



# The Sunday Statesman

DEREK CHAUVIN GETS  
22.5 YEARS IN JAIL IN  
FLOYD DEATH CASE



P10

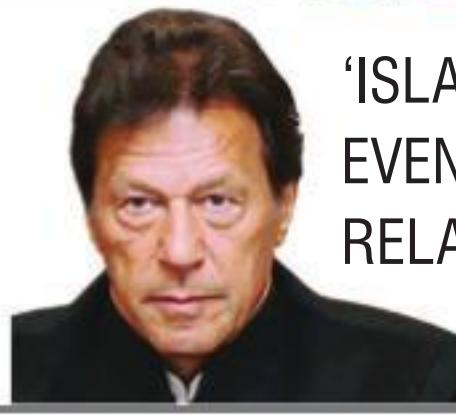
GREECE SUPPORTS  
INDIA'S PERMANENT  
MEMBERSHIP OF UNSC



P4

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

'ISLAMABAD SEEKS  
EVEN-HANDED  
RELATIONSHIP WITH USA'



FARAH FAILS  
TO QUALIFY  
FOR TOKYO



P11

P12

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky with light rain/thundershowers at a few places. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 39 and 26 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

## RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 71% Min: 36%

## TEMPERATURE

Max: 38.7°C (+1) Min: 25.6°C (-3)

## SUN RISES

05:26 hrs

## MOON RISES

22:03 hrs

## SUN SETS

## SC audit report on O2 not final: AIIMS chief

Delhi CM pleads for end to bickering after BJP alleged 'criminal negligence'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

**It is an interim report. The oxygen needs are dynamic and change from day to day. The matter is sub-judice**

**AIIMS DIRECTOR RANDEEP GULERIA (WHO HEADED THE FIVE-MEMBER SUPREME COURT-APPOINTED PANEL)**

gerated four times over during the second wave.

The five-member Supreme Court appointed panel was headed by Guleria who said, "It is an interim report. The oxygen needs are dynamic and change from day to day. The matter is sub-judge."

While the BJP charged the Delhi government with "criminal negligence" after the report came into the public domain on Friday, AAP leader and Deputy

chief minister Manish Sisodia alleged that the "bogus" report was "cooked up" at BJP's office.

"May we work now if your fight over oxygen is finished? Let us together make a system so no one faces shortage of oxygen in third wave," Kejriwal said in his tweet in Hindi a day later.

There was an acute shortage of oxygen in the second wave. It should not be so in the third wave.

Corona will win if we fight with each other. The nation will win if we fight together," he added.

Dubbing the BJP the Bharatiya Jhagda Party, his deputy Sisodia said its leaders know only how to have fights and have nothing to do with either oxygen or the third Covid wave.

When the third wave will start, they will be caus-

ing fights someplace else, he tweeted in Hindi.

The report of the Supreme Court constituted sub-group to audit oxygen consumption in hospitals in the national capital during the second wave in April-May said the Delhi government "exaggerated" the consumption of oxygen and made a claim of 1,140 MT, four times higher than the formula for bed capacity requirement of 289 MT.

The panel said the Delhi government had made the claims for allocation of 700 MT oxygen on 30 April of medical grade oxygen using a "wrong formula". Two members, BS Bhalla, Delhi government's principal home secretary, home, and Max Healthcare's Sandeep Budhiraja, questioned the conclusions.

(SEE P3)

## WAITING



Elderly people wait to get Covid vaccine dose in Nadia, Bengal on Saturday. IANS

## Vaccination of 60-plus sluggish after initial high

NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

The pace of vaccination of the 60-plus population has become sluggish in the past few weeks after an initial high, with healthcare experts attributing it to mobility issues and misinformation and apprehensions about the jabs.

The 60-plus population was projected to be at 14.3 crore in 2021. About 80.77 lakh vaccine doses were given to this group per week between 13 March and 2 April, but the weekly figure fell to about 32 lakh between 5 to 25 June, according to government data.

PTI

Active cases have now come down below 6 lakh. The country has 5,95,565 active cases presently and has witnessed 3,94,493 deaths so far, according to data updated on Wednesday.

By contrast, Delhi reported just 85 fresh Covid cases, the lowest daily count this year, and nine more deaths.

A total of 64,818 people

have been discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the total recoveries to 2,91,93,085.

Delhi logs 85 cases, lowest this year: Delhi today reported 85 fresh coronavirus cases - its lowest this year - and 9 Covid-linked deaths, according to the Delhi government's health department figures.

On Saturday evening, the

national capital's

Covid positivity rate dipped

to 0.12 per cent. The fresh fatalities pushed its Covid death toll to 24,961. (SEEN P3)

**Rajnath to visit Ladakh today:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, accompanied by the Army chief, will begin a three-day visit to Ladakh from Sunday to carry out a comprehensive review of India's operational readiness amidst a stalemate with China on the next stage of disengagement at several friction points in eastern Ladakh. Singh's visit with Army Chief Gen MM Naravane comes two days after India and China held a fresh round of diplomatic talks to resolve the prolonged military standoff that began in early May last year.



BKU leader Rakesh Tikait takes rest during the farmers protest in New Delhi on Saturday. As perplexing and contradictory, it asserted that farmer leaders are not seeking some meaningless amendments in the Central farm laws which have fundamental flaws and urged the people to punish the BJP.

Security was tightened in the national capital and other cities after the SKM said that representatives of farmers will submit memoranda of their demands, addressed to

the President, to governors in various states. Hundreds of farmers from interiors of Uttar Pradesh, many of them on tractors, reached Ghazipur on Delhi's borders to mark the completion of seven months of their protest.

Led by Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait, a group of protesters submitted a memorandum of their demands at the office of DCP Northeast Delhi after a virtual meeting with Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal.

The farmers then called off their march to Delhi. "The memorandum included our demands for the withdrawal of the three new farm laws and for enacting a new law to ensure guarantee for MSP," he said.

Dr. Abdullah described the meeting as "satisfactory" and said there is a level of mistrust that has to be removed and it is for the government

MORE REPORTS ON PAGE 5

## Onus on Centre to remove mistrust in J&K: Farooq

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 26 JUNE

National Conference president and sitting MP Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said that people must wait to see if the Central government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes concrete steps to remove the mistrust existing on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Abdullah and Omar Abdullah were talking to media persons in Srinagar after returning from New Delhi where they participated in the all-parties meeting of J&K and Kashmir with Modi.

Dr. Abdullah described the meeting as "satisfactory" and said there is a level of mistrust that has to be removed and it is for the government

of India to decide how it removes it. "Let's see what they do to remove that mistrust or will they continue with the same situation."

Dr. Abdullah said that he reminded the participants in the meeting that the first PM Nehru promised a plebiscite and went back on it. "Thereafter, PV Narsimha Rao promised us autonomy and said sky is the limit. Where is it?" he asked.

He said that all leaders were invited for the meeting in their individual capacity and not as part of the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD). The National Conference, PDP and CPI(M) leaders were there in their individual capacity and none of them violated the agenda of the PAGD while putting forth their viewpoints before the PM.



Former chief minister Omar Abdullah, who is Vice-President of the NC, said his party will keep pushing for delimitation first, statehood second and elections later.

"Not delimitation-election-statehood" as being proposed by the Centre, he said.

Referring to Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad's remarks

in the meeting, Omar said that even before the PM's address, Azad expressed the view behalf of all of them that the timeline of delimitation-election-statehood is not acceptable to us. The PAGD members made it clear that they don't accept the decisions of 5 August 2019 when Article 370 was abrogated and J&K split

into two Union territories.

"We will continue to fight peacefully, constitutionally, legally and politically to undo what was done on 5 August. We don't want to betray our people. If we tell people that we are seeking reversal of 5 August decisions, it would be a betrayal," he said.

The struggle for restoration of J&K's special status is a long one. It took BJP 70 years to fulfill their agenda of scrapping the status. If it takes 70 weeks or 70 months or whatever time it takes, we will not retreat from our mission". He said it was unfortunate that the people of Kashmir were facing an unbridled bureaucracy. People are being harassed and arrested for questioning bureaucrats.

SNS photograph

Top BJP leaders talk preparations for Assembly polls in 5 states in 2022

NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Preparation for the Assembly polls in five states early next year was the main agenda of a meeting of senior BJP leaders, including several Union ministers, on Saturday as they deliberated on political and governance issues in these states.

Party president J P Nadda and Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, Narendra Singh Tomar, Smriti Irani, Piyush Goyal and Dharmendra Pradhan were among those who attended the meeting, party leaders said.

Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa are slated for early next year. The BJP is in power in all these states except Punjab.

## 'Finest of our traditions': PM on Ayodhya development plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the development plan for Ayodhya and asserted that the temple town in Uttar Pradesh should manifest the "finest of our traditions and the best of our developmental transformations".

Speaking at a virtual meeting, which was also attended by Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, Modi described Ayodhya as a city that is etched in the cultural consciousness of every Indian and said the human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure.

"Chaired a meeting on the Ayodhya development plan. Emphasised on public participation and involving our Yuva Shakti in creating state-of-the-art infrastructure in

Ayodhya, making this city a vibrant mix of the ancient and modern," Modi tweeted after the meeting.

A Prime Minister's Office (PMO) statement on the meeting said Ayodhya's development is being envisaged as a spiritual centre, global tourism hub and a sustainable smart city.

The PM was informed about various upcoming and proposed infrastructure projects to improve connectivity with Ayodhya.

An upcoming greenfield township was discussed which includes lodging facilities for devotees, space for ashrams, maths, hotels, bhavans of various states.

Noting that Ayodhya is both spiritual and sublime, the Prime Minister said the human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure

devotees, space for ashrams, maths, hotels, bhavans of various states. A tourist facilitation centre and a world class museum will also be built, it said. "Ayodhya should manifest the finest of our traditions and the best of our developmental transformations," the Prime Minister was quoted as saying at the meeting by the statement.

Noting that Ayodhya is both spiritual and sublime, he said the human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure, which is beneficial for everyone including tourists and pilgrims.

Modi said that the coming generations should feel the desire to visit Ayodhya at least once in their lifetime.



Modi reviews the Ayodhya development plan, through video conferencing, on Saturday.

The Prime Minister pointed out that developmental works in Ayodhya will continue in the foreseeable future and stressed that at the same time, the momentum towards heralding Ayodhya to this next leap of progress must begin now.

"It is our collective endeavour to celebrate the identity of Ayodhya and keep its cultural vibrancy alive through innovative ways," Modi said.

The way Lord Ram had the ability to bring people together, the development works of Ayodhya should be guided by a spirit of healthy public participation, especially by the youth, Modi said.

He called for the skills of talented youngsters to be leveraged in this development of the city, according to the PMO. The PMO also said special attention is being devoted to development of

infrastructure around the Saryu river and its ghats. Cruise operations on the Saryu river will also be made a regular feature, it said.

The city will be developed to ensure sustainability with adequate spaces for cyclists and pedestrians.

Traffic management will also be done in a modern manner using Smart City infrastructure, according to the PMO. UP deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma and several other ministers of the UP government were present in the meeting.

The Prime Minister had performed the "bhoomi puja" of a Ram temple in Ayodhya on 5 August last year.

In a historic verdict on 9 November, 2019, the Supreme Court had cleared the way for the construction of the temple in Ayodhya.



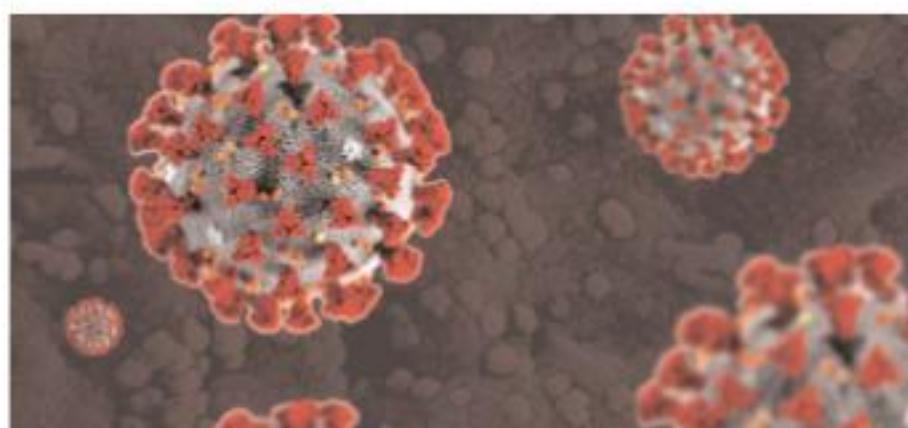
Lack of audit breeds corruption and ignores governance transparency and accountability

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR, GOVERNOR, WEST BENGAL

ON COMPLAINTS ABOUT ALLEGED CORRUPTION IN THE GORKHALAND TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

# Delhi logs 85 fresh Covid cases, lowest this year; 9 deaths added

Positivity rate drops to 0.12 pc, active cases dip to 1,598, home isolation cases slip to 494

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Delhi today reported 85 fresh coronavirus cases—it's lowest this year—and 9 Covid-linked deaths, according to the Delhi government's health department figures.

The national capital's Covid positivity rate dipped to 0.12 per cent. The fresh fatalities pushed its Covid death toll to 24,961, as per the official data.

Last Monday, Delhi had recorded 89 coronavirus cases with a positivity rate of 0.16 per cent, while 11 people were then reported to have died due to the contagious, deadly pathogen.

Ninety-four people had been diagnosed Covid positive on February 16 while the daily tally was 96 on January 27, according to official figures.

The 89 cases recorded on Monday was the first time since February 16 that the daily count of coronavirus cases dropped below the 100-mark.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of 72,920 tests, including 50,839 RT-PCR tests and 22,081 rapid antigen tests, according to the official bulletin.

Delhi's cumulative Covid tally rose to 14,33,675 while over 14 lakh patients have recovered from the virus so far.

The tally of active cases decreased to 1,598 from yesterday's 1,680. The number of patients under home isolation came down to 494 from yesterday's 503 while the tally of containment zones dropped to 1,817 from 2,048 a day before, the bulletin added.

The city had recorded 111 cases and 7 deaths last Wednesday, while the positivity rate was then 0.15 per cent. On Thursday, 109 Covid cases and 8 deaths were recorded while on Friday, 115 cases and 4 deaths, lowest since March 21, were reported.

On 22 June, Delhi had recorded 8 fresh Covid deaths and 134 coronavirus cases with a positivity rate of 0.20 per cent.

The national capital had on 20 June reported 124 Covid cases and 7 coronavirus-linked deaths while the positivity rate

was 0.17 per cent. On 19 June, it had recorded 7 deaths due to the infection and 135 cases while the positivity rate was 0.18 per cent.

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

Delhi was severely hit by a brutal second wave of the pandemic that swept the country claiming a staggering number of lives daily, with the acute shortage of oxygen, hospital beds, and essential medicines turning the crisis into an unprecedented public health catastrophe.

Since April daily cases as well as death count in the national capital had been on upward spiral.

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

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

The continuing "unlock-down" and relaxations of restrictions in Delhi have again led to overcrowding in markets and other places, prompting doctors and experts to issue fresh warnings about possible hastening of the third Covid wave due to people's continued violations of Covid safety protocols.

## 'Delhi govt to undertake tree plantation drive for 15 days'

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government will run a tree plantation drive across Delhi for the next 15 days as part of "Van Mahotsav", environment minister Gopal Rai said today.

Rai, who inaugurated the

"Van Mahotsav" at Ghari Mandu on Yamuna Bank, said the Delhi government aims to plant 33 lakh saplings this year as part of its goal of planting two crore trees in its five-year term.

"During the next 15 days, we will run the plantation programme in all 70 assembly constituencies led by

the respective MLAs. And we are hoping to meet most of our aim of planting 33 lakh saplings this year during this drive," Rai said.

He added that all the departments involved in plantation drives have been given directions for audit of the earlier programmes.

"The audit report from the

forest department will soon be made public," the minister said.

Also, to control the pollution problem in the national capital, he said, agencies

have been finalised that will monitor replantation of the trees that are cut due to development works.

"The agency will make

sure the trees and plants removed during any development work are planted at another location," Rai said.

The move is part of the new tree plantation policy that was cleared last year to prevent felling of trees due to development works in Delhi.

## JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

**Public Notice**  
On Behalf of HDFC BANK LTD., We would like to inform the general public that M/S. FULL CIRCLE EDUCATION PVT. LTD. (property owners (1) Shri Rakesh Kumar Gupta S/o Late Shri Indar Kumar Gupta (2) Smt. Parul Gupta W/o Shri Rakesh Kumar Gupta (3) Sh. Ajay Kumar Gupta S/o Late Shri Indar Kumar Gupta (4) Smt. Rakhi Gupta W/o Sh. Ajay Kumar Gupta owned of the Entire Flat bearing its Pvt. No. GF-03, having area measuring 2000 Sq. Ft. Approx. along with one reserved car parking, one servant quarter (which falls at rear/back side of the basement) Part of free hold built-up property bearing No. 15, along with all common facilities of entrance/ passage/ staircase/ lift and a common bathroom and toilet for servant, situated at Banarsi Dass Estate, Timarpur Delhi-110054) has approached for loan to HDFC Bank Ltd. but Original Sale Deed dated 28.04.2005 in respect of back portion of ground floor having its covered area measuring 1678.25 Sq. Ft., approx. without terrace rights of the said property (as per the said partition deed) executed by (1) Mr. Siddharth Aggarwal (2) Mr. Chetan Aggarwal (3) Mr. Ankit Aggarwal in favour of Shri Pradeep Kumar Aggarwal and the same was registered the Office of Sub-Registrar, Delhi, as Document No. 2200, in Addl. Book No. 1, Vol. No 1419, on pages 158 to 175 dated 28.04.2005 have been actually lost and an FIR dated 11-06-2021 against the lost document have been Lodged with the concerned Police Station, if anyone claimant found or is having any objection on said property, please contact to Mr. Pukhraj Neera, Advocate (Raj Law Associates) Mob. No. 9999792385 Golki-1, A-602, Tower-16, Krishna Garden, Gulmohar Garden Phase-2, Raj Nagar Extension, Ghaziabad.(U.P.) 201017 within 14 days to this publication, else it will be presumed that the above property is free from all encumbrances and no other person is having any claim whatsoever on it.

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### The Sunday Statesman

**KOLKATA**  
Statesman House,  
4, Chowringhee Square  
Kolkata-700 001  
Tel: (033) 22127070-76,  
(033) 41071700  
Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780  
Email: thestatesman@vsnl.com  
statesmandisplay@gmail.com  
thestatesmansclassified@gmail.com

**DELHI**  
Statesman House,  
148, Barkahama Road,  
New Delhi-110 001  
Tel: (011) 23315911  
Hiten Rathore  
hitens.statesman@gmail.com  
Mob: 9212192123, Tel: 011-43043793  
Ishan House (2nd floor)  
A-90, Sector II, NOIDA,  
UP 201 301  
Tel: (0120) 4171421  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
delhi@thestatesmangroup.com

**BHUBANESWAR**  
Plot 3A, Zone B, Sector A, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751 010.  
Tel: (0674) 2588060/61/62/2586371,  
Telefax: 0674-2588061  
Email:  
bhbabeswar@thestatesmangroup.com  
statesmanbbsr@gmail.com

**SILIGURI**  
Spencer Plaza, 18/19, 1st Floor  
Burdwan Road  
Above Vishal Mega Mart  
Siliguri-734005, West Bengal  
Ph: 9832082429  
Email:  
sil\_statesman@yahoo.co.in

**SHIMLA**  
Cabin No. 305, P. C. Chambers  
Near Jodha Niwas  
The Mall Shimla-171001, H.P.  
Tel: 0177-2815000  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
shimla@thestatesmangroup.com

**AIR-SURCHARGE; Kathmandu - Re. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1**

**HYDERABAD**  
The Statesman Limited, 2nd Floor, UNI Building,  
A.C. Guards, Hyderabad-500004,  
Mob: 9866323009  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
hyderabad@thestatesmangroup.com

**BANGALORE**  
No. 68, First Floor, Gold Tower,  
50 Residency Road, Bangalore-560025.  
Tel.: 080-22229129, 080-22234813  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
bangalore@thestatesmangroup.com

**MUMBAI**  
5, Kasturi Buildings, Jamshedji Tata Road, Mumbai-400 020  
Tel: (022) 2202 1045,  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
mumbai@thestatesmangroup.com  
manuelfrancis@thestatesman.com

**CHENNAI**  
Fagun Mansion (4th floor), 26, Ethiraj Road, Chennai-600 008, Tel: (044) 28278037, 28224800  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
chennai@thestatesmangroup.com

**LUCKNOW**  
2/2, Butler Palace (Near Jopling Road),  
Lucknow-226 001,  
Ph.: (0522) 2206705  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
lucknow@thestatesmangroup.com

**RANCHI**  
11/C, Road#1, Ashoknagar, Ranchi - 834 002  
Fax: (0651) 2247054  
Email:  
delhistaesman@gmail.com  
ranchi@thestatesmangroup.com

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**AIR-SURCHARGE; Kathmandu - Re. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1**

## Over 2.05L received Covid shots on Saturday: Sisodia

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

**Sisodia tweeted Saturday's vaccination figures and claimed that it has "surpassed all records".**

Over 2.05 lakh people in Delhi received anti-coronavirus vaccine shots on Saturday, the highest in a day till now, said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

AAP MLA Atishi said the Delhi government has written to the Centre requesting them to provide 45 lakh doses of vaccine for July.

"About 1.5 lakh vaccine doses are being administered daily in Delhi. Therefore, at least 45 lakh doses should be given to Delhi in July so that we can vaccinate the people of the city as soon as

possible and save them from the third wave," she said while issuing the vaccine bulletin.

Sisodia tweeted Saturday's vaccination figures and claimed that it has "surpassed all records".

"Vaccination in Delhi is happening at a record pace!

For the last three days, we have vaccinated more than 1.5 lakh beneficiaries. Today, surpassing all previous

records Delhi has vaccinated 2,05,170 people! This is how we are going to protect Delhi from the 3rd wave!" he tweeted.

According to the Cowin portal, the total number of vaccine shots administered till Saturday stands at 73,28,647, out of which 56,28,594 are first doses and 17,00,053 are second ones. The national capital has 1,320 vaccination sites.

Over 31.87 lakh people in the 18-44 years age group have received at least one dose of vaccine, over 25 lakh people in the 45-60 age group have received the doses while over 16.40 lakh

senior citizens have been inoculated so far, according to the Cowin portal.

New Delhi district saw the least number of vaccinations on Saturday at 13,232 while North Delhi had a maximum of 23,289. Central Delhi, North, South and South-West Delhi districts saw over 20,000 vaccine shots being administered on Saturday.

On June 25, a total of 1,66,209 vaccine doses were administered in Delhi which was the highest till now.

On Friday, Delhi received 58,000 doses of Covaxin and 53,000 doses of Covishield. Delhi has 8.39 lakh doses

available and according to the current vaccination speed the stock will last for five days, she said.

"For the last one month, we have been repeatedly asking the Central government to provide vaccine doses for Delhi's youth. The youth themselves want to get inoculated as they are aware that it is the only way to avoid the third wave of Covid," Atishi said.

"Now walk-in vaccination is also being done at all the centres of Delhi. Youth too are availing walk-in vaccination which is why a large number of vaccine doses are being administered daily."



### Pulse Polio Immunization facts

- India has been declared Polio Free. However, Polio Vaccination will continue till global eradication of polio is achieved until danger of Polio virus importation from neighbouring countries persists.
- Routine immunization is the key to sustaining polio free status of the country.
- Routine immunization to infants & young children is essential. It protects children from 12 serious diseases and is available free of cost at all govt. health facilities through out the year.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, DELHI GOVERNMENT  
PULSE POLIO CELL: 23813210  
7th Floor, C-Wing, Vikas Bhawan-II, Civil Lines, Delhi-110054

दिल्ली सरकार  
जन आरोग्य विभाग  
प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय



Farmers with leader Rakesh Tikait during their 'Save Agriculture, Save Democracy' protest marking 7 months of their stir against the Centre's farm laws, at Ghazipur border in the Capital Saturday.

## 7 months of stir: Farmer leaders speak to LG virtually, seek repeal of farm laws

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Farmer leaders on Saturday virtually spoke to Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal after they claimed they were allowed to meet him and submitted to his representative a memorandum addressed to the President demanding repeal of the three farm laws.

Farmers had given a call for a protest from Civil Lines metro station to the Raj Bhawan, a senior police officer said, adding that the Delhi Police tightened security across borders of the national capital in view of the anticipated march.

The SKM alleged in a statement that protesters were not allowed to meet the LG, and were picked up and taken to the Wazirabad Police Training Centre. Later on, a brief virtual meeting was arranged with the LG and the memorandum was handed over to his representative, it said.

"The memorandum included our demands for withdrawal of the three farms laws and demand for a new law to ensure guarantee for MSP," BKU media in-charge Dharmendra Malik said. Earlier hundreds of farmers from interiors of Uttar Pradesh reached Ghazipur to mark the completion of seven months of the protest. Many of them came on tractors.

"Adequate police deployment was made at the site in view of the increased gathering of protesters," a police official said.

A protestor from Moradabad and affiliated to the BKU, said he has been associated with the movement for seven months and intended to continue the stir till the farmers

shut down three main stations on the



*This is dangerous. This one scam can create resistance among people against getting vaccinated.*

BOARD CHAIRMAN OF KMC FIRHAD HAKIM

EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE FAKE VACCINATION CAMPS THAT HAVE COME TO LIGHT

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE 2021

03

# Can we work now if your O2 fight is over: Kejriwal to Centre

Corona'll win if we fight with each other, the nation'll win if we fight together: Delhi CM

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Seeking to move on from the controversy over a Supreme Court-appointed panel's interim report on Delhi's oxygen demand during the second Covid wave a couple of months ago, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today called upon everyone to work together to ensure there is no shortage of oxygen in the next Covid wave.

The virus will win if there is a fight among stakeholders, Kejriwal tweeted, a day after his Aam Aadmi Party and the BJP hit out at each other over the panel's report that reportedly said that Delhi's oxygen needs were "exaggerated four times over" during the second Covid wave.

"Can we work now if your fight over oxygen is over? Let us together ensure a system so that no one faces any shortage of oxygen in third wave," Kejriwal asked the BJP-led Centre in a tweet in Hindi.

"There was an acute shortage of oxygen in the second wave. It should not be so in the third wave. Corona will win if we fight with each other. The nation will win if we fight together," the CM asserted.

While AAP leaders accused the BJP of "cooking up" the report



from the Supreme Court-appointed committee, the opposition charged the Delhi government with showing "criminal negligence".

Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia alleged that the "bogus" and "misleading" report was "cooked up" at BJP's office and submitted by the Centre to the apex court.

The sub-group constituted by the top court to audit oxygen consumption in hospitals in the national capital during the second Covid wave reportedly said the Delhi government "exaggerated" the consumption of oxygen and made a claim of 1,140 MT, four times higher than the formula for bed capacity requirement of 289 MT.

The five-member panel, headed by AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria, said the Delhi government had made the claims for allocation of 700 MT oxy-

gen on April 30 of medical grade oxygen using a "wrong formula".

Two members, B S Bhalla, Delhi government's principal home secretary, home, and Max Healthcare's Clinical Director Sandeep Budhiraja, however, questioned the conclusions.

Bhalla gave his objections and comments on the 23-page interim report shared with him on May 30. The report has an annexure of communication sent by Bhalla on May 31 in which he said a reading of the draft interim report makes it painfully apparent that the sub-group, instead of focusing on the task, deviated from the terms of order of the Supreme Court dated May 6.

The manner in which the proceedings of the sub-group were conducted, he said, suggested that the purpose of pro-

ceedings was to satisfy a pre-conceived and predetermined conclusion and narrative to recommend a lower quantity of LMO to Delhi. It was also aimed at further portraying an impression that the assessment by the GNCTD (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi) before the high court and the Supreme Court was exaggerated or not genuine, Bhalla added.

He said in his note that there is no gainsaying that this kind of exercise does not further the spirit, intent and objective of the order of the Supreme Court under which the sub-group was constituted.

Bhalla also objected to the finding of the sub-group that medical oxygen consumption as per actual bed occupancy was 250 tonnes in late April, 470-490 MT in the first week of May and 900 MT as claimed on May 10.

This para should be deleted as it is neither correct nor based on verified data.

With the number of new positive cases peaking in the first week of May, and hospital bed occupancy continuing to rise even after that, the Oxygen requirement based on occupancy was around 625 MT at the end of April and 700 MT in the first week of May, he said.

Regarding the finding that exaggerated oxygen requirement claims were made by the Delhi government, Bhalla said the GNCTD clarified that the calculation for 700 MT has been made in accordance with standard oxygen requirement specified by the government of India/ICMR, which is 24 litres per minutes (LPM) for ICU beds and 10 LPM for non-ICU beds.

Doubts about the percentage of non-ICU beds that need oxygen can only be resolved through an actual on-ground audit of hospitals, which the auditors sub-group is yet to do, he said.

As controversy spiralled on Friday, Kejriwal reacted to developments saying his only "crime" was that he "fought for the breath of two crore people" of Delhi.

"...When you were doing an election rally, I was awake all night arranging for oxygen. I fought, pleaded to get oxygen for people. People have lost their loved ones due to lack of oxygen. Don't call them liars, they are feeling so bad," the CM had then said.

Meanwhile, Guleria today sought to clarify the matter and said: "It is an interim report. The oxygen needs are dynamic and change from day to day. The matter is sub-judice."

## HP Cong demands suspension, arrest of BJP MLA for 'torturing' his wife

PTI  
DHARAMSALA (HIMACHAL PRADESH), 26 JUNE

Congress leaders and workers held a protest here on Saturday demanding suspension and arrest of BJP MLA Vishal Nehria over allegations of torturing his wife.

The Congress has also demanded a high-level inquiry into the matter.

Two months after the marriage, Oshin Sharma, the wife of Dharamsala MLA Nehria, lodged a police complaint on Friday accusing her husband

of physical and mental torture. She also released an 11-minute video that has gone viral on social media.

Sharma, a Himachal Pradesh Administrative Service (HPAS) officer, alleged that her husband had physically and mentally tortured her severally.

Nehria and Sharma got married on April 26 this year.

A police official said Nehria met the Kangra SP and submitted his statement on Saturday.

When asked to comment on the matter, BJP spokesperson

Randhir Sharma said, "The video has gone viral on this issue. A written complaint has also been made to the police. The police will take action according to that complaint. The government is not going to put any kind of pressure on this subject."

"The incident is unfortunate, it should not have happened. It is a family matter, the matter of husband and wife. The police administration will proceed with seriousness and the government will not put any kind of pressure on this. I assure you that," he added.

## Dharamsala BJP MLA's wife alleges mental, physical torture by him

PTI  
SHIMLA, 26 JUNE

Dharamsala BJP MLA Vishal Nehria has been accused by his HPAS officer wife of physical and mental torture.

In an 11-minute video that has gone viral on social media, the 2020-batch Himachal Pradesh Administrative Services (HPAS) officer Oshin Sharma alleged that the BJP legislator slapped her thrice on Thursday.

Sharma, posted as the block development officer at Nagrota Suriyan in Kangra district rural development agency (DRDA), claimed that Nehria had physically and mentally tortured her several times.

Nehria and Sharma were married two months ago on April 26.

Sharma said she has now returned to her maternal house.

The HPAS officer claimed that Nehria had also beaten her in February this year at a Chandigarh hotel.

The BJP MLA neither answered calls nor replied to messages sent to get his version.

Sharma said she has now returned to her maternal house.

The HPAS officer claimed that Nehria had also beaten her in February this year at a Chandigarh hotel.

She added that her husband's family had also levelled allegations of torture against her.

## R-day violence: Court grants interim protection from arrest to Lakha Sidhana

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

A Delhi court on Saturday granted interim protection from arrest to gangster-turned-activist Lakha Sidhana in connection with his alleged involvement in violence which ensued at the Red Fort here on Republic Day.

On January 26, protesting farmers had clashed with police during their tractor rally and

stormed into the Red Fort, hoisting religious flags on its domes and injuring scores of policemen.

Fearing arrest, Sidhana moved Delhi's Tis Hazari court seeking anticipatory bail in the case, with his counsel asserting that he has no role to play in the incident.

Additional Sessions Judge Neelofa Abida Perveen posted the matter for July 3 and directed

the police to not arrest him until then. This came after the police sought more time to make submissions on his pre-arrest bail plea.

Sidhana had earlier denied involvement in the Republic Day violence.

Several cases had been registered against him in Punjab and he was jailed many times. He had also unsuccessfully contested the 2012 state assembly polls.

Sharma said he has now returned to her maternal house.

The HPAS officer claimed that Nehria had also beaten her in February this year at a Chandigarh hotel.

She added that her husband's family had also levelled allegations of torture against her.

## Pak promoting narco-terror to weaken Pb youth, wean them from armed forces: Capt

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 26 JUNE

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Saturday said Pakistan is promoting narco-terrorism as part of the neighbouring country's conspiracy to weaken Punjab's youth and weaning them from armed forces.

Terming drug menace as a global problem, the CM said most of the drugs, especially heroin, are smuggled into Punjab from Afghanistan via Pakistan bordering states like Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Delhi and even Nepal.

Interacting with the people on the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Amarinder termed it a Pak conspiracy to weaken Punjab's youth and weaning them from armed forces. He cited the instances of drug drops via drones, and seizure of 700 kg of heroin smuggled into Punjab through Kandla port. In addition, several deadly weapons have been smuggled by Pakistan through Uri sector in Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

Amarinder attributed the problem to the strong nexus between smugglers, gangsters and terrorists as well as Pakistan

to promote narco-terrorism in Punjab.

Expressing concern over a recent incident of large drug seizure in Canada, the CM said it was shameful that the involvement of few Punjabi youth in the crime had not only defamed Punjab but also brought disrepute to other Punjabis living peacefully across the globe.

On the progress made in the fight against drugs, Amarinder said Punjab had successfully got two A category gangsters deported - Sukhpreet Budhia from Armenia in 2019 and Suhk Bhikhariwal from UAE in 2021.

Gaurav Patiyal was in the process of being deported from Armenia while Ramanjit Romi, a handler of gangsters, was being brought back from Hong Kong. Further, efforts were on to bring back gangsters Harry Chatha from Portugal and Gagan Hathur from Australia, he said. Calling for the support of all stakeholders to fight the menace, which he termed a global problem, the CM said while the neighbouring states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi had agreed to put in place an effective mechanism for tackling drug smuggling, no significant progress had been

made.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also digitally launched live destruction of seized drugs at Amritsar by a special team.

The Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said since Punjab shares around 550 Kilometres border with Pakistan, it has become a major transit route to smuggle heroin, mainly produced in Afghanistan, to other states across the country. Pakistan has established a huge smuggling infrastructure at the borders to smuggle drugs in Punjab, using different methods including rivers, border fencing and sea route.

The decision to keep the two tiger reserves open round-the-year was taken after a discussion with forest department officials as part of plans to boost its income which has been hit hard by the Covid pandemic over the last one-and-a-half years, the minister said.

The state government should review its decision to open the tiger reserves throughout the year because monsoon is also the mating season for a number of wild animals, including elephants, who roam freely around the forests in search of a mate.

## Wildlife experts oppose decision to open Corbett, Rajaji tiger reserves round the year

PTI  
DEHRADUN, 26 JUNE

Wildlife experts in Uttarakhand on Saturday strongly opposed the state government's decision to open Corbett and Rajaji tiger reserves for visitors all round-the-year, saying it amounts to cruelty to the animal world.

"The rule to close tiger reserves for around four months from June to mid November every year was framed after considering all aspects. Opening them for visitors round-the-year

just for income generation will be an act of cruelty to animals. We will oppose the decision legally and on all other platforms to ensure that it is withdrawn in the interest of wildlife," former wildlife warden for Nainital Dinesh Pandey said.

Wildlife tourism is not open round-the-year anywhere in India or abroad, he said.

Uttarakhand's forest and environment minister Harak Singh Rawat recently announced that Corbett and Rajaji tiger reserves will now remain open for visitors

throughout the year. The two tiger reserves whose major parts are located in Nainital and Haridwar districts, respectively remain closed to visitors every year from June 30 to mid November.

The decision to keep the two tiger reserves open round-the-year was taken after a discussion with forest department officials as part of plans to boost its income which has been hit hard by the Covid pandemic over the last one-and-a-half years, the minister said.

However, wildlife experts and

activists feel the decision is not good for animals as monsoon is the breeding time for them and the crowd of visitors may be disturbing for them.

It may even lead to rise of man-animal conflict situations, they warned.

The state government should review its decision to open the tiger reserves throughout the year because monsoon is also the mating season for a number of wild animals, including elephants, who roam freely around the forests in search of a mate.

It has 24 species of trees from 28 states and five Union Territories, including trees from more than one state like mango, bargad, peepal, coconut and sal, Chaururvedi said.

DEHRADUN, 26 JUNE

The Uttarakhand Forest Department has developed a park over a one-acre land in Haldwani, showcasing different tree species from across the country.

The garden, 'Bharat Vatika', was inaugurated by two schoolgirls on Saturday, Chief Conservator of Forest (research) Sanjeev Chaururvedi said.

PTI

The occasion, the Chief Minister also digitally launched live destruction of seized drugs at Amritsar by a special team.

The Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said since Punjab shares around 550 Kilometres border with Pakistan, it has become a major transit route to smuggle heroin, mainly produced in Afghanistan, to other states across the country. Pakistan has established a huge smuggling infrastructure at the borders to smuggle drugs in Punjab, using different methods including rivers, border fencing and sea route.

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speak to our call centre executive for

personal assistance.

The process will continue till the time

balance is less than ₹20, post which the

number shall be permanently

disconnected.

Customer can get the number reactivated



The govt is duty-bound to encourage sportspersons who distinguish themselves at global meets. These cash awards will be given on behalf of the government

TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER M K STALIN

ANNOUNCING AWARD OF RS 3 CRORE TO OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLISTS FROM TAMIL NADU

**India**

THUMBNAILS



An employee cleans Kapaleeshwar temple ahead of its reopening in Chennai on Saturday. PTI

**1st Delta+ death in TN:** Tamil Nadu has registered its first death due to the Delta Plus variant with a person from Madurai succumbing to it, according to the state health department. Minister for Medical and Family Welfare Ma Subramanian said three positive cases of the new 'Delta Plus' variant were identified of which two have recovered. PTI

**New appointments in MMN:** In a post-poll shake-up following the drubbing in the April 6 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, Makkal Needhi Maiam (MMN) founder-president Kamal Haasan on Saturday announced new appointments, and will also be the party General Secretary. PTI

**Goa-bound Rajdhani Express derails:** Goa-bound Rajdhani Express train from Hazrat Nizamuddin, with 309 passengers on board, derailed inside a tunnel in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra early on Saturday, but nobody was injured in the incident, officials said. The derailment led to disruption of railway traffic on the route, but it was restored within a few hours. PTI

## Greece backs India for UNSC permanent role

India, Greece call for respecting sovereignty, territorial integrity



External affairs minister S Jaishankar meets foreign minister of Greece, Nikos Dendias (L), during his visit in Athens.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

**G**reece today reiterated its support for permanent membership of India in a reformed UN Security Council as the two countries reaffirmed the importance of the urgent reform of various multilateral institutions so as to make them more inclusive, transparent, accountable and better reflective of contemporary geopolitical realities.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar, who is on a three-day visit to Greece on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Greek independence, held talks with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias in Athens.

Jaishankar is on a three-day visit to Greece from Friday, the first tour by an Indian foreign minister to Athens in the last 18 years.

The two sides also noted with satisfaction the convergence of each other's vision for a free, open and inclusive consolidation of the bilateral relations. They noted with satisfaction the ongoing cooperation in several areas, such as trade and investment, science and technology, culture, academics and people-to-people contact and agreed to work together to further enhance collaboration in these areas. Both sides also agreed to work towards the establishment of a strategic partnership.

The Greek Foreign Minister signed and handed over to Jaishankar the agreement on the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to the Indian side. Both sides agreed that this will assist the two countries in realisation of the energy goals set by the respective governments to make renewable energy a significant part of the energy supply.

India and Greece on Saturday called for following fundamental international principles of rule of law and respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, and denounced radicalisation, violent extremism and terrorism, in a clear signal of their growing convergence on key geopolitical challenges. The issues figured prominently during talks between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Greek counterpart Nikos Dendias in Athens.

Jaishankar is on a three-day visit to Greece from Friday, the first tour by an Indian foreign minister to Athens in the last 18 years.

The two sides also noted with satisfaction the convergence of each other's vision for a free, open and inclusive consolidation of the bilateral relations. They noted with satisfaction the ongoing cooperation in several areas, such as trade and investment, science and technology, culture, academics and people-to-people contact and agreed to work together to further enhance collaboration in these areas. Both sides also agreed to work towards the establishment of a strategic partnership.

The Greek Foreign Minister signed and handed over to Jaishankar the agreement on the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to the Indian side. Both sides agreed that this will

productive bilaterally" and insightful on many regional and global issues, adding it was agreed to step up the pace of engagement and work towards a strategic partnership.

The external affairs minister also paid a courtesy call on Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Prime Minister of Greece.

The MEA said the Greek foreign minister signed an agreement making Greece part of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), an initiative of India aimed at promoting renewable energy and sustainable development. It said the two ministers shared views on regional and global issues of mutual interest in the context of new geopolitical and geo-economic realities, including the Indo-Pacific.

"Both sides noted with satisfaction the convergence of each other's vision for a free, open and cooperative Indo-Pacific ensuring connectivity and growth for all in the region," the MEA said, adding they also discussed the recent developments pertaining to the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus and Libya.

It said India and Greece also agreed that the rule of law and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity are fundamental principles of international relations that must be observed by all.

The assertion came amid growing global concerns over China's increasing military assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific and elsewhere.

"Both countries recognised the threat posed by radicalisation, violent extremism, as well as terrorism, including cross border terrorism. They emphasised that there can be no justification for these in any form or manifestation," the MEA said in a statement. The reference to cross border terrorism is seen as an oblique reference to Pakistan's support for cross-border terrorism against India.

The two countries also conveyed their deep commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based international order.

## State plans special courts to try dowry cases: Vijayan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
T'PURAM, 26 JUNE

In the backdrop of several deaths related to dowry have been reported in the state recently, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has on Saturday said that violence against women would be dealt with severely.

Speaking after inaugurating the new police buildings via online, chief minister Vijayan said that the recent deaths that took place in connection with dowry were a shame to the state. He added that directions have already been given to the police force to take strict action over the incidents of

violence against women in the state.

"The government is examining the possibility of sanctioning special courts to try dowry cases, in order to ensure punishment for the culprits at the earliest. It will be considered if session court and the sub court can be converted to special court," he further

said.

"We have seen several girls committing suicide at a very young age due to dowry-related harassments. Kerala should not change like this. The government has already given directions to the police to take strict action over the incidents of violence against women in the state."

## TENDER

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders on PWD Form 6 & 8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Shimla Rural Division, H.P.P.W.D. Dhami on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following works from the eligible contractors enlisted in H.P.P.W.D. (B&R) whose registration stood renewed as per revised rules and also registered under the H.P. General Sales Tax Act, 1968 so as to reach in this office on before 14-07-2021 up to 11:00 AM and the same shall be opened on the same day at 11:30 AM, in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The Tenders documents can be had from this office against cash payment (Non-refundable) on 13-07-2021 up to 4:00 PM and the application for issue of tender form shall be received on 12-07-2021 up to 4:00 PM.

The amount of earnest money in the shape of NSCs/FDR deposit at call of any of the Post office/Bank duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Shimla Rural Division, H.P.P.W.D. Dhami must be accompanied with the application for tender documents. Please note no exemption order of earnest money will be entertained. Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money as mentioned above will similarly be rejected. The offer of the tenders shall be kept open for 90 days.

The Executive Engineer reserve right to reject any tender of all tenders without assigning any reasons. If it happens to be a holiday on the day of opening of tenders the same will be opened on next working day at the same time and venue.

**Condition:-** (I) The bidders must have successfully completed similar nature of work not less than 40 % of estimated cost during the last five years (without liquidated damages or compensation) for Job No. 2, 11, 18.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earliest Money	Time	Cost of Form
1.	Restoration of Rain damages on Summer Hill Chailly Karechi Road km: 0/0 to 5/525 (SH:- Providing and Laying Bitumen Concrete 30 mm thick in km: 0/0 to 0/450).	Rs. 3,67,553/-	Rs. 7,400/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
2.	A/R & M/O Link road to village Kanori km: 0/0 to 1/00 (SH:- Providing Patch Work in km: 0/0 to 1/00)	Rs. 1,98,648/-	Rs. 4,000/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
3.	C/o link road from Garkhan to Maghivar Sheet Shorh km: 0/0 to 5/60, Link road Sanhoo Shorh Km: 0/0 to 2/800, Chain Dayala Tabog road km: 0/0 to 2/515, C/o approach road from Lunsu to proposed bridge site km: 0/0 to 1/120 and link road to Dhar Duganha from Sunhi Luni road km: 0/0 to 2/530 (SH:- Preparation of digital map/CA.FCA cases and monitoring of MOEP portal in km: 0/0 to 1/120).	Rs. 2,91,000/-	Rs. 5,600/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
4.	C/o additional accommodation for Rest House at Tara Devi Shimla (SH:- Providing wood work, plastering work, roofing work and painting work etc.) (Deposit Work).	Rs. 1,42,766/-	Rs. 2,900/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
5.	Renovation of PHC building at Pandua Tehsil Sumti District Shimla HP (SH:- Providing wood work, plastering work, roofing work and painting work etc) (Deposit Work).	Rs. 3,75,352/-	Rs. 7,550/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
6.	R/R damages on Tara Devi Matog Zalgi road km: 0/0 to 0/500 (SH:-C/o R/wall at RD 0/100 to p/107-50)	Rs. 4,95,677/-	Rs. 2,875/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
7.	R/R damages on Galog Nehra Okhroo road km: 0/0 to 11/300 (SH:-C/o R/wall at RD 5/530 to 5/538-50).	Rs. 2,93,391/-	Rs. 5,875/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
8.	A/R & M/O to Badmian Ghali road km: 0/0 to 6/500 (SH:- C/o B/wall at RD 3/900 to 3/930).	Rs. 1,72,999/-	Rs. 3,500/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
9.	Stock storage of HPPWD Store at Boltuganj for the year 2021-22 (SH:- Unloading of materials i.e. Cement, Bitumen, Tor Steel, CGI Sheet and lime etc) Job No. II	Rs. 1,99,940/-	Rs. 4,000/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
10.	A/R & M/O to Rattanpur Bathamra road km: 0/0 to 1/600 (SH:- Repair of Pot holes in km: 0/0 to 1/600)	Rs. 1,98,646/-	Rs. 4,000/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
11.	C/o HP State Legal Services Authority at Chakkhar Shimla (SH:- Providing Geotechnical Investigation for construction of HP State Legal Services Authority at Chakkhar Shimla).	Rs. 2,04,600/-	Rs. 5,000/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
12.	Special repair of CHC building at Sunni Tehsil Sumti District Shimla HP (SH:- Providing and fixing cup boards in set No. 1 & 2 and minor repair).	Rs. 2,27,622/-	Rs. 4,600/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
13.	C/o link road from Okhroo to Nehra via Keru km: 0/0 to 3/00 (C/o 20,000 mtr Span RCC T-beam bridge over Dhaneshwar Khud at RD 1/150) (SH:- Consultancy services for the preparation of Hydraulic Survey data investigation i.e. Bearing capacity test, soil investigation, preparation of Architectural drawings, structural designs and detailed estimate etc)	Rs. 3,15,904/-	Rs. 6,350/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
14.	A/R & M/O to PWD Rest House at Sunni Tehsil Sumti District Shimla (SH:- Providing and fixing cup boards in set No. 1 & 2 and minor repair).	Rs. 2,27,622/-	Rs. 4,600/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
15.	Improvement of black spot on Shimla Mandi road km: 39/200 to 45/550 (SH:- Providing W-metal beam Crash barrier in km: 44/875 to 45/00 and edge wall).	Rs. 4,18,644/-	Rs. 8,350/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
16.	A/R & M/O link road to Village Madyalu km: 0/0 to 2/820 (SH:-C/o B/wall at various Rds 1/415 to 1/425)	Rs. 2,58,497/-	Rs. 5,200/-	One Month	Rs.350/-
17.	A/R & M/O Tukkandi Shilgoan road km: 0/0 to 3/870 (SH:-M/T in km: 1/375 to 1/540)	Rs. 4,68,797/-	Rs. 9,380/-	Two Months	Rs.350/-
18.	Special repair of HSC building at Ogil-Tehsil Sumti District Shimla Mashobra Block (SH:- Minor repair work)	Rs. 1,39,875/-	Rs. 2,800/-	One Month	Rs.350/-

Followings documents should be attached with the application for tenders:-

- The Contractors are requested to be produced a copy of their PAN No., GST No., copy of enlistment renewed letter and EPF certificate alongwith FDR against earnest money.
- The contractor is requested to submit an undertaking for not having more than two works in hand for execution.
- Special care would be taken to write the rates both in figures and in word failing which tender is likely to be rejected.

Executive Engineer  
Shimla Rural Division  
H.P.P.W.D. Dhami

On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The sealed item rate tender on from No. 6 & 8 are invited on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following works from the approved and eligible contractor enlisted in H.P.P.W.D. so as to reach in this office on or before on 05.07.2021 upto 11:00 AM and the tender will be opened on the same day at 11:30 AM in the presence of intending contractor or their authorized representatives. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment (Non refundable) upto 5:00 PM on 03.07.2021.

The earnest money in the shape of National Saving certificate/F.D.R./Time deposit account in any of the Post office in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Kulu Division HP.PWD. Kulu must accompany with each tender. Conditional tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 90 days. The undersigned reserve the right to reject the tender without assigning any reasons.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earliest money	Time limit	Cost of form
1.	Special repair to the office of Dy. Director Animal Husbandry at Kullu (SH:- P/L wiparquet laminate flooring, Australian pine wood paneling and distempering and painting and other minor repair).	1,06,249/-	2,200/-	Two months	350/-
2.	Construction of link road from Kabristan to Muth Km: 0/0 to 1/400 (SH:- Providing and laying G-III & BC in Km: 1/050 to 1/390).	4,92,431/-	9,800/-	One month	350/-
3.	Extension of link road to village Dabri Km: 0/0 to 0/600 (SH:- Formation cutting at RD 0/240 to 0/500) (DC Deposit).	2,39,321/-	4,800/-	One month	350/-
4.	Construction of Chhatar Nullah to Bhrain road Km: 0/0 to 3/735 (SH:- C/O hume pipe culvert at RDS 1/860, 1/045 and Formation cutting km: 2/290 to 2/320 and 3/660 to 3/705).	3,72,342/-	7,500/-	Two months	350/-
5.	RRD on Bains Bai to Bhulang road Km: 0/0 to 1/170 (SH:- Construction of wire crated R/wall in Km: 10/822.50 to 10/840).	4,61,588/-	9,300/-	Two months	350/-
6.	RRD on Mohal Jamot Khokhan road Km: 0/0 to 4/415 (SH:- C/O Retaining wall at RD 4/315 to 4/350).	4,95,723/-	10,000/-	Two months	350/-
7.	RRD on Badh Pahnilah road Km: 0/0 to 9/70				



Work is on to bring all opposition parties together at the national level, and this alliance will be incomplete without the Congress.

SHIV SENA LEADER SANJAY RAUT

ADDING THAT CONGRESS WILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ANY OPPPOSITION ALLIANCE

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE 2021

05

## THUMBNAILS



Drizzle in the afternoon in the Capital on Saturday.  
SUBRATA DUTTA

**C`garh drug arrest:** Two persons have been arrested for alleged possession of cannabis worth Rs 2.6 crore in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district, police said on Saturday. Based on a tip-off, the police on Friday intercepted a truck at Temri Naka and recovered around 1,300 kg of cannabis worth Rs 2.6 crore. PTI

**Grenade attack in J&K:** At least three civilians were injured on Saturday when terrorists tossed a grenade at security forces in the downtown area of Barbarshah Srinagar. Terrorists lobbed a grenade at a joint party of the CRPF and J&K Police at Barbarshah falling under Kralkhud police station around 6 pm. SNS

**Court reunites inter-caste couple split by family**

AHMEDABAD, 26 JUNE

An inter-caste couple, separated by family pressures, has been reunited with the intervention of the Gujarat High Court recently.

A 32-year-old doctor in Deodhar of Banaskantha district of north Gujarat fell in love with a nurse working in another health centre and got married in 2017. The couple kept the marriage secret from their families as they knew that it would not be approved because they belonged to two different castes. When the marriage was formally registered in May this year, the woman's family was agitated as the doctor belonged to Thakor community while they are Chaudhary by caste. Within few days, the young woman's family forced the couple sign the divorce papers and she was whisked away to her parental home.

After a week, the woman sent messages to the doctor seeking to be freed from the confinement by her family following which he filed a habeas Corpus petition in the High Court.

SNS

# Avoid random vax centres, Hakim tells public

Mimi Chakraborty and many others fell ill on Saturday, undergoing treatment; list of all vaccine-giving centres and hospitals to be published

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 26 JUNE

In the wake of the vaccine scam in the city, the board chairman of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), Firhad Hakim has warned citizens against visiting random vaccination centres and instead report to the authorities. Meanwhile, the actress and Trinamul MP Mimi Chakraborty who was inoculated at the fake centre in Kasba, today fell ill.

No sooner than the fake vaccination drive came to light, a certain apprehension among people in getting vaccinated is becoming apparent. The fake vaccination drives organised by the common Debanjan Deb have struck fear in many.

More than 200 people visited such camps and victims are presently undergoing thorough health check-ups conducted by KMC and the state health department at Kasba and City College, Amherst Street.



A health check-up camp organised for the people who were vaccinated at a fake vaccination camp at Kasba in Kolkata on Saturday. ■ SNS

Most of the Covid vaccine ampoules recovered from the vaccine camp at Kasba turned out to be fake, as per KMC officials who have pointed out that it could possibly be an antibiotic solution used in treating chest infection. However, forensic reports are yet to confirm the nature of the contents inside the ampoules.

The Tollywood actress and Trinamul MP Mimi Chakraborty, one of the victims, today fell ill

which has sparked fresh concerns and worries regarding her health. Sources said doctors, however, have reported that symptoms are mostly out of panic and fear. She was diagnosed with low blood pressure and stomach ache. She has been advised to rest. About 87 people among the victims reported similar symptoms of headaches, nausea, and body aches, said KMC sources.

Hakim told the media: "This is dangerous. This one scam can create resistance among people against getting vaccinated. I would advise all citizens to kindly not allow this incident to prevent them from saving their lives from Covid through vaccines.

Instead, we will again publish the list of all KMC vaccine centres in all wards and the list of private hospitals that are vaccinating against Covid. No one should go to any random centre and instead report to us if they come to know of one." Meanwhile, more facts have

come to light surrounding the length and breadth of the scam pulled off by Debanjan who posed as a joint municipal commissioner of KMC to dupe people. At least two traders have come forward and lodged complaints against him. According to a trader, Surajit Sahu, Deb procured a bulk amount of oxymeters, masks and sanitizers from him. The accused, careful not to raise suspicions, used to float proper tenders to procure these and had asked Surajit to keep a security deposit amount of approximately Rs 40 lakh. Another trader from Tyangra also levelled similar allegations against Deb.

The man had even got made a fake hologram stamp of the KMC to pull off his scam. He reportedly hired the blue beacon vehicle using this hologram while a gym in Kasba he used to frequent said Deb used to go there with heavy security and had even hired a personal fitness trainer at a high cost.

## Govt sets up expert committee to monitor health of fake vaccination camp victims

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 26 JUNE

The state health department today set up a four-member expert committee to monitor the health condition of more than 1000 people who have taken fake vaccines at two unauthorised vaccination camps at Kasba and City College in the Amherst Street area last week. Debanjan Deb, prime accused in the fake vaccination racket busted in the city hardly one week ago, had organised the two camps.

The committee comprises Dr Santanu Tripathi, senior pharmacologist attached with the School of Tropical Medicine (STM), two general medicine specialists, Dr Soumitra Ghosh of SSKM Hospital, and Dr Jaytirmoy Pal of RGK Medical College Hos-

pital and Dr Gopalkrishna Dhal, gastroenterologist of SSKM. "The experts will also take corrective measures for treatment if any of the people vaccinated at the two fake camps shows ailments. They will also prepare a standard operating procedure (SOP) to prevent such fake vaccinations camps in future across the state," a member, who requested anonymity said.

Ms Mimi Chakraborty, Trinamul Congress MP, who had lodged complaint against the Kasba vaccination camp organized by Debanjan with the municipal authorities first, fell ill today with stomach upset and abdominal pain.

A local physician attended to her at her residence. The actor, who has been suffering from gall bladder and liver-related problems, suffered

from dehydration, stomach ache and her blood pressure count dipped, according to sources.

However, the doctor who attended the Jadavpur MP is reported to have said that it is too early to link her illness with the fake vaccine.

While promoting awareness on Covid-19 vaccination programme at the Kasba camp, she was also 'vaccinated' there more than one week ago. She was prompted to lodge complaint against the fake vaccination camp with the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) after she did not receive the automated text message confirming her vaccination.

The Kasba camp organiser Debanjan posed as an IAS officer holding the post of deputy commissioner in the Kolkata civic body.

## FIGHT FOR RIGHT



Farmer shout slogans during a protest against three farm reform laws, and over other issues at the Golden Gate in Amritsar on Saturday. Farmers are observing 26 June as 'Save Agriculture, Save Democracy' Day to mark seven months of their agitation. ■ IANS

## ED summons Anil Deshmukh next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 26 JUNE



Anil Deshmukh's personal assistant Kundan Shinde being taken to a court by ED officials in Mumbai on Saturday.

fresh date for appearance.

Official sources said Deshmukh has now been asked to appear next week by Tuesday. Earlier, lawyers of Deshmukh handed over a letter written by the politician to the investigators. "He (Deshmukh) will not appear today. We have not been given documents related to this case and we have given a letter to ED demanding these documents and case details in which he is to be questioned. We will furnish our reply accordingly," lawyer Jayvant Patil told reporters outside the ED office.

The central agency early on Saturday arrested his person-

al secretary Sanjeev Palande (51) and personal assistant Kundan

Shinde (45) after it carried out raids against them and Deshmukh in Mumbai and Nagpur on Friday. The aides were brought to the ED office for questioning following the searches and arrested subsequently. They were sent to ED custody till July 1 by a special PMLA here.

The ED case against Deshmukh and others was made out after the CBI first carried out a preliminary inquiry followed by a regular case being filed on the orders of the Bombay High Court.

## Maha BJP holds protest to seek OBC quota in local bodies

MUMBAI, 26 JUNE

The Maharashtra unit of the BJP on Saturday held 'chakkajam' or road blockade protests across the state demanding restoration of reservation for the Other Backward Classes (OBC) in local governing bodies which was quashed by the Supreme Court in March this year.

The party had announced that it would hold agitation at 1,000 locations across the state. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis participated in a protest in his home district Nagpur, while Leader of Opposition in the Council Pravin Darekar took part in an agitation in Thane.

Addressing BJP workers, Fadnavis said his party will restore reservation for OBCs in local bodies if given power, and if not, he will retire from politics.

"The fact is that this issue can be resolved at the state level. The state government can restore the reservation by formulating a law. There is no need for any act of the Centre. That is why OBC reservation is prevalent in other states except in Maharashtra. You (MVA) will have to make a law. We will not stop until we expose their lie. This protest is held to condemn this government on the issue," he said.

Fadnavis, said OBCs are being purposely deprived of the political reservation. "I want to appeal to all the OBC ministers in the MVA government. PTI

former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal for two-and-a-half hours.

The Punjab government had formed the new SIT to probe the Kotkapura police firing incident following the directions of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The new SIT is investigating the two FIRs registered on October 14, 2015 and August 7, 2018 in connection with the Kotkapura incident.

The High Court had on April 9 this year quashed a report by an earlier Punjab Police SIT into the firing at people protesting in Kotkapura in 2015 over the alleged desecration of religious texts and the subsequent police firing at people protesting against it had taken place in Faridkot in 2015.

Several senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders, including Bikram Singh Majithia, Balwinder Singh Bhundar, N K Sharma and Daljit Singh Cheema, reached the Punjab Police Officers' Institute in a show of support to Badal.

After his questioning, Badal

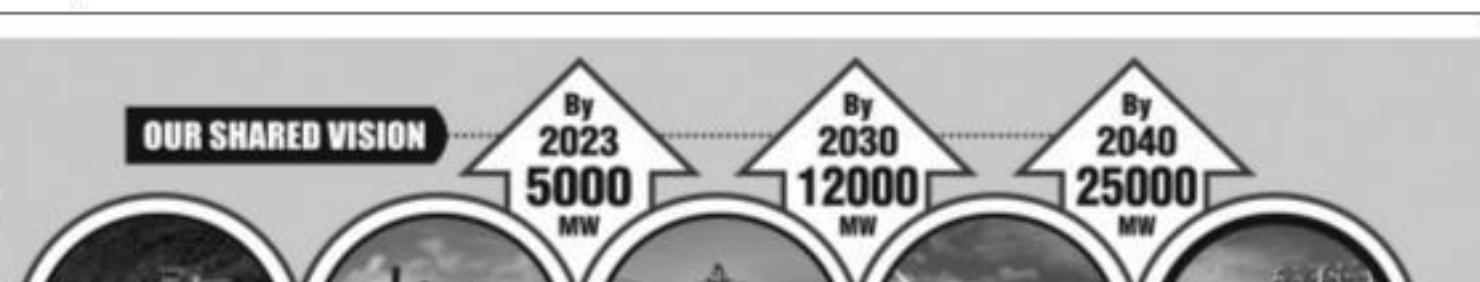
came out of the institute at 3.10 pm and then waved at the Akali Dal workers from his vehicle.

Sidhu tweeted, "6Yrs since

sacrifice of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. No Justice in 2 yrs of your rule. No Justice in the following 4.5 yrs. Today, New SIT inches closer to Justice for Punjab's soul".

Sidhu added, "I am indebted to the party workers for giving so much love and respect, Badal tweet-ed.

On Tuesday, the SIT led by Additional Director General of Police (Vigilance Bureau) LK Yadav had questioned Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch and



## EXTRACT OF THE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2021

Sr. No.	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated	
		Quarter ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Year ended
1.	Total Income from Operations	31.03.2021 (Audited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)	31.03.2021 (Audited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)	31.03.2021 (Audited)	31.03.2020 (Audited)
2.	Profit before exceptional items, net movement in regulatory deferral account balance and tax	46,565	54,585	2,49,083	2,70,761	46,377	54,411
3.	Profit before net movement in regulatory deferral account balance and tax	72,897	26,676	2,13,328	1,77,251	73,622	26,465
4.	Profit before tax after net movement in regulatory deferral account balance	72,893	26,067	1,83,984	1,76,642	73,618	25,856
5.	Net Profit after tax from continuing operations	88,469	39,137	2,16,867	1,95,936	89,280	39,185
6.	Total Comprehensive Income comprising net profit after tax and other comprehensive income after tax	61,380	39,944	1,63,304	1,55,743	61,992	39,921
7.	Paid-up equity share capital (Face value of share ₹10/- each)	61,840	39,314	1,63,138	1,54,323	62,452	39,291
8.	Other equity excluding revaluation reserve	3,92,980	3,92,980	3,92,980	3,92,980	3,92,980	3,92,980
9.	Earnings Per Share for continuing operations (before net movement in regulatory deferral account balance) (of ₹10/- each) (not annualised) (in ₹)					8,83,204	8,10,451
10.	Earnings Per Share for continuing operations (after net movement in regulatory deferral account balance) (of ₹10/- each) (not annualised) (in ₹)					1.56	1.01
						4.16	3.96
						1.58	1.02
						4.19	3.99

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/ Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results of the Company are available on the investor section of our website <http://www.sjvn.nic.in> and under Corporate Section of BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at <http://www.bseindia.com> & <http://www.nseindia.com>.
- The Board of Directors have recommended final dividend of ₹0.40 per share (on face value of ₹10/- each) for the year 2020-21 in its meeting held on 26.06.2021. The total dividend (including interim dividend) is ₹ 2.20 per share (Previous Year: ₹ 2.20 per share) (on face value of ₹10/- each).

Place: Shimla

Dated : 26th June,2021



एसजे वीएन लिमिटेड  
**SJVN LIMITED**  
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Himachal Pradesh)  
A Mini Ratna & Schedule "A" PSU

CIN : L40101HP1988GOI008409

Regd. Off.: SJVN Corporate Office Complex, Shimla - 171006, Himachal Pradesh (India)

Expediting Off.: Office Block, Tower-1, 6th Floor, NBCC Complex, East Kidwai Nagar, New Delhi-110023 (India)

## Fake vaccines

Quite the most distressing facet to the potentially mortal resurgence of Covid-19 is the emergence of illegal vaccination camps in Kolkata's Kasba area. Most particularly the fact that these have sprouted in the vicinity of a civic health clinic ~ so-called ~ where the number of people in the queue would outnumber the available vaccines. The ignorance about its existence is as contrived as it is collective not the least because Kasba police station is 1.5 km from the "camp". Such suspicions are bound to deepen as the illegal camp was organised barely 150 metres from the office of the KMC ward coordinator. The jab centre thrived on fake shots and yet reports suggest that there isn't a single civic official who was privy to the illegality, wholly criminal. Horror of horrors, the police had no knowledge about the camp as well as others organised by the accused, a certain Debanjan Deb. Posing as an IAS officer and a joint commissioner of KMC, he had the cheek to put up flexes and boards to proclaim the vaccination centre and embellish these with the KMC's emblem.

In the wake of the news-break on Thursday, there is considerable consternation among residents over the ignorance of the civic authorities as well as of the local police. Hundreds of people were being "vaccinated" each day and when the health clinics of the civic body were facing a crippling shortage of vaccines. It is difficult to believe that no one found anything suspicious. Such suspicions were aroused rather late in the day when it was learnt that the KMC had not organised any such camps. A KMC official said: "After we were informed about the camp, one of our officers went there. His phone was taken away before he was allowed to enter. He came out and reported that the KMC logo was being used at the camp. As we enquired further, we came to know that the corporation had not organised any such camp."

The overwhelming ignorance during the period when the camp thrived ought to stump the health department authorities at Nabanna. It is pretty obvious that the prime accused and his henchmen were exploiting the endemic dearth of vaccines. And this afforded an opportunity to make a fast buck amidst the crisis.

Any investigation that may be commissioned ought to be riveted to the role of the principal accused, how the KMC's emblem came to be used, and how the Kasba police station and KMC offices in the area were ignorant of the canker that permeated the public health system. Not to put too fine a point on it, the accused had been playing with fire in the midst of a catastrophe in West Bengal and further afield in India and beyond. The public, we trust, will be informed about the findings of the probe. Extending the lockdown is not the singular solution.

## Secretly does it

Bereft of the grandstanding that marks a moment in history, the government of Xi Jinping in Beijing has adopted the decidedly unusual step of closing Tiananmen Square to the people, nearly a week ahead of a major celebration that has been planned to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Communist Party of China, verily the omnipotent authority. This must seem amazing as the movement 32 summers ago was spearheaded by the people, many of whom had fallen to the soldier's bullet. The square, which was the nerve-centre of events in June 1989 and offers a peek into China's stirring history, normally attracts tourists from across the country. The same would have happened this year, but China has somehow chosen to keep the people - the bedrock of the Communist party - at a distance. The square was barricaded on Wednesday and will remain closed till 2 July. Of course, there are rows of yellow seats and heavy machinery in the open plaza that also houses the mausoleum of Mao Zedong, the founder leader of Communist China. Neither the party nor the government have as yet disclosed the reasons for the closure of Tiananmen Square or the factors that prompted the low-key anniversary, under the shadow of the persecution of Uighurs in Xinjiang and the violation of human rights generally.

The party will showcase the country's rise from civil war and disastrous political campaigns in the early years of Communist rule to market reforms that have created the world's second largest economy, with a superpower status rivaled only by the United States of America. For all that, arrangements for the July 1 anniversary remain shrouded in secrecy. Around Tiananmen Square, the former palace complex of the Forbidden City, and other historical sites of profound scenic value are also closed. Fly-pasts by air force squadrons suggest an aerial review is on the anvil, but the authorities are yet to release details. Around Beijing and throughout the country, signboards have been erected and commemorative activities held, accompanied by the deployment of additional police and paramilitary forces. It bears recall that the party was established in secrecy in 1921, following the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912. It held its first session at a girl's school in Shanghai, and later moved to a "lake boat" to evade agents of the local warlord. The party has built its reputation on resistance, first from Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, then the Japanese invaders and culminating in its seizure of power in 1949.

Chiang fled to Taiwan, which has since evolved into a democracy that Beijing threatens to annex by force, while the Communists' military wing asserted control over Tibet and other outlying regions. Mao's death in 1976 brought about an end to orthodox Marxist economics, even while the party retained its authoritarian Marxist-Leninist governing structure. That structure of governance has kept the people away from the romantic euphoria generated by the centenary of the Communist Party of China.

# Siberia at Stake

Siberians have realized that, for better or for worse, Beijing is a lot closer than Moscow. The land is already providing China, 'the factory of the world,' with much of its raw materials, especially oil, gas and timber. Increasingly, Chinese-owned factories in Siberia churn out finished goods, as if the region already were a part of the Middle Kingdom's economy



**O**ne is unable to understand the Russian regime's inability to realize that its greatest enemy potentially would be China and certainly not the USA. Moscow's obsession with America earlier was due to its illusion that the Soviet Union was a superpower. Josef Stalin imagined that primarily the USSR was instrumental for the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. He overlooked that the USA and Britain were the Western front and a lot of his weaponry and other material had been supplied under the Lend Lease Act.

The Soviet Union was not a very strong European power before the war; its economy was neither resourceful nor efficient. It did not deserve to nurture dreams of being a superpower, a dream that eventually resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union itself. By some strange device, this delusion was passed on to his successor Nikita Khrushchev, who in turn passed it on to Leonid Brezhnev. It was only Mikhail Gorbachev who could see the reality, by which time it was too late.

Vladimir Putin appears to be making an equally dangerous mistake by ignoring the potential threat from China. He was only 17 years old when the Soviet Union fought a seven-month-long mini war across the Ussuri River, which is located in Russia's Siberia or sleeping land. How big was Beijing's ambition one does not know, but the Soviets had to convey an implicit nuclear threat to the aggressor.

To save face, Mao Zedong through his premier Zhou En Lai, threatened a "People's War," which meant that hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers would swarm Soviet tanks, as they had done with the Americans in the Korean War in 1951-52. The Chinese leader's belief of convenience was the superiority of man over machine. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) did demonstrate its idea of warfare on one of the islands on the Ussuri by ambushing Soviet soldiers.

In the end, China gained quite a few islands on the river, which were a loss for the Soviet

Union. Logically, more conflict lies ahead. China is a much bigger nuclear power than it was in 1969. Its ambitions have grown and by its current indications, it wishes to become a superpower. We have to remember that Siberia is over 13 million square kilometres with a sparse population, whereas China is bubbling with people but is short of arable land. Incidentally, the Yellow giant gained several hundred islands in the midst of not only the Ussuri but also the Amur and Argun rivers. This gain by China and loss by the USSR were after decades of harrowing negotiations which ended in 2004.

With the earth experiencing climate change and getting warmer, Siberia could well become more hospitable. Today,

the whole region is considered hostile due to its very low temperatures in winter. It gets as cold as -25 degrees centigrade on an average; at its coldest some pockets touch -46 degrees centigrade. In other words, with global warming, Siberia, east of the Ural mountains and stretching to Vladivostok on the Pacific Ocean, is likely to become attractive for China to occupy.

To add to its attractions, parts of Siberia are rich with minerals. The region, called Sibir in Russian, is rich in coal, natural gas, diamonds, iron ore, gold and aluminum. The visionary Czar towards the end of the 16th century sent groups of Cossacks led by a heroic Yermak who occupied gradually the whole area now a part of Russia.

A possible scenario of China forcibly occupying Siberia can no longer be looked upon as hypothetical or imaginary. Patrick Prinston, a Western columnist informs us that a Chinese portal "Jinji Toutiao" had published an article whose author called Siberia "Chinese land".

The Chinese media regularly praises Russian ruler Vladimir Putin and how cleverly he puts the West in its place. Simply, from

the point of view of Beijing, Russia is not only a good friend, but also has an excellent potential prize.

"There are no countries around the world that are always friendly, or, conversely, always hostile to each other. In the past, Siberia was conquered by the Mongols and therefore, in fact, is a Chinese territory." This is increasingly becoming China's

recently, one of the inhabitants of Siberia organized a collective boycott of China, collecting 250,000 signatures. He wants Russia to stop exporting timber to China within ten years. Siberian forests are of great value for Russia. However, following the sharp increase in the volume of foreign trade in recent years, the local forest has been cut down on a large scale.

Joe Burgess in his column in The New York Times "Why China Reclaims Siberia" lays out an even starker scenario. A land without people for a people without land, Burgess says.

At the turn of the 20th century, that slogan promoted Jewish migration to Palestine. It could be recycled today, justifying a Chinese takeover of Siberia. The land is as resource-rich and people-poor as China is the opposite.

The weight of that logic scares the Kremlin. Like love,

a border is real only if both sides believe in it. And on both sides of the Sino-Russian border, that belief is wavering. Siberia - the Asian part of Russia, east of the Ural Mountains - is immense. It takes up three-quarters of Russia's land mass, the equivalent of the entire USA and India put together.

The 1.35 billion Chinese people south of the border outnumber Russia's 144 million almost 10 to 1. The discrepancy is even starker for Siberia on its own, home to barely 38 million people, and especially the border area, where only 6 million Russians face over 90 million

Chinese.

With intermarriage, trade and investment across that border, Siberians have realized that, for better or for worse, Beijing is a lot closer than Moscow. The land is already providing China, "the factory of the world," with much of its raw materials, especially oil, gas and timber. Increasingly, Chinese-owned factories in Siberia churn out finished goods, as if the region already were a part of the Middle Kingdom's economy. Beijing could use Russia's own strategy: hand out passports to sympathizers in contested areas, and then move in militarily to "protect its citizens." If Beijing chooses to take Siberia by force, the only way Moscow could stop it would be by using nuclear weapons.

In a meeting with the press on May 20 this year, Russian President Putin, using a bit of colourful language, threatened to "smash the teeth of anyone who tried to bite off even a piece of Siberia". He surely could not have been thinking of the USA or the West. Chinese dictator Xi Jinping only last year described Putin as his "best friend". The bonhomie is understandable as both countries now face American sanctions and hostility - China for its increasingly apparent role in engineering the Covid-19 pandemic devastating the world and increasing aggression, and Russia for its revisionism in Europe and cyber-interference in American affairs.

But despite all the nice sounding rhetoric, the reality of the China-Russia relationship is a shallow one. The USA and the nations friendly to it are bound by a set of common values, formal military alliances and/or structures and even sharing of intelligence, with both qualitative and quantities expansions like the Quad (USA, Japan, India and Australia) happening.

There is nothing even remotely comparable in the case of Russia and China; in this partnership, which is purely transactional without any real political integration, Russia is very much the junior partner by a long distance, with China eyeing its geographically vast, resource-rich but under populated Eurasian neighbour.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Border guards stay vigilant amid pandemic

The complex developments of the Covid-19 pandemic in Cambodia and Thailand mean pandemic prevention efforts on Viêt Nam's southwestern border areas need more focus than ever. The southwestern provinces of Long An, Dảng Tháp, An Giang and Kiên Giang share more than 384km of border with Cambodia. The Border Guard of Long An province manages 134km of the border line across 20 communes in five districts, with one town next to the border with one international border gate, one national border gate, and ten local border checkpoints. In the border area of Long An, there are 36 fixed posts with more than 500 officers and soldiers on duty, six mobile patrol teams and three mobile working groups of nearly 100 people.

Their job is to patrol, protect the border and prevent illegal immigration. From the beginning of 2021 to the end of May, the Long An Border Guard tackled 102 cases related to 158 illegally crossing the border. Those 158 people were mainly Vietnamese nationals, Cambodians and Chinese people who were attempting to travel from northern provinces to Cambodia for work opportunities. Authorities have prosecuted six cases involving 27 people on charges of illegal immigration and human trafficking.

A total of 953 people were also quarantined following investigations. "We have prepared for a serious pandemic situation. We're ready to repatriate Vietnamese-Cambodia and Viet-

Nam

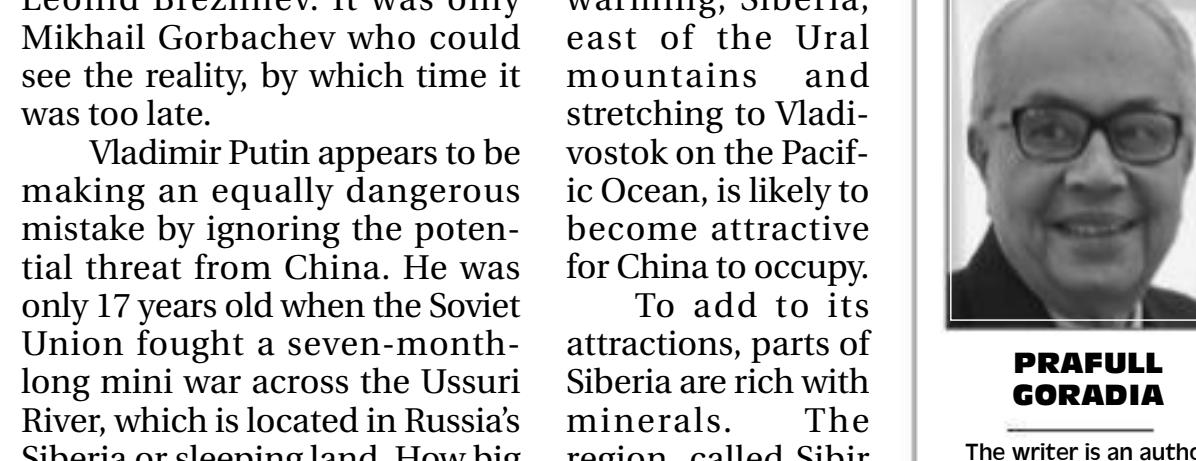
Viet Nam News

namese nationals who do business in two Cambodia provinces next to Long An by any means and the number of people is expected to be 50 up to 100 a day," said Colonel Phan Phu Phuoc, commander of the Long An Border Guard.

"In addition to strengthening border management and protection, preventing illegal immigration, we are mobilising all resources for key groups so the soldiers can stay there for a longer time. "We will ask the Long An Provincial People's Committee to drill wells or provide tap water to all the posts, request the Department of Science and Technology to implement the project of lighting the border and instruct officers and soldiers to plant vegetables and raise cattle to ensure their nutrition and health," he said. According to Col Bùi Trung Dũng, deputy commander of the Border Guard Command of An Giang, Vinh Xuong and Tịnh Biên are the province's only two international border gates for Vietnamese people to enter and for Vietnamese-Cambodian people to return to Cambodia.

"We can't quarantine them all," Col Dũng said. "If there are too many people returning, we won't have time to make a medical declaration and they cannot be put in the current isolation group." Col Dũng added: "To do that, we must have a separate area or have to set up a place or camp in that particular area for them to declare and provide medical reports."

Tây Ninh shares more than 240km of border with three provinces of Cambodia, namely Tboung Khmum, Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. Since the pandemic in Cambodia became complicated, the Border Guard Command of Tây Ninh has directed all units to strengthen border management and protection, strictly control border areas and roads, trails and openings to prevent illegal immigration.



PRAFULL GORADIA

The writer is an author, thinker and former Member of Parliament

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com

## Centre must be magnanimous

**SIR**, This is with reference to your report 'Will extend all support to Alapan: Mamata' (24 June). The former Chief Secretary of West Bengal, Alapan Bandhyopadhyay, incurred the wrath of the Centre for non-attendance at a meeting in Kalakunda chaired by PM Narendra Modi. The officer was with the CM overseeing the situation, came with her, stayed for some time and left with her. He retired at the end of last month.

The officer could have urged the CM to attend the PM's meet first and then go for other engagements. His action infuriated the Central government, and some observers saw in the action against him the BJP's inability to digest its election defeat. The matter did not subside, an explanation was sought from him after his superannuation, and a few days ago, he was served with a major penalty charge-sheet and asked to reply within 30 days. As per rules, a retired official can be tried within four years of retirement.

The CM has promised support to the officer, who within a period of 15 days lost his younger brother, nephew and mother to



Covid. Didi has termed the actions of the Centre as those of a "selfish giant". All along, the officer was a man of proven integrity, suave and soft-spoken. Notwithstanding the lapse at Kalakunda, which could have been diffused by administering a written warning on the day of his superannuation, the issue is being allowed to snowball.

The ball is in the Centre's court and prudence dictates that

forgive and forget must be its decision. Snatching of pensionary benefits, gratuity or both would be cruel and demoralising for other good officers, and unnecessary litigation will follow. The Centre must show magnanimity.

BJP lost in Bengal because of its inability to gauge public opinion and the State's ethos. Politics is all about survival of the fittest, defeat and victory

## FALSE NARRATIVE

**SIR**, With reference to your report, 'Sensex hits all time high' (June 26), it is a paradox that Covid should accentuate the existing divide in the Indian economy between those who rule the markets and perhaps the minds of mandarins of finance and those whose economic engine is sought to be painfully cranked up and diligently oiled by the common man. Was not Covid expected to play the ruthless leveller, without mercy and across the spectrum? Post-pandemic, the Sensex had been on a merry ride and today it has breached all records. This is but a parody of a modern economic dispensation where millions are sick and lakhs have died and a wide swathe of the population is unable to earn a living. To rub salt into the ruthless gash of economic assault on average citizens, foreign direct investment (FDI) flows too are currently at record highs, though there is a steady contraction in GDP. These investments are coming into creating digital assets rather than real assets, and not into manufacturing or in sectors where the government would wish for. They create neither additional jobs nor contain inflation. Yet the govt is happy to roll out such impressive statistics on a near daily basis. North Block would like to stick with this narrative on the state of our investment-positive economy and treat the many crore Indians who have since inexorably slipped below the poverty line as no more than a bad dream that will pass. Would it?

Yours, etc., R Narayanan, Navi Mumbai, 26 June.

Partha Sarathy Sen,  
New Delhi, 24 June.

## GREAT LOSS

**SIR**, It is extremely saddening to learn about the demise of legendary sprinter Milkha Singh, "The Flying Sikh", owing to post-Covid complications. Milkha Singh, who won four Asian Games gold medals in his career, was the first Indian track and field athlete to clinch gold in the then British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Cardiff in 1958. In the 1960 Rome Olympics, the legend finished fourth in the 400m final in a photo-finish. Undoubtedly, with his passing away, our country has lost one of its greatest sportsmen. He will remain in our hearts forever.

Yours, etc., Sourish Misra, Kolkata, 19 June.

ATANU BISWAS

In a recent article in the New York Times, columnist Thomas Friedman portrayed Benjamin Netanyahu as the Donald Trump of Israel, and the Israeli Change Coalition which replaced his government as Joe Biden. Although Friedman drew many similarities in support of his postulation, Netanyahu, certainly, has a much smarter political brain. He is the 'magician' of Israeli politics, who has been at the helm for 15 long years, and 12 years at a stretch since 2009. He has been demonstrated extraordinary political skill and control.

After two long years and four elections, the political scenario of the country is in a mess. There has been no annual budget since March 2018. A serious political deadlock, indeed. No wonder that there have been severe policy paralyses in Israel in between, and public trust in the institutions has seen a sharp decline. And all this happened amid the deadliest pandemic in a century. Now, apparently, Israel has broken a two-year political logjam and far-right former settler leader Naftali Bennett was sworn in as the country's new prime minister on June 13, after winning confidence vote with a razor-thin margin of 60 votes to 59. What is more, he created history by ousting Netanyahu, the longest-serving prime minister of Israel. While negotiations for the 'Change Coalition' were in the final stage, a 11-day-long war in the Gaza strip almost scuttled the chances of such a government and many believed that the war could provide another lifeline to Netanyahu.

Bennett is the leader of Yamina, a right-wing party which could bag only seven seats in Israel's parliament, the Knesset, according to its proportional representation system where seats are assigned proportional to vote shares beyond a threshold. It is, however, unprecedented to become the prime minister with such a small number of seats, even in the multi-party democracy of Israel where coalitions of conflicting ideologies is the destiny of the country.

But still it is certainly the most diverse coalition Israel has ever seen. It is an unlikely assortment of eight parties, including the anti-occupation and dovish Meretz, and parties led by other hawkish figures on the right such as Avigdor Lieberman, a Moldova-born settler. Yair Lapid, the head of the centrist Yesh Atid party having 17 seats in the Knesset, is the main architect of this unlikely coalition. Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid agreed to a rotational scheme, with Bennett becoming prime minister for the first two years and Lapid scheduled to take over thereafter.

Such an arrangement is certainly not alien to Israel – this happened between 1984 and 1988 when Labor leader Shimon Peres and Likud leader

# Israel's new coalition holds hope for future



Yitzhak Shamir served as prime ministers for two years each.

However, this is the first time an Arab party with four seats in the Knesset – the United Arab List, known by its Hebrew acronym 'Ra'am' and led by Mansour Abbas – is part of the government. That is the most important aspect of the new regime of Israel.

Every other issue, including the ouster of Israel's longest serving prime minister, is insignificant compared to the unusual picture of Abbas, Lapid and Bennett sitting around a little table, which drew much international attention. Many political commentators including Haaretz's Anshel Pfeffer, however, believed that "the man who made it all possible wasn't there. Netanyahu created this moment."

True, the cementing factor of this alliance was the need to oust Netanyahu. One may like him or not, but Israel's politics at the moment revolve around that man.

However, Ra'am's participation in the ruling coalition might have a long-standing impact in the peace process

of the region as well. Despite the fact that Arabs constitute one-fifth of Israel's population, no Arab party has ever taken part in the government. In the 1950s, a small faction composed of one Arab parliamentarian, which essentially operated as an Arab franchise of Israel's ruling socialist party, Mapai, entered the coalition. And, in the 1990s, when the government of Labor leader Yitzhak Rabin was struggling, the Arab parties stepped in to prevent a vote of no confidence.

Although many Arab politicians in Israel are not happy about Abbas joining the government by abandoning his principles, he is now clearly a kingmaker – no doubt about that. The so-called change bloc supposedly agreed to put over 53 billion Israeli New Shekel (\$16.3 billion) in budgets and government development plans for Arab society, and a significant part of it would flow to the Negev region in southern Israel having Ra'am's political base. "This agreement has a lot of things for the benefit of Arab society, and Israeli society in general,"

Abbas told reporters.

And, more importantly, with the inclusion of Ra'am, the Islamist party, a taboo is broken. It might pave the way for a broader Arab-Israeli coalition in future, thus having huge potential to become a game-changer in Israel's politics. It could impact the relationship between Israeli-Arabs and Jews, and might have potential to influence the future direction of Israel-Palestine conflict as well. The photograph of the smiling Mansour Abbas along with Bennett and Lapid could have an enduring power, even beyond simple imagination.

Many people are suspicious whether this Israeli 'Change Coalition' would last long. Certainly, Netanyahu would continually try to dismantle the coalition for his political survival, and for his personal interest. Netanyahu is facing multiple corruption charges in the court. He would not like to follow his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, who resigned in such a situation, and was convicted subsequently. Netanyahu might desperately seek

immunity as the prime minister. Also, there has been wide speculation that the new government would impose term limits or make it illegal for someone who has been indicted to be prime minister.

Back to the issue of Ra'am's inclusion in the government. It might have unknown effects in multiple directions. Take an example. About 64.8 per cent Arab Israelis voted in the previous election for the 23rd Knesset, while only around 52 per cent of Arabs turned out to vote in this election – a significant drop. With Abbas joining the government now, Arab Israelis might find more interest in voting in subsequent elections.

The broader question, however, is whether the new 'change government' can change Israel, its politics and its social co-existence. Can it lead to a fuller integration of Arab-Israelis in society? History is being written in Israel. And there is scope to reshape history as well.

The writer is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

**POLITICAL DIARY | KALYANI SHANKAR**

## Important initiative by PM on J&K

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Kashmiri leaders on Thursday was politically significant and a step forward. Both sides gave up their aggressive attitude and came to the table for dialogue. In a major initiative, the Prime Minister reached out to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Almost twenty-two months after sweeping constitutional changes were brought in, the same political leaders who were put into jail for months are now part of the process. By calling all stakeholders for a sit-down, the Union Government extended an olive branch to Kashmir's regional parties.

This is in itself is forward movement. RSS leader Ram Madhav, who had handled Kashmir affairs at one time said, "The fact that J&K meeting has gone on for over three hours is an indication of its success." Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad emphasized five points for a road map and insisted most discussions revolved around these issues.

Mr. Modi is reported to have said he wants to remove 'Dilli ki Doori' and 'Dil Ki Doori'. The feedback from the Kashmiri leaders is quite positive as they came out of the meeting with hope.

It was a high-stakes meeting attended by four former Chief Minis-



ters, Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar (NC), Mehbooba Mufti (PDP), and Ghulam Nabi Azad (Congress). Four former deputy chief ministers, Muzaffar Hussain Baig (J&K People's Conference), Tara Chand (Congress), Nirmal Singh, and Kavinder Gupta (BJP) also attended. Six state party chiefs in Sajjad Lone (J&K People's Conference), Altaf Bukari (J&K Apni Party), Ravinder Raina (BJP), GA Mir (Congress), Bhim Singh (Panthers Party) and MY Tarigami (Communist Party of India-Marxist), also participated in the meeting.

The meeting was held for the first time after the Centre stripped the region's semi-autonomy. The meeting resulted from the backchannel talks and pressure from the US, UK, and other countries.

In a way, the meeting has brought a thaw between the Centre and the Kashmiri leaders. After all, it was the first step for a dialogue between the Centre and state political leaders. Those who participated in the dialogue seem to have adopted a forget and forgive attitude. Tweeting after the meeting, the PM said it was "an important step in the ongoing efforts towards a developed and progressive J&K, where all-around growth is furthered."

The meeting comes at a time when a delimitation commission is on the job. It is expected to take a call on redrawing the boundaries of Lok

Sabha and Assembly constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, which is now a Union Territory with a legislative Assembly.

Why did Mr. Modi take this step now when the whole country is reeling under the second wave of the pandemic? It is to resume the political process as well as send a signal abroad.

There was the need to do so, given the disturbing neighbourhood. China is flexing its muscle. The US is virtually handing over Afghanistan to the Taliban. The Biden administration is gently nudging India on the human rights situation in Kashmir. But, above all, the people of the state have felt alienated for the past two years. The trust deficit needs to be addressed.

Neither side expected any startling results. Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah talked more about the state's development and assured leaders that Assembly elections would be held after the current delimitation exercise. Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad kept five demands in the meeting - grant statehood soon, conduct Assembly elections, rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits in J&K, all political detainees should be released and domicile rule.

The Prime Minister stressed that holding assembly elections - just like the successful December 2020 District

Development Council elections - is a priority. Delimitation, statehood, and assembly elections were the critical issues at the all-party meeting. However, some leaders also demanded the revocation of Article 370.

Mr. Modi gave the state leaders a patient hearing. Though restoration of Article 370 is not the intention of the Modi government, Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti demanded it. Quoting Altaf Bhukari, the RSS mouthpiece, Organiser, claimed that nobody talked about Pakistan.

Overall, the interaction at the top level is a timely and welcome step. Both sides should follow up on this meeting and take it forward. The people of Kashmir have suffered for a long time with militancy and a whole generation has lost its childhood.

People's Conference chairman Sajjad Lone hoped that "this meeting may start a new phase of reconciliation in J&K. It is tough, but we will all have to check our words and facilitate deliverability".

The Prime Minister has indicated that he wants traditional politicians of Kashmir to become a part of 'Naya Jammu and Kashmir' and play a constructive role. An early end to disturbances, free and fair elections, and a popular elected government are required. The Centre and state leaders should build on the meeting as Kashmir needs a political solution

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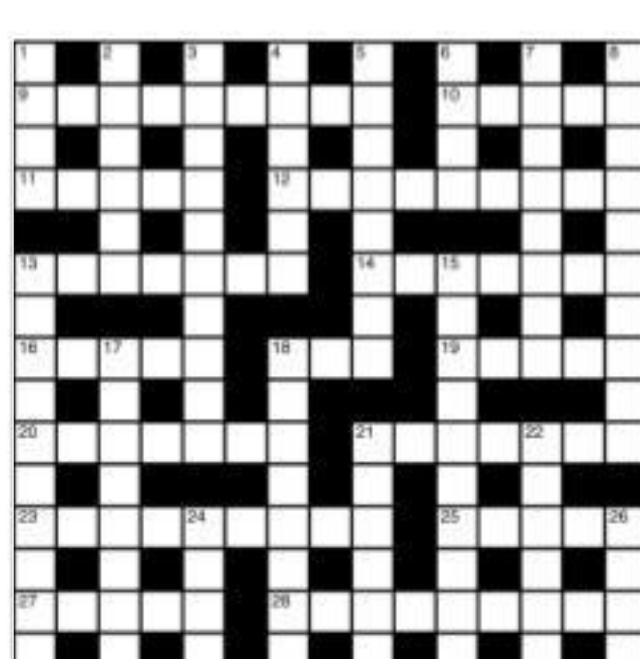
**100 YEARS AGO**

**MR. ANDREW'S "REGRET"**

To The Editor Of The Statesman  
SIR, - With reference to Mr. C.F. Andrews's regret for his inaccuracies re the labourers' quarters at Goalundo published in The Statesman of 21st instant, I would like to say for his benefit that this is not the first occasion on which he has made public statements which he has had subsequently to withdraw. He does a lot of damage and then calmly "regrets." Quite a number of people who read his first statements may not see his withdrawals. The result is that he does not entirely remove erroneous impressions. There was a time when I believed that this gentleman was sincerely working for the benefit of the poor. As a missionary his duty should be to sow the seed of peace and he, could with much advantage use his talent in that direction instead of which he is doing all he can to make the racial hatred more intense.

MULTAN.

**CROSSWORD**



SOLUTION FOR 20 JUNE

STAYCATION LOCK  
EELNAO  
GARLIC TAPEWORM  
SLAHKM  
ZERO PEEPINGTOM  
WOSNLRL  
SINFONIA ESAU  
TEEMDN  
KIEV ELONGATE  
NESBUA  
HEARTTHROB ROAM  
RAETRM  
VALLETTA FRIDAY  
NAUTUE  
STAB SCHOLASTIC

ACROSS

- 9 Robber one up holding atomic weapon the wrong way (5-6)
- 10 Be patronising towards women denied start (5)
- 11 Agent on vacation was resting back in Crimean resort (5)
- 12 Mature mother cradling son in Michelangelo's work? (3,6)
- 13 Find some supermarket chickens so yellow? (7)
- 14 Regular classes taken by inexperienced driver (7)
- 16 Dog trained for keeping at home? Not thin one (5)
- 18/19 Blouses with underwear

included for 14s? (3,5)

- 20 Possibly wise move to drop very sorrowful expression (3,2,2)
- 21 Attendant checks returning dread in two ways (7)
- 23 Torment tiresome sort outside electronic plant (9)
- 25 Bronte heroine reserves island home for birds (5)
- 27 See! That catches animal! (5)
- 28 Went through stop light rounding car on late trip? (9)

DOWN

- 1 This cart carries heavy load three feet up (4)
- 2 Charm a Greek character hired out (6)
- 3 Gaunt old American beneath fellow in saloon (10)
- 4 Repulsive party overturned fiscal promises (6)
- 5 Call for rapid movement over Brexit problem? (5,3)
- 6 Star not complete convert to compassionate eating? (4)
- 7 Six American spies surrounding rocky hill station (8)
- 8 As equipment in theatre
- 13 Idle sister wrecked (10) Degenerate duke's command after first part of march? (2,8)
- 15 Men to label explosive element resistant to corrosion (5,5)
- 17 Excessive to provoke fascist troops (8)
- 18 See 22
- 21 Set eyes on article in stew (6)
- 22/18D A mongrel had to be ordered to cover king in blanket (6-3-5)
- 24 Horseless champion succeeded in love (4)
- 26 Works From Sturllson in numbered days (4)

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

NOW AND AGAIN

## Old Order Changes

DEVENDRA AND DEVANSHI SAKSEN

Transfers, the bane of Government service, disrupt the normal pace of your life. Once transferred, almost always suddenly, you are transported to a new environment; you have to search for a new house, new friends, new maids and most importantly, new schools for your children. So, I viewed with trepidation the fax machine that had just spewed out the Government's orders of a transfer to Ahmedabad.

Fortunately, within a fortnight of moving to Ahmedabad, almost everything fell in place; we had managed to rent a lovely house and had got my son admitted to a school of his choice. All my problems had been resolved except for a school for my daughter. Despite our best efforts, we could not locate a suitable school for her; admissions were over in most, some were too far off, some others did not appeal to us. Then, someone suggested a new school, a few kilometres outside city limits, which propagated alternative education. One visit convinced us that this was the school for our daughter. The school was located in sylvan surroundings; teaching was in gurukul tradition, with classes being conducted in small open huts. The school taught most subjects by the project method; students were encouraged to explore their surroundings, to find answers to questions given in their books. Mr. X, the founder of the school, was devoted to his fledgling enterprise, spending most of his time on campus at the cost of his flourishing business.

When my daughter missed the school bus, it was a pleasurable task to drop her to school because of the exhilarating morning drive on a narrow road, through the greenery of fields and villages. We could see farmers ploughing; peacocks, monkeys and woodpeckers crossing our path. There was a railway crossing just ahead of the school, and often we could hear trains blowing their horns or even see a goods train crossing in front of us.

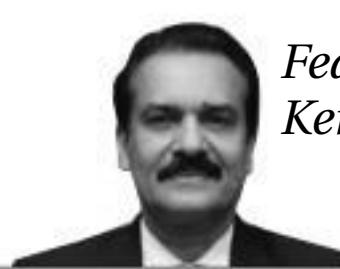
After some years, I was transferred from Ahmedabad to Kolkata, which was a decidedly bigger and livelier place. My daughter's new school, a reputed one with excellent facilities, was just outside the colony gate but she missed the beautiful surroundings of her old school.

Cut to the present. I had retired and settled down in Ahmedabad and after passing out from IIT, my daughter was working in an MNC in Bangalore. On a visit home, my daughter wanted to visit her old school. I phoned Mr. X, who was pleased to know that his student had done so well. Mr. X, himself, invited us to visit his school.

So, next morning, we set off on our old route but nothing appeared to be the same. The fields were gone, replaced by massive housing societies. The village had disappeared; some malls had come up instead. We would have lost our bearings, if the way to the school had not been a straight road. A massive overbridge now obscured the railway line and a housing society next to the road hid the school building from our view.

If Mr. X had not met us at the school gate, we would not have recognised the school, which now consisted of a couple of multi-storeyed buildings. The huts were history. Talking to us over tea and biscuits, Mr. X revealed that though running the school in gurukul style was extremely satisfying, there were few takers for this pattern of education. Perforce, he had to switch to the conventional model of education. Mr. X revealed that the changeover had not been without its rewards, he had brought more than a dozen schools under his flag in as many years.

Congratulating Mr. X on his success, both of us realised that the present had irrevocably obliterated the past.



Federal Bank has provided 400-odd part-time jobs at its branches in Kerala to help those who lost their employment due to the pandemic.

AJITH KUMAR K K

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER, FEDERAL BANK

## THUMBNAILS

**SBI Cards:** SBI Cards & Payment Services has joined hands with Fabindia to launch an exclusive co-branded contactless credit card ~ Fabindia SBI Card. The card is designed with thoughtfully curated benefits and privileges to offer a rewarding shopping experience to its premium customers and comes in two variants ~ Fabindia SBI Card Select and Fabindia SBI Card, said a Press release. SNS

**Business platform:** Jimmy Mistry, innovator, design thinker and social entrepreneur, announced the launch of Della Leaders Club ~ world's first technology-enabled global business platform designed to create a robust support system for leaders across industries globally, according to a Press release. The platform was formally inaugurated in Lonavala recently in the virtual presence of Union minister Nitin Gadkari. SNS

**Dabur move:** Taking a leap forward on the path to environment sustainability, Dabur India Ltd is now moving towards removing outer paper cartons from its flagship ayurvedic toothpaste brand Dabur Red Paste. The carton-free eco-friendly packaging is being rolled out in a joint initiative with Reliance Retail, it said. SNS

**Realme:** Realme has introduced two new additions to Narzo 30 family ~ Narzo 30 5G and Narzo 30, along with smart TV Full HD 32" and buds Q2. Madhav Sheth, vice-president, Realme India and CEO, Realme India and Europe, said: "We are extremely delighted to launch four new technologically advanced products based on Realme's highly advanced innovations." SNS

**Samsung launch:** Samsung has introduced multiple new 5G chipsets to boost performance, increase power efficiency and reduce the size of 5G solutions, said a release. SNS

# RBI limits continuous term of UCB MDs to 15 years

Apex bank's measures to ensure professional management of urban cooperative banks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 26 JUNE

## FIT AND PROPER CRITERIA

► The managing director shall function under the overall general superintendence, direction and control of the board of directors (BoD).

► With regard to the age, the RBI has said that the person at the top of UCBs should not be below the age of 35 years and above the age of 70 years at any time during his/her term in office.

► But, within the overall limit of 70 years, as part of their internal policy, individual bank's boards are free to prescribe a lower retirement age, the RBI said.

► To run the operations professionally, the person should also have adequate educational qualifications.

directly or indirectly.

In general, the RBI has directed that the tenure of MD/WTD shall not be for a period of more than five years at a time subject to a minimum period of three years at the time of first appointment, unless terminated or removed earlier, and shall be eligible for re-appointment. The performance of MD/WTD shall be reviewed by the board annually, the apex bank said.

The UCBs shall ensure

that the following "fit and proper" criteria is fulfilled by the person being appointed as MD. The MD shall function under the overall general superintendence, direction and control of the board of directors (BoD).

With regard to the age, the RBI has said that the person at the top of UCBs should not be below the age of 35 years and above the age of 70 years at any time during his/her term in office. But, within the over-

all limit of 70 years, as part of their internal policy, individual bank's boards are free to prescribe a lower retirement age, the RBI said.

To run the operations professionally, the person should also have adequate educational qualifications. He/she should be a graduate, preferably, with qualification in banking/ cooperative banking or Chartered/Cost Accountant/MBA (finance); or post graduation in any discipline.

They must also have a combined experience of at least eight years at the middle/senior management level in the banking sector, including the experience gained in the concerned UCB, or non-banking finance companies engaged in lending (loan companies) and asset financing.

The person should not be engaged in any other business or vocation or be holding the position of a member of Parliament or state legislature or municipal corporation or municipality or other local bodies. He/she should also not be a director of any company other than a company registered under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. The RBI has given a long list of propriety criteria to ensure only the right candidate is appointed for the post.

The RBI also said that UCBs shall constitute a "Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC)" consisting of three directors from amongst the board of directors (BoD) and nominate one among them as chairman of the NRC.

# Renuka Sugars to invest ₹450 cr to up ethanol production

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Shree Renuka Sugars will invest Rs 450 crore to expand its ethanol capacity, the company said today.

In a regulatory filing, the company informed that its board has approved expanding production capacity by 430 kilo litres per day to 1,400 kilo litres per day.

"Considering the huge untapped demand for ethanol due to the policies of Government of India on ethanol blending, the board of directors of the company approved further capacity expansion for ethanol production from 970 kilo litres per day to 1,400 kilo litres per day," the filing said.

The investment required for this capacity expansion is Rs 450 crore, it said. The capacity addition would be completed by October 2022.

"The Government of India has mandated 20 per cent ethanol blending in fuel by 2025 against a current blend-

ing of 7.79 per cent. Considering this, the company sees a huge untapped demand for ethanol for the ethanol blending programme of the Government of India which can be of benefit to the company in the future," Renuka Sugars said.

**SJVN profit:** State-owned power producer SJVN Ltd today posted a 55 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit after tax (PAT) at Rs 619.92 crore during the quarter ended 31 March 2021. The company's net profit after tax from continuing operations was at Rs 399.21 crore in the January-March quarter of the financial year 2019-20, SJVN said in a BSE filing.

During the quarter under review, its total income jumped to Rs 1,084.96 crore, from Rs 703.72 crore a year ago.

The company's total expenses reduced to Rs 348.74 crore compared to Rs 439.07 crore in the same period of the preceding fiscal.

SJVN further informed that its board has recommended a final dividend of 40 paisa per share of Rs 10 each for the FY 2020-21.

## Petrol crosses ₹100 in TN after steep hike in prices

NEW DELHI, 26 JUNE

Petrol price soared past Rs 100-a-litre mark in Tamil Nadu after fuel prices were hiked again today. Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 35 paise per litre each - the steepest in recent times, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The increase took rates across the country to fresh highs with Tamil Nadu becoming the latest state to see petrol cross Rs 100-a-litre mark.

In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 98.11 a litre, while diesel is now priced at Rs 88.65 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as value-added tax (VAT) and freight charges.

While petrol had crossed Rs 100-a-litre mark in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, and Ladakh, several towns in Tamil Nadu including Salem, Vellore and Cuddalore saw that level after the steep price hike.

In Chennai, petrol is priced at Rs 99.19 a litre while diesel comes for Rs 93.23 per litre.

Among metro cities, petrol is already above Rs 100 in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. In Mumbai, petrol now costs Rs 104.22 a litre and diesel comes for Rs 96.16.

Rate of diesel, the most used fuel in the country, had crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Sri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh in Rajasthan as well as in a couple of places in Odisha.

The hike today is the 30th increase in prices since 4 May, when state-owned oil firms ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal. PTI

# Hero delivers first batch of Made in India e-bikes to Europe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 26 JUNE

India's Hero Motors Company (HMC) Group has said that Hero Cycles has successfully delivered its first batch of Made in India e-bikes to Europe.

The shipment, under the HNF brand of Hero International (HIT), marks the start of the Indian bicycle major's plan to become a leader in the European Union (EU) market, the company said this week.

The first batch of around 200 units has been delivered to Germany, with further units planned for the EU in future.

The shipment marks a step forward to establish Hero Motors Company (HMC) as the largest fully integrated e-bike company in Europe, with a well-oiled manufacturing capability in India and brightens the prospect of India as

a reliable supplier to the market other than China, HMC said in a statement.

Hero International, the European bike and e-bike arm of HMC, said the company's aim is to achieve an organic revenue of up to euro 300 million by 2025, while adding euro 200 million from inorganic growth.

The first HNF branded bike built in India has landed on European shores. This is a big moment for the company and will demonstrate its ability to disrupt the market in Europe, said Jeff Weiss, the London-based chief executive officer of Hero International.

Clearly, a major part of the future is e-bikes with e-bike sales expected to reach around 15 million units in Europe by 2030. We are confident that Hero is poised to become a market leader in this segment, making high-quality

**BIG PLAN**  
"Apart from a business decision, foraying into the European market was aimed at highlighting our strength as market creators and leaders in India... we have much more to offer to the world, our vision now is to become the largest fully-integrated e-bike company in Europe." Pankaj M Munjal, Group chairman & MD, Hero Motors Company

ity e-bikes fusing HNF's engineering and design expertise with Hero's manufacturing capability, especially with the 100-acre Cycle Valley in Ludhiana, he said.

The company believes its latest batch of e-bikes to Europe overcomes the bicycle supply chain disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. While supplies dwin-

dled and lead times for components increased manifold, consumer demand for bikes and e-bikes sky-rocketed.

To cater to this growing demand for bikes and e-bikes, Hero said it established its digital supply chain company - Hero Supply Chain (HSC) - a team specialised in logistics management and digital transformation. HSC is designed

to act as a consolidated buying house for HIT and cater to the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) demand in the EU for supplies from India. Hero's latest venture, Spur, will manufacture key components for bicycles in-house, a move aimed at further de-risking the value chain. Where most of our competitors are struggling with supplies, the partnership with HSC allows uninterrupted supplies for bikes and e-bikes even in this high-demand period. Since HMC is also setting up component manufacturing in-house, the dependence on external component suppliers will be reduced, Weiss added.

The European arm of HMC was created to cater to the booming European market by acquiring Avocet Sports in Manchester in the UK in 2016. Avocet Sports, later renamed

as Insync Bikes, is one of the largest bike distributors in the UK, with more than 22 per cent market share in the kid's bike segment.

By 2019, the European market was drifting increasingly towards e-bikes, and demand for high-tech, light and durable e-bikes for sustainable commuting was growing. HMC decided to leverage its automotive manufacturing experience to venture into manufacturing premium e-bikes in India while acquiring HNF Nicolai, a premium German e-bike brand, to enter the European e-bikes market.

Today, the bike market in India is valued at euro 0.8 billion with 15 million bikes a year; whereas the European market is 15 times that of India.

The e-bikes market, where the growth lies, is valued at euro 5 billion for Europe, 50 times

that of India, valued at euro 0.1 billion, said HMC group chairman and managing director Pankaj M Munjal.

With a conducive environment to thrive both in terms of infrastructure and policies, e-bikes were popular in Europe at the time the concept was in its nascent in India.

Apart from a business decision, foraying into the European market was aimed at highlighting our strength as market creators and leaders in India... we have much more to offer to the world, our vision now is to become the largest fully-integrated e-bike company in Europe, he said.

Hero Cycles, part of India's HMC Group, has a manufacturing capacity of 6 million bicycles per year and a network of plants located in Ludhiana (Punjab), Ghaziabad (UP), and Bihta (Bihar).

## NEWSFEED

**Sinclair's Hotels FY21 EBIDTA at Rs.1021.10 lakh Sharp increase in Q4 FY 21 EBIDTA Board recommends 40% dividend**

For the quarter ended 31st March 2021, Sinclair's Hotels Limited posted a Total Income of Rs 1055.06 lakh (Rs 755.91 lakh), an increase of 39.57% over the same period in the previous year. The EBIDTA for the quarter stood increased by 986.46% to Rs 439.80 lakh as against Rs 40.48 lakh in the same quarter last year. For the year ended 31st March 2021, revenues were badly affected on account of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Company's hotels had to be closed due to the restrictions and lockdown imposed during the first six months of the year. Total Income for FY21 stood at Rs 2313.88 lakh (Rs 4716.66 lakh) and EBIDTA declined to Rs 1021.10 lakh (Rs 1854.06 lakh). Profit Before Tax for the year stood at Rs 423.16 lakh (Rs 1178.44

**CSR Activity by Canara Bank Circle Office Bhubaneswar: Distribution of Mask, Sanitiser and Food Packets to Poor and Needy People.**

Canara Bank Circle Office Bhubaneswar under the Leadership of General Manager & Circle Head Sri B.L. Meena, has successfully conducted a CSR Activity in Jagamara-Pokhariput Area. Shri Meena, GM & Circle Head along with other Senior Executives from Circle Office distributed Mask, Sanitiser and Food Packets to Poor and Needy People living nearby. Canara Bank is widely known and well appreciated for such kind of social activities in the past also. Among others, DGM(D) Shri G.N. Murthy, AGM Sri K.S. Gupta, AGM Sri Prakashdhan, AGM Sri Sushil Kumar, Divisional Managers Sri Kumar Sanjeev, Sri R.K. Sinha, Sri Dibyalochar Swar and other officials from Circle Office were present on the occasion.

**JSW Odisha steps up observance of COVID-19 protocol**

JSW Steel (mines division), Odisha has stepped up enforcement of COVID-19 protocol in an attempt to ensure the safety of its employees and associate partners from possible virus infection. Entry into the mine offices is highly regulated and is prohibited without due thermal scanning and sanitizers. All employees and workers are strictly mandated to wear relevant PPE and individual masks all the time. Hand sanitizers have been placed at all entry offices in the mines, said a release by the company. "The safety and well-being of its employees and workers of its associate partners are of utmost importance. The company is undertaking safe operations through these extensive preventive measures against COVID-19 across the operational facility, residential areas and adjacent areas. The company will continue to stand together with the Government and the community in its effort to fight against this pandemic", said Ranjan Nayak, Chief Operating Officer, JSW Steel Limited (Mines division), Odisha.

**IndianOil-Haldia Refinery organizes vaccination camps; around 4500 people inoculated in a week**



In its commitment to fight against COVID-19, IndianOil-Haldia Refinery organized a Covid vaccination camp in Refinery Community Centre from 7th to 12th June 2021 in association with Apollo Gelenages Hospital, Kolkata to vaccinate over 4500 people across age. Taking a step forward towards care for its stakeholders, Haldia Refinery focussed to vaccinate its contract workers free of cost at large. Around 3000 contract workers benefited from this drive. As of now, all together approximately 7500 people

**President travels on the train to Uttar Pradesh**

The Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind commenced a journey to Kanpur on a special Presidential train from Delhi Safdarjung railway station, New Delhi on 25.06.2021. The Hon'ble President will be visiting his birthplace after taking over his present assignment. Post covid as the country enters into the resurgence and rebuilding mode Indian Railways had requested the Hon'ble President to travel by the people's transport. A special train service was run for his excellency to travel from Delhi to his native village. The special Presidential Train will make two stops at Jhunjhunwala and Rura of Kanpur Dehat, where the President will interact with people known to him. On June 28, the President will board the train at Kanpur Central railway station to reach Lucknow for his two-day visit to the state capital. On June 29, he will return to New Delhi. Minister of Railways, Shri Piyush Goyal, Chairman and CEO of Railway Board Shri Suneet Sharma, General Manager Northern Railway, Shri Ashutosh Gangal, Divisional Railway Manager, Delhi Division Shri SC Jain and other senior officials of Railway Board and Northern Railway were present on the station on this occasion.

# Odisha health authorities allay fears of Delta plus variant spread

Epidemiologists sent to Deogarh, variant has not spread over a month since its detection

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUABANESWAR, 26 JUNE

**A** day after the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) announced the detection of the Odisha's first case of COVID-19 Delta Plus variant in Deogarh district, the state government has deputed a team of epidemiologists for further examination of health profile of the 62-year-old man and contact tracing of the variant-affected sexagenarian.

The fact that the man had contracted the variant two months ago and there is no increase in number of cases or the variant in the said district indicates that it is not a cause of major concern, said

health authorities here.

The infected man had contracted the variant in April. The infectivity period of the variant is over and there is no immediate cause of worry. Nonetheless, as a precautionary measure the epidemiologists have been sent to Deogarh mainly to trace the contacts of the man and vaccinate the people who had come in contact with variant-infected, said Director, Health Services, Bijay Mohapatra.

While the detection of the Delta Plus variant, also described as the "variant of concern" by health experts, has begun to fuel scare of spread of the disease in the western Odisha district, the

State's health authorities today maintained that the epidemiologists have sent to the district to ensure the aggressive contract tracing and keep the patient isolated to prevent the infection from spreading further.

The infected people besides his family members are under close surveillance for at least six weeks. The Delta-infected man was vaccinated on 30 March and has not developed health complications despite contracting the variant virus. The health authorities are laying priority on administering vaccine doses on his contacts', said Director, Health Services, Mohapatra.

His sample was sent for

genome sequencing on 24 April. He had contracted the virus from another infected person and was found to be asymptomatic. Presently, he is in perfect health condition.

The travel history of the man is being ascertained. It has already been found that Covaxin and Covishield are quite effective against this variant. So, those who might have come in contact with the infected man will be vaccinated on a war footing, Mohapatra noted.

Over 700 samples were sent for genome sequence since May first week and none of those contained new variants, he added.

Strangely, the Deogarh dis-

trict administration was completely unaware of the detection of the case. Yesterday the district collector and chief district medical officer had asserted that they had not found any case of Delta Plus.

They had even insisted that the person may have been detected elsewhere and might have given his village address in Deogarh. He could be a non-resident, the district authorities said.

The question now is that if the district administration was telling the truth of being in the dark till yesterday, then how could contact tracing and monitoring of health status of the family take place since May, questioned people of Deogarh.

Odisha will be a sports powerhouse: CM

₹1000 Cr for Sports Infra, 39 sportspersons join police service

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 26 JUNE

youth. Investment in youth is investment in the future of the state, he added.

We have embarked on a journey to make Odisha a sports powerhouse. In the last few years, Odisha has featured prominently in the sports sector in the country.

We have successfully hosted a number of national and international events. Hockey World Cup 2018 and Asian Athletics championship 2017 has been a great success for the State, he added.

He noted that Odisha was building India's largest hockey stadium in Rourkela for the Hockey World Cup in 2023.

The strategy to partner with corporates and eminent sportspersons set up high performance centres, coaching at grassroots etc will pay dividend, he said.

He further said "our Para

athletes have also been performing well at the international level. Sh Pramod Bhagat, Arjuna Awardee, has qualified for Paralympics and is a leading contestant for the medal.

In another development, the CM launched the extension of e-FIR under the 5T initiative for public Place Theft. It will help people in lodging FIR relating to chain snatching, laptops, mobile theft etc at public places. The complainant will also get an SMS alert on the progress of the investigation.

DGP Abhay gave the welcome address and Principal Secretary Sports, Vishal Dev also spoke on the occasion.

Secretary to CM (5T) V.Kartik Pandian interacted with the new recruits and advised them to set goals for better performances and go up the ladder in their career.

## Odisha sees fluctuating curve of COVID cases in June

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 26 JUNE

Odisha continued to record fluctuations in the Covid positive cases in the current month indicating that the rate of infection is yet to be on a steady downward trend. On Saturday the state reported 3,554 new COVID-19 cases at 5.53 percent Test Positivity Rate (TPR) with a 22 percent rise in virus infections in the last 24 hours.

The TPR and daily infections may have receded considerably in the current month in comparison to May when the State consistently logged around 10,000 cases every day with TPR hovering around 15 to 20 percent. But the TPR has been going up and down over the last one week.

The test positivity rate (TPR) on Saturday increased 5.53% from to 4.19% recorded yesterday, thus underlining the fact that over little over 5 people tested positive out of 100 samples in the last 24 hours. As many as 1,31,065 positive cases were reported in the 26 days of June averaging 5,079 cases everyday, while the death count stood at 1,094 during the period at an average daily death of 42.

With the latest new infections, the overall COVID case-load has shot up to 8,97,062 while 47 fresh fatalities pushed the cumulative death toll to 3,848. The new Covid-19 cases were reported from 30 districts. While 2,028 are quarantine cases, the remaining 1,526 were local contact cases, said health and family welfare department officials.

Khordha district, of which capital city of Bhubaneswar is a part, topped the daily infection at 615 cases followed by Cuttack (501), Balasore (271), Jajpur (256), Puri (233), Mayurbhanj (196), Bhadrak (158), Jagatsinghpur (145), Angul (133), Kendrapara (119) and Nayagarh (100).

Similarly Khordha district reported nine new deaths, the highest in the state followed by five each from Bargarh, Cuttack and Nayagarh, three from Sundargarh, Puri and Ganjam. Two deaths were reported from Angul, Jajpur and Kendrapara while one each from Balasore, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Nuapada districts. Odisha now has 33,019 active cases and the recovery rate was 95.88 percent.

## Disquiet in BJD over proximity with BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 26 JUNE

There is growing disquiet in the ranks of the ruling BJD here as quite a few have started grumbling over the proximity of the 'power centre' in the state with the BJP leadership at the centre.

The unwritten dictum from the 'top' is not to utter a word against the central BJP leadership in public. We can criticise the state BJP but not the centre, confided a BJD leader when asked why the party has remained silent over the fuel price hike, vaccine supply muddle, MSP of paddy etc.

BJD leaders here, speaking on conditions of anonymity,

told they incur the wrath of the 'boss', began venting their disgust and how suffocated and helpless they are.

The Congress has been hammering on the visible camaraderie between the BJD and BJP. During the UPA regime, the BJD Ministers and MLAs used to hit the streets at every time there was a hike in petrol and diesel, today they are silent only because of their tacit understanding with the centre and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's liaison alleged the Congress leaders.

Recently when PM Narendra Modi visited the state to see the damage caused by cyclone Yaas, he wished the

CM and others at the airport on arrival with a 'Namaste' maintaining the social distance, but when he left, he was seen pleasantly tapping the shoulder of CM Naveen Patnaik, pointed out OPCC working president Pradip Majhi. After all, the BJD gifted a Rajya Sabha seat to the BJP and Ashwini Vaishnav who got elected is now among the frontrunners for a ministerial berth, quipped former minister and Congress leader Panchanan Kanungo.

Ruling BJD circles are divided between the anti-BJP group and the rest who feel it doesn't matter as long as it puts them in a comfort zone of enjoying power without any

harassment.

The fact however, remains that CM Naveen Patnaik firmly believes in non-confrontationist politics and it has been the same even when the UPA was in power.

Today's appointment of observers by the BJD is also being seen as a step towards sidelining the disgruntled elements. The state BJP is equally in a fix as it is restrained in playing the role of an effective opposition party.

Interestingly the disillusioned groups in the BJD, as well as the BJP, hope that the next cabinet reshuffle at the centre will bring about clarity or give a political direction as far as Odisha is concerned.

Mullick and there was an altercation following which dropped them on the road and fled.

IIC of Jagatsinghpur police station Pravash Chandra Sahoo said a case has been registered and the district hospital has been informed.

The Additional District Medical Officer (Medical) DHH, Ajaya Swain said the driver has been terminated and the ambulance handed over to the Road Transport Office.

erly variety black rice paddy seeds free of cost to farmers. If we get good results from these tribal cultivators, we will distribute more. We will adopt almost all blocks in Kandhamal to popularize black rice cultivation as it's a cash crop and cultivators will get double rate in comparison to traditional paddy varieties.

The traditional tribal paddy growers particularly in Phirningia, K.Nagam and Baliliguda have shown their interest to cultivate the much publicized paddy variety during this Kharif season, sources said.

AWARD has distributed about 10 quintals of such

## Woman's body found, injured toddler rescued

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KENDRAPARA, 26 JUNE

Police on Saturday retrieved the mutilated body of a woman and a critically injured baby boy near a creek at Kandarpata mangrove forest under Jamboo marine police station jurisdiction in Kendrapara district.

The child aged around two years old was shifted to the district headquarters hos-

pital. His health condition is stated to be serious. The body of the deceased woman was sent for post mortem, police said. The identities of the deceased and the injured baby are yet to be established.

Scientific team has rushed to the spot as preliminary investigation has found it to be case of murder. Further investigation of the matter is underway, police added.

## Black Rice introduced in Kandhamal dist

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PHULBANI, 26 JUNE

'AWARD', a voluntary organization in Kandhamal district, has committed to introduce 'Black Rice' in entire district, official sources said.

The traditional tribal paddy growers particularly in Phirningia, K.Nagam and Baliliguda have shown their interest to cultivate the much publicized paddy variety during this Kharif season, sources said.

AWARD has distributed about 10 quintals of such

early variety black rice paddy seeds free of cost to farmers. If we get good results from these tribal cultivators, we will distribute more. We will adopt almost all blocks in Kandhamal to popularize black rice cultivation as it's a cash crop and cultivators will get double rate in comparison to traditional paddy varieties.

Historian Anil Dhir said that Odisha has now become the philatelic capital of the country, with many eminent philatelists who have participated in international and national exhibitions and won laurels.

Kashinath Sahoo, another

young philatelist, recalled the role of the late Bijayshree Routray, former minister, in building up EIPA as the foremost philatelic club in the country. C.R. Das, another senior EIPA member called for popularizing the hobby of stamp collecting among the school children for which India Post should organise district level exhibitions.

According to Shanti Swarup Rath, the book will be a boon for all philatelists who collect Special Covers and showcase the rich heritage, culture, history, flora and fauna and the varied natural geographical features of Odisha.

Quackery rules the roost in most parts of Malkangiri district with self-styled physicians running a parallel health service network. Following the absence of doctors in rural health centres, quacks are cashing in on the situation, alleged local civil society activists.

These quacks are much sought after by gullible and illiterate locals during the prevailing COVID-19 health crisis, they added.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



#### SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Flashy jewellery (Slang) (5)	1 Noisy fight (5)
4 Coagulated milk (4)	2 Examine closely (7)
7 Forgetful (6-6)	3 Literary category (5)
8 Woodland plant (8)	4 Type of cloud (7)
9 Merit (4)	5 Scope (5)
10 Portable computer (6)	6 Car fuel (6)
13 Rider's seat (6)	11 Writer (6)
15 Pace (4)	12 Source of difficulty (7)
17 Abroad (8)	14 Undeterred by (7)
20 Bouldering, for example (4,8)	16 Card game (5)
21 Tot (4)	18 US TV awards (5)
22 Lustre (5)	19 Inert gas (5)

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

#### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



#### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



#### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



#### NEED TO KNOW

##### HOSPITALS

• AIIMS 26588500, 26588900  
• Mochindia Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447

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

• Bara Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747

• Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

• Guru Tegh Bahadur 2317473, 23325520

##### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139  
• Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

• SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

##### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

• ISBT (General Inquiry): 2369836, 23865183

• Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

• Haryana Roadways 23861262

• Himachal Roadways 2371473, 23325520

##### PAR SCORE 70-80

by JUDD

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	17°C	9°C S
DUBAI	30°C	25°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C C H
NEW YORK	10°C	07°C C S
MOSCOW	16°C	09°C H

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

## THUMBNAILS



Protesters rally during an anti-government demonstration in Ljubljana, Slovenia on Friday.

**Copa America Covid cases rise:** There were 166 known Covid-19 cases at the Copa America in Brazil, CONMEBOL said on Friday. The figures included all tests up to Monday, the same day the soccer body said 140 people had been infected in connection with the tournament.

**Man who shot gunman in US killed by police officer:** A man who intervened in a shooting that killed a police officer near Denver was shot and killed by a responding officer while holding the suspect's AR-15, police said on Friday. Johnny Hurley, described by police as a hero, shot suspect Ronald Troyke on Monday after Troyke gunned down Arvada Officer Gordon Beesley.

AP

# Floyd death case: Chauvin gets 22.5 years in prison

It is the longest prison term ever imposed on a police officer in killing of Black man



Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin in court on Friday.

Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced Friday to 22 and half years in prison for the murder of George Floyd, whose dying gasps under Chauvin's knee led to the biggest outcry against racial injustice in the USA in generations.

The punishment which came after Chauvin broke his yearlong silence to offer condolences to the Floyd family and express hope that they eventually have some peace of mind is one of the longest prison terms ever imposed on a US police officer in the killing of a Black person.

Still, Floyd family members and others were disappointed. The sentence fell short of the 30 years prosecutors had requested. And with good behavior, Chauvin, 45, could get out on parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or about 15 years. Just because it's the most time doesn't mean it's enough time," said Nekima Levy Armstrong, a Minneapolis protest leader.

Judge Peter Cahill went beyond the 12 and half-year sentence prescribed under state guidelines, citing Chauvin's abuse of a position of trust and authority and also the particular cruelty shown to Floyd.

Floyd family attorney Ben Crump said the family had gotten some measure of accountability but is hoping Chauvin gets the maximum at his upcoming federal civil rights trial. Crump said this was the longest sentence a police officer has ever received in Minnesota.

But he added: "Real justice in America will be Black men and Black women and people of color who will not have to

fear being killed by the police just because the color of their skin. That would be real justice. Outside the courthouse, a crowd of about 50 people clapped hands or placed them on each other's shoulders. The reaction was subdued as people debated whether the sentence was long enough. Some cursed in disgust.

At George Floyd Square, as the intersection where Floyd was pinned to the pavement is now known, members of the crowd broke into applause, and several said, We'll take it.

Chauvin was immediately led back to prison. He showed little emotion when the judge pronounced the sentence. His eyes moved rapidly around the courtroom, his COVID-19 mask obscuring much of his face.

The fired white officer was convicted in April of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee against Floyd's neck for up to 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old man gasped that he couldn't breathe and went limp on 25 May, 2020.

Bystander video of Floyd's arrest on suspicion of passing a counterfeit \$20 bill at a corner store prompted protests around the world and led to scattered violence in Min-

neapolis and beyond, as well as demands for overhauling police departments.

On Friday, Chauvin, who did not testify at his trial, removed his mask and turned toward the Floyd family, speaking only briefly because of what he called some additional legal matters at hand an apparent reference to the federal civil rights trial, where his words could be used against him.

I do want to give my condolences to the Floyd family. There's going to be some other information in the future that would be of interest. And I hope things will give you some peace of mind, he said without further explanation.

Defense attorney Eric Nelson had asked that Chauvin be let off on probation, saying the former officer's brain is littered with what-ifs from that day: What if just did not agree to go in that day? What if things had gone different? What if I never responded to that call? What if? What if? What if?

Chauvin's mother, Carolyn Pawlenty, pleaded for mercy for her son, saying his reputation has been unfairly reduced to that of an aggressive, heartless and uncaring person and a racist.

I want this court to know that none of these things are true and that my son is a good

man, she told the judge, adding: Derek, I want you to know I have always believed in your innocence, and I will never waver from that. I will be here for you when you come home, she said.

Prosecutor Matthew Frank, in asking the judge to exceed the sentencing guidelines, said tortured is the right word for what the officer did to Floyd. This is not a momentary gunshot, punch to the face. This is 9 minutes of cruelty to a man who was helpless and just begging for his life," Frank said.

Floyd family members had finally asked the judge to impose the maximum, which was 40 years. Several spoke before the sentence, and his seven-year-old daughter, Gianna, was seen in a recorded video. I miss you and I love you, Gianna Floyd said in the video when asked what she would say to her daddy. She had a list of things she would have liked to do with him: I want to play with him, have fun, go on a plane ride.

Afterward, Floyd's nephew Brandon Williams said the sentence was insufficient, when you think about George being murdered, in cold blood with a knee on his neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds execution-style in broad daylight. LaTonya Floyd, George Floyd's sister, said of the punishment: That's nothing. That's nothing. He should have got the max, period.

The concrete barricades, razor wire and National Guard patrols at the courthouse during Chauvin's three-week trial in the spring were gone Friday, reflecting an easing of tensions since the verdict. Before the sentencing, the judge denied Chauvin's request for a new trial. The defense had argued that the intense publicity tainted the jury pool and that the trial should have been moved out of Minneapolis.

# Biden vows 'sustained' help as Afghan drawdown nears

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 26 JUNE

US President Joe Biden on Friday promised Afghanistan's top leaders a "sustained" partnership even as he moves to accelerate winding down the United States' longest war amid escalating Taliban violence.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, chair of the High Council for National Reconciliation, met at the Pentagon with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin before their sit-down with Biden at the White House later in the afternoon. While Biden vowed that the US was committed to assisting Afghanistan, he also insisted that it was time for the American military to step back.

"Afghans are going to have to decide their future," Biden said in brief remarks at the start of his meeting with the Afghan leaders. Biden did not elaborate on what a "sustained" partnership might entail.

The leaders' visit to Washington comes as the Biden administration has stepped up plans for withdrawal ahead of the President's 11 September deadline to end a nearly 20-year-old war that has come with a breathtaking human cost. Ghani also paid a visit on his own Friday to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and with House Republican lawmakers. He met with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell on Thursday.

More than 2,400 US troops have been killed and 20,000 wounded in the war since 2001, according to the Defense Department. It's estimated that over 3,800 US private security contractors have been killed. The suffering has been even greater for Afghanistan with estimates showing more than 66,000 Afghan troops killed and more than 2.7 million forced to flee their homes mostly to Iran.

Roughly 650 US troops are

expected to remain in Afghanistan to provide security for diplomats after the main American military force completes its withdrawal, which is set to be largely done in the next two weeks, U.S. officials told.

Several hundred additional American forces will remain at the Kabul airport, potentially until September. They'll assist Turkish troops providing security, a temporary move until a more formal Turkey-led security operation is in place, the officials said Thursday.

Overall, officials said the US expects to have American and coalition military command, its leadership, and most troops out by July Fourth, or shortly after that, meeting an aspirational deadline that commanders developed months ago. The officials were not authorised to discuss details of the withdrawal and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The departure of the bulk of the more than 4,000 troops that have been in the country in recent months is unfolding well before Biden's 11 September deadline to end a nearly 20-year-old war that has come with a breathtaking human cost. Ghani also paid a visit on his own Friday to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and with House Republican lawmakers. He met with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell on Thursday.

More than 2,400 US troops have been killed and 20,000 wounded in the war since 2001, according to the Defense Department. It's estimated that over 3,800 US private security contractors have been killed. The suffering has been even greater for Afghanistan with estimates showing more than 66,000 Afghan troops killed and more than 2.7 million forced to flee their homes mostly to Iran.

Roughly 650 US troops are

**'Biden should tell Pakistan to stop proxy war in Afghanistan'**

WASHINGTON, 26 JUNE

Members of the Afghan-American community on Friday held a welcome rally in support of their visiting President Ashraf Ghani and CEO Dr Abdullah Abdullah in which they urged US President Joe Biden to ask Pakistan to stop a "proxy war" in Afghanistan.

"We are here to support Afghan troops and Afghan national army and security forces. We want the US to end the proxy war in Afghanistan supported by Pakistan establishment," Mirwais Safi, an Afghan-American told in front of the White House.

The Afghan-Americans also urged the Biden administration to refrain from sending money to Pakistan. Because they (Pakistan) are definitely supporting terrorism in Afghanistan.

"We are gathered here to welcome our President Ashraf Ghani and the delegation. But our main purpose of this rally is to stop the proxy war in Afghanistan, where Pakistan has been supporting all the terrorist groups in the region, Ashraf said in his address to the participating Afghans.

Abdullah said, "If Afghanistan is abandoned completely, without support, without engagement, there's a danger that Afghanistan can turn once again into a haven for terrorist groups."

# Finland sees spike in virus cases from returning soccer fans

AP  
HELSINKI, 26 JUNE

have been exposed," the institute said.

Finland played two of its Euro 2020 group games in St. Petersburg, facing Russia on June 16 and Belgium on Monday. At least 2,000 Finns are estimated to have traveled to the city for those matches.

The Finns finished in third place in their group and were eliminated. Russia was also eliminated after finishing last.

St. Petersburg hosted six games in the group stage of the tournament and will host one of the four quarterfinal matches on Friday.

Authorities in the Russian city tightened anti-coronavirus restrictions last week in an effort to curb a spike in new infections. That included closing food courts in the city's shopping malls and its Euro 2020 fan zone.

The Finnish health institute's director, Mika Salminen, told public broadcaster YLE that more than 120 virus cases have so far been detected from passengers returning from St. Petersburg, mostly soccer fans, and the number is likely to increase.

Though the Finnish Bor-

der Guard was prepared for heavy return traffic from St. Petersburg, the key Vaalimaa border station got badly jammed Tuesday with lines of dozens of buses carrying soccer fans and hundreds of cars waiting for the required coronavirus test after border formalities.

As the queue got longer and the border station was to be closed, Finnish authorities decided to let passengers return to the country without testing, on the condition they would take one at their respective home region after arrival.

There are two main crossing points between the countries in eastern Finland, making it a trip of between 180-220 kilometers (112-135 miles) from the border to St. Petersburg.

The Russian city's population of more than 5 million nearly equals the entire population of Finland.

According to the latest

Finnish health officials said earlier this week that they traced some of the infections to a German beer hall-style restaurant in St. Petersburg.

Finland is one of the least affected European countries by coronavirus with just under 95,000 cases and 969 deaths detected since the start of the pandemic.

The 1,340-kilometer (832-mile) long Finnish-Russian land border has been closed for passenger travel from both sides since March 2020 and remains so with certain exceptions, such as traveling to Euro 2020 matches.

national coronavirus taskforce, there were 8,457 new infection cases in Moscow and 1,247 in St. Petersburg detected in the past few days.

In a letter to the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Hancock said the government "owe it to people who have sacrificed so much in this pandemic to be honest when we have let them down" and reiterated his previous apology for breaking the government guidance on social distancing from people outside a close household bubble.

In a video posted on Twitter, Hancock said: "I have been to see the Prime Minister to resign as secretary of state for health and social care.

It follows mounting pressure on him from the Opposition as well as within his own Tory party to resign for undermining public trust in the COVID lockdown guidance.

The minister, so far in charge of the country's health response to the pandemic, praised the National Health Service (NHS) for the ceaseless work in fighting the deadly virus.

"We didn't get every decision right but I know people understand how hard it is to deal with the unknown, making the difficult trade-offs between freedom, prosperity and health that we have faced," he said.

"I am so proud that Britain avoided the catastrophe of an overwhelmed NHS and that through foresight and brilliant science we have led the world in the vaccination effort, so we stand on the brink of a return to normality," he added.

It came as campaign group "COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice" described Boris Johnson's backing of Hancock by accepting his apology and declaring the "matter closed" on Friday as a "slap in the face" for families who had lost loved ones to the virus.

Hancock is married to osteopath wife Martha for 15 years and they have three children together.

The pictures in The Sun' appeared to show evidence of an extra-marital affair with married Gina Coladangelo, who is listed on the DHSC website as a non-executive director. The pair are said to have been close since their student days at Oxford University.

Hancock was appointed health secretary by former British Prime Minister Theresa May in 2018 and has held the post for nearly three years.

# As virus surges in Uganda, hospitals accused of profiteering

AP  
KAMPALA, 26 JUNE

That means that Pope Francis probably losing his patience with the leaders of the Polish Episcopate, Isakowicz-Zaleski said. The Vatican has been investigating reports, also in the Polish media, of alleged lack of reaction by some of Poland's Roman Catholic Church figures to reports of abuse of minors. A few bishops and archbishops were recently punished by the Vatican and barred from religious and lay ceremonies.

Two TV documentaries in 2019 and 2020 by independent journalists, which told stories of victims of abuse by priests, have prompted investigation in Poland and at the Vatican.

A state commission investigating around 330 reports and cases of sex abuse of people under age 15 said this week that in around 30% of the cases clergymen are cited as the perpetrators.

The State Commission for Pedophilia said it has written to the Vatican asking to be allowed to see its documents related to Poland, because Poland's church wasn't cooperating.

A priest in Poland, the Rev. Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski, says that in 2012 he personally gave Dzivisza a letter containing evidence of sex abuse by a priest of a 12-year-old altar boy. Dzivisza at first denied it and suggested the matter should be investigated, but later said the letter had been found.

The victim, Janusz Szymik, says there was no reaction from Dzivisza.

Isakowicz-Zaleski says he was recently questioned about a certain Polish bishop by a Vatican commission that specially came to Poland to investigate the

Thursday that Africa's third wave is very devastating as the delta variant drives infections in many countries.

Just 1 per cent of people across Africa have been fully vaccinated, and Uganda has vaccinated under 1 per cent of its 44 million people. It has confirmed 75,537 infections, including 781 deaths. The actual totals are believed to be much higher because only a few thousand samples are tested daily.

Hospitals in cities including the capital, Kampala, report difficulties in finding bottled oxygen, and some are running out of space for COVID-19 patients. Intensive care units are in high demand.

Although the practice of requiring deposits from patients has long been seen as acceptable in this East African country where few have health insurance



*Delta is the most transmissible of Covid -19 variants identified so far, spreading rapidly among unvaccinated populations*

STATING THAT COUNTRIES EASING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL MEASURES ARE WITNESSING INCREASE IN VIRUS TRANSMISSION

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE 2021

11

## THUMBNAILS



People enjoy a summer's day along the beach in Benidorm, south-east Spain on Friday.

AP

**Helicopter carrying Colombian Prez attacked:** Colombian President Iván Duque said on Friday that a helicopter carrying him and several senior officials came under fire in the southern Catatumbo region bordering Venezuela, in a rare instance of a direct attack on a presidential aircraft. Duque said everyone on board the helicopter was safe.

AP

**Attack on UN mission in Mali:** Germany's defence minister said on Friday that 12 German troops and a soldier from another country were wounded following an attack on soldiers taking part in a United Nations mission in Mali. The UN mission in the country had earlier said that 15 peacekeepers were wounded when an operational base in the Gao region was targeted with a vehicle bomb.

AP

**Germany knife attack:** Investigators were looking Saturday for a motive behind an attack in the German city of Wuerzburg in which a man armed with a long knife killed three people and wounded at least five others. The suspect, a 24-year-old Somali, was shot in the leg by police and arrested after the Friday afternoon attack. Police said he was being questioned.

AP

## Aquino, Philippine ex-leader who dared China, is buried

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, 26 JUNE

Former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III was buried in austere state rites during the pandemic Saturday with many remembering him for standing up to China over territorial disputes, striking a peace deal with Muslim guerrillas and defending democracy in a Southeast Asian nation where his parents helped topple a dictator.

Aquino died Thursday at age 61 of kidney disease arising from diabetes following a long public absence, after his single, six-year term ended in 2016. Family and friends sang a patriotic song after a silver urn with Aquino's remains was placed beside the tomb of his mother, former President Corazon Aquino. Military honors included a 21-gun salute in a private cemetery in Manila.

Aquino's family did not

# We seek civilised and even-handed relationship with US: Imran Khan

Khan expresses his disappointment that his bid to normalise ties with India did not make progress despite approaching PM Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, 26 JUNE

**P**akistan is seeking a "civilised" and "even-handed" relationship with Washington like the one that existed between the US and the UK or with India "right now", Prime Minister Imran Khan has said, underlining the role Islamabad could play in the region, including in Afghanistan after America leaves the war-torn country.

Khan made the comments during an interview with *The New York Times* in which he also expressed his disappointment that his bid to normalise ties with India did not make any progress though he approached PM Narendra Modi soon after assuming office in August 2018.

In the interview that comes as US President Joe Biden had his first face-to-face meeting with his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani at the White House on Friday, Khan recalled that Pakistan has had a closer relationship with the US than other nations in the region,

such as India, and was a US partner in the war against terrorism, Dawn newspaper reported.

"Now, after the US leaves Afghanistan, basically Pakistan would want a civilised relationship, which you have between nations, and we would like to improve our trading relationship with the US, he said. Asked to elaborate his concept of a civilised relationship, Khan said he was seeking relations like the one that existed "between the US and Britain, or between US and India right now. So, a relationship which is even-handed".

"Unfortunately, the relationship during the war on terror was a bit lopsided," he said. "It was a lopsided relationship because the US felt that they were giving aid to Pakistan, they felt that Pakistan had to do US' bidding."

"And what Pakistan did in terms of trying to do the US bidding cost Pakistan a lot. 70,000 Pakistanis died, and over \$150 billion were lost to the economy because there were suicide bombings and bombs



going on all over the country," he said.

The main problem with this lopsided relationship was that "Pakistani governments tried to deliver what they were not capable of," and it led to a "mis-trust between the two countries," Khan said.

"And people in Pakistan felt they paid a heavy, heavy price for this relationship. And the US thought Pakistan had not done enough."

The prime minister said that his government wanted the future relationship to be based on trust and common objectives, including a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

The US and the Taliban have signed a landmark deal in Doha on February 29, 2020 following multiple rounds of

negotiations to bring lasting peace in war-torn Afghanistan and allow US troops to return home, effectively drawing curtains on America's longest war.

Asked if Pakistan will continue to have any strategic relevance to the US after the pull-out, Khan said: "I don't know, really. I haven't thought about it in that way, that Pakistan should have some strategic relevance to the US."

Khan said he could not predict the future of the military and security relationship between Pakistan and the US.

"Post the US withdrawal, I don't know what sort of military relationship it will be. But right now, the relationship should be based on this common objective that there is a political solution in Afghanistan

before the United States leaves," he stressed.

Asked if Pakistan was still using its leverage with the Taliban to move the peace talks towards a deal, Khan said,

"Pakistan has used the maximum leverage it could on the Taliban."

"He said the US decision to fix a date for withdrawing its troops from Afghanistan also diminished Pakistan's leverage on the Taliban."

"Given that the US gave a date of withdrawal, from then onward, our leverage diminished on the Taliban. And the reason is that the moment the United States gave a date of exit, Taliban basically claimed victory, Khan said. "They're thinking that they won the war. And so, therefore, our ability to influence them diminishes the stronger they feel."

Khan said Pakistan has been emphasising to the Taliban that they should not go for a military victory because it would only lead to a protracted civil war.

In the interview, Khan also claimed that Pakistan would have had a better relationship with India if it had a different

government and they would have resolved all their differences through dialogue.

"When I assumed office, the first thing I did was I made this approach to Prime Minister Modi (to seek) a normal, civilised trading relationship... We tried but didn't get anywhere," he said.

"Had there been another Indian leadership, I think we would have had a good relationship with them. And yes, we would have resolved all our differences through dialogue."

Khan claimed. The strained ties between India and Pakistan deteriorated further after India announced withdrawing special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the state into two union territories in August 2019.

Khan said the US assumption that India would be the bulwark against China was wrong. "I think it would be detrimental for India because India's trade with China is going to be beneficial for both India and China."

Pakistan, he said, was "watching the scenario unfold and with a bit of anxiety."

Up to 9,00,000 in Ethiopia's Tigray face famine, says US

NAIROBI, 26 JUNE

The United States estimates that up to 900,000 people in Ethiopia's Tigray region now face famine conditions amid a deadly conflict, even as the prime minister says there is no hunger there.

The hunger crisis in Tigray is the world's worst in a decade, and the new famine findings are terrifying, the head of the US Agency for International Development, Samantha Power, said Friday. The new estimate more than doubles the warning issued earlier this month by the UN and aid groups that more than 3,500,000 people face famine conditions in Tigray.

Even as scattered reports emerge of people starving to death, the real number of people facing famine conditions is unknown because active fighting and access restrictions keep aid workers from reaching all parts of the region of 6 million people. Conditions will worsen in the coming months, particularly as Tigray enters the July-to-September lean season, unless humanitarian assistance reaches the populations most in need, the new USAID analysis says.

## Pak security agencies identify key person behind blast outside Hafiz Saeed's house, arrest 3 more persons

LAHORE, 26 JUNE

and 21 others injured.

"Three more suspects have been arrested from Lahore, Sheikhpura and Peshawar in connection with the Lahore blast on the information of the main suspect ~ Peter Paul David," an official of the CTD told. He said the three suspects had remained in contact with David whose car was used in the blast. The investigators are trying to reach the 'mastermind' of the blast, he said.

Another official said the mastermind of the blast has been identified and his name is Samiullah of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province.

"Currently Samiullah is living in Dubai and his brother had planted the explosives in the car," he said, adding that police are conducting raids to arrest Samiullah's brother. David was arrested on

Thursday at the Lahore airport, a day after the blast.

"Yesterday our team raided David's residence in Mamboodabad and seized his travel and other important documents," he said. David's link with MQM-London is also being probed, he said.

Mujahir Qaumi Movement is a political party in Pakistan that was founded by Altaf Hussain in 1984. Currently, the party is split between 2 main factions. The MQM-London faction is controlled by Hussain, who has been living in self-exile in the UK.

Another official in the Punjab police told that David had provided his car to the suspect who parked at a police picket outside Saeed's house at the Board of Revenue Society Johar Town and left 15 minutes before it exploded through a remote control device. Some 15kg of explosives were reportedly installed in the car.

According to the official, David's wife and a son had left

their Karachi residence before the police raid.

"David has two sons -- Denzel and Cummings. Denzel had been arrested in the past for allegedly supplying drugs in dance parties. He is currently living in Dubai. Cummings is living with his mother in Karachi," the official, adding that David has a scrap and hotel business in Bahrain. He was a frequent traveller between Pakistan and Gulf countries, he said.

Another official in the Punjab police told that David had provided his car to the suspect

who parked at a police picket outside Saeed's house at the Board of Revenue Society Johar Town and left 15 minutes before it exploded through a remote control device. Some 15kg of explosives were reportedly installed in the car.

## SCAPE GOAT



A worshipper carries a goat as an offering at the crater of Mount Bromo during Yadnya Kasada festival in Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia on Saturday, June 26, 2021. Every year people gather for the annual festival where offerings of rice, fruit, vegetables, livestock or money are made to Hindu gods at the active volcano to ask for blessings and assure a bountiful harvest.

AP

## Report showed major damage before Florida condo collapse

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SURFSIDE (US), 26 JUNE

The oceanfront condominium building that collapsed near Miami had major structural damage to a concrete slab below its pool deck that needed to be extensively repaired, according to a 2018 engineering report on the building.

The report was among a series of documents released by the city of Surfside as rescuers continued to dig Saturday through the rubble of the building in an effort to find any of the 159 people who remain unaccounted for after its collapse. At least four people were killed.

While the engineering report from the firm of Morabito Consultants did not warn of imminent danger from the damage and it is unclear if any of the damage observed was responsible for the collapse, it did note the need for extensive and costly repairs to fix the systemic issues with the building. It said the waterproofing under the pool deck had failed and had been



sloped, preventing water from draining off.

The failed waterproofing is causing major structural damage to the concrete slab below these areas. Failure to replace the waterproofing in the near future will cause the extent of the concrete deterioration to expand exponentially, the report said.

The firm recommended that the damaged slabs be replaced in what would be a major repair.

The report also uncovered abundant cracking and

spalling of concrete columns, beams and walls in the parking garage. Some of the damage was minor, while other columns had exposed and deteriorating rebar.

It also noted that many of the building's previous attempts to fix the columns and other damage with epoxy were marrred by poor workmanship and were failing.

Beneath the pool deck where the slab had been epoxy-injected, new cracks were radiating from the originally repaired cracks, the

report said.

At the site where the building once stood, scores of rescuers used big machines, small buckets, drones, microphones and their own hands

on Friday to pick through the mountain of debris that had been the 12-story Champlain Towers South.

Rachel Spiegel was anxious for any update on her missing mother, 66-year-old Judy Spiegel, who lived on the sixth floor. "I'm just praying for a miracle," Spiegel said. "We're heartbroken that she was even in the building."

Jeanne Ugarte was coming to grips with what she feared was a tragic end for longtime friends Juan and Ana Mora and their son Juan Jr., who was visiting his parents in their condo at the tower. I know they're not going to find them (alive), Ugarte said. It's been too long.

Any time that we hear a sound, we concentrate in that area, Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadallah said.

It could be just steel twisting, it could be debris raining down, but not specifically sounds of tapping or sounds of a human voice.

## US Senators ask Biden admin to protect 'documented dreamers' from deportation

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 26 JUNE

A group of influential US lawmakers on Friday urged the Biden administration to take all necessary steps to prevent the deportation of "documented dreamers".

Specifically, the letter recommends updating DACA criteria to include documented dreamers and adjusting the way that US Citizenship and Immigration Services determines an individual's age when he or she files for adjustment of status in order to protect more documented dreamers from aging out of the system.

The letter comes a week after a group of Indian youngsters from across US, facing imminent prospects of deportation, lobbied with lawmakers at the Capitol Hill and met senior Biden administration officials at the White House appealing them to "let us stay in the US".

"Our nation benefits immensely from immigrants who come to work in fast-growing fields in technology, medicine, engineering, and so many others, said Congresswoman Ross.

Congresswoman Deborah Ross and Indian American Congressman Dr Ami Bera led the group of 36 of their Congressional colleagues in the House of Representatives in sending a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas in this regard.

The letter urges the DHS to strengthen protection for children and young adults who have grown up in the United States as dependents of long-term work visa holders—a group known as the documented dreamers.

Specifically, the letter recommends updating DACA criteria to include documented dreamers and adjusting the way that US Citizenship and Immigration Services determines an individual's age when he or she files for adjustment of status.

They find themselves caught in one of the last active fronts in a war that has dragged on for nearly seven years, between the Houthi and the government, which controls much of the south and is backed by a Saudi-led coalition.

The war has been largely stalemate for years but continues to wreak destruction, killing more than 130,000 people and spawning the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The same day as the strike on the gas station, an Omani delegation landed in Sanaa for talks with rebel leaders, including the group's religious and military leader, Abdel-Malek al-Houthi. Pressure is mounting on the Houthi to stop their Marib offensive and agree on a nationwide cease-fire, paving the way for peace talks.

In the meantime, Marib's residents endure the frequent blasts of missile and drone attacks. Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the head of the rebels' Supreme Revolutionary Committee, said the missile strike targeted a military position and called for an independent investigation. He did not provide evidence.

## A father and daughter's grave marks the cost of Yemen's war

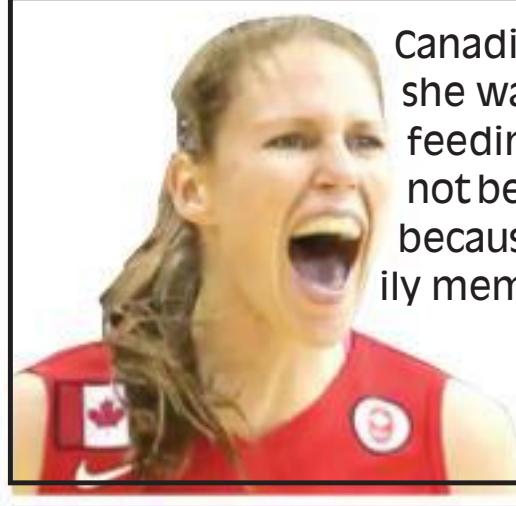
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MARIB, JUN 26

Among the growing number of graves of the war dead in the cemetery of the Yemeni city of Marib, one tombstone stands out. It has two martyrs listed — a father and his young daughter.

Taher Farag and his 2-year-old Liyan were inseparable, their family say. So earlier this month, when Farag drove to the market to buy food for his wife to make lunch, he took Liyan with him.

Along the way, he stopped at a gas station in



Canadian basketball player Kim Gaucher (*in photo, left*) said she was being forced to decide between "being a breastfeeding mom or an Olympic athlete" because she would not be able to bring her three-month-old daughter to Tokyo because of Covid-19 protocols. Organisers have barred family members of athletes from attending the Games.

For more updates

[www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## DIFFICULT CHOICE

### THUMBNAILS

**ITTF requests:** The national tennis federation has requested the ITF to consider Ankita Raina's bronze medal winning performance at the 2018 Asian Games for a place in the women's singles draw of the Tokyo Olympics since the gold and silver medallists from China are eligible for a direct entry due to their higher ranks.

**National heroes:** Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju reiterated that India's Olympic-bound athletes are national heroes and urged the people to extend support to these players in the same way they follow cricketers in the country. Rijiju was speaking at a virtual interaction organised by CII-Sportscom Industry Confederation in partnership with Sports ministry.

**Awards nomination:** Veteran India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and former women's team player Deepika were on Saturday nominated by Hockey India for this year's prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award. Besides the duo, vice-captain of India's Tokyo Olympics-bound men's team Harmanpreet Singh and women's team members Vandana Katariya and Navjot Kaur were nominated for the Arjuna awards. The national federation also nominated RP Singh and Ch Sanggai Ibeamhal for the Dhyani Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement.

## 1st WODI: Shafali set for debut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRISTOL, 26 JUNE



Teen sensation Shafali Verma (*in photo*) is set to make her eagerly-anticipated ODI debut as the Indian women's team seeks white-ball course correction against a strong world champion English side in the first game of the three-match series, here on Sunday.

The 17-year-old batting sensation, who has taken world cricket by storm, has so far played 22 T20 Internationals but was inexplicably not picked for the last home series against South Africa Women, with India witnessing disastrous consequences.

India lost 1-4 against South Africa and there was a lot of debate about Shafali's omission from that series.

However on Sunday, no such harakiri is expected to be committed by the Indian team management, which now understands Shafali's true value all the more after her stellar Test debut against England last week with scores of 96 and 63.

Her big-hitting prowess would certainly be of great value for the Indian team, which has lacked impact players save vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who herself has not been in the best of form.

With defensive plodders like Purnam Raut, skipper Mithali herself in the top-order, Shafali on her day could be the difference between a sub-par total

of 200 and winning score of 235 to 240. The manner in which Shafali hammered the likes of Anya Shrubsole, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Nat Sciver and Sophie Ecclestone on her Test debut, the home team's coaching staff would certainly be burning the midnight oil to stop the new 'Haryana Hurricane'.

It would be interesting to check out India's team composition which came under a lot of scanner during the series against the Proteas.

Priya Punia had a moderate series against the South Africans at home and India have the option of rookie keeper-batter Indrani Roy, who was selected in the squad on the back of a great domestic 50-over tournament.

If Smriti Mandhana and Shafali open the batting, Indrani might have to wait for

her chance as Raut, after a good show and slightly improved strike-rate, would love to come in at No 3, followed by her skipper and deputy Kaur at No 5.

All-rounder Deepi Sharma is a sure-shot at No 6 and the choice between Taniya Bhatia and Indrani could mean that the former would be slightly favourite after her second innings performance.

Among four bowlers, the economical Jhulan Goswami is an automatic choice and it would be two among Shikha Pandey, Puja Vastrakar and Arundhati Reddy.

The Indian team had seen how Ecclestone with his wicket-wacker left-arm orthodox spin bowling troubled the Indians during the lone Test and hence either Ekta Bisht or Radha Yadav, with similar skill sets, might get preference.

In case, India decides to go with a third spinner, Sneh Rana with her batting capabilities and impressive off-breaks will be pitted against diminutive leg-spinner Poonam Yadav.

But Yadav's disastrous performance against South Africa, (0 wickets in five games) makes Rana favourite.

Teams (from): India: Mithali Raj (captain), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Purnam Raut, Harmanpreet Kaur (vc), Deepi Sharma, Taniya Bhatia (wk), Sneh Rana, Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey, Jemimah Rodrigues, Arundhati Reddy, Puja Vastrakar, Ekta Bisht, Radha Yadav, Poonam Yadav, Priya Punia, Indrani Roy (wk).

England: Heather Knight (captain), Tammy Beaumont, Kate Cross, Nat Sciver, Sophia Dunkley, Lauren Winfield-Hill, Anya Shrubsole, Katherine Brunt, Sophie Ecclestone, Amy Jones (wk), Freya Davis, Tash Farrant, Sarah Glenn, Mady Villiers, Fran Wilson, Sarah Glenn, Emily Arlt, Tash Farrant.

age of 52.04.

Even his ODI batting average has taken a hit. It is 43.26 in the phase (between December 1, 2019 to now) as against his career average of 59.07. That apart, he has not got a single century in the period.

"It (lean phase) has happened to the best of people, happened to Sunil Gavaskar, Mohinder Amarnath, happened to me. I had good seasons in 1969, 1970, 1971 but in 1972 I got five zeroes in Ranji Trophy despite the fact that I was in good form," said former India batsman, coach and selector Anshuman Gaekwad to IANS.

Another former national selector Gagan Khoda too said it is not something to worry about.

"Every player goes through a lean phase. Playing eight Test matches without a century or a dip in average does not mean that a batsman like Kohli will continue to fail. He has made so many runs, scored so many centuries over the years, so there will be a time when he will struggle. Every batsman does," said Khoda to IANS.

am Yadav, Priya Punia, Indrani Roy (wk).

England: Heather Knight (captain), Tammy Beaumont, Kate Cross, Nat Sciver, Sophia Dunkley, Lauren Winfield-Hill, Anya Shrubsole, Katherine Brunt, Sophie Ecclestone, Amy Jones (wk), Freya Davis, Tash Farrant, Sarah Glenn, Mady Villiers, Fran Wilson, Sarah Glenn, Emily Arlt, Tash Farrant.

Match Starts: 3:30 pm IST.

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Verma wins compound individual gold

AGENCIES  
PARIS, 26 JUNE

Star compound archer Abhishek Verma stunned American heavyweight Kris Schaff in a shoot-off to bag a gold medal at the Archery World Cup Stage 3 here on Saturday.

In a neck-and-neck final clash, the duo dropped just two points each to be locked 148-all after the regulation five ends. The world number five Schaff started the shoot-off with

a nine and Verma, showing nerve of steel, clinched the contest in style with a perfect 10 to open India's account. It was Verma's second individual World Cup gold medal. The 32-year-old Indian last won an individual medal in 2015 at World Cup Stage 3 in Wroclaw.

"That's archery, it's all about hits and misses. My heart beat went up so I just calmed myself down and kept my focus on the next arrow," Verma said about the intense finish.

## Farah fails to qualify for Oly in last-gasp bid

AGENCIES

LONDON, 26 JUNE

Four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah's (*in photo*) hopes of ending his track career at the Tokyo Games ended as he fell short of the qualifying mark for the 10,000 metres in Manchester on Friday. The 38-year-old won a specially-arranged race to give him a final chance to qualify at the British Championships, but his time of 27 minutes 47 seconds was nearly 20 seconds off the time required to qualify.

Farah won the 5,000m-10,000m double at the London Olympics in 2012 and repeated the feat four years later in Rio de Janeiro. He then turned his attention to the marathon, but after mixed results returned to the track in the hope of one final shot at Olympic glory.

"I've been lucky enough to have had the long career I've had. I'm very grateful but that's all I had today," said Farah, who refused to confirm if he had just run his final track race. "It's a tough one. I always said if I can't compete with the best I'm not just going to go there to finish in a final. Tonight it shows it's not good enough."

Not to be for @Mo\_Farah tonight but this man is and always will be a champion???????? - Team GB (@TeamGB)

Farah was blighted by an ankle problem when he finished eighth at the British 10,000m Championships on 5 June in a time of 27:50.64. Despite having the help of pacemakers in Manchester, his time improved by only three seconds to remain well



off the pace needed to qualify.

After his Belgian training partner Bashir Abdi peeled off the front with nine laps to go, Farah steadily started falling behind the required time and he wore a pained expression as he came down the final straight on the last lap.

That contrasted sharply to the kick Farah had in his glory years to become an Olympic great.

He famously capped "Super Saturday" on the track for Team GB at the home games in 2012 as Jessica Ennis-Hill claimed heptathlon gold and Greg Rutherford won the long jump in the space of 44 minutes. Farah also won six world championship gold medals and two silvers. However, his success has been dogged by his links to banned American coach Alberto Salazar.

Farah was coached by Salazar at the Nike Oregon Project from 2011 to 2017. Salazar is serving a four-year ban for breaking anti-doping rules following a probe by the US Anti-Doping Agency.

## Manu-Saurabh win Silver

AGENCIES  
OSIJEK (CROATIA), 26 JUNE

Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary won their sixth 10M Air Pistol Mixed Team-International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup medal on the trot, only this time their first silver after a run of five gold medals, going down to the Russian pair of Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov 12-16 in the gold medal match on Saturday in Osijek, Croatia.

The Indian duo fought hard, levelling at 6-6 and then fighting back from 6-12 to level it back at 12-12, but that was not enough on the day to ward off the world class Russian pair in the Olympic event.

India now has one silver and two bronze medals at the ongoing Osijek shooting world cup to lie ninth in the medals tally. Russia top the table currently with three gold medals for a total of seven medals.

A total of 17 nations have medals at the Osijek ISSF Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun World Cup stage, in what is the final world level competition before the Tokyo 2020 summer Olympics next month.

Rio Olympic silver medalist Batsarashkina and World Championship gold medalist in the discipline Artem Chernousov had earlier topped the second qualification round, shooting a combined 390 out of 400, to qualify for the gold medal match-up against the Indian duo, who came in second with 387.

They are very compact, they know how to play big games in big tournaments. And they have a lot of experience as well, so I think we are going to have to be top to beat them.

"Of course, everyone talks of Cristiano Ronaldo, he is one of the best in the world but they have not only him but also a

## Ronaldo in 'form of his life' but Belgium 'can stop him'

AGENCIES  
LONDON, 26 JUNE

With five goals in three matches, Portugal skipper Cristiano Ronaldo (*in photo*) is leading the goal scorers chart at the Euro 2020 after the completion of the group stage of the competition. And according to Belgium defender Toby Alderweireld,

Portugal's star forward might be "in the form of his life" but Belgium can still stop Ronaldo when they go head to head in Seville for a place in the quarter-finals on Sunday.

"He (Cristiano) is in the form of his life, but as a team we can stop him. That has always been our strength," Alderweireld told reporters after Portugal finished third in Group F after last-gasp drama at the conclusion of the group phase on Wednesday.

"But they will be difficult, they are a real tournament team," he added.

The contrast in the two sides' progress could not have been greater with Belgium masterfully overcoming adversity to win all their group games, while a pugnacious Portugal saw their fortunes ebb and flow before they finished third in their section after holding world champions France to a 2-2 draw on Wednesday.

But top-ranked Belgium, boasting the golden generation including Romelu Lukaku, Kevin De Bruyne, Eden Hazard, Youri Tielemans and Thibaut Courtois, veteran defender Alderweireld, will still be wary of the defending champions.

"I think they (Portugal) are a very difficult team to beat, they have a lot of quality, the team



are very compact, they know how to play big games in big tournaments. And they have a lot of experience as well, so I think we are going to have to be top to beat them.

"Of course, everyone talks of Cristiano Ronaldo, he is one of the best in the world but they have not only him but also a

## Copa infections

RIO, 26 JUNE

There were 166 known Covid-19 infections at the Copa America in Brazil, Conmebol said on Friday. The figures included all tests up to Monday, the same day the soccer body said 140 people had been infected in connection with the tournament.

Conmebol said 22,856 tests had been taken with people related to the tournament, and 0.7 per cent of the results came back positive. At the beginning of the week that figure was at 0.9 per cent. Conmebol works with Brazil's health ministry to track infections. More than 510,000 known people have died due to the coronavirus. The statement also said most of the positive tests were of outsourced workers who were yet to be vaccinated. Conmebol said it had no control over why those people had not got their shots. Seventeen players have tested positive since the tournament began, and 15 of them were available to their national team after time in isolation, Conmebol said. AP

their last five appearances at a major tournament (Euros and World Cup), progressing to the semi-final in their previous one at Russia 2018. Their defeat to eventual winners France three years ago is the only one of their last 10 games at major tournaments that they have failed to win.

And Alderweireld insisted that Belgium were "very hungry and desired to achieve success at the Euro 2020."

## Of India in Olympic spotlight amid coronavirus pandemic

PULKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

The rescheduled Tokyo Olympics will probably be gone ahead with simply because the global authorities of the Games will take a rather nasty toss if they lose out on the huge amount of money television gives them for coverage rights.

Covid-19, and the continuing deaths, will not be a deterrent. And if the Olympics are held, it can be taken for granted that India - only two medals in the previous edition of the show, in Rio, amid a lot of end-of-the-world chest-thumping at home - will roll up there all right, partially because our national associ-

ation is, among several other regrettable things, an elaborate favour distribution system.

Years ago, in a telephone conversation, one of its erstwhile front-rank administrators, explaining allegedly ques-

### SHORT POINT

had come pat, bereft of any contrition as controversies raged across the land.

During the 1998 Asian Games, a sight of the august personage in a plush Bangkok hotel was a hit to the spiritu-

al solar plexus: the much-celebrated go-getter, standing in a foyer in full view of officials from an assortment of countries heading into a huddle, was picking his nose. Uninhibited, unabashed.

And he was quite evidently relishing the experience. He is not there in the whip-

cracking mix any more but it was impossible not to think back to the day when India recently found itself clubbed with 10 other countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan among them - who would be required to isolate themselves for three days on fetching up at the Games Village in Tokyo.

This after daily coronavirus tests at home in the run-up to the trip. The Indian Olympic Association said that this was discriminatory and unfair, but that might not have mattered. And though it stopped short of saying that not all allegedly Covid-19-affected countries had not had the same inflexible standards

applied to them, the crucial matter was how the fiat was going to influence the preparations of the handful of Indians who would stand a medal-winning chance.

But then, all the fuss around the Olympics, was never about performances, was