear healthcare friends, the goons who attack you are an aberration and do not represent society. The average citizen is ever grateful for your service. For offenders who lay their hands on you, the prison will be their home.

(The writer is an advocate at the Madras high court, columnist & author)



## OTHER STORIES

## Gang steals ₹48 lakh from SBI cash deposit machines

Chennai, June 22: Abusing technology that is meant to help customers, a gang has stolen Rs 48 lakh from various cash deposit machines of State Bank of India in Tamil Nadu, police said here on Tuesday.

The government owned top lender meanwhile said it has halted the facility to withdraw cash from these machines across the country, as an immediate preventive measure and these could be used only to deposit cash. According to police, a total of Rs 48 lakh has been stolen from Automated Cash Withdrawal and Deposit Machines also known as Cash Deposit Machines (CDM) located in various places including Velachery here. The CDMs provide a 20-second window to customers to take cash away and if it was not done, the cash went back into the machines. If cash was taken, the lid of the machine would slide and get closed. Probe indicated that the suspects first took the cash from the machines (using withdrawal option in such machines) and then prevented the lid from getting closed for a while by using their hands.

The sensors appeared to have misread this action for "cash not being taken away" by customers and sent messages to servers that cash has not been withdrawn. Hence, the related bank accounts were not debited while cash was taken away from machines. Addressing reporters, Police Commissioner Shankar Jiwal said the probe indicated that a small group of men from outside of Tamil Nadu are the suspects. There are leads on the crime and this is the first time cash has been stolen from CDMs using this modus operandi and only the SBI's CDMs were targeted, he said.

"This will not happen again. There was a flaw and this has been blocked (by bank) and such a thing cannot happen by (mis) using that flaw. In the past about one week, similar incidents have been reported from other states as well."

## Squirrels running on power cables led to outages: Minister

Chennai, June 22: Electricity minister V. Senthil Balaji was on Tuesday trolled for his remark that frequent power outages in the state were caused by squirrels running on power lines.

Squirrels which managed to climb the power cables and run on them result in frequent power outages, he claimed.

"In certain places power outages occur when two cables come into contact due to squirrels running on the power cable while

the tree branches rub onto the other line," Balaji reasoned during a press briefing.

Ridiculing him, PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss, an ally of the opposition AIADMK, asked, "wonder what could be the reason for power cuts in Chennai nowadays? Maybe squirrels are running underground in Chennai? #Doubt," he tweeted.

Ramadoss, a medical doctor by profession, said in another tweet, "squirrels run over the power lines where scrub touch-

es the cable, causing power outage: (says) Electricity Minister Senthil Balaji! Science... Science! #TNpowerCuts."

Many social media users also questioned Balaji's logic, while hilarious memes involving squirrels also did the rounds.

During the press briefing, the minister had accused the previous AIADMK government of not initiating maintenance work and said this had led to frequent power cuts.

—PTI

## TN opposes draft ports bill, seeks support of coastal states

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JUNE 22

Chief Minister M. K. Stalin called upon all coastal states and Union Territories in the country to express their objection to the new 'Draft Indian Ports Bill 2021,' which aims to modify the present management model of minor ports, now under the control of state governments.

The new bill proposed to take away the powers of the states and hand them

over to the Union Government, Stalin said in his letter to Chief Ministers of nine states, urging them to 'take joint action to prevent any move to dilute the powers already vested with the States.'

He told the Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Puducherry to oppose the bill during the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) meeting,

called for June 24 to discuss the bill.

The ministry of ports, shipping and waterways has framed the new bill that proposes to transfer the power of managing the ports to MSDC, which has so far been only an advisory body, he said.

Tamil Nadu had already taken up the issue with the Ministry, strongly opposing the steps being taken to reduce the autonomous role of States, he said.

"Further to this, many powers currently exercised by state govern-

ments would be taken over by the Union Government," he said, adding that the existing Indian Ports Act, 1908, entrusts the powers to plan, develop, regulate and control minor ports with the state governments concerned.

"You will agree that the present system has led to good development of minor ports," Stalin told the Chief Ministers, pointing out to them that the new bill, if passed, will have long term adverse implications.

## Beware of artificially ripened fruits in summer

M. ARULOLI | DC TIRUNELVELI, JUNE 22

The soaring temperature and public sentiment about consumption of fruits enhancing natural immunity against Covid have led to increased sales of summer fruits, especially mangoes.

The mango harvest was very good this season but mango farmers were uncertain about a market for their produce due to the stringent lockdown that was in place. They are heaving a sigh of relief now as the market has picked up due to the relaxation of lockdown by the state government leading to easing of supply constraints.

According to a wholesale fruit vendor, on an average around 25 to 30 tonnes of summer seasonal fruits like mango, muskmelon, cucumber, grapes, chikoo and watermelon are being sold on a summer day in Tirunelveli district. The demand for the fruits con-

sidered to be healthier during this pandemic period does, however, come with negative shades as the demand for fruits sees some unscrupulous traders taking resort to artificial ripening of fruits.

According to food activist Dr Charles, it is healthy to consume more fruits during summer season but people should be aware of how fruits are made to glow by artificially ripening them. Calcium carbide, most commonly used for artificial ripening of fruits, especially mangoes, causes stomach ailments like diarrhoea and abdominal pain, said the physician, who added that he has many patients coming with such stomach problems and dizziness caused by consuming artificially ripened fruits.

Artificially ripened fruits could be identified by their yellowish, smooth, wrinkle free and glowing skin, Dr Charles said.

## DMK, AIADMK blame each other

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The ruling DMK and Opposition AIADMK sparred over various issues like management of the coronavirus, vaccination, Neet, electricity supply and price of cement, each pointing fingers at the other on the floor of the Assembly.

When the House assembled for the second day to discuss the motion for thanks to the Governor's Address on Tuesday, obituary references were made for 13 ex-MLAs and four other prominent personalities, including actor Vivekh and Tamil writer Ki Ra.

During the discussions, AIADMK member C Vijayabaskar reminded the DMK that it had promised to do away with Neet if it came to power and wanted to know if the eligibility examination for medical admission would be held this year or on.

He also spoke about the coronavirus crisis, warning the government of the

imminent third wave, which he said could affect children. He asked the government it was prepared to face it as more beds would be required to accommodate the parents of hospitalised children.

Health minister M Subramanian said that the government was prepared to face the third wave. He also said the government had undertaken vaccination as a movement and that an average of 1,34,926 persons were being vaccinated daily as against the daily figure of 61,000 during the AIADMK regime.

Thenarasu also clarified that the state government had rejected all the applications made by the ONGC for exploration, drilling and production of 15 oil wells – five in Cuddalore district and 10 in Ariyalur district. All proposals for such hydrocarbon products had been shot down, he said.

Minister for Cooperation I. Periyasamy rebutted a charge of Vijayabaskar that farmers whose loans were written off had not

## Cement price falls

Industries Minister Thangam Thenarasu, replying to a charge by AIADMK's Pollachi Jayaram on the prices of construction material shooting through the roof, said that it has been brought down.

He discounted Jayaram's charge that the prices went up after the DMK took charge and said that the price of a bag of cement was ₹470 in March. Then it went up to ₹490 and due to the efforts of the present government had been brought down to ₹460, the Minister said.

been given the 'receipts', without which they would not be eligible for another loan. Periyasamy said most of the farmers had been given the 'receipt' and clarified that there was no bar on anyone applying for the next loan. To a charge that the DMK government had not fulfilled its poll promises, PWD Minister E V Velu said that the government had not only fulfilled the promises given but also done more.

He cited the example of paying ₹4,000 to card holders as relief to compensate for the loss of livelihood in the pandemic and said that an additional relief of a package of 14 grocery items were also supplied

to the people.

Velu asked the AIADMK member to wait for five years and see how many of the promises that the government failed to fulfil.

Raising the issue of opening wine shops during the lockdown, AIADMK member S Ravi said the DMK had created a hue and cry when the previous government opened the TASMACH shop by holding protests.

V Senthil Balaji, Minister for Prohibition, said the Tasmach shops were opened because wine shops had opened in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Puducherry and liquor was smuggled in and sold for even ₹1,000

per bottle.

He said that there were even incidents of bootlegging being carried out through vegetable trucks entering the State from Karnataka.

With Balaji saying that during the AIADMK regime the Tasmach shops were subsequently closed due to court orders and such a thing had not happened now, Leader of the Opposition Edappadi K Palaniswami intervened.

He clarified that his party member was just pointing out that the liquor shops were opened at a time when the number of Covid-19 cases was high.

AIADMK coordinator O. Panneerselvam also spoke out when Balaji, who is also in charge of electricity, gave an evasive reply to a question by Ravi on the power cuts.

Panneerselvam said that his member had only pointed out that power cuts had come in after the DMK took charge but the Minister was trying to blame it on the poor maintenance in the last nine months.

## COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



**Aries:** Luck definitely seems to be on your side. Make sure you avoid behaving roughly with colleagues even if you are unhappy with their performance.



**Taurus:** Some of you might face financial crunch. Ignoring the feelings of your partner could bring some setbacks in love life.



**Gemini:** Teachers and artists get due recognition for their work. You are likely to raise capital through collecting outstanding debts or asking for funds for projects.



**Cancer:** Professionals engaged in official work are likely to find environment very congenial. The day promises to bring prosperity and financial security.



**Leo:** Make sure you don't neglect family traditions and values for personal gains. Patients with gastric problem must avoid oily diet to prevent illness.



**Virgo:** Children will have to strive hard to live up to family's expectations. Herbal treatment would provide a solace from minor aches. Take care of your health and spend time with partner.

## You share your b'day with

**Zinedine Zidane, a French former professional football player who played as an attacking midfielder. He recently coached Real Madrid and is one of the most successful coaches in the world.**



**Libra:** Your communication skills would immensely help in motivating subordinates. Rigid attitude would create problems at romantic front.



**Scorpio:** There is a possibility of arguments with senior officials. Failure to understand your partner's needs may lead to misunderstandings and negativity.



**Sagittarius:** Promotional chances with additional responsibilities are possible for some of you. The day would help in keeping your financial position upbeat.



**Capricorn:** A secret personal wish is likely to be fulfilled. Time to engage yourself in some recreational activities with other family members. Don't splurge on unnecessary purchases.

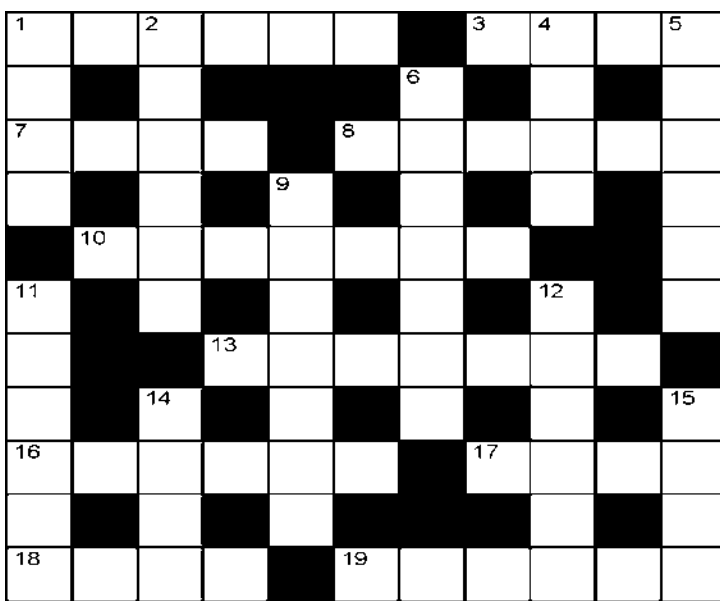


**Aquarius:** Failure in tightening the domestic budget could give rise to unnecessary expenses. Don't forget to take the suggestions of family members before making any alterations at home.



**Pisces:** Investing surplus money in secure financial schemes for long-term will lay the foundation for monetary gains. You enjoy every moment of your romance today.

## QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

- Purchased (6)
- Overabundance (4)
- Quick run (4)
- Thrifty (6)
- Go before (7)
- Train stop (7)
- Prolonged hug (6)
- Bench clamp (4)
- Arithmetic (4)
- Moved back and forth (6)

Down

- Unopened flowers (4)
- Hesitant (6)
- Racing toboggan (4)
- At an angle (6)
- Learned (7)
- Deliberately sink (7)
- Summary (6)
- Make alterations to (6)
- Dutch cheese (4)
- Fuse together with heat (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

**Across:** 1. Gullible, 7. Exile, 8. Chasm, 9. Outlaw, 10. Inca, 12. Pact, 14. Cornet, 17. Still, 18. Dogma, 19. Escargot.

**Down:** 1. Guilt, 2. Leeway, 3. Itch, 4. Learn, 5. Decompose, 6. Impartial, 11. Topdog, 13. Coins, 15. Night, 16. Ulna.

## Word Mine

Y  
U  
T  
I  
A  
L  
B  
I  
S

TODAY'S RATINGS: 9 AVERAGE; 10 GOOD; 12 OUTSTANDING

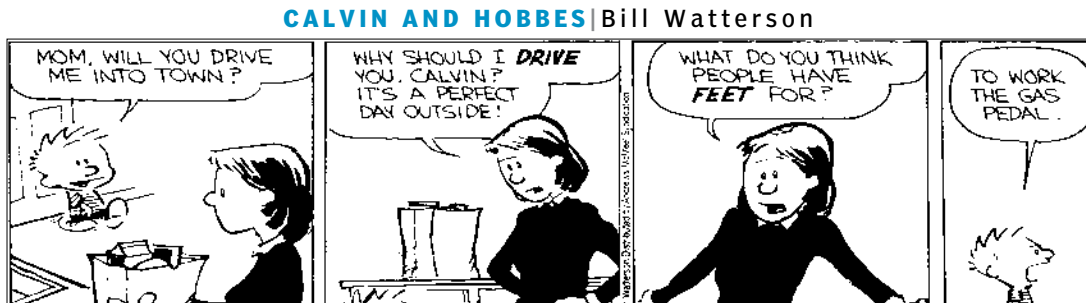
How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

Answers: Yesterday's: 1. Gullible, 7. Exile, 8. Chasm, 9. Outlaw, 10. Inca, 12. Pact, 14. Cornet, 17. Still, 18. Dogma, 19. Escargot. Today's: 1. YUTALBIS, 2. YUTALBIS, 3. YUTALBIS, 4. YUTALBIS, 5. YUTALBIS, 6. YUTALBIS, 7. YUTALBIS, 8. YUTALBIS, 9. YUTALBIS, 10. YUTALBIS, 11. YUTALBIS, 12. YUTALBIS, 13. YUTALBIS, 14. YUTALBIS, 15. YUTALBIS, 16. YUTALBIS, 17. YUTALBIS, 18. YUTALBIS, 19. YUTALBIS.

## jumble

ESYED  
ILFYI  
COILAS  
DOEUXS

Answers: Yesterday's: 1. Gullible, 7. Exile, 8. Chasm, 9. Outlaw, 10. Inca, 12. Pact, 14. Cornet, 17. Still, 18. Dogma, 19. Escargot. Today's: 1. YUTALBIS, 2. YUTALBIS, 3. YUTALBIS, 4. YUTALBIS, 5. YUTALBIS, 6. YUTALBIS, 7. YUTALBIS, 8. YUTALBIS, 9. YUTALBIS, 10. YUTALBIS, 11. YUTALBIS, 12. YUTALBIS, 13. YUTALBIS, 14. YUTALBIS, 15. YUTALBIS, 16. YUTALBIS, 17. YUTALBIS, 18. YUTALBIS, 19. YUTALBIS.



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli &amp; Craig Boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



## RING AN ALARM TO GUIDE PARTNER



A.N. Anonymous said, "Many of us have heard opportunity knocking at our door, but by the time we unhooked the chain, pushed back the bolt, turned two locks and shut off the burglar alarm, it was gone."

We have an alarm bid in bridge, which could have saved East-West in this deal. But first, what do you think of the auction, and how did South play in six diamonds after West led the heart

seven? South chose not to employ the Michaels Cue-Bid (see yesterday's column), perhaps because the diamonds were longer and much stronger than the spades. North did well to run from four spades, a contract that would have failed if West had led a minor. Five diamonds was cold, but South, perhaps imagining that his partner had only a singleton spade, moved on to slam. Any nonheart card would

have been successful, but West led his partner's suit. Declarer played low from the board and ruffed with the diamond 10. Then he cashed the diamond ace and diamond king, played the diamond four to dummy's nine and ran the hearts. His 12 tricks were five hearts, six diamonds and the club ace.

How could West have known to lead something other than a heart? When South bid six dia-

monds, he would have been anticipating a heart lead and was presumably prepared for it. So, West might have selected a different suit. But perhaps East should have doubled the final contract. This would have been a Lightner Slam Double, asking for an unusual lead – not the suit bid by East or a trump.

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SHORT TAKES

SENA SAYS LEADERS BEING HARASSED

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 22

Shiv Sena on Tuesday tried to downplay the Pratap Sarnaik letter issue saying that the matter of ‘unnecessary harassment’ by the central investigative agencies can be raised with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the party MLA’s letter will be sent to him for his information.

“The Shiv Sena leaders are facing unnecessary harassment from the central investigative agencies. Pratap Sarnaik has written a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray urging him to ‘team up with BJP’ if the harassment is to be avoided. It can be his personal opinion. However, those who feel that this is an indication of change of power in Maharashtra are ‘kuchcha limbus’ (unripe lemons) in politics,” said Sena in an editorial in party mouthpiece *Saamana* on Tuesday.

The essence of Mr Sarnaik’s letter is that MLAs of MVA Government are being made to face unnecessary harassment due to BJP’s wrath of losing the power in Maharashtra. The word ‘unnecessary harassment’ is important here. The central investigative agencies like CBI, ED, Excise, NIA are being used for political reasons, said the party.

SC RELIEF FOR NAVNEET IN CERTIFICATE CASE

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the Bombay High Court’s June 9 order cancelling the caste certificate of Navneet Kaur Rana – an independent member of Lok Sabha from Amravati reserved constituency in Maharashtra.

A vacation bench of Justice Vineet Saran and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari issued notice to the Maharashtra government and others, including the person who had complained against Navneet Kaur Rana’s caste certificate.

The High Court had not only cancelled her caste certificate obtained allegedly using fabricated documents but also imposed a fine of ₹2 lakh on her.

Rana, backed by Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), had won from Amravati constituency reserved for Scheduled Castes (SC) in the state in 2019 by claiming to be a member of ‘Mochi’ scheduled caste.

The high court verdict, if not stayed, would have made Rana’s continuance as the Scheduled Castes lawmaker legally untenable.

COMBAT EXERCISE BY IAF, US NAVY

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE

The Indian Air Force and the Navy will participate in a major combat exercise with US Navy from Wednesday in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to further strengthen their military-to-military relations with an eye on China.

The two days exercise will be carried out with US carrier strike group (CSG) led by nuclear powered aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan along with Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer USS Halsey and Ticonderoga class guided missile cruiser USS Shiloh.

The CSG is currently deployed in the IOR.

The Indian Air Force maritime-strike Jaguars and Su-30 MKI fighters, along with AWACS, AEW&C and air to air refueller aircraft will participate in the exercise. IAF forces will operate from bases under four operational commands. From Indian Navy Indian Naval Ships Kochi and Teg along with P8I and MiG 29K aircraft are participating.

The US CSG is expected to field F-18 fighters and E-2C Hawkeye AEW&C aircraft. The exercise will be carried out south of Thiruvananthapuram, on the western seaboard, over two days.

The naval operations during the exercise include advanced air defence exercises, cross deck helicopter operations and anti-submarine exercises. The participating forces will endeavour to hone their war-fighting skills and enhance their interoperability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the maritime domain.

NARADA CASE: SC TO HEAR MAMATA PLEA ON JUNE 25

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The Supreme Court on Tuesday set for June 25 a plea by West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and state law minister Moly Ghatak challenging the Calcutta high court’s refusal to accept their affidavit contesting the CBI’s plea that they obstructed the arrest and subsequent production of accused TMC leaders in the Narada scam case before the trial court.

Justice Aniruddha Bose earlier recused himself from hearing the matter and the petitions were listed before vacation bench of Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari.

A five-judge bench of the Calcutta high court is hearing a plea by the CBI seeking transfer of the Narada case allegedly involving TMC leaders outside West Bengal.

While directing the listing of the three petitions by the CM, the state law minister and the State of West Bengal itself on June 25, the bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari asked the Calcutta high c court not to go ahead with its hearing on the matter listed before it on Wednesday or any date prior to June 25. “We hope the high court will not take up the hearing prior to June 25,” the Supreme Court said.

Ordering the hearing on Friday, the bench said the judges have to go through the case file. The matter was listed before the bench of Justices Saran and Maheshwari after Justice Aniruddha Bose, who was part of the bench headed by Justice Hemant Gupta, had recused himself.



Vehicles stuck in a traffic jam in central business district after certain restrictions of lockdown were eased in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

— PTI

Opposition leaders meet but no signs of a third front yet

NC, Left, AAP leaders attend meet at Pawar’s house; Cong leaders stay away

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The eight-party meet held at Maharashtra strongman and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar’s residence here turned out to be a non-starter for a united Opposition Third Front as was earlier being perceived.

The meeting, that drew a lot of media attention as heralding the formation of a third front against the BJP juggernaut, was eventually termed as a “non-political meet” by the NCP. Speaking to reporters, NCP leader Majeed Memon, who was among

those present the meeting, said: “The meeting was called by Yashwant Sinha, not Sharad Pawar, this was not a political meeting. There are talks that the meeting was for a Third Front without the Congress, which is not the truth. There is no discrimination. We called all like-minded people. We also invited Congress leaders. I called Vivek Tanha, Manish Tewari, Abhishek “Manu” Singhvi and Shatrughan Sinha for the meeting. They couldn’t come. It’s not true that we didn’t invite the Congress.”

As the meeting was taking place at Mr Pawar’s

house who is skilled at stitching up tricky alliances, many projected it as a precursor to a larger Opposition alliance before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. “Yashwant Sinha heads the Rashtra Manch. He asked to meet with Mr Pawar. So, the meeting is an initiative of the Rashtra Manch,” said NCP leader Praful Patel. Insiders claimed that neither Mr Pawar nor his party had sent out any invitations. “This is a highly overrated and speculative meeting,” they said.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah, RLD’s Jayant Choudhary,

Samajwadi Party’s Ghanshyam Tiwari, AAP leader Sushil Gupta, CPI’s Binoy Viswam and CPI(M) leader Nilotpal Basu were among those who attended the meeting. Others at the gathering included retired Justice A.P. Shah, former ambassador K.C. Singh and lyricist Javed Akhtar. In addition, former Congress leader Sanjay Jha and former JD(U) leader Pavan K. Varma also attended.

“It was not a political meeting but an interaction among like-minded people. Issues like Covid-19 management, the ‘attack’ on institutions and unemploy-

ment were discussed,” Mr Nilotpal Basu told reporters.

The surprising aspect of the meeting was that no important leader of the attending parties was present.

A senior Congress leader remarked that there could be no Opposition unity if the Congress Party was not included. He remarked, on condition of anonymity, that if the Rashtra Manch leaders were serious about a joint Opposition front they should have approached Congress president Sonia Gandhi and she would have deputed someone.

GUPKAR ALLIANCE READY FOR TALKS

FROM PG 1

Elucidating it, PAGD spokesman and CPM leader Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami said: “We will not ask for the moon. We will seek (return of) something that is ours and will remain ours.” He added: “We will put forth the aspirations of people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the meeting. Whatever is possible within the Indian Constitution is what we are going to seek.”

Muzaffar A. Shah of the Awami National Conference hastened to add: “There can be no compromise on Articles 370 and 35A.”

Dr Abdullah said he along with Tarigami and People’s Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, PAGD’s vice-president, will attend the Prime Minister’s meeting. He did not say why his son and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, who is among the four former CMs of the erstwhile state invited for the meet, has been excluded from the PAGD delegation.

Ms Mufti said a suggestion was made at Tuesday’s meeting of its leaders that only Dr Farooq Abdullah may represent the PAGD in the June 24 meeting, but later the participants arrived at consensus on all invitees attending it.

‘Delta Plus’ found making inroads

FROM PG 1

NSACOG, a consortium of 28 government laboratories, has said that the Delta Plus variant, now a “Variant of Concern”, has characteristics like increased transmissibility, stronger binding to receptors of lung cells and potential reduction in monoclonal antibody response.

The ‘Delta Plus’ mutant has been found in nine countries in all – India, the United States, Britain, Portugal, Switzerland, Japan, Poland, China and Russia. The “Delta” variant is now in 80 countries. “Based on the recent findings of INSACOG, the Union health ministry has alerted and advised Maharashtra, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh on the Delta Plus variant of Covid-19 being found in some districts in these states. The Centre has sent an advisory to these states today explaining what kind of public health response should initiate to address this issue, which (now) looks fairly small in terms of numbers. But we would not like these to assume significant proportions and take a bigger form,” said Mr Bhushan. He added genome sequencing of 45,000 samples has

been done so far and the scientists are constantly monitoring the virus and its mutations.

Officials said the three states were advised that public health response measures, while broadly remaining the same as implemented earlier, have to be more focused and effective. The states’ chief secretaries have been advised to take up immediate containment measures in the districts and clusters (as identified by INSACOG), including preventing crowds and intermingling of people, widespread testing, prompt tracing as well as vaccine coverage on a priority basis. They were also advised to ensure that adequate samples of positive persons are promptly sent to the designated laboratories of INSACOG so that clinical epidemiological correlations can be made for further guidance to be provided to states.

India on Tuesday reported 42,640 new Covid-19 cases in the past 24 hours, which came down under 50,000 for the first time in 91 days. The fatalities too are on the decline, 1,167 deaths reported in 24 hours. The country’s recovery rate has increased to reach 96.49 per cent.

IF INDIA CAN TALK TO TALIBAN, WHY NOT WITH PAK? : MEHBOOBA MUFTI

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, JUNE 22

Former chief minister and president of People’s Democratic Party (PDP), Mehbooba Mufti, on Tuesday urged the Narendra Modi government to resume peace dialogue with Pakistan at earliest, asserting that harmonious and good neighbourly relations between the two countries leave a positive impact on the internal situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ms. Mufti who is among the 14 mainstream politicians of J&K who have been invited to an all-party meet to be chaired by the Prime Minister at his residence on Thursday said that if India could talk to the Taliban in Afghanistan what was the harm in resuming a comprehensive bilateral dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the outstanding issue including Kashmir.

She said, “They (India) are talking to the Taliban in Doha. They should talk with everyone in Jammu and Kashmir and with Pakistan as well for the resolution (of Kashmir issue).”

A report from Doha had earlier quoted Mulla bin Majed al-Qahtani, a senior Qatari diplomat involved in the Afghan peace process, as saying that Indian officials have engaged in the talks with the Taliban at Doha.

Ms. Mufti while speaking to reporters after the leaders of People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) met here said that in order to restore peace in the region it was equally imperative to undo the “illegal and unconstitutional” abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A which guaranteed a special status to J&K within the Indian Union. “You must return what you have snatched from us,” she reiterated.

NIA OPPOSES BAIL PLEA OF KASHMIRI WOMAN

**New Delhi, June 22:** The NIA has opposed the bail application of a Kashmiri woman before a Delhi court in a case of allegedly planning a terror attack in the country during the anti-CAA protests here.

The probe agency told the court that Hina Bashir Beg, arrested along with her husband Jahanzaib Sami and another accused Abdul Basith last year for their alleged link to the ISIS, incited Muslims against non-Muslims and “excite disaffection” against Indian State.

It claimed that the accused was promoting the Islamic State’s ideology and instigating protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The agency alleged that they were motivated by the ideology of proscribed terrorist organisation Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS) and were working for another banned terrorist organisation Islamic State - Khorasan Province.

— PTI

NAME | BLUNDER

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JUNE 22

In what has triggered a major controversy and anger in the frontier state of Arunachal Pradesh, the Border Road Organisation (BRO), in order to avoid any confrontation with China, not only renamed a town of the frontier state but also showed it as part of Assam during a programme attended by union defence minister Rajnath Singh on June 17.

**BRO says it did so to evade Chinese objection over the project and Rajnath’s visit to Arunachal**

BRO ‘renames’ Arunachal’s Kimin as Billgarh

Mr Singh had dedicated to the nation 12 BRO roads — all in Arunachal Pradesh except one each in the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir — from Kimin. But the BRO projected the place as Billgarh in Assam and had whitewashed all signs that had any reference to Kimin or Arunachal Pradesh.

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union and local organisations in Kimin, a town in

Arunachal Pradesh’s Papum Pare district have demanded an apology from the BRO for the “blunder” that they said was done deliberately to let a “certain country” know that the Indian defence minister visited Assam and not Arunachal Pradesh, the state it claimed.

The clarification of the Border Road Organisation that they renamed “Kimin” of Arunachal Pradesh as “Billgarh” of

● **THE ALL ARUNACHAL Pradesh Students’ Union and local organisations in Kimin, a town in Arunachal Pradesh’s Papum Pare district, have demanded an apology from the BRO.**

Assam to evade Chinese objection over the project and union minister’s visit to Arunachal Pradesh has invited more angry reaction among the people of the frontier state.

“This has not gone down well among the people of Arunachal Pradesh. They are extremely patriotic. They are of the view that New Delhi shouldn’t succumb to any Chinese objection,” said Mr Jarpum Gamlin in his social media posts.

Union minister for sports and youth affairs Kiren Rijiju also jumped into the controversy. Taking to the social media on June 21, he said that BRO made a “gross mis-

take” that needed urgent rectification.

“A serious mistake was committed by the BRO during the inauguration of 11 new and old widened roads in Arunachal Pradesh by mentioning Kimin as Assam. The matter came to my notice after the event and I immediately conveyed to BRO for urgent rectification of the mistake, which happened without the knowledge of the defence minister and the Arunachal govern-

ment,” he wrote.

Arunachal chief minister Pema Khandu said that the BRO’s error was unfortunate. “The Arunachal government came to know about the inauguration programme quite late. The public leaders of Kimin later apprised the government that the sign boards displaying Arunachal’s name and other mentions of the state were covered with white papers pasted by the BRO,” he told reporters.



## SHORT TAKES

JUDGE DISMISSES  
BID TO LOCK UP  
FUJIMORI

**Lima, June 22:** A Peruvian judge on Monday dismissed a prosecutor's request for the detention of corruption-accused presidential hopeful Keiko Fujimori while the country awaits the outcome of June 6 elections in which she vied for the top job.

Fujimori, who narrowly trails leftist rival Pedro Castillo according to the unconfirmed vote count, risks an imminent corruption trial if she loses the race. If she wins, it will be delayed until after her term.

Fujimori has already spent 16 months in pre-trial detention on charges of taking money from scandal-tainted Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht to fund failed presidential bids in 2011 and 2016.

SARKOZY FACES  
JAIL TERM IN POLL  
FINANCING TRIAL

**Paris, June 22:** The trial of former French President Nicolas Sarkozy concludes Tuesday in Paris, after a month during which the court sought to determine whether he broke laws on campaign financing in his unsuccessful 2012 re-election bid.

The verdict is expected to be rendered at a later date. Prosecutors have requested a six-month prison term, as well as a six-month suspended sentence and a fine of 3,750 euros (\$4,468). Sarkozy, France's president from 2007 to 2012, denies wrongdoing. He is accused of having spent almost twice the maximum legal amount of 22.5 million euros (\$27.5 million) on the re-election bid that he lost to Socialist Francois Hollande.

THREE, INCLUDING  
OFFICER, SUSPECT  
KILLED IN DENVER

**Arvada (US), June 22:** A gunman is believed to have shot and killed an officer and another person in a shopping district in a Denver suburb before being fatally shot by police, authorities said.

An officer responded to a call at 1:15 pm on Monday about a suspicious incident near the library in the city of Arvada, and about 15 minutes later, a 911 call came in about shots fired and the officer hit, Deputy Chief Ed Brady said at a news conference. Another person believed to have been shot by the gunman was taken to a hospital and died, police said. The attacker also was shot and killed. Authorities didn't immediately describe the circumstances of the shooting.

CARCASSES OF  
TURTLES ON  
LANKA SHORE

**Colombo, June 22:** Nearly a hundred carcasses of turtles with throat and shell damage, as well as dozens of dead dolphins and a blue whale, have washed ashore in Sri Lanka since a container ship burned and sank, raising fears of a severe marine disaster.

Ecologists believe the deaths were directly caused by the fire and release of hazardous chemicals while the Singapore-flagged X-Press Pearl burned for 12 days and sank last week off Sri Lanka's main port in the capital Colombo.

Government officials, however, said these causes were "provisionally" confirmed and the investigation was continuing. The fire started on the ship on May 20 and dead marine species started washing ashore days later. A ship manifest seen by *The Associated Press* said 81 of the ship's nearly 1,500 containers held "dangerous" goods.

The Sri Lankan navy believes the blaze was caused by its chemical cargo, most of which was destroyed in the fire. But debris, including burned fiberglass and tonnes of plastic pellets have severely polluted the surrounding waters and a long stretch of the island nation's famed beaches. Post-mortem analysis on the carcasses are being performed at five government-run laboratories and separately by the Government Analysts Department, said an official of the wildlife department who spoke on condition of anonymity as the official was not authorised to speak to the media.

## Protest rocks Paris



Demonstrators stand on the top of a truck during a rally called by the National Federation of Mines and Energy — General Confederation of Labour (FNME-CGT trade union) — in Paris on Tuesday. The workers are protesting against the Hercule project which is aimed at restructuring the French energy Group Engie. — AFP

Oli's appointment of  
20 ministers quashed

## Unconstitutional, rules SC as Nepal's political crisis worsens

**Kathmandu, June 22:** (PTI) In a major blow to beleaguered Nepal Prime Minister K.P. 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 Chandra 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 Mahata from Janata Samajwadi Party and Raghuraj 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 Prime Minister.

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

The court passed the judgement on petitions filed on June 7 by six individuals, including senior advocate Dinesh Tripathi, demanding that the Cabinet expansions by the caretaker government of Oli be quashed.

Oli, 69, who is heading a minority government after losing a trust vote in the House last month, expanded his Cabinet on June 10 and June 4, inducting 17 ministers, amid widespread criticism and the ongoing political crisis in the Himalayan nation. Three state ministers were also appointed.

"The Supreme Court has issued an interim order asking not to allow the ministers appointed after the House dissolution to function," said senior advocate Tripathi. The Supreme Court has cited Article 77 (3) in its ruling to quash the appointments.

It states if the Office of the Prime Minister falls vacant after the prime minister fails to win a vote of confidence or resigns, the same Council of Ministers shall continue to act until another Council of Ministers is constituted, the report said.

The petitioners had argued that since the government has already turned into a caretaker status following the announcement of the elections, the Constitution does not allow such a prime minister to appoint new ministers. The development comes when the Supreme Court is hearing the case regarding the reinstatement of the 275-member House of Representatives, which was dissolved by President Bidya Devi Bhandari on May 22 at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli.

— PTI

US chambers seeks to  
double H-1B visa quota

**Washington, June 22:** The powerful US Chamber of Commerce has launched a massive campaign to address the acute shortage of skilled and professional workforce in America, prominent among which includes urging the Biden administration and Congress to double the number of H-1B visas and eliminate per-country quota for the Green Card.

The most sought-after H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The demand to increase the H-1B quota, which currently is at 65,000 and another 20,000 for those who have higher studies from the US, is part of the America Works campaign launched by the US Chambers of Commerce early this month.

3 We must arm workers with the skills they need, we must remove barriers that are keeping too many Americans on the sidelines, and we must recruit the very best from around the world to help fill high-demand jobs

— SUZANNE CLARK  
President, US Chamber of Commerce

"As we stand on the cusp of what could be a great American resurgence, a worker shortage is holding back job creators across the country," US Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Suzanne Clark said.

Through the America Works Agenda, the US Chamber is calling for doubling the cap on employment-based visas, doubling the quota on H-1B and H-2B visas and implementing other reforms to the legal immigration system to help employers meet the demand for high-demand

jobs in labour-strapped sectors.

It is also calling for growing federal investments in employer-led job education and training programmes and expanding access to childcare for working parents.

"We must arm workers with the skills they need, we must remove barriers that are keeping too many Americans on the sidelines, and we must recruit the very best from around the world to help fill high-demand jobs," Clark said.

The Chamber called for changes to be made on the issuance of employment-based immigrant visas including doubling the cap on employment-based immigrant visas from 140,000/year to 280,000/-year. Eliminate the practice of counting spouses and minor children under the annual Green Card quota, which, if done alone, would practically double the amount of employment-based immigrant workers our nation admits every year, it said.

— PTI

Pak won't host US  
bases, says Imran

**Islamabad, June 22:** 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, he 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 air base in Balochistan to carry out drone strikes since 2008 that focused on suspected Al Qaeda operatives in mountainous tribal areas, but also crossed the border into Afghanistan. "If the US, 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 our bases?" Khan asked.

He, 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. — PTI



Kim Yo Jong

KIM'S SISTER: NO  
CHANCE OF TALKS  
WITH U.S.

**Seoul, June 22:** The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed prospects for an early resumption of diplomacy with the United States, saying Tuesday that US expectations of talks would "plunge them into a greater disappointment." Kim Yo Jong's blunt statement indicates that the diplomatic impasse over North Korea's nuclear programme is likely to continue unless the North suffers greater economic and pandemic-related difficulties, some experts said.

Hope for a restart of nuclear talks flared briefly after Kim Jong Un said last week that his country must be ready for both dialogue and confrontation, though more for confrontation. US National Security adviser Jake Sullivan called Kim's comments an "interesting signal".

On Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong derided Sullivan's response. "It seems that the US may interpret the situation in such a way as to seek a comfort for itself," the official Korean Central News Agency quoted her as saying.

"The expectation, which they chose to harbor the wrong way, would plunge them into a greater disappointment," Shin Beomchul, an analyst with the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, said North Korea has been communicating the same message for months.

## Those refusing vax go to India: Duterte

Deaths in nursing homes up  
32% in 2020 amid pandemic

**Washington, June 22:** Deaths among Medicare patients in nursing homes soared by 32% last year, with two devastating spikes eight months apart, a government watchdog reported Tuesday in the most comprehensive look yet at the ravages of Covid-19 among its most vulnerable victims.

The report from the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services found that about 4 in 10 Medicare recipients in nursing homes had or likely had Covid-19 in 2020, and that deaths overall jumped by

169,291 from the previous year, before the coronavirus appeared.

"We knew this was going to be bad, but I don't think even those of us who work in this area thought it was going to be this bad," said Harvard health policy professor David Grabowski, a nationally recognised expert on long-term care, who reviewed the report for *The Associated Press*.

"This was not individuals who were going to die anyway," Grabowski added. "We are talking about a really big number of excess deaths." Investigators used a generally accep-

PAKISTAN TO  
BUY 1.3 CRORE  
PFIZER VACCINES

**Islamabad, June 22:** Pakistan has signed an agreement with Pfizer to procure 1.3 crore doses of the American Covid-19 vaccine, a media report said on Tuesday. An agreement was signed between Pfizer Pakistan and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Monday to supply 1.3 crore doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (BNT-162b2), *Dawn* newspaper reported. The delivery of the 13 million doses (1.3 crores) is planned during 2021, it said.

— AP

## RODENT | SCOURGE

## Carcasses, excrement are polluting farmers' water tanks

## Oz to evacuate prison after mice attack

**Canberra, June 22:** A plague of mice that has ravaged vast swathes of eastern Australia has forced the evacuation of a prison while authorities repair gnawed electrical wiring and clear dead and decaying mice from walls and ceilings.

Around 200 staff and 420 inmates will be transferred from the Wellington Correctional Center in rural New South Wales state to other prisons in the region during the next 10 days

while cleaning and repairs take place, Corrective Services Commissioner Peter Severin said on Tuesday. "The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and inmates is our No. 1 priority so it's important for us to act now to carry out the vital remediation work," Severin said.

Millions of mice have caused havoc in the grain-growing region of Australia's most populous state for months, devouring crops and haystacks

as well as invading homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and prisons.

The most common complaint about the plague is an ever-present stench of mice urine and decaying flesh. People report being bitten by mice in bed.

Mouse carcasses and excrement in roof gutters are polluting farmers' water tanks and causing sickness. The remediation work at the prison will include investigating ways to protect the facility from

future mice plagues, which are a phenomenon largely unique to Australia.

Plagues usually happen when rain follows several years of drought. The current plague is the worst that many can remember in some areas. Severin said the mice infestation was worst in prison buildings that weren't built from concrete.

"The mice have got into... wall cavities, into roof spaces. They're dead

but then they start obviously decaying and then the next problem is mites," Severin told *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*.

Government mouse researcher Steve Henry said mice numbers had begun to plateau as the species always stops breeding during the Southern Hemisphere winter. But numbers could explode again if conditions are right in the spring. — AP

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Chief Purchase Officer/ MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, 2nd floor, Multistory Building, The Mall, Patiala, invites E-Tender for Procurement of 1,60,000 Nos. HT Guy Strain Insulators Brown glazed, 9000 Kg. strength as per Fig-3 and Designation-C of IS-5300 (with latest amendments, if any) and as per PSPCL specification QQ-2318/ PSPCL/PO-P. For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to <a href="https://eproc.punjab.gov.in">https://eproc.punjab.gov.in</a> from 22.06.2021 onwards.	
NOTE: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <a href="https://eproc.punjab.gov.in">https://eproc.punjab.gov.in</a>	
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GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU <b>RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT</b> <b>STATE RURAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY</b> <b>Periodic Renewal of PMGSY Roads</b> <b>(Financial Incentive under PMGSY-2020-21)</b>	
1. For details, visit <a href="http://www.pmgstyenderstn.gov.in">www.pmgstyenderstn.gov.in</a> 2. e-Bids are invited by the Project Director, DRDA (33 Districts), for Periodic Renewal of PMGSY Roads, package wise, under two cover system 3. The Package wise bid documents can be downloaded at free of cost from <a href="http://www.pmgstyenderstn.gov.in">www.pmgstyenderstn.gov.in</a> from 28.06.2021 to 14.07.2021 4. Common Date and Time for downloading of Bid document, submission and opening	
(i) Last Date and Time for downloading and Online Submission of Bid Documents	14.07.2021 Upto 3.00 PM
(ii) Date and Time of online opening of Bid Documents	14.07.2021 - 4.00 PM onwards
DIRECTOR, D/PR/1810/TENDER/2021 RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT	



## DECCAN Chronicle

23 JUNE 2021

### Yes we can: Jab milestone proves poor policy villain

India crossed a new milestone in its vaccination programme against Covid-19 pandemic on Monday when it administered 88.09 lakh doses, a record till now. The day also marks the launch of the revised vaccination policy that provides for the procurement of 75 per cent of the total vaccine available by the Union government for distribution to the states, scrapping the “Liberalised Vaccination Policy” which handed over the responsibility of inoculating people aged between 18 and 44 to the state governments. The government also had dropped its insistence on the people registering themselves on the CoWin app for being eligible for vaccination and instead made walk-ins possible where the health workers would register them. The twin measures would have immensely contributed to the surge in the vaccination numbers. Allegations of some of the BJP-ruled governments having planned the sudden spike notwithstanding, the success of the campaign, in fact, proves the point that India has the logistical wherewithal to set higher vaccination targets and meet them and that the government’s tardy planning was the real villain.

**The success of the campaign proves the point that India has the logistical wherewithal to set higher vaccination targets and meet them and the government’s tardy planning was the real villain**

As it stands today, India has vaccinated about 25 per cent of all its adults with at least one dose of the vaccine; every one in two persons above 45 have also been given at least one dose. Given that India will have to administer 82.1 lakh doses a day if we were to vaccinate all its adults by December 31, 2021, this momentum must be sustained. It is important that the Union government supported the states to maintain the tempo. It may be remembered that several states had to close down the vaccination camps they had opened. It must be ensured that all the camps are reopened now and that the vaccine supply chain does not suffer for lack of doses.

There are no definite reports about a third wave and who it will impact the most despite experts cautioning of its arrival in 8-12 weeks from now and the need to inoculate children, too. The World Health Organisation has advised all the south Asian countries to rev up the healthcare infrastructure in anticipation of a fresh wave. The WHO advisory should be seen as an endorsement of the demand which experts have been making for some time now about the need to upgrade our systems, especially in the rural areas. The second wave shook the nation by exposing the deep fissures in our healthcare delivery mechanism and their shortcomings, accentuated by an all-pervading ill-preparedness. Far too many precious lives have been lost, that too in tragic situations such as shortage of oxygen and essential drugs. It was not that there were no early warnings but the decision-makers sat on them.

The Union budget for 2021-22 had seen a substantial hike in financial allocation for the health and family welfare ministry — from ₹94,000 crore to ₹2.23 lakh crore. A part of the money is aimed at spending on projects with a span of several years, but the government should consider front-loading it and ensure that we are well-prepared for a third wave.

### ‘Dream team’ to advise TN govt

The state of Tamil Nadu, piloted by chief minister M.K. Stalin, has drafted a bevy of big name economists in its five-member Economic Advisory Council. Two macroeconomists, two development economists and a former Union finance ministry secretary are in a council that includes the Nobel laureate Ms Esther Duflo, feted for her work in poverty alleviation. The out-of-the-box thinking in putting together such a distinguished panel of honorary advisers upholds the primacy of the power of seasoned professionals to guide the state’s overall development.

It is said in jest that an economist is an expert who will know tomorrow why the things he predicted yesterday didn’t happen today. And at least two economists were not fully at ease with the larger scheme of things in India where they had major roles as RBI governor and chief economic adviser. The difference could lie in how accepting Tamil Nadu will be in putting into practice the advice on re-floating an economy hit by the pandemic.

Raghuram Rajan had an exceptional record in going against the tide and warning the US of the 2008 subprime crisis while others were busy fuelling what became globally the biggest economic meltdown until the pandemic of 2020. An optimistic surmise is that the highly industrialised state, the second wealthiest in the country in terms of GDP (estimated at \$290 billion in 2020-21), could get very sound advice. The state has also done well in the competitive environment of finding domestic and foreign investment for industry and services.

A reflection of the depth of thinking behind getting the new regime up and running is seen in proposals for an annual budget exclusively for agriculture, a separate ministry for management of water resources and a promise to use data to support decision making, especially in allocating scarce resources among competing claims. How much of financial resources will there be for public spending as the economy reopens may determine outcomes. No one can make water flow uphill but they have shown they are capable of putting thought into action.

Subhani



## China is many things, but it’s definitely not ‘lovable’



Abhijit Bhattacharyya

The apparent recent volte face by Beijing’s imperial overlord Xi Jinping, who called for the creation of a fresh, “favourable” image of a “lovable” and “humble” Middle Kingdom reminds one of a popular Bengali saying: “*Bhooter mukhe Ram naam*”. (It is not a translation, but it has some of the same meaning as “the devil quoting scripture”.) The Hindu belief of the absurdity and impossibility of an evil and foul spirit of a dead man remembering Lord Ram, the ultimate in purity and pristine divinity — seen in the context of the People’s Republic in relation to the rest of the world — takes the whole scenario into the realm of farce. It can never be!

As long as Beijing and its 1.4 billion-plus population remains under the yoke of Emperor Xi and the ruthless and heartless Communist Party of China, which marks its centenary on July 1, the image of “love and humbleness” will prove elusive. Xi, who has been his nation’s paramount leader since 2012 (first as CPC general secretary, then as President), has followed a policy of avoidable aggression against the whole world, including all of China’s neighbours such as India, but with little to show for it. This so-called “change of heart” is just a tactical shift, in line with traditional Chinese deception as advocated in Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* and Chairman Mao Zedong’s *Military Writings*. Xi, like his mentors, tried to deploy the traditional tricks of the Dragon’s offensive-defence deceit: “Two steps forward, one step back”.

It will, therefore, be foolhardy to fall for Xi’s “charm offensive”; instead, we should study what lies behind the CPC’s new strategy. Can China’s diplomats and

soldiers truly shed their much-practised “wolf warrior” tactics and turn a new leaf? Unlikely. Playing to the gallery and muttering a few catch words like “lovable” and “humble” can’t convert the Han warriors into apostles of love, virtue, pioussness, piety and mercy as advocated by Lord Buddha or philosopher-king Ashoka’s initiative to spread peace, harmony and universal brotherhood after the devastation of Kalinga. Can Xi really spread Buddhism, the religion of peace, with his diplomatic “wolves” across the world? As they say, “charity begins at home”, and so can Beijing’s overlord make a start in Xinjiang and Tibet, in Taiwan and Hong Kong, with his new mantra of love and togetherness? Can we see the effects first in the Ladakh Himalayas and as non-Chinese vessels exercise their right of passage through the South China Sea to know that “lovable” China is for real?

To this writer, China’s motives and machinations stand brutally exposed due to the Wuhan-origin virus, which has devastated the demography of the entire planet. In all this, it is important to understand the way that some Chinese (Han) people — especially all who belong to the imperial durbar in Beijing and those who take their cues from them — look at the rest of the world. To them, China is the “sole civilisation” and the rest of the world are “barbarians” who are inferior — and thus need to be subjugated. The “barbarians” deserve contempt and should be made to kowtow before the Beijing durbar! Those who can’t be bullied should be conquered with cash, backed up by the PLA’s ever-expanding forces on land, sea and cyberspace — with its troll army spreading

its tentacles. The aim is to buy up every possible strategic asset overseas, by resorting to hostile takeovers of foreign tech companies, luring foreign politicians with cash or kind and manipulating the media by any or every means to build the image of the “lovable” Chinese.

A single country’s example will demonstrate this. The United Kingdom is a particular target of the CPC’s unwelcome attention, mainly due to its colonial history with a much-weakened Middle Kingdom — the Opium War (1839-1842), the retention of Hong Kong by London as a coveted commercial base up to 1997, the loot of the Chinese Emperor’s Summer Palace (1860) by British forces (which included a fair number of Indian soldiers), and the loss of almost all Chinese ports to the combined might of the West and Japan’s subjugation of Chinese territory in the early twentieth century. Britain’s strategic assets are thus a prime target for the CPC (like the “Carthage must be destroyed” psyche) for long.

Little wonder then that a top UK daily flagged in May 2021: “How China is buying Britain”. It showed how Chinese investors amassed a portfolio of UK businesses, infrastructure, property, and other assets worth nearly 135 billion pounds, almost twice as previously suspected. What shook the British establishment was the “swift and largely unnoticed buying spree which included purchases worth at least 44 billion pounds by Chinese state-owned-enterprises, linked to the PLA or CPC, or both. Alarming, over 80 of the 200 Chinese investments uncovered were since

2019, a time when London-Beijing ties started growing tense. Wasn’t that a “hostile takeover bid”? These included critical British infrastructure providers like Thames Water, UK Power Networks, Heathrow Airport; in addition to shares in FTSE, 100 companies, prime property in London and at least 17 private schools. *New Statesman* reported in July 2020: “Weak rules allowed China to acquire significant stakes in British nuclear power, oil, steel, water, and transport.” In a classic reversal of historical forces, the “East Asian Company of China” was taking revenge on the old “East India Company” of our history books.

The CPC’s economic/commercial invasion of London is a clear warning. “The Chinese are coming” is no longer a slogan, what is real is that the “Chinese have come to corner all”. All nations in the world should heed the danger signs — because the threat is real. And many have begun to wake up and started taking steps to protect themselves from the “China virus” in virtually every sector — from health to hydrology, commerce, industry, technology, and much more. The “total war” has begun, and it’s not the way the CPC had envisaged. The Belt and Road Initiative is no longer looking so attractive to foreigners, and many are challenging the Chinese, posing a serious threat to the CPC overlord’s grand plans. Hence his call to his minions to make China a “lovable” nation!

**Post-script:** As Xi’s New Delhi ambassador Su Weidong urged India — “Let’s cooperate, not confront each other” — came some other news: In one, “Chinese scam cheats 5 lakh Indians of crores”; and in another, “Dangerous Chinese spy-cum-criminal caught on India-Bangla border”. Are these the actions of a “lovable” country?

*The writer is a Supreme Court advocate. The views expressed here are personal.*

**The CPC’s economic/commercial invasion of London is a clear warning. ‘The Chinese are coming’ is no longer a slogan, what is real is that the ‘Chinese have come to corner all’.**

### LETTERS

#### SILLY REASONS

The government spent crores of money to clean the Cooum river and the project was halted by reasoning out that there were crocodiles in the river and hence the workers were afraid to continue the work. Subsequently, when there was a shortage of sugar bags in the government warehouse, the reply given by the then leader was that the ants ate the sugar. In the sequence when the leader was further enquired about the left-over bags after the ants consumed sugar, the leader was creative enough to take a defence by saying that termites ate the bags. While addressing the reason for frequent power cuts in recent times, the electricity minister is using a similar formula, saying that since squirrels are moving around on the electricity overhead lines the state is facing frequent power cuts. The story, which started with crocodiles and ants now moves on to squirrels, makes one wonder if these creatures can’t be summoned before the law.

**A.P. Thiruvadi, Chennai**

#### ONLINE DRESS CODE

It is with reference to the news, Dress Code for online classes. Tamil Nadu government has issued guidelines, which instructs teachers and students to observe dress code suitable for classroom setting while participating in online classes. The guidelines are applicable to all types of schools belonging to all educational boards in Tamil Nadu and are to be welcomed. The schools should instruct their teachers and students to be appropriately dressed during online classes to prevent incidents of bullying or sexual harassment. Students and teachers must be strictly advised not to wear provocative attire during online classes since they have been watched by many parents who are accompanying their children.

**P. Victor Selvaraj, Palayamkottai**

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Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



### I-T filing mess: Why try to ‘fix’ a system that wasn’t broken?

At a time when eking out new tax revenues in a shrinking economy is the only goal, an unwarranted self-goal has a lot of knickers in a twist in North Block. The question that’s hovering over Raisina Hill is, why fix something that isn’t broken? That’s a question everyone seems to be now asking when the new e-filing website of the income tax department, lauded and much tooted about, turned out to be a non-starter. I-T officials had announced that the new portal was even designed to be “taxpayer-friendly” and would help ease the filing process and reduce dependence on tax advisors.

Numerous glitches in the software have now left irate taxpayers stranded — they have reported even basic issues such as login problems and complain that old tax filings critical to users are not visi-

ble on the new portal. Meantime, the old reliable website has been unfortunately shut down and the new one doesn’t work. A ripe old mess that comes at a really inconvenient moment.

And since even finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has tweeted about it, I-T officials are in a frenzy trying to salvage the situation with Infosys, the corporate supplier outsourced with this task. A testing time for the newly-appointed acting chairperson of CBDT Jagannath Mohapatra to show his leadership skills. He took over his new assignment after his predecessor P.C. Mody hung up his bat after a prolonged and much extended innings that ended almost apocryphally on the very day the old website was shut down!

Hectic efforts are being made to fix the snafu — the vendor management tax babus are in talks with

Infosys and we are told that furious efforts are expected to ensure that the glitches will be removed very shortly. The taxpayers certainly hope so. Meanwhile, revenues are awaited.

#### GOVT TACKLES BABU CRITICS WITH FOOTBALL TACTIC

Football teams often employ a technique known as one-to-one marking during a game, in which a player is deputised to stop a rival player from taking possession of the ball for too long. Something along these lines is now in the works as the Centre’s sets about tackling the rising tide of insiders turned dissenters, especially if they happen to be retired babus who were once part of the ‘System’ but are now freely speaking their mind on issues that they feel strongly about.

What may perhaps be more

galling to the Centre is that the authors of these contrarian views are venerable ex-bureaucrats who were well-known for their administrative skills and subject expertise during their civil service career — former adviser to governor of Punjab and former ambassador to Romania Julio Ribeiro, former Cabinet secretary K.M. Chandrasekhar, former culture secretary Jawahar Sircar, former foreign secretary Shyam Saran and other similarly notable and “non-partisan” former civil servants. Their words carry weight. Collectively and individually they have written on wide-ranging subjects, including the PM Cares Fund, the farmers’ agitation, Article 370, the handling of the Covid pandemic, human rights abuses, the controversial Central Vista etc. They write edit page articles but also dash off open letters to

the Centre that are released to the media.

The government is clearly feeling affronted by this unsolicited advice, but since these are not ordinary voices that cannot be clamped by usual ploys, it has decided to retaliate by getting other “neutral” babus to respond to their colleagues. So, these days a critical piece on a delicate subject by a former babu is immediately responded to by another babu defending the government’s policies. If nothing else, it doesn’t hurt to muddy the waters without getting dirty yourself. And while the babus take on each other in the media, the government carries on with its usual business.

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect.*



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,588.71	0.03
Nifty 50	15,772.80	0.17
S&P 500*	4,238.88	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.87	0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18	0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,213▼45	0.09
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.73	-0.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.025	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.478	-0.007

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Kesoram Inds. suspends work at rayon factory

BK Birla Group company Kesoram Industries Ltd suspended work at its rayon factory in West Bengal's Hooghly district due to fall in demand. The company management blamed the slump in demand due to Covid-led disruptions for the suspension of work till further notice. The company employs 2,500 people in the loss making plant. Rayon division contribution is negligible for the company.

## Sun settles patent litigation with Celgene



Sun Pharma said it has reached an agreement with Celgene Corporation, a subsidiary of Bristol Myers Squibb, to resolve the patent litigation regarding generic version of cancer drug Revlimid (lenalidomide capsules) in the US. As per the terms of the settlement, Celgene will grant Sun Pharma a licence to Celgene's patents required to manufacture and sell certain limited quantity of generic lenalidomide capsules in the US in 2022.

## EV makers laud Gujarat policy with subsidy

Companies like Tata Motors, Mahindra and Hero Electric lauded the Gujarat government for bringing a new electric vehicle policy in the state. Chief minister Vijay Rupani unveiled the 'Gujarat Electric Vehicle Policy 2021', which has been designed to see at least 2 lakh electric vehicles on the state roads in the next four years. The state will provide subsidies ranging from Rs 20,000 to Rs 1,50,000 to buyers of vehicles.

## NMDC's Q4 profit after tax zooms to ₹2,838 crore

India's largest iron ore producer NMDC said its profit after tax for the March quarter was 708 per cent higher at Rs 2,838 crore compared to Rs 351 crore during the year-ago quarter. Turnover stood at Rs 6,848 crore compared with Rs 3,187 crore a year ago. Sumit Deb, CMD, NMDC, said, "This has been an excellent year for the iron and steel sector and it gives me great pride to share these impressive results."



## NCLT approves resolution plan Jet Air to get wings again

FC BUREAU  
WITH agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has ruled that Jet Airways India Ltd can resume operations under a new owner more than two years after it collapsed under heavy debt burden, according to Ashish Chhawchharia, the tribunal-appointed resolution professional.

Jet Airways, once the country's biggest private carrier, needs to apply for slots within 90 days and the aviation regulator will make a final decision on allotting them, reports said.

Describing the NCLT nod for the resolution plan as one of the biggest turnaround events for the troubled aviation sector, Chhawchharia hoped that the carrier will be back in the skies by the end of this year provided everything goes well.

The NCLT Mumbai bench, chaired by Mohammed Ajmal and V. Nallasenapathy, has approved the resolution plan for Jet Airways that will have to be implemented in 90 days starting from June 22.

"We are delighted with the go-ahead to the plan. Certainly, we are quite hopeful of the airline's revival. And if all go well, we hope that by the end of this year, we can see some Jet Airways flights in the skies again," Chhawchharia, a partner at Grant Thornton Bharat



LLP said.

The airline fell into bankruptcy in 2019 after failing to repay debts. A rescue plan was laid out last year by Dubai-based businessman Murari Lal Jalan and Kalrock Capital Management Ltd, a London-based financial advisory and alternative asset manager.

They pledged in December that Jet Airways would fly again by this summer, operating its historic domestic slots as well restarting international routes. The revival plan included a dedicated freighter service and hubs in smaller cities beyond Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, according to a Bloomberg report.

Though it is difficult to say by when the issues of slots will be resolved, Chhawchharia 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 the

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.

Even before Covid-19 crushed demand for air travel, the country was a tough place to make money in aviation. Bruising fare wars and high costs made it difficult for many carriers to survive. Kingfisher Airlines Ltd, once the country's second-largest domestic carrier, collapsed in 2012, and flag carrier Air India Ltd is saddled with debt and has been searching for a buyer for years.

Jet Airways has almost 21,000 creditors seeking claims of around \$6 billion. It has lost most of its landing slots in the time it hasn't been flying.

Investors remained optimistic about the airline successfully emerging from a restructuring, sending its shares soaring 316 per cent in 2020 despite the industry being plunged into crisis. Jet Airways rose 5 per cent on Tuesday.

## SENSEX CROSSES 53K-MARK BEFORE RETREATING

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, JUNE 22

The Sensex crossed the 53000-mark for the first time and made a new high of 53,057 on Tuesday in intraday trade, but profit taking erased the day's gains as the index closed almost flat at 52,588.71, up 14.25 points. The Nifty-50 closed at 15,772.75, up 26.25 points.

Market volatility remained high ahead of the monthly derivative contracts expiry on Thursday.

Strong overnight global markets, record number of Covid vaccinations in a day, daily Covid cases dropping below 50,000 and good monsoon rains coverage cheered the market as it opened. But there was profit taking as valuations are looking stretched.

The market reaching all-time high is great news for hundreds of thousands of small investors who entered the stock market over the last 12-15 months, as they are sitting on pretty strong gains right now.

But analysts warned investors who entered the market during the pandemic period against the inherent risks. "Nearly every stock has a certain intrinsic value and with markets at all time highs, more and more stocks are trading close to or even higher than their carefully estimated intrinsic values," said Rahul Shah, co-head of research, Equitymaster.

"The market is likely to see volatile trading till Thursday as equity derivative expiry and index heavy weight Reliance Industries annual general meeting are scheduled on June 24.

FPIs were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,027.94 crore.

## Confidence levels drop for working women, young pros

New Delhi, June 22: The second wave of the pandemic has left young Indian professionals and working women increasingly vulnerable to the economic uncertainty, says a survey.

According to LinkedIn's latest Workforce Confidence Index, the plight of India's working women has worsened after the second Covid-19 wave, as the Individual Confidence Index scores of female professionals fell from 57 in March to 49 in early June—a 4x decline compared to working men (58 in March to 56 in June).

Further, the pandemic's recent peak in India has amplified the importance of work experience and professional connections, as young Indians were found twice as worried as their older cohorts about the impact of Covid-19 on their careers.

Nearly 30 per cent of Gen Z professionals and



26 per cent of millennials are troubled due to lack of jobs, in comparison to 18 per cent of Baby Boomers, said the survey based on responses of 1,891 professionals from May 8 to June 4. Gen Z refers to those born between 1997 and 2015, Millennials are those born between 1981 and 1994/6 and Baby Boomers are born between 1946 and 1964.

"As India slowly begins to come out of the second wave of Covid-19 cases, we see the year-over-year hiring rate recover from a low of 10 per cent in April

to 35 per cent at the end of May. Despite this modest revival, confidence levels of working women and young professionals are amongst the lowest in the workforce today," said Ashutosh Gupta, country manager, LinkedIn.

Gupta said "twice as many working women are concerned with job availability compared to working men, and 30 per cent of Gen Z professionals worry due to lack of jobs."

The survey said, India's overall workforce confidence has declined after peaking in early March, with a composite score of 54 (down 4 points from 58 in March).

This decline in confidence is reflected strongly across professionals from creative industries such as entertainment, design, and media and communications, who expressed being uncertain about the future of their employers.

—PTI

## YouTube wins user copyright fight in EU

FOO YUN CHEE  
LUXEMBOURG, JUNE 22

Google's YouTube won its latest copyright-infringement challenge after Europe's top court said online platforms are not liable for users uploading unauthorised works unless the platforms failed to take quick action to remove or block access to the content.

The case marks the latest development in a long-running battle between Europe's \$1 trillion cre-

ative industry and online platforms, with the former seeking redress for unauthorised works that are uploaded.

It is also part of the wider debate on how much online platforms and social media should do to police the posting of unauthorised, illegal or hateful content, an issue that European Union regulators are targeting with tough new rules that could come into force next year.

"As currently stands, operators of online plat-

forms do not, in principle, themselves make a communication to the public of copyright-protected content illegally posted online by users of those platforms," the EU Court of Justice said.

"However, those operators do make such a communication in breach of copyright where they contribute, beyond merely making those platforms available, to giving access to such content to the public," judges said.

—Reuters

## Not against flash sales that benefit consumers: Govt

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The government on Tuesday clarified that discount sales will continue on e-commerce platforms, but not "fraudulent flash sales". The government stated that it will not seek disclosure of flash sales, but did not provide clarity as to how it will ascertain whether a flash sale is fraudulent.

Discount sales that benefit maximum to consumers will continue, but not fraudulent flash sales on the e-commerce platforms, Nidhi Khare, additional secretary in the consumer affairs ministry told the media.

"Such competition actually helps the business overall to bring goods at better prices to consumers. We are not against that," she said. However, in Monday's notification, the ministry had defined "flash sale" as "a sale at significantly reduced prices, high discounts or any other such promotions or attractive offers for a pre-determined period of time on selective goods and services or otherwise with an intent to draw a large number of consumers". This definition applies to all sales events organised by e-commerce players.

Without elaborating on what is defined as "fraud-

### ONLINE CHANNELS SELL 45% MOBILES

New Delhi, June 22: Online channel accounted for about 45 per cent of the mobile phone sales in the country in 2020, according to Counterpoint Research.

Online sales accounted for about 26 per cent share of the global mobile phone market last year.

"Covid-19 had a big role in this change in consumer behaviour. By major country, India showed the highest online share at 45 per cent, followed by the UK

at 39 per cent and China at 34 per cent," the report said.

Online sales accounted for 31 per cent share in Brazil, 24 per cent in the US, 16 per cent in South Korea and 8 per cent in Nigeria, as per the report.

The share of online handset sales (global) in 2020 increased by nearly 6 per cent points compared to the previous year, while it increased by more than 10 per cent in terms of market size, it added.

—PTI

lent flash sales", she said that in western countries many times shell companies organise flash sales without any inventory, which is against the interest of consumers and limits fair competition.

Ankur Pahwa, partner and e-commerce sector leader, EY India, said, "In some of the western countries there are companies which put up only rejected and low quality products for a few hours or single day. They dupe customers by not having any return policy or product guarantee. In India, there are some very small e-commerce companies which do such fraudulent sales.

Probably, the government wants to regulate them."

But the government has not provided clarity on how it will find if a flash sale is fraudulent without seeking disclosure.

"We are not going to seek disclosure of flash sales. We are with sales that benefit maximum consumers. If someone wants to complain, there should at least be a provision," she said.

The government will take action on fraudulent flash sales if it receives any complaint, Khare said.

She said the consumer affairs ministry's role is to safeguard the interest of consumers and hence the draft rules. Otherwise, the

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is the main regulator.

When asked why there is no regulation on cheap discount sales offered in offline markets, Khare said: "That is not true. Today, you have features of product liability for stores and anybody can sue them. Consumers can file if their rights are infringed."

Pahwa said, "Even now online companies are under the purview of consumer courts. Consumers can approach these courts for products bought both online and offline. I do not understand why Consumer Protection rules should try to regulate e-commerce companies."

The Consumer Protection (E-commerce) Rules, 2020 were first notified in July last year. Their violations attract penal action under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

"E-commerce is set to gain greater market share from an overall retail market perspective. And while regulations are certainly needed to govern this channel, they need to be devised comprehensively and holistically, be consistent in their application to various retail channels and finally be governed by a single law vs various regulations and notifications," said Pahwa.

### HYBRID | SPACE

It's not just office and home. There could be a satellite office too

## Tata explores 'third place' in workplace model

SARITHA RAI  
JUNE 22

The pandemic has changed the nature of work, accelerating the adoption of digital technologies by at least a decade and ushering in a hybrid model where work extends beyond offices and engages more women, Tata Sons chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran said.

While the office remains a critical hub and staff will gradually return, the world won't return to its pre-Covid norm, Chandrasekaran, head of

India's biggest private-sector employer, said during the Qatar Economic Forum on Tuesday. The Indian executive, joined by fellow employers such as Iwag Plc CEO Mark Dixon, said workplaces will benefit from allowing staff greater leeway with the help of technology.

When the pandemic hit India in early 2020, the 150-year-old steel-to-airlines conglomerate scrambled to adapt to lockdown restrictions. At Tata Consultancy Services Ltd—its largest company by employee numbers and profitability



N. Chandrasekaran

—nearly half a million workers began working from home within weeks, continuing to deliver software projects and support to Wall Street banks,

retailers and airlines. TCS declared early on it expects only a fourth of its workforce to be in the office on any given day by 2025. Yet many of its employees asked for a return to the office. Companies will have to adopt a model somewhere in-between, Chandrasekaran said during a session about the future of work.

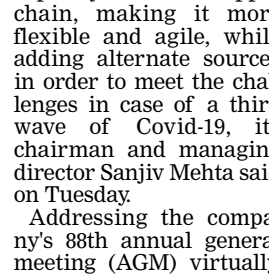
"If the hybrid model has to work, let's not think of it as only office and home," he said. "There's going to be a concept of a third place. I call it a 'third place,' you may

want to call it a satellite office."

In India's case, it could also see improved workplace diversity, another positive outcome of a hybrid model, Chandrasekaran said. "Only 23 per cent of women who could be potentially working are in the workforce because issues like commuting, the lack of social infrastructure like child care," he said. "We should not miss this opportunity, it is not just good for GDP and growth, but also it is the right thing to do."

—Bloomberg

## HUL HIKES SUPPLY CHAIN CAPACITY, PREPARE FOR THIRD COVID WAVE



Sanjiv Mehta

New Delhi, June 22: FMCG major HUL has added 30 per cent more capacity in its supply chain, making it more flexible and agile, while adding alternate sources in order to meet the challenges in case of a third wave of Covid-19, its chairman and managing director Sanjiv Mehta said on Tuesday.

Addressing the company's 88th annual general meeting (AGM) virtually, Mehta also expressed optimism that the rural markets will continue to be strong despite the second wave of the pandemic impacting the hinterlands.

With commodity prices increasing, the company is keeping a close eye on the situation and going for calibrated price hikes so as to avoid impacting consumers in a big way, he added.

Replying to a shareholder's query on the preparedness of the company in case of a third wave of the pandemic, Mehta said, "Now we have made the supply chain much more agile, we have taken a number of initiatives to improve efficiency. We have added much more flexibility in our supply chain by adding 30 per cent more capacity, and we aim to preserve resilience through alternate sourcing."

"We also continue to invest in technological capabilities, and we have invested in creating a very safe environment for our workforce through tiered protocols," he added.

HUL's supply chain is undergoing a massive transformation across the verticals and the company is digitising upstream sourcing network which allows optimisation of cost, Mehta said.

—PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## Maharaj bowls SA to series victory

**Gros Islet:** Keshav Maharaj completed just the second hat-trick by a South African in Test history as the Proteas completed a 158-run victory over the West Indies on the fourth day of the second Test of the two-match series at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St Lucia on Monday. In the penultimate over before lunch the left-arm spinner removed Kieran Powell, Jason Holder and Joshua da Silva in successive deliveries to join fast bowler Geoff Griffen, who achieved the feat at Lord's in 1960, in the record books. Maharaj then followed up with two of the last three to fall in the afternoon to finish with figures of five for 36.

— AFP

**Brief scores:** South Africa 298 & 174 bt West Indies 149 & 165 in 58.3 overs (Kieran Powell 51, Keshav Maharaj 5/36, Kagiso Rabada 3/44).

## Ex-Indian athletics coach Yuri dies

**New Delhi:** Former Indian athletics coach Yuri Ogorodnik, who was sacked for his alleged involvement in the infamous 2011 dope scandal, has died at his native place in Ukraine, the national federation said on Tuesday. He was 84. He was associated with Indian athletics for nearly two decades since the early 2000s, training the Indian athletes during his multiple stints. The Athletics Federation of India consoled his death in Kharkiv on Monday. AFI President Adile Sumariwalla described Ogorodnik as a friend of Indian athletics. — PTI

## Younis quits as Pak batting coach

**Karachi:** Former captain Younis Khan on Tuesday stepped down as Pakistan's batting coach in a surprise decision which the cricket board said was agreed upon "reluctantly but amicably" even though no reasons were specified for it. The Pakistan team is due to start a tour of the UK from June 25 to July 20 for three ODIs and three T20Is. The team will next go to the West Indies from July 21 to August 24 to feature in five T20Is and two Tests. "The team will travel to the United Kingdom without a batting coach, while the decision to appoint replacement for the West Indies tour will be made in due course," a PCB statement said. — PTI

## Below-par Neeraj wins in Sweden

**New Delhi:** Olympic-bound star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra produced a below-par effort of 80.96m but still won his event in the Karlstad Grand Prix in Sweden on Tuesday. Chopra began with a throw of 79.07m before hurling the iron spear to 80.96m. His next three attempts were fouls before coming up with a final throw of 77.48m in a mediocre field. On June 10, he had come up with a best effort of 83.18m to win an event in Lisbon, Portugal in his first international competition after more than a year. Chopra's next stop is at Kuortane Games on June 26 in Finland, where he is expected to face season-leader and 2017 world champion Johannes Vetter (SB: 96.29m). The 23-year-old Indian had qualified for Tokyo Olympics in January, 2020 in South Africa. The reigning Asian and CWG champion holds the national record of 88.07m.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**World Test Championship final, Reserve day:** India vs New Zealand from 3pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

## EURO

**Group Stage:** Sweden vs Poland, Slovakia vs Spain from 9.30 pm; Germany vs Hungary, Portugal vs France from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, HD

## COPA AMERICA

**Group Stage:** Ecuador vs Peru from 2.30 am (Thursday); Brazil vs Colombia from 5.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, HD

## SHAMI KABAB

## Mohammed on fire as India bowl Kiwis out for 249

**Southampton, June 22:** Mohammed Shami's artistry was on full display as India bowled New Zealand out for 249 on the fifth day of the World Test Championship final here. India were 64 for two with a lead of 32 runs at stumps.

Pacer Tim Southee removed both the openers, Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma.

The finale is tantalisingly poised with the contest now spilling into the reserve day.

New Zealand showed more intent on keeping the scoreboard ticking with Kyle Jamieson (21) and Tim Southee (30) throwing their bats around for useful runs which certainly put the pressure back on India going into the final session of the day.

The tea break was called after the fall of last New Zealand wicket.

Mohammed Shami (4/76), after a mesmerising morning spell, got a couple of more wickets in the post-lunch session. He dismissed Colin de Grandhomme with a delivery angled in and Jamieson with a bouncer.

During the final half-an-hour, India's senior-most player Ishant Sharma (3/48) denied half-century to a dogged skipper Kane Williamson (49) with a classic Test match dismissal — delivery rearing up and shaping out which was edged to Virat Kohli at third slip.

Sensing that mere survival would spell doom,



India pacer Mohammed Shami celebrates a New Zealand wicket during Day 5 of the World Test Championship final in Southampton on Tuesday.

New Zealand scored 114 runs in the post lunch session even as Shami and Ishant remained standout performer bowling their hearts out.

Jamieson and New Zealand's all-time third highest six-hitter Southee got some easy runs at the

pace end which could prove to be useful in the final context.

But no amount of praise is enough for Shami, who brought India back in the match before New Zealand could press its foot on the pedal.

Such was his domina-

tion that Williamson managed only seven runs in an entire session of play.

Ross Taylor (11) was dismissed as Shami reaped the rewards for finding the fuller length which enticed the batsman to go for a drive.

— PTI

## SCORECARD

**India (1st Innings): 217**  
**New Zealand (1st Innings):** Tom Latham c Kohli b R. Ashwin 30, Devon Conway c M Shami b I Sharma 54, Kane Williamson c Kohli b I Sharma 49, Ross Taylor c S. Gill b M. Shami 11, Henry Nicholls c R Sharma b I Sharma 7, BJ Watling b M. Shami 1, Colin de Grandhomme lbw b M. Shami 13, Kyle Jamieson c J Bumrah b M. Shami 21, Tim Southee b R Jadeja 30, Neil Wagner c A Rahane b R. Ashwin 0, Trent Boult (not out) 7. **Extras (B-4, LB-10, NB-5) 19. Total (in 99.2 overs) 249.**

**FoW:** 1-70, 2-101, 3-117, 4-134, 5-135, 6-162, 7-192, 8-221, 9-234.

**Bowling:** Ishant Sharma 25-9-48-3, Jasprit Bumrah 26-9-57-0, Mohammed Shami 26-8-76-4, Ravichandran Ashwin 15-5-28-2, R. Jadeja 7.2-2-20-1.

**India (2nd Innings):** Rohit Sharma lbw b Southee 30, Shubman Gill lbw b Southee 8, Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 12, Virat Kohli (batting) 8. **Extras (lb 4, nb 1, w 1) 6. Total (for two wickets in 30 overs) 64.**

**FoW:** 1-24, 2-51. **Bowling:** Tim Southee 9-3-17-2, Trent Boult 8-1-20-0, Kyle Jamieson 10-4-15-0, Neil Wagner 3-0-8-0.

## Rijiju hopes for best Olympic show ever

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
 HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju threw his weight behind Indian athletes on Tuesday, eve of International Olympic Day, promising all support from the government as they gear up to do the country proud at next month's Tokyo Olympics. "We need to galvanise the country in cheering our athletes. They need our support as they set out for the biggest sporting competition," Rijiju said in an online interaction with media while

announcing the launch of a slew of programmes to pump up the Indian contingent ahead of the tough task in Tokyo.

"India's presence at the Olympics must be big. For that we have short, medium and long term targets," he said, setting off the 30-day countdown.

Asked about medal expectations, he did not put a number to it but said: "India should do better than what it has in the previous editions. We are looking forward to a new standard and record (in terms of medal count). I am very hopeful."



Kiren Rijiju

"Our athletes have been provided the best platforms to practice, some of them are training abroad, others in important and well-equipped centres in

India. The government has been providing full support and reaching out to the athletes. The total funding through Annual Calendar and Training Competition (including TOPS — Target Olympic Podium Scheme) in the last four years has been ₹1,100 crore for the training of athletes," he informed.

Speaking about the tough conditions imposed on the Indian contingent by Japan, Rijiju said "as per the Olympic charter there cannot be any discrimination against any country."

"I have already conveyed to the Indian Olympic Association to register our concern with the Organising committee in Japan that it will not be acceptable to us. They (the IOA) have already written to the organising committee. We will strongly raise any issue which affects our athletes' preparation and chances," he added.

The Minister also said that an Olympic Cell has been created in the Indian Embassy in Tokyo to assist athletes. "We will provide them all the necessary back-up support," he said.

## DANISH DELIGHT

## Denmark thrash Russia to reach Last 16, Austria edge through

**Paris, June 22:** Denmark powered into the last 16 of Euro 2020 with a brilliant 4-1 thrashing of Russia at a raucous Parken Stadium on Monday, helping to send five other teams through in the process. It was a joyous night in Copenhagen as goals from Mikkel Damsgaard, Yussuf Poulsen, Andreas Christensen and Joakim Maehle saw the hosts through in style, as Belgium scored two late goals to beat the Finns.

Kasper Hjulmand's men will meet Wales in the last 16 in Amsterdam on Saturday.

"The most important (thing) is that we are now united as Denmark," Maehle told Danish broadcaster DR after the win in front of a 25,000-strong crowd.

The results in Group B also saw Switzerland, who finished third in Group A, the Czech Republic, England, Sweden and France — all yet to play their final group games — move into the knockout phase.

Austria edged to a 1-0 win over Ukraine to beat their opponents to a spot in the last 16. Christoph Baumgartner's 21st-minute goal proved enough for Austria to secure second place in Group C behind the Netherlands, who saw off North Macedonia 3-0 in a dead rubber in Amsterdam. Austria will face Group A winners Italy at



Denmark's Mikkel Damsgaard (right) celebrates after scoring his team's first goal against Russia during a group match in Copenhagen on Monday.

Wembley on Saturday for a quarter-final berth. "We wanted to write history," Austria coach Franco Foda told uefa.com.

## FINLAND ON THE BRINK OF EXIT

Belgium scored two late goals to see off a valiant Finland 2-0 on Monday, pushing their opponents to the brink of a group-stage exit.

Finnish goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky's 74th-minute own goal and Romelu Lukaku's third strike of the tournament ensured Roberto Martinez's Belgium finished top of Group B. The world's number-one-ranked side will face a third-placed team in the next round on Sunday in Seville.

— AFP

## CHAMPIONS PORTUGAL TAKE ON FRANCE, FACE RISK OF SHOCK EXIT

**Budapest, June 22:** Germany can secure a place in the last 16 of Euro 2020 on Wednesday, but holders Portugal are at real risk of crashing out despite a prolific start to Group F by Cristiano Ronaldo.

France top the section with four points heading into their final game against Portugal, a repeat of the Euro 2016 final, despite an underwhelming 1-1 draw with bottom side Hungary in Budapest.

Germany and Portugal are locked on three points apiece but Joachim Loew's side crucially have the head-to-head edge follow-

## EURO RESULTS

<b>Belgium</b> (Lukas Hradecky 74-og, Romelu Lukaku 81)	2
<b>Finland</b>	0
<b>Denmark</b> (Mikkel Damsgaard 38, Yussuf Poulsen 59, Andreas Christensen 80, Joakim Maehle 82)	4
<b>Russia</b> (Dzyuba 70-p)	1
<b>Austria</b> (Christoph Baumgartner 21)	1
<b>Ukraine</b>	0
<b>Netherlands</b> (Memphis Depay 24, Georginio Wijnaldum 51, 58)	3
<b>N. Macedonia</b>	0



Paraguay's Angel Romero takes a free-kick against Argentina during their Copa America match in Brasilia on Monday.

— AP

## Argentina, Chile enter QF

**Brasilia, June 22:** Argentina and Chile on Monday booked their places in the Copa America quarter-finals, ending top of Group A after low-scoring matches that left the other two spots up for grabs. Argentina logged its second win in three group matches played, beating Paraguay 1-0, with Alejandro "Papu" Gomez scoring the sole goal of a lacklustre match in Brasilia in the ninth minute.

The win placed Lionel Messi's La Albiceleste top of Group A with seven points — enough to secure its spot in the next phase of the tournament being played in empty stadiums in coronavirus-battered Brazil.

The match marked a personal milestone for Messi, who tied Javier Mascherano's record for the most games played for Argentina — 147.

30 DAYS TO GO

## Final countdown begins for Tokyo

**Tokyo, June 22:** The Tokyo Olympics have weathered a historic postponement, an unprecedented ban on overseas fans and persistent domestic opposition, but with one month to go, the finish line is finally in sight.

The journey to this year's Games has involved a long list of complications that sometimes threatened to make them the first modern Olympics cancelled in peacetime.

Now, just four weeks remain until the opening ceremony on July 23, and while the mood is far from jubilant, organisers might just have cause to celebrate.

The first Olympic teams are already in Japan, along with key officials and some overseas media. And polls suggest long-standing public opposition to the Games may be weakening as D-day approaches.

"We are in the full delivery phase," International Olympic Committee chief

Thomas Bach said on Monday.

"Athletes are beginning to arrive in Tokyo, ready to make their Olympic dreams become a reality."

It has been an uphill battle since the unprecedented decision to postpone the Games in March 2020, as the scale of the pandemic started to emerge.

## NO CHEERING, NO HIGH-FIVES

Even with some spectators in the stands, there's no doubt this year's Games will be a pale imitation of Olympics past.

Cheering will be banned, and athletes can't hug or high-five. They must wear masks at all times except when eating, sleeping or competing, and are only allowed to move between the Olympic Village and their venues. Punishments for violating the rules will range from verbal warnings and fines to being kicked out of the Games altogether.

— AFP

## Indians at Games

## Golfer Lahiri makes the cut

Seasoned pro Anirban Lahiri qualified for his second successive Olympic appearance after finishing as the best-placed Indian golfer in the final Tokyo Games Rankings for men released on Tuesday. The Indian made the cut at the 60th spot, the last available quota in the Games rankings. India was eligible for one spot and Lahiri was the highest-placed in the latest official world golf rankings at the 340th position. "Best surprise I have got in a while. @Tokyo2020 can't believe I will have the opportunity once again to represent the tricolor," Lahiri tweeted. Aditi Ashok is also in contention to make the cut.

## SFI nominates 2 swimmers

The Swimming Federation of India has nominated Srihari Nataraj and Maana Patel to compete in the Olympics via the Universality places qualification system, which allows countries to recommend their two highest ranked swimmers for the showpiece if none makes the cut through the regulation process. The Universality quota allows one male and one female competitor from a country to participate in the Olympics.

## Manpreet to lead India

India on Tuesday named incumbent Manpreet Singh as the skipper of the men's hockey team for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics where he will have two deputies in defenders Birendra Lakra and Harmanpreet Singh. India had announced a 16-member team for the showpiece event last week but refrained from naming the team's leadership group. "I am humbled to have this opportunity of representing India at the Olympics for the third time, this time as team Captain. It is a very proud moment for me to be given this charge," Manpreet said.