



Akhilesh Yadav has lost faith in his own leaders, says Mayawati  
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BJP members in Standing Committee flag rising fuel prices  
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Chinese astronauts dock with new space station  
page 11



India takes on New Zealand in WTC final from today  
page 13

## NEARBY



Ration scheme: CM's fresh bid to get L-G nod

NEW DELHI  
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday resent the file of the home delivery scheme of ration to L-G Anil Baijal for approval. He also responded to the objections raised saying that the scheme was in accordance with the law.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

COMPLETE GEOGRAPHY Module by Amit Garg Ex- Faculty Vajiram & Ravi FEE During Covid 3999/- After Covid 999/- Starting on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 (5 Seats Left) IASSETU.COM 9218400100

## Operationalise vaccine units: Stalin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

In his first meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi after assuming office, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday urged him to operationalise the vaccine units in Chengalpattu and Coonoor.

He also sought the scrapping of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the three farm laws and the proposed Chennai-Salem Greenfield Expressway.

Mr. Stalin handed over a memorandum containing 25 major demands, including

►



T.N. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

exemption of Tamil Nadu from the NEET-based admission to medical courses and scrapping of the entrance tests for admission to other professional courses.

### Timetable Ready

The CBSE has set deadlines for schools to complete the assessment process

By June 23, 2021

- Formation of result committee by school
- To note subject-wise maximum marks of subjects offered by the school
- Identification of students who changed subject(s) in Class 12 with CBSE approval



- Checking of marks of Classes 10 & 11 if student passed from boards other than CBSE
- By June 30: Finalisation of roadmap and schedule by the committee
- By July 15: Finalisation of result after moderation and checking by schools
- Uploading of marks on Board's link

■ CBSE will declare results by July 31

SOURCE: CBSE AFFIDAVIT IN THE SUPREME COURT

theory component of the final exam taken in Class 11. Finally, 40% weightage would be given for marks obtained in one or more unit tests, mid-term exams and pre-board exams in Class 12.

So, if the total marks for

theory is 80, the 30% weightage of Classes 10 and 11 would come to 24 marks each and the 40% weightage derived from performances in tests conducted in Class 12 would translate to the remaining 32 marks.

On the practical side, calculation would be on the "actual basis" of the marks uploaded by the schools on the CBSE's portal.

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RELATED REPORTS ▶ PAGE 8

Scheme evokes mixed response

SHINJINI GHOSH  
JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ  
NEW DELHI

There were mixed reactions to the CBSE's assessment scheme for the Class 12 exams. Some said it was not an accurate evaluation process, while others welcomed it. Devansh Saraf, who was to take his exam, said any assessment done would not be accurate to what a student could have been able to achieve in an offline exam. He, however, felt the CBSE criteria was fair as it could get.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Students freed as court rejects police's stand

Police wanted time to verify addresses



Victory stand: Natasha Narwal, Asif Iqbal Tanha and Devangana Kalita outside Tihar Jail in Delhi after their release on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

till the time such reports are filed," the judge said.

"The accused is directed to be released forthwith as per orders of the Delhi High Court," the court said, taking into account the undertaking given by counsel of the accused that their clients would not leave the jurisdiction of the Capital.

In the morning, the High Court directed the trial court to "proceed with promptitude and expedition" on the pleas filed by the three activists for immediate release. "The orders enlarging the applicants on bail have already been rendered by us. It needs to be implemented," the HC said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2 & 9

## I have written to PM thrice to withdraw Governor: Mamata

She denies allegations of post-poll violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday that she had written thrice to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar from the State.

She was responding to questions on Mr. Dhankhar's

visit to Delhi. She described the Governor as "Centre's own person" and denied allegations of post-poll violence.

"A child can be calmed into silence... In this case, speech is silver and silence is golden," the Chief Minister said, responding to the Governor's allegations of post-poll violence in the State.

On speculation that the Governor might be changed, Ms. Banerjee said she had

not been informed about any such development. "How am I supposed to know? When a Governor is appointed, the State government is usually consulted. That was not done in this case," she said.

This is the first time the Chief Minister has gone on record that she had written to the PM on withdrawing the Governor.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Paras elected as new LJP president

No opposing nomination filed; democratic process was followed, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

The rebel group of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) on Thursday elected Pashupati Kumar Paras unopposed as the new party president. After his election, Mr. Paras, who days before had staged a coup in the party, told mediapersons, "I was elected according to the party's constitution and democratic process. The party has thrust a big responsibility on me and I'll take forward the party."

The LJP's national executive committee meeting was held at the residence of senior party leader Suraj Bhan Singh in Patna.

Mr. Singh later announced that no other nomination had been filed against Mr. Paras.

After the coup in the party, the rebel LJP group had elected Mr. Singh, a party



Big responsibility: Pashupati Kumar Paras after being elected national president of the LJP in Patna on Thursday. ■ PTI

leader and former MP from Munger, as its working president.

His nephew becomes an autocrat, what can an uncle do?"

"I've been elected under the party's constitution, which says that every three years, election for the party president will take place. No one can be party president for life in a democratic setup," said the MP from Hajipur.

Earlier, Mr. Paswan was removed from the post of LJP president after an emergency meeting of the party's national working committee.

Out of a total of six LJP MPs, five rebelled against Mr. Paswan.

Mr. Paswan, however, on Wednesday nominated party leader and former MLA Raju Tiwari as the LJP State president.

pur.

Mr. Paras also urged partymen who had quit previously to "come back to fulfil the dream of party's founder leader Ram Vilas Paswan". He said there was no "internal bickering" in the LJP and that the party would "take care of people coming from every section of the society".

The LJP is currently an ally of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre.

Earlier, Mr. Paswan was removed from the post of LJP president after an emergency meeting of the party's national working committee.

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Mr. Paswan, however, on Wednesday nominated party leader and former MLA Raju Tiwari as the LJP State president.

## A 'deal' prompted by one couple's need, another's desire

Payment dispute led parents who sold their baby to file kidnapping complaint, landing all in police net

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A couple's need for money and another's desire for a male child led them to strike a deal on a six-day-old infant and subsequently land in police net.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Thakur said the accused have been identified as Vidyanand Yadav, 50, his wife Rambai Yadav, 45, Raman Kumar Yadav, 32, Haripal Singh, 50, Govind Kumar, 30, and his 24-year-old wife Pooja.

The police said on Tuesday they received a call at Fatehpur Beri police station from Mr. Govind, who said his six-day-old baby boy had been kidnapped. When the police reached the spot in Aya Nagar, he said his wife, Ms. Pooja, had delivered the baby on



The six accused in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

June 8. One of their friends, Haripal Singh, invited the couple to live with him because there wasn't enough space at their rented accommodation. On June 12, the couple reached the friend's residence in Aya Nagar where Mr. Haripal locked them from outside and fled with the child, alleged Mr. Govind. The police registered a kidnapping case based on his statement.

A team led by Station House Officer Kuldeep Singh launched the investigation and traced Mr. Haripal, who allegedly told them that the couple had, in fact, given the child willingly to the relatives of his friend, Mr. Raman, who lives in the Moti Bagh jhuggis. When the police reached

Mr. Raman's house, he told them that the couple had sold the baby to his relatives, Mr. Vidyanand and Ms. Rambai for ₹3.6 lakh, and the duo had already left for Kanpur. The police sought the details of the train they had boarded and nabbed the couple from Kanpur railway station. They were then brought to Delhi.

### Financial crisis

Further investigation revealed that Mr. Govind and Ms. Pooja were extremely poor and needed money for which they agreed to sell their baby for ₹3.6 lakh to Mr. Vidyanand and Ms. Rambai through Mr. Haripal and Mr. Raman. "When Vidyanand and Rambai were questioned, they said they were married for 25 years but couldn't bear a child because

of which their relatives in their village in Bihar would demean them and use derogatory words. Vidyanand, in fact, sold his land to be able to buy the baby. He told Raman that he will only take the child if it's a boy," said a senior police officer. A written agreement was signed between the two parties and pictures were also taken.

Policemen said Mr. Govind decided to inform them because they got only ₹2 lakh cash and four cheques of ₹40,000 each dated June 18. Mr. Govind wanted to encash the cheques on June 14 and leave for his village immediately. When he tried to reach Mr. Haripal and Mr. Raman on phone, they blocked him. He also couldn't reach them physically. Feeling cheated, he decided to call the police.

## 'Continue demolition of illegal buildings in Aravali forest land'

SC had refused to give encroachers any quarter on June 7

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to halt the demolition of about 10,000 unauthorised residential constructions encroaching into the ecologically fragile Aravali forest land near Lakkarpur Khori village in Haryana.

A Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari had refused to give encroachers any quarter on June 7 while ordering the demolition. The court had categorically said that "land-grabbers cannot take the refuge of the rule of law" and demand fairness.

However, fresh petitions were filed urging the court to revisit its order and provide

for rehabilitation of the residents, including children. The petitioners, mostly residents whose properties face the axe, said they were not given time to submit documents to the local authorities to prove their claim.

But the court refused to budge on Thursday. The Bench said officials and personnel were pelted with stones at the site of demolition. However, the court declined to pass any orders while merely telling the authorities, "You know what to do then."

The court had in its June 7 order made it clear that the encroachers should be evicted by the land even by force. The next hearing is scheduled on July 27.

"Petitioners were obligat-

ed to provide documents to come under the rehabilitation scheme, which they have failed to do. We have recorded the submission that clearance of unlawful encroachment on forest land will be carried out as per due process of law," the court said.

'Vindication of Constitution's libertarian promise'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court order regarding the release of student-activists – Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal and Asif Tanha – is a resounding vindication of the Constitution of India's libertarian promise, said former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar on Thursday.

He said the subsequent steps by the government to delay their release "mock the conscience of the Constitution and the memory of our Freedom Fighters".

"Protagonists of a muscular State seem to have forgotten the inescapable lesson of history that the cry for freedom is irrepressible. The State ill serves its purpose by oppressing its constituents...," he said, adding that the attempt to label dissenters as "anti-nationals" must be fought.

## Friends, family shed tears of joy as they welcome JNU students

Crowd gathered outside Tihar jail ahead of Devangana and Natasha's release

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

"I can't wait to hold her and feed her favourite food when she gets home," said JNU student Devangana Kalita's husband Andre Ling, who welcomed her at Tihar Prison Complex on Thursday evening after completing court formalities.

Wearing a blue *mehkela chador* – a traditional attire of Assamese women, gifted by mother – Devangana stepped out of Tihar Prison gate number 3 along with Natasha Narwal a little after 7 p.m. on Thursday evening and hugged her husband with a wide smile "It's been a long and difficult year of waiting with so many twists and turns. I am finally relieved," he said.

Around 6 p.m., JNU students started gathering outside



JNU students wait for the release of their friends outside Tihar jail on Thursday. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

side Tihar for the three to be released by 7 p.m. The crowd grew bigger with their close friends and family joining.

### Praise for judiciary

Ms. Narwal's paternal uncle Virender Singh Malik, criticised Delhi Police for the two-day delay and praised the judiciary. "This order has raised hopes among other

dissidents on such charges. Justice delayed, though not denied but in one sense, it was denied as Dr. Narwala (Natasha's father) is not with us. He just kept waiting for her release," he said.

Shortly after 7 p.m., a friend peeped through the hole in the gate and started raising slogans, bringing cheer among the crowd. The

pitch of the slogans increased and minutes later, Devangana and Natasha stepped out amid the roaring. "Saare pinjre todenge.. itihas ki dhara modenge" the two joined the crowd. A friend's eyes welled up with tears of joy.

Asif's friends welcomed him outside gate number 4 without the crowd. Though his family was away, his friends made sure his mother saw him speak outside the jail through a video call from Jharkhand. "I am very proud of him," she said, teary-eyed.

Standing at a distance, Devangana laughed and said: "I can't quite believe I am out of jail. I think I'll continue to feel that someone will come and arrest me from home tomorrow". The trio then came together for a picture with their fists held high.

## Man 'burnt to death' near Tikri border; one arrested

SKM says it is an attempt to defame farmers' movement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

A man was burnt to death allegedly by a group of farmers protesting against the farm laws near Tikri border in Haryana's Bahadurgarh on Wednesday. One of the accused, Krishan, has been arrested.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (Bahadurgarh) Pawan Kumar said two accused, including Krishan, were identified. Both belonged to Jind and were part of the ongoing farmers' protest. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said that it was an attempt to defame the farmers' movement.

According to the FIR, the incident took place around 5 p.m. when Mukesh, a resident of Kasar village, went for a stroll and reached the farmers' agitation site. A little later, Mukesh's brother Madan Lal received a call on his phone saying that the farmers at the

protest site had doused Mukesh with an inflammable liquid and set him afire with an intention to kill him, said the FIR registered at Sector-6 Bahadurgarh Police Station.

Madan Lal, the complainant, said he informed village sarpanch who took Mukesh to Civil Hospital for treatment. Mukesh identified one of the assailants as Krishan, according to the FIR. Mukesh was later referred to Post Graduate Institute of

Medical Sciences in Rohtak where he died during treatment.

Krishan and his fellow accomplices were having drinks with Mukesh when an altercation broke out between them and they set him afire, said Inspector Jai Bhagwan, Sation House Office, Sector 6 Bahadurgarh police station.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, in a press statement, claimed that as per the facts known to it, the man doused himself with petrol to end life due to conflict in his family, and the Kisan Morcha volunteers rushed in to douse the fire and save his life. The SKM said an "unfortunate case of suicide" was being used by the Bharatiya Janta Party and Janayak Janata Party government, its political agents and their troll army to somehow implicate the farmers' movement".

## DMRC to build 'halt platform' to link two corridors

Move aimed at improving interconnectivity between Green and Pink Lines

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to improve interconnectivity between Green and Pink Lines, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Thursday said a special "halt platform" was being constructed at Punjabi Bagh West metro station to connect the two corridors.

The DMRC said: "There will not be any ticketing facility on the interchange platforms but boarding and deboarding facilities will be available."

### 230m-long FOB

Officials said the platforms will be connected by a 230-m-long foot overbridge (FOB), which will connect the platforms with the Punjabi Bagh West metro station of the Pink Line.

### Bridging the gap

First and last train services on Green Line

S.N. SECTION	WEEKDAYS (MON-SAT)		SUNDAY	
	FIRST TRAIN	LAST TRAIN	FIRST TRAIN	LAST TRAIN
1	Brig. Hoshiar Singh-Inderlok	7 a.m.	9 p.m.	8 a.m.
2	Brig. Hoshiar Singh-Kirti Nagar	7.18 a.m.	9.10 p.m.	8.18 a.m.
3	Inderlok - Brig. Hoshiar Singh	7.25 a.m.	9.30 p.m.	8.25 a.m.
4	Kirti Nagar - Brig. Hoshiar Singh	7.25 a.m.	9.30 p.m.	8.25 a.m.

\*Timings are till September 30

While the Pink Line connects Majlis Park and Shiv Vihar, the Green Line runs between Inderlok and Bahadurgarh.

"The platforms will be 155m in length and shall be connected with the FOB by two extra-large lifts [each

officials explained.

Currently, there is no interconnectivity between the two corridors.

"This facility will be of great benefit to passengers traveling to and from the satellite city of Bahadurgarh and other outer Delhi areas such as Mundka and Nangloi," DMRC officials said.

Due to the construction work, services on the Green Line are set to be regulated from late night on Friday to September 30, the DMRC said.

"We cannot think that normal conditions will prevail anytime soon. To avoid another situation next year where we have to rush and take decisions with regard to administering board exams, we should already start developing a plan taking into account online exams and the modalities to conduct assessments and projects if schools have to open partially," Mr. Sisodia said.

To undertake the construction of this halt platform, the first and last train services between Brigadier Hoshiar Singh [Bahadurgarh] to Inderlok/Kirti Nagar will be regulated from the intervening night of June 18 and 19 to September 30," the DMRC added.

## Complaint against actor, Twitter MD in Loni case

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police received a complaint against Swara Bhaskar, Manish Maheshwari, Twitter MD and others in connection with Loni incident where a man from a minority community was attacked, officials said on Thursday.

"We have received a

complaint against Swara Bhaskar, Manish Maheshwari, Twitter MD and others at Tilak Marg police station. It is under inquiry," a senior officer said.

In a video on social media, an elderly Muslim man had accused four men of beating him up, chopping his beard and asking him to chant "Jai

Shri Ram" in Ghaziabad's Loni.

Meanwhile, a police team, which is probing the 'Covid Toolkit' matter, was sent to Bengaluru where they questioned Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari.

The police, however, did not divulge further details of the questioning.

## Amount spent on land purchase for Ram temple shows graft: AAP MP

Information not provided to I-T department on purchases

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

AAP MP Sanjay Singh on Thursday alleged that for Ram temple 12,080 square meter of land was bought for ₹8.50 crore, while 10,370 square meter of land next to it was bought for only ₹8 crore, which clearly shows that there has been corruption.

"Even if the rate of 10,370 square meter of land for ₹8 crore is considered correct, then about 26,000 square meter of land could be bought for ₹18.50 crore, whereas only 12,080 square meter of land was bought for ₹8.50 crore," he said.

### IT information

He said that in Uttar Pradesh, if any purchase of more than ₹50 lakh is done in the registry department, information is given to the Income Tax Department. "In such a situation why was the information not given in this case of purchase of land

that Ram temple is not being built because 'scam and corruption' are being done.

"The people of BJP and Ram Janmabhoomi Trust have eaten the money of Prabhu Shri Ram Mandir. The poor had back on their expenses and donated for the temple of Lord Shri Ram, every rupee of that donation money should be put to good use," Mr. Singh said.

The AAP leader claimed

worth ₹18.50 crore, ₹8 crore and ₹2 crore?" he asked.

The police then found Chetan admitted to a hospital with a hand injury. He told the police that when he was going deposit the mo-

## Man and his mother held for staging robbery

Police recover over ₹6 lakh from duo

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man and his mother have been arrested for allegedly staging a robbery and flee with ₹6 lakh in north Delhi, the police said on Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Chetan Saini and his 52-year-old mother Madhu Saini – both residents of Kanhya Nagar, Ganganagar, they said.

The case came to the fore when complainant Kamal Gupta, proprietor of Kamal Auto Industries in Anand Parbat Industrial Area, approached the police on Tuesday.

He told them that he had given ₹6.33 lakh to his employee Chetan to deposit in the bank but could not contact him, a senior officer said. His phone was switched off, Mr. Gupta said.

The police then found Chetan admitted to a hospital with a hand injury. He told the police that when he was going deposit the mo-

ney, he was robbed of the cash, one scooter, one bill, cheque, his mobile phone and purse.

"During investigation, the police found Chetan's statements to be suspicious. He was interrogated at a length when he said he had staged the robbery along with his mother and cousin brother," said DCP (North) Anto Alphonse.

On Wednesday, the police raided his house and recovered the money. The scooter was also recovered on his instance, the DCP said.

Chetan has been working in Kamal Auto Industries for the last 14 months. He used to take cash from the factory for delivery purposes and bank depositions. This time, he told the police that it was a large sum of money and he decided to siphon it off, the police said.

On Tuesday, Chetan staged a robbery near Shastri Nagar. Madhu assisted him in the commission of the crime, an officer said.

The police recovered over ₹6 lakh from the duo.

## Member of gang involved in looting mobile shops nabbed

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A member of an inter-State gang, which is allegedly involved in burglaries in over 50 mobile showrooms in Delhi, has been arrested, the police said on Thursday.

On May 17 night, a man complained to the police that someone broke into his JIO mobile showroom near Delhi Cantt police stations and fled off with all the mobile phones. An FIR was lodged. During probe, the police received inputs that members of Mewati Gang are involved

in such cases. A tip-off was received by the police that on June 15, a member of Mewati gang, Tarif, would come on a stolen two-wheeler in Vasant Vihar to recces a mobile showroom.

"A trap was laid and the accused, Tarif from Haryana was held. We recovered one countrymade pistol along with two live cartridges from him," said the officer.

DCP (South-West) Ingit Pratap Singh said they have identified other members of the gang as well and arrests will soon be made.

**JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**  
3RD FLOOR, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY ROAD, RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND.

**CORRIGENDUM - 3**

Name of Project: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Mahagama, Barharwa, Hariharganj, Barkashariya, Domchanch, Bachra&Dhanwar in Jharkhand, NIT No.JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-7 ULBs/2021-381 , Tender ID.2021\_UDD\_49641\_1 P.R No.:246399

This is for information of all the bidders that following Corrigendum are being made in RFP documents (Ref. JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-7 ULBs/2021-381 for "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Mahagama, Barharwa, Hariharganj, Barkashariya, Domchanch, Bachra&Dhanwar in Jharkhand". The bidders are advised to take into account the following Corrigendum before submission of their bids against this tender. If any bidder has already submitted his/her bid, then he/she should resubmit his/her bid taking into account following amendments/Pre-bid Response/Corrigendum.

Sr.no.	Bid Document Ref.	As per Corrigendum 1	As per Corrigendum 3
1	Last Date/ Time of Bid Submission	17.06.2021 17:00 Hrs	24.06.2021 17:00 Hrs
2	Last Date/ Time of Submission of Tender Fee & EMD	18.06.2021, 17:00 Hrs	25.06.2021, 17:00 Hrs
3	Date of Bid Opening	18.06.2021, 17:30 Hrs	25.06.2021, 17:30 Hrs

SD/-  
Project Director (Technical)

**JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED**  
3RD FLOOR, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY ROAD, RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND.

**CORRIGENDUM - 3**

Name of Project: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Hussainabad, Bishnupur, Lohardaga, Garhwa, Chatarpur, Khunti, Chatra and Latehar, NIT No.JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-8 ULBs/2021-380 , Tender ID.2021\_UDD\_49640\_1 P.R No.:246532

This is for information of all the bidders that following Corrigendum are being made in RFP documents (Ref. JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-8 ULBs/2021-380 for "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Hussainabad, Bishnupur, Lohardaga, Garhwa, Chatarpur, Khunti,

**Timings****DELHI**

FRIDAY, JUN. 18

RISE 05:24 SET 19:22

RISE 12:28 SET 00:32

SATURDAY, JUN. 19

RISE 05:24 SET 19:22

RISE 13:30 SET 01:06

SUNDAY, JUN. 20

RISE 05:24 SET 19:22

RISE 14:33 SET 01:41

**Delhi Weather**

max min

Delhi City 35 26

Safdarjung 35 26

Palam 36 26

Delhi Pilm Today

36°C Dry and very warm

weather likely. Light winds and

occasional partly cloudy sky

would prevail.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow

37°C A hot day with moderate

winds likely. Thunder clouds

may develop at few areas with

partly cloudy sky.

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**IN BRIEF****Fortis hospitals to start Sputnik V inoculation**

NEW DELHI

Fortis Healthcare on Thursday said that they will start vaccination using Sputnik V vaccine at two of its hospitals from Saturday. "The two-dose vaccine will be available at two hospitals – Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, and Fortis Hospital, Mohali. In the coming days, the vaccine will be available at more Fortis hospitals across 11 cities as part of the phase-wise pilot project," the hospital said.

**'Raise production capacity of Dwarka water plant'**

NEW DELHI

Delhi Water Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday directed officials to increase the production capacity of the Dwarka water treatment plant (WTP) from 50 million gallons per day to 70 million gallons per day. The Minister said a lake would be built inside the Dwarka WTP across an area of 10 acres to increase groundwater levels. PTI

# 'Delhi govt's expenditure increased in April, May'

Order issued to curb non-essential expenditure, says Sisodia

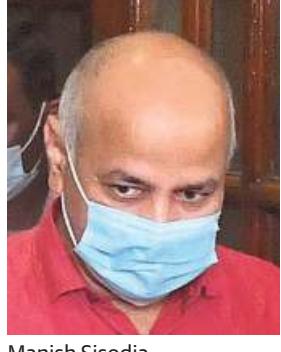
**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday said that a memorandum has been released to rationalise the Delhi government's expenditure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Sisodia said that the expenditure of the Delhi government has increased around 80% during the first two months of the current financial year compared to the corresponding period during the previous financial year.

He stated that revenue receipts of Delhi have been ₹5,273.26 crore during the first two months of the current financial year, while its expenditure has reached



Manish Sisodia

₹8,511.09 crore.

"Delhi has incurred ₹3,237.83 crore more than its receipts which were met from last year's savings. Historically, during the first two months, the expenditure used to be ₹4,705.14 crore in FY-2019-20 and

₹4,965.58 crore in FY-2020-21. However, due to unprecedented COVID surge, the expenditure during the first two months has jumped to ₹8,511.09 crore in current financial year," he said.

**Tax collection declines**

Mr. Sisodia said that the tax collection has declined due to second wave of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

"The order has been issued to curtail the expenditure of the government, beyond the expenditure for essential and day-to-day functions. Further, the various welfare schemes being run for the Delhi residents will remain unchanged," an official statement said.

## Adequate vaccine stock available in Capital, says AAP leader Atishi

158 new infections reported as cases continue to dip in city

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

AAP leader Atishi on Thursday said that adequate vaccine stock is available in Delhi for people above 45 years of age and 18-44 age group too.

"Stock of 2.34 lakh vaccines available for 18-44 and 7.44 lakh vaccines for 45+ age group

**ATISHI**

AAP leader

large numbers by registering on the CoWIN app. We hope that people of 45 years and above, who have not got themselves vaccinated yet, will also come forward and get inoculated soon," she added.

Meanwhile, the downward trend in COVID-19 cases continued with 158 new cases being reported in the

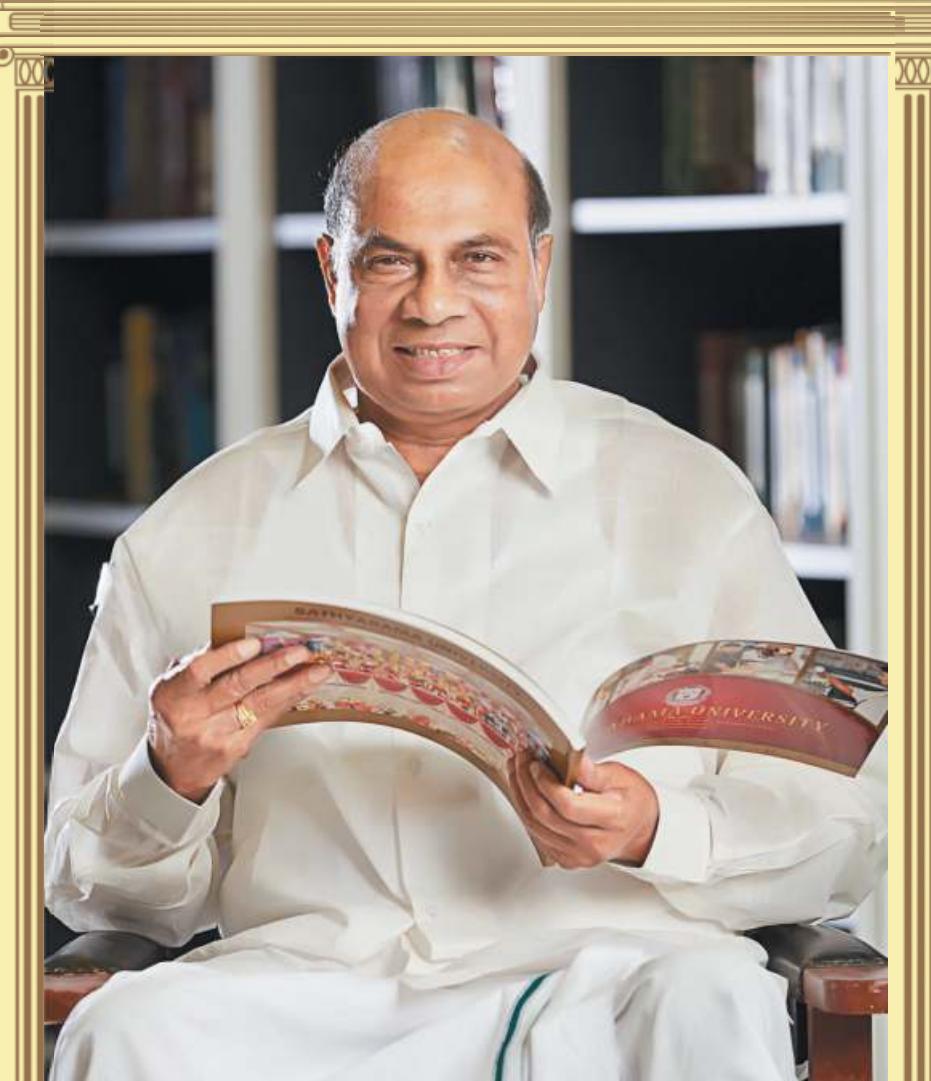
past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,31,868, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

Also, 10 deaths were reported and the total number of deaths stood at 24,886. A total of 77,542 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said. Of the total cases, 14,04,428 people have recovered and there are 2,554 active cases.

The test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.20%, which means that about one person out of 500 people taking COVID-19 tests are now positive for the virus.

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## Ration scheme: CM's fresh bid to get L-G nod

Kejriwal responds to objections raised, says scheme in accordance with the law

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday resent the file of the home delivery scheme of ration to the Lieutenant-Governor for approval. He also responded to the objections raised saying that the scheme was in accordance with the law and was being implemented to follow the orders of the Central government.



A woman collects free ration at a government school in Vishwas Nagar in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

ment. In addition, the Delhi government has been, from time to time, informing and seeking assistance from the Centre regarding the implementation of the doorstep delivery scheme through several letters," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that the only objection received from the Central government was to remove the name of 'Chief Minister' from this scheme which the Delhi government immediately accepted.

In reference to a petition filed in the Delhi High Court by an association of ration shopkeepers seeking a stay on the scheme, the Chief Minister said that the matter has already been heard five times and the High Court has refused to grant a stay on the same.

## COVID-19 third wave unlikely to affect children: study

'SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity rate among kids high compared to adult population'

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

It is unlikely that a possible third wave of COVID-19, due to the prevailing variant of the virus, would disproportionately affect children, according to the interim result of a multicentre study by researchers at AIIMS, Delhi and other hospitals.

The study is yet to be peer reviewed and has appeared in pre-print on an online platform.

"SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity rate among children was high and were comparable to the adult population. Hence, it is unlikely that any future third wave by the prevailing COVID-19 variant

would disproportionately affect children two years or older," the report read.

The report has published interim data of serological prevalence (% of people with antibodies) among children aged between 2 to 17 years along with a comparison with people of 18 years of age and above.

"The data collection period was from March 15, 2021 to June 10, 2021. Total available data was of 4,509 participants of which &lt;18 years were 700 and ≥18 years was 3,809. The seroprevalence was 55.7% in the &lt;18 years age group and 63.5% in the ≥18 year age group," the report said.

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## 12 policemen injured in U.P. protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Twelve police personnel were injured when people protesting over the death of two motorcycle riders in an accident pelted stones at them near a village here, officials said on Thursday.

Forty-three people have been arrested, and a case has been registered against 100 named and 250 unknown persons in connection with the violence that took place on Wednesday, the police said.

Devikheda village residents Rajesh and Vipin died as their motorcycle was hit by a car in the City Kotwali police station area.

## Farm laws will benefit farmers: Lal

Haryana CM announces special package for labourers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Thursday reiterated that the new farm laws were in the interest of farming community and farmers should not oppose their implementation.

"Farmers should understand that the farm laws are in their interest. Let the laws be implemented, if after implementation, these laws prove to be non-beneficial the government would be ready to work on the legislations," he said here.

Mr. Lal was addressing a press meet on completion of 600 days of the second tenure of his government.

He said that amid the ad-

verse impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, the State government has decided to give economic relief packages.

"In view of the financial constraints faced by the labourers working in the unorganised sector a relief package of ₹600 crore would be given to 12 lakh such families in the State. Under this, a financial assistance of ₹5,000 will be given to all such families. To ensure that the labourers of the unorganised sector have easy access to the scheme a portal has been designed and the registrations on the portal will start from June 18," he said.

Mr. Lal said that it has been decided to waive off the entire property tax for the first quarter of the year 2021-22.

"Besides this, we are an-

nouncing a relief package of ₹150 crore for small shopkeepers. Also, a discount of 25% would be provided to 600 farmers, who would purchase e-tractors," said Mr. Lal.

**Aid for Corona warriors**  
The Chief Minister said a financial aid of ₹5,000 per family of Corona warriors such as ASHA workers and employees of NHM would also be given.

He said that the State government has borne the entire cost of the Covid affected patients of below poverty line families.

Mr. Lal said that it has been decided to waive off the entire property tax for the first quarter of the year 2021-22.

## 'Centre's relief package for children defective'

Monthly stipend to orphans only after 18 years of age: Gehlot

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday said the Centre's relief package for children who lost their parents to the COVID-19 infection was "defective", as it stipulated the payment of a monthly stipend to them only after they attain 18 years of age. The package for orphans should be revised with a provision for immediate relief, he said.

Addressing a video-conference meeting on COVID-19 vaccination here, Mr. Gehlot said he would speak to Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the Centre's scheme and point out the "shortcomings and confusion" to him about the financial help to be extended to orphans. "Who knows where a child will be after 18 years? A package should provide an instant help," he said.

Mr. Gehlot said the Centre had not announced any measures to render help to wo-



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

men whose husband died of COVID-19 during the pandemic. In Rajasthan, the Congress government has announced a relief package comprising an ex-gratia of ₹1 lakh each to widows and orphans, followed by a financial assistance every month.

### CM's scheme

As part of the Chief Minister's Corona Baal Kalyan Yojana, the children who lost their parents will get ₹2,500 a month till they attain 18 years of age. The orphans will be provided an assistance of ₹5

lakh on the completion of 18 years as well as free senior secondary education and other benefits under the scheme.

Referring to the ongoing vaccination, Mr. Gehlot said the vaccine wastage in the State had reduced to just 0.8%. It was about 2% as against the national average of 6% recently, when the Centre had written to the State government seeking a probe into the "misleading reports" about the vials of vaccines found in the dustbins at some inoculation centres, said Mr. Gehlot.

## 17 children die of COVID-19 in Meghalaya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

COVID-19 has claimed the lives of 17 children in Meghalaya, according to local media reports, which cited official data.

The COVID-19 dashboard of the State's Health Department revealed 5,101 minors aged up to 14 years testing positive since the outbreak of the pandemic in Meghalaya in 2020. Of these, 4,344 recovered till June 15, while 17 died of the disease.

### Cause of concern

What has worried government and healthcare specialists is that 13 children died over the past 30 days.

"We are concerned by the positivity rate among children. We are in the process of constructing three prefabricated paediatric hospitals to deal with the situation," State Health Minister Alexander Laloo Hek said.

State capital Shillong, Tura and Jowai towns would have a prefabricated hospital each.

## Odisha govt. announces package for the poor

It will spend ₹1,690 cr. on their welfare

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

As the COVID-19 pandemic triggered massive job loss and pushed millions into crisis, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday announced an assistance of ₹1,690.46 crore for economically and socially weaker sections of society.

The package would primarily benefit landless farmers, construction workers, urban poor, particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs), beneficiaries of State Food Security Scheme (SFSS) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and physically-challenged students.

According to the Chief Minister's Office, 17.89 lakh landless farmers will get special monetary assistance of ₹1,000 under Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) for which ₹178,911 crore

has been earmarked.

The government has placed ₹260 crore under Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan or Mukta Yojana (MUKTA), a scheme of urban wage employment. It has been decided to provide additional ₹50 to MGNREGA workers over their usual wage received between April and June. During this time, 6 crore man-days have been created which means the government would spend ₹300 crore.

Each registered construction workers will get special COVID-19 assistance of ₹1,500 for which ₹360 crore would be spent.

Similarly, the government will provide 5 kg of free rice to SFSS beneficiaries from the month of July to November for which ₹92.86 crore has been earmarked.

The CM also announced ₹5,000 for 66,214 members of PVTGs.

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4	ITRON CG	M/s ITRON India Pvt. Ltd.
5	KRANTI-KBMG+	M/s Aman Engg. Works Mfg.
6	KRANTI-ULTRA-G	M/s Aman Engg. Works Mfg.
7	CRESCENT -CDM	M/s Bharat Precision Instruments Company
8	BELANTO	M/s B.W. Water Meters
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IN BRIEF



Naidu condemns killing of two TDP activists

VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday condemned the killing of two party activists in Kurnool district. Mr. Naidu said he suspected the role of YSRCP MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy in the incident.

Ganja, liquor worth ₹52 lakh seized, 10 held

CHITTOOR

The Chittoor police seized huge quantities of ganja, and Karnataka-made liquor and banned chewing tobacco products, all worth about ₹52 lakh, and arrested 10 people during raids in three different locations in Tavanampalle mandal of Andhra Pradesh. Three vans, an autorickshaw and two motorcycles were also confiscated.

## 21-year-old killed 'for rejecting proposal'

Her 13-year-old sister was injured

STAFF REPORTER

MALAPPURAM

A 21-year-old man stabbed a woman to death and injured her sister in an apparent reprisal for rejecting his romantic advances at Elamkulam, near Perinthalmanna, on Thursday morning, the police said.

Vineesh Vinod entered the 21-year-old woman's house and allegedly attacked her in her room on the second floor.

Her younger sister, 13, was also injured in the attack.

Police arrested Vineesh within hours of the incident.

## Plea against development rules dismissed

Kerala HC says examination of legality of Lakshadweep draft regulation is completely premature

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Thursday dismissed a writ petition challenging the draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation, 2021, which proposes to develop towns on inhabited Lakshadweep islands.

The petition was filed by K.P. Noushad Ali, secretary of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. According to him, the draft regulation grants the Administrator the power to "declare any area to be a planning area" for the purpose of development.

**Petitioner's contention**  
The petitioner contended that the draft Bill gave sweeping powers to the administration and all its bodies to directly interfere with an islander's right to possess and retain property. The draft regulation was widely



Up in arms: Activists of the CITU gathering for a protest outside the Lakshadweep administration office in Kochi. • AP

opposed as it vested the Administrator with powers to remove or usurp smallholdings of property owned by islanders.

The petitioner also challenged the procedure to be followed for auctioning livestock on the islands and the decision to discontinue the

service of the temporary staff engaged by the administration in certain sectors.

Dismissing the petition, the Bench comprising Justices S.V. Bhatti and Murali Pu-

rushothaman observed that examination of the legality of the draft regulation, which was under the active consid-

eration of the administration, was completely premature. The draft stipulation could not be challenged through a public interest litigation (PIL) petition.

The court noted that it was well settled that championing the cause concerning service matters by way of

## Aisha Sultana gets interim anticipatory bail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

The Kerala High Court on Thursday granted interim anticipatory bail to Aisha Sultana, a filmmaker, in a sedition case registered against her.

Justice Ashok Menon ordered that she be granted interim anticipatory bail if she is arrested when she

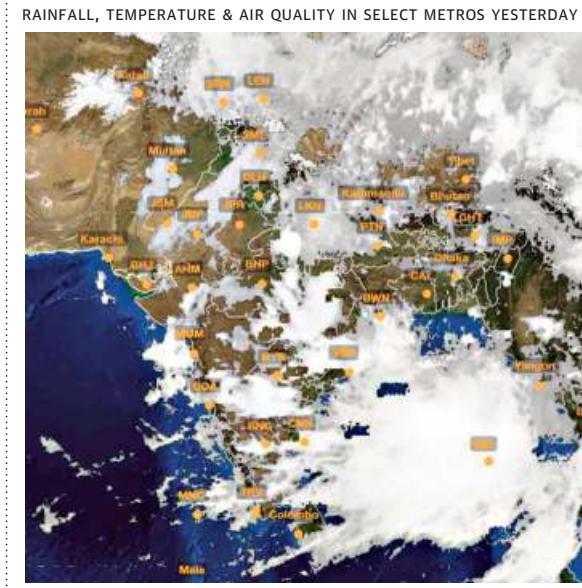
appears before the Kavaratti police on June 20 for interrogation in connection with the sedition case.

She has been charged with offences under Sections 124 A and 153 B of the IPC for her alleged remark on a TV channel that the Union government had used a bio-weapon against the islanders.

a PIL was impermissible on the ground that the petitioner lacked the *locus standi* to question the legality of the decision.

Besides, the petitioner had not convinced the court about his standing vis-à-vis the affairs of Lakshadweep to entertain the PIL.

## WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Friday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	33.5...	25.8	Kozhikode	33...	31.8...	24.0
Ahmedabad	59...	34.5...	23.0	Kurnool	3...	33.8...	25.2
Aizawl	—	29.8...	27.4	Lucknow	0.6...	32.6...	26.3
Alappuzha	—	29.8...	27.4	Madurai	—	36.0...	27.1
Bengaluru	5...	28.4...	20.7	Mangalore	19.3...	29.2...	24.0
Bhopal	15.4...	34.8...	21.4	Mumbai	31...	29.6...	26.0
Bhubaneswar	0.9...	29.4...	24.9	Mysuru	16...	27.2...	20.2
Chandigarh	16...	32.3...	24.2	New Delhi	32...	31.4...	24.0
Chennai	—	37.8...	29.7	Port Blair	0.2...	30.9...	26.8
Coimbatore	0.9...	32.3...	23.1	Puducherry	—	37.4...	26.4
Dehradoon	9...	33.8...	23.2	Pune	12.7...	26.8...	21.6
Gangtok	58...	19.6...	18.2	Raipur	—	34.0...	26.5
Goa	66...	31.2...	24.6	Ranchi	2...	25.8...	22.7
Guwahati	6...	35.4...	26.4	Shillong	—	25.1...	18.1
Hubballi	—	26.0...	21.0	Shimla	14...	26.0...	15.7
Hyderabad	—	32.6...	23.8	Srinagar	—	22.1...	14.3
Imphal	5...	29.0...	20.8	Thiruvananthapuram	6...	31.5...	25.0
Jaipur	—	38.8...	26.3	Tiruchi	—	37.6...	28.0
Kochi	17...	31.0...	24.6	Vijayawada	—	36.6...	28.2
Kohima	—	28.8...	18.4	Visakhapatnam	51...	25.8...	23.8
Kolkata	—	25.8...	23.8	Visakhapatnam	—	35.4...	27.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

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Chennai	12	.8	.35	.73	.86	...
Delhi	.5	.33	.49	.122	.198	...
Hyderabad	.4	.39	.12	.18	.18	...
Kolkata	.8	.20	.20	.53	.53	...
Lucknow	—	.40	.68	.51	.78	...
Mumbai	.1	.7	.7	.107	.113	...
Pune	.6	.22	.90	.215	.134	...
Visakhapatnam	11	.48	.33	.40	.86	...

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sonipat, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 251, indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

## WEST

## Jolt to BJP: Vidarbha leader to join Cong. on Rahul's birthday

Sunil Deshmukh had switched to the saffron party in 2014

STAFF REPORTER

MUMBAI

In what could be termed a blow to the BJP in Vidarbha, senior party leader and former Minister Sunil Deshmukh is set to join the Congress on June 19. Mr. Deshmukh's re-entry into the Congress has been cleared by the party's high command.

Former State Youth Congress president, Mr. Deshmukh, had switched to the BJP in 2014 after the party repeatedly neglected him over former President Pratibha Patil's son Raosaheb Shekhwat.

Mr. Deshmukh was Minister of State (Finance) in the 2004 Congress-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) government. Despite that he was denied ticket from the



Sunil Deshmukh

Amravati Assembly seat. The Congress gave the ticket to Mr. Shekhwat. Mr. Deshmukh then contested as an Independent and lost the election.

**Prominent face**  
In 2014, he joined the BJP and defeated Mr. Shekhwat and since then he was the

party's prominent face in Vidarbha. In 2019, he lost to the Congress candidate, Sulba Khodke, and later he was sidelined by the BJP.

Mr. Deshmukh's re-entry to the Congress comes days after party State president Nana Patole announced that the party was ready to contest the polls independently.

The move is seen as the party's plan of expansion and regaining the lost space. A week ago, Mr. Patole toured Amravati district where the final talks with Mr. Deshmukh seem to have held.

According to a senior party leader, Mr. Deshmukh will join the party on June 19, the birthday of Rahul Gandhi, in the presence of senior leaders and party in-charge H.K. Patil.

## Pilot project to check for deafness in newborns to kick off in Maharashtra

It will be started in Pune, Gadchiroli, Jalna districts: Minister

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Thursday said an experimental project will use mobile units to check the hearing of newborn children in the State. The project will be started in Pune, Gadchiroli and Jalna districts, he added.

This initiative comes in the backdrop of the National Deafness Prevention Programme, which is being implemented in 16 places in the State.

The pilot project was conceived by Baramati MP and senior Nationalist Congress Party leader Supriya Sule and was presented by Abhijit Raut, State organiser, Disability Rights Development Forum, at Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan in Mumbai.

According to a senior party leader, Mr. Deshmukh will join the party on June 19, the birthday of Rahul Gandhi, in the presence of senior leaders and party in-charge H.K. Patil.

Rajesh Tope

**Otoacoustic emission**

Mr. Tope had a detailed discussion with senior Health officials on the implementation of the otoacoustic emission method in newborns following the presentation.

"Early hearing problems in children can be diagnosed and treated with the neces-

sary treatment. Therefore, it is important to implement this programme for the overall development of children," the Health Minister said.

There were around 92,000 hearing and language-impaired persons at present in the State, of whom 51% were in rural areas and the rest in urban pockets, he added.

"Deafness can be prevented if this test is done at an early stage. Therefore, this programme should be planned according to the method of early diagnosis and treatment. Mobile units can be used to go to primary health centres and check the newborns. Hearing tests can also be done during a child's immunisation session," Mr. Tope said.

## Will publish weekly COVID-19 vaccination plan, govt. tells HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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## Reverse migration

Political mobilisation based on opportunistic defection can only offer limited purchase

Leaders switching parties and parties recruiting turncoats are not unheard of in Indian politics. A shrinking party would lose leaders while an expanding party would gain them. The talent acquisition strategy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) goes far beyond such familiar opportunism. In the recent years of its growth, it has built entire electoral strategies around leaders who crossed over from other parties. In Assam, its two consecutive Chief Ministers were in other parties not long ago; the current incumbent, Himanta Biswa Sarma, was not just any other Congress leader but a decision maker in the 15-year-long tenure of the party until 2016. Perhaps encouraged by the success in Assam, the party launched a similar strategy in West Bengal. It recruited dozens of leaders from other parties, particularly the Trinamool Congress (TMC). Not surprisingly, a good number of the leaders who crossed over to the BJP due to its lure or fear of the central agencies investigating scams and irregularities, are now flocking back to the TMC. Even as it continued to induct defectors from the Congress and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi this week, Mukul Roy left the BJP to return to the comfort of his old party, the TMC. Several others may follow suit. The TMC itself is a haven of defectors – dozens of leaders from the Congress and the Left Front have joined it since it won power in 2011. The political flux is unlikely to end soon.

The BJP has achieved significant growth in West Bengal in a short span of time. Had it relied more on leaders who had organically grown with it, the BJP would not have been in such an embarrassing position. Its hurry to be in power even in places where it has not established itself as a viable party is harming it. It is also coarsening the political debate and harming democracy itself, simultaneously. If the reverse migration of TMC leaders is rattling the BJP in West Bengal, in Kerala, another State where it tried to punch far above its weight, it is caught in a vortex of corruption allegations. Allegations range from bringing money from Karnataka for the campaign in Kerala through *hawala* routes and bribing an ally. The leaders that the BJP recruited from other parties in Kerala have added up to nothing. All this should point the BJP towards the virtue of patience, which is not unfamiliar to it. Replacing grassroots activism with large-scale defections from other parties can only win short-term rewards, if at all. In the long run, such trends undermine the parties, the persons involved and the democratic processes. The BJP must learn to be more modest in victory and gracious in defeat. Tactics too focused on the short term can only harm the larger interest over the longer term.

## Old and slow

India and New Zealand are vying for the latest ICC trophy in the game's original format

Ever since Australia and England played the first ever Test at Melbourne in March 1877, cricket's longest format has constantly evolved. Timeless Tests were dispensed with and rest days within a game were discarded while faster siblings One Day Internationals and Twenty20s emerged. As the abridged variants attracted fans and commerce, Tests of recent vintage also embraced the day-and-night spectacle. Through these changes, nations have tested themselves in bilateral series with the Ashes and India-Pakistan clashes having stronger brand equity. Yet, there was a demand for context, a yearning that these languid affairs with breaks for lunch and tea over five days coalesce into something more significant. Limited-overs' cricket had World Cups but in Tests, it was all about annual rankings. The International Cricket Council (ICC) stepped in to plug this gap with the World Test Championship (WTC) and the inaugural final will feature India and New Zealand, the leading two teams based on points garnered since 2019. The summit clash commencing at Southampton's Ageas Bowl on Friday, presents an opportunity for both India and New Zealand to gain some ICC silverware that is missing in their trophy cabinets. The respective countries have suffered a title drought with New Zealand winning the ICC Knockout tournament, as the Champions Trophy was known then, back in 2000 while India claimed the ICC Champions Trophy in 2013.

Previously, Virat Kohli's and Kane Williamson's men had riveting jousts though it was the New Zealanders who mostly emerged on top. India lost the 2019 World Cup semi-final at Manchester and last year in New Zealand, won the T20Is and then succumbed in the ODIs and Tests. A neutral venue can negate home-advantage but New Zealand may feel more comfortable while taking into account the playing surface and the prevailing weather. However, India has the confidence gleaned from winning in Australia while also getting the better of England when Joe Root's men came visiting. Meanwhile, true to its giant-slayer tag, New Zealand edged past England with a 1-0 verdict in the two-Test series over the last fortnight. Williamson and company have been in cricket's birthplace for a longer time with additional matches under their belt while India has the solace of intra-squad warm-up games. The simplistic trope would be Indian batting against opposition bowling but times have changed and Kohli has an incisive pace arsenal led by Jasprit Bumrah besides solid back-up in spin. The teams seem equal and the provision for an extra sixth day should come in handy as rains are forecast. If there is a draw or a tie, the championship will be shared which is ideal as in their unique ways, India and New Zealand have repeatedly proved their mettle.

# A judicial pushback to a draconian legal regime

The Delhi court ruling is a way forward in finding a balance between civil rights and the imperatives of anti-terror laws



GAUTAM BHATIA

The judgment of the Delhi High Court granting bail to activists Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal, and Asif Iqbal Tanha – they have been in jail for over a year (without trial) for their alleged role in the 2020 Delhi riots – is significant for many reasons. Most importantly, it brings to a close many months of jail time for three people who are yet to be proven guilty of any crime, something that should be anathema to any civilised justice system. What is also significant, however, is that the judgment represents an important judicial pushback to the authoritarian legal regime under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act ("UAPA").

### The root of the issue

Ostensibly designed to check and address terrorism, the UAPA is perhaps one of the most abused laws in India today. The root of the problem lies in Section 43(D)(5) of this Act, which prevents the release of any accused person on bail if, on a perusal of the case diary, or the report made under Section 173 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure, the court is of the opinion that "there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is *prima facie* true".

It is important to break this down. Broadly speaking, India follows the adversarial system of criminal justice, where two sides to a dispute attempt to persuade the court that their version of events is

true. At the heart of the adversarial system of justice is the testing of evidence through cross-examination. Each side is afforded the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge, and question the evidence produced by its opponent; and the best way for a judge to unearth the truth – or the closest approximation of it – is to consider which side's evidence is left standing, and appears more persuasive, after the rigours of cross-examination.

Production of evidence, and cross-examination, involves witnesses, recoveries of incriminating objects, tests of handwriting or voice samples, and many other elements. It constitutes the bulk of a criminal trial. In India, with our overburdened courts and creaking justice system, criminal trials take years. In high-profile cases such as the Delhi riots case, where the record is bulky, and the witnesses number in their hundreds, trials can take many years – even a decade or more.

### Importance of bail

For this reason, bail becomes of utmost importance. If an individual is not able to secure bail from the courts, they will languish as under-trials in prison, for the duration of the case, no matter how many years it takes (in recent memory, there are cases of people being found innocent in terrorism cases after 14 and even 23 years in prison). Bail, thus, becomes the only safeguard and guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty.

In ordinary circumstances, when considering the question of bail, a court is meant to take into account a range of factors. These include whether the accused is a flight risk, whether he or she might tamper with the evidence or attempt to influence witnesses,



and the gravity of the offence. But it is here that Section 43(D)(5) of the UAPA plays such a damaging role. As we have just seen, under the classical vision of criminal justice, truth – about innocence or guilt – can only be determined after the evidence of both the prosecution and the defence has been subjected to the rigours of cross-examination. However, as lawyers and scholars such as Abhinav Sekhri and Anjana Prakash have also pointed out, Section 43(D)(5) short-circuits that core assumption. For the grant of bail, it only looks at the plausibility of one side's evidence – that is, the Prosecution's. It binds the court to look at only the case diary or the police report, which has not been challenged by cross-examination, and requires that bail be denied as long as the unchallenged prosecution case appears to be *prima facie* true.

### One-sided

The perversity of Section 43(D)(5), thus, is that it forces the court to make an effective determination of guilt or innocence based on one side's unchallenged story, and on that basis to deprive individuals of their freedom for years on end. In a democratic polity, which is committed to the rule of law, this is a deeply troubling state of affairs.

The effect of Section 43(D)(5), as one can see, is that once the police elect to charge sheet an individual under the UAPA, it becomes

extremely difficult for bail to be granted. Even outlandish or trumped-up cases can sound convincing until people have a chance to interrogate and challenge them. In short, unless the police prepare an extremely shoddy case – that is riddled with internal contradictions, for example – a case diary or a report will invariably make out a *prima facie* case against an individual.

### Finer points of the judgment

It is here that the Delhi High Court's judgment becomes important. The Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jairam Bhambhani correctly note that even though Section 43(D)(5) departs from many basic principles of criminal justice, there are other fundamental principles that remain of cardinal significance. These include, for example, that the initial burden of demonstrating guilt must always lie upon the prosecution; and also, that criminal offences must be specific in their terms, and read narrowly, to avoid bringing the innocent within their net. On this basis, the court's judgment notes that as the UAPA is meant to deal with terrorist offences, its application must be limited to acts that can reasonably fall within a plausible understanding of "terrorism". "Terrorism" is a term of art, and not a word that can be thrown around loosely. Thus, to attract the provisions of the UAPA – the judgment holds – the charge sheet must reveal factual, individualised, and particular allegations linking the accused to a terrorist act.

The judgment then finds that even if the police's claims are taken to be true, no such allegations exist. At the highest, the accusations against the activists involve calls for protests and *chakka jams*

(road blockages). There is no act, overt or covert, attributed to the activists that could constitute a terrorist offence. And, importantly, inferences or hypotheticals drawn by the police do not count at the stage of granting bail. Coupled with the significance of the right to protest and to dissent under our constitutional scheme, the judgment therefore holds that even *prima facie*, a case under the UAPA has not been made out, and therefore, there is no question of the application of Section 43(D)(5).

The Delhi High Court's judgment indicates a pathway forward in the quest for finding a balance between citizens' civil rights and the imperatives of anti-terrorism legislation such as the UAPA. A position under which citizens can be jailed for years on end just on the basis of police reports and case diaries, with courts precluded from granting them bail, is completely inconsistent with democracy, and redolent of authoritarian or tyrannical states. However, the court's analysis shows how even within – and consistent with – the terms of the UAPA, there is an important role for a conscientious judiciary to play. By scrutinising the police case on its own terms, and according a strict interpretation to draconian legislation such as the UAPA, courts can ensure that civil rights are not left entirely at the mercy of the state.

At the time of writing, the High Court's judgment has been appealed by the Delhi Police to the Supreme Court of India. It now remains to be seen whether the highest court will also endorse this crucial ruling, which restates the responsibility of an independent judiciary in checking executive impunity.

Gautam Bhaitia is a Delhi-based lawyer

## A place for disruptive technology in India's health sector

Artificial intelligence, autonomous systems and data analytics have a defining role to play in shaping the medical sector

SURJITH KARTHIKEYAN & GOWTHAM DAAS RAJENDRAN

As frontline warriors fighting COVID-19, the medical community has been selfless, but also losing a number of staff in the process. Nurses and attendants, on full-time duty, donning mainly masks and gloves as the only protective gear have been exposed to great risk. It is in such a situation that the relevance of disruptive technology and its applications comes into focus, potentially helping to reduce the chances of hospital staff contracting the infection.

There are reports in the global media of established innovative field hospitals using robots to care for COVID-19 affected patients.

There are hospitals, in China, that use 5G-powered temperature measurement devices at the entrance to flag patients who have fever/fever-like symptoms. Other robots measure heart rates and blood oxygen levels through smart bracelets and rings that patients wear; they even sanitise wards. Last year, in India, the Sawai Man Singh government hospital in Jaipur held trials with a humanoid robot to deliver medicines and food to COVID-19 patients admitted there (<https://bit.ly/3wLxtSQ>).

The critical aspect is how new technologies can improve the wel-

fare of societies and reduce the impact of communicable diseases, spotlighting the importance of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, blockchain, cloud and quantum computing, data analytics, 5G. Blockchain technology can help in addressing the interoperability challenges that health information and technology systems face. The health blockchain would contain a complete indexed history of all medical data, including formal medical records and health data from mobile applications and wearable sensors. This can also be stored in a secure network and authenticated, besides helping in seamless medical attention.

Big data analytics can help improve patient-based services tremendously such as early disease detection. Even hospital healthcare facilities can be improved to a great extent. AI and the Internet of Medical Things, or IoMT (which is defined as a connected infrastructure of medical devices, software applications, and health systems and services) are shaping healthcare applications.

Medical autonomous systems can also improve health delivery to a great extent and their applications are focused on supporting medical care delivery in dispersed and complex environments with the help of futuristic technologies.

This system may also include autonomous critical care system, autonomous intubation, autonomous cricothyrotomy and other autonomous interventional procedures. Cloud computing is another application facilitating collaboration and data exchanges between doctors, departments, and even institutions and medical providers to enable best treatment.

### Furthering UHC

According to the World Health Organization (<https://bit.ly/3gtHBT>), "Universal health coverage (UHC) is the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer. It is a powerful social equalizer and the ultimate expression of fairness."

The question is about how UHC can be achieved through the application of digital technologies, led by a robust strategy integrating human, financial, organisational and technological resources.

Studies by WHO show that weakly-coordinated steps may lead to stand-

alone information and communication technology solutions, leading to a fragmentation of information and resulting in poor delivery of care. India needs to own its digital health strategy that works and leads towards universal health coverage and person-centred care. Such a strategy should emphasise the ethical appropriateness of digital technologies, cross the digital divide, and ensure inclusion across the economy. 'Ayushman Bharat' and tools such as Information and Communication Technology could be fine-tuned with this strategy to promote ways to protect populations. Online consultation through video conferencing should be a key part of such a strategy, especially in times when there is transmission of communicable diseases.

### Using local knowledge

In addition to effective national policies and robust health systems, an effective national response must also draw upon local knowledge. Community nurses, doctors, and health workers in developing countries do act as frontline sentinels. An example is the Ebola virus outbreak in Africa, where communities proactively helped curtail the spread much before government health teams arrived. Another example is from

Indonesia, where the experience of backyard poultry farmers was used to tackle bird flu. Primary health centres in India could examine local/traditional knowledge and experience and then use it along with modern technology.

**Possible challenges**  
In the developing world, and this includes India, initial efforts in this direction should involve synchronisation and integration, developing a template for sharing data, and reengineering many of the institutional and structural arrangements in the medical sector. Big data applications in the health sector should help hospitals provide the best facilities and at less cost, provide a level playing field for all sectors, and foster competition. The possible constraints in this effort are a standardisation of health data, organisational silos, data security and data privacy, and also high investments. However, there is no doubt that disruptive technology can play an important role in improving the health sector in general.

Surjith Karthikeyan is an Indian Economic Service Officer, serving as Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Gowtham Daas Rajendran is a post graduate in public policy from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. The views expressed are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name with initials.

### The undercut

The recent spurt of data reconciliation in connection with COVID-19 deaths in a number of States confirms long-held suspicions of inaccurate mortality being reported previously. These revisions will represent a truer estimate of fatality, in turn leading to better epidemiological data needed to track the intensity of the outbreaks.

Dr. THOMAS PALOCAREN,

Vellore, Tamil Nadu

**Surge in FDI inflows**  
In the article, "What explains the surge in FDI inflows" (*The Hindu*, OpEd page, June 2, 2020), which analysed data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on May 24, 2021 and the May 2021 bulletin of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in India, the RBI data appear to have been

misinterpreted. The analysis of the reasons behind the buoyancy in FDI inflows is erroneous. The writer seems to suggest that the FDI inflows of US\$81.72 billion include amounts attributable to 'repatriation/disinvestment' and 'FII investments' with the surge in FDI inflows to US\$81.72 bn in 2020-21 being attributable to an increase in 'repatriation/disinvestment' and 'FII investments'. FII investments are different from FDI. FII investment amounts have not been included to calculate FDI inflows. FII investments of US\$38 billion in 2020-21 have been categorised separately by the RBI and do not form part of the FDI inflow figure of US\$81.72 bn. If the writer's intention was to demonstrate the staggering increase in aggregate foreign exchange inflows under the FDI and FII routes, US\$119.8 billion

should have been quoted. Aggregate foreign exchange inflows under these routes witnessed an increase of 59.88% over the figure of US\$74.94 billion in 2019-20. The writer appears to attribute the amounts in respect of 'repatriation/disinvestment' to investments from private equity funds and also seems to suggest that the 'repatriation/disinvestment' amount has been taken into account to calculate the FDI inflow figure of US\$81.72 bn. However, 'repatriation/disinvestment' of US\$27 billion in 2020-21 has been categorised separately by the RBI and does not form part of the FDI inflow figure. India attracted the highest ever FDI inflows of US\$81.72 bn in 2020-21, higher by 10% over 2019-20. FDI inflows remained buoyant despite challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown. The

Government of India has put in place a stable, predictable and transparent policy environment and continues to take measures to develop infrastructure, improve the business environment and liberalise the FDI policy regime. Their effects will continue to deliver results.

YOGESH BAWJEA,  
ADG (MEDIA & COMMUNICATION),  
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

SUKHCHAIN SINGH,

ASST. DIRECTOR (M&C),

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU,

NATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE,

New Delhi

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Likewise, the FII investment of \$38 bn mentioned in the Ministry's response is similar to the figure reported in the RBIB table, row no. 1.2.2. Similarly, 'repatriation/disinvestment' of \$27.056 bn is also recorded in the same table, row no. 1.1.1.2. In the RBIB tabulation, a few arithmetical identities define these financial flows. For instance, gross inflows (1.1.1) are related to 'Direct Investment to India' (1.1.1) and repatriation/disinvestment (1.1.1.2). 'Foreign Investment Inflows' (1) is the sum of 'Net Foreign Direct Investment' (1.1) and 'Net Portfolio Investment' (1.2). 'FIIs' (1.2.2) is a sub-set of net portfolio investment (1.2). By rearranging the rows in Table 34, we get the following identities:

Identity 1: Gross inflow (1.1.1) = Foreign investment inflow (1) + Repatriation (1.1.1.2) + FDI by India (1.2) - Net portfolio investment and repatriations is not tenable.

portfolio investment (1.2); Identity 2: FIIs (1.2.2) = Net portfolio investment (1.2) - GDRs/ADRs (1.2.1) - Offshore funds and others (1.2.3) + portfolio investment by India (1.2.4). Plugging in the values from the table for 2020-21 against each variable (in billion dollars), we get the following arithmetical identities: Identity 1: US\$1.721 = \$80.209 + \$27

# Should India accept Islamic State returnees?

PARLEY

Respecting international law, India should bring them back and try them in court as Indian citizens

*In 2016-18, four women from Kerala accompanied their husbands to join the Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan's Khorasan Province. Their husbands were killed in different attacks, and the women are now lodged in an Afghanistan prison. Authorities in Afghanistan want to return the women to India, but the Indian government has not indicated what it proposes to do in this matter. Sources say security agencies have advised against taking them back. What do international laws say about foreign fighters returning to their countries? K.P. Fabian and Kabir Taneja discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Suhasini Haider. Edited excerpts:*



**K.P. Fabian**  
is a former diplomat, author and Professor at the Indian Society of International Law



**Kabir Taneja**  
is Fellow with the Strategic Studies Programme at the Observer Research Foundation and author of 'The ISIS Peril'



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## Recovery takes more than reforms

In any serious attempt at economic recovery, the focus must be on food supply and not money supply

PULAPRA BALAKRISHNAN

The most recent growth estimates of the National Statistical Office show that after a steep contraction in the first quarter of last year, growth accelerated steadily afterwards. This would have assured a recovery had we not experienced the second wave of the pandemic that came with the current financial year. Overlapping State-level lockdowns that started in April have now lasted for almost as long as the nationwide lockdown of 2020, and there is no gainsaying their impact on the economy. Output may well have contracted in the beginning of this year. So, though recovery will eventually come, it could be W-shaped rather than V-shaped.

### Meaning of reforms

When the issue of economic recovery was raised in public, a minister asserted that the economy will recover due to the reforms planned or already implemented by the government. We do not know what the government has in mind but we should be sceptical of the claim that reforms can make a difference at this stage. Since 1991, the term 'reforms' has been used to mean both policy changes that remove restrictions on private sector activity in certain areas and those that increase profits in existing lines of production. Recent examples of these are allowing greater private sector participation in defence as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan launched in 2020 and the significant lowering of corporate tax in 2019, respectively. However, more reforms may be ineffective in spurring recovery. Presently for the private sector, entry into a new area or undertaking investment in an existing activity may not appear profitable given their expectation of the state of the economy in the near future, upon which their revenue will depend.

We may assume that the private sector is fully aware of the following history. In February, believing that the peak of the epidemic had been crossed, the government reverted to its principal macroeconomic pre-occupation, namely fiscal consolidation or the paring down of the fiscal defi-

cit. Accordingly, it raised its budgeted expenditure by less than 1% in the last Budget. The onset of the second wave of COVID-19 in April has thrown the economic policy calculations of the government out of gear. Back in February it was already known that the economy had contracted in 2020-21. To keep public expenditure virtually unchanged under such circumstances had been heroic enough then, but now, with a possible further contraction of the economy, to continue with the frigid fiscal stance would be disastrous. Though we do not know how output has fared so far this financial year, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy show that unemployment has risen in May, indicating slack demand for output. With this knowledge, the private sector is unlikely to respond with alacrity to liberalising reforms.

### Public spending is the key

Right now, raising public spending is the only game in town left to the policymaker serious about bringing on a recovery. If we are to have it, though, we should accept a higher than budgeted deficit. A debate involving economists and central bankers has been set off on whether the government should now 'print money'. This is the wrong way to approach the problem. It puts the cart before the horse. It is also alarmist. The objective is to revive the economy, public spending is the instrument and the funding must be found. It need not involve money creation. India's public debt is low by comparison with the OECD countries, and debt financing remains an option. Even if money financing is adopted, it need not cause accelerating inflation as some predict. Experience in India suggests otherwise. However, studies do show that any economic expansion would be inflationary if the production of food does not respond adequately. How the expansion is financed is less relevant for inflation at least in the near term. In any serious attempt at economic recovery, the focus must be on the food supply and not the money supply.

Pulapra Balakrishnan teaches economics at Ashoka University, Sonipat, Haryana

when Afghanistan has asked for it.

**The question some are asking is that if these women left India of their own volition and joined what they believed was an Islamic Caliphate, and pledged allegiance to this separate Caliphate, don't they lose their right to an Indian citizenship by acquiring this other notional citizenship?**

**KPF:** No, there are international treaties which say that you cannot strip anyone's citizenship if it makes that person stateless. Let me draw your attention to Shamima Begum, a U.K. citizen who left the U.K. at the age of 15 to join the IS. After the IS fell, the U.K. government said she cannot return and stripped her of citizenship. The Court of Appeal in the U.K. said the government was in the wrong. The government then went to the Supreme Court and said there are national security reasons for the decision not to let her in. The Supreme Court said she can contest the decision taken to strip her of citizenship, but when she is in a position to do so.

The Indian passport enables you to go out. You also need a visa or an agreement that there is no need for visa. The same passport permits you to come back without a visa.

**Kabir Taneja:** I believe that they should be allowed to come back and be tried as Indian citizens by an Indian court because if they have joined an organisation such as the IS, which is banned in India, they can be tried in court. Arif Majeed (an IS recruit who returned from Iraq in 2014) went through the trial and is now out on bail because the court said it's very difficult for the prosecution to come up with concrete evidence as all the acts committed were outside India's geography. So, after serving six to seven years as an undertrial, he was given bail. Now, you can argue whether that case was a successful case of trying someone who had joined a banned organisation or whether it fell apart.

Due to the fact that India does not have a cohesive policy towards foreign fighters, and also because it



does not have that many such cases, it's easy for the state to approach them on an ad hoc basis and tell these women in Afghanistan, 'you did it by choice and we are not responsible for you anymore.'

**Is there a national security risk from bringing back people who have been radicalised and have been associated with a terror group, possibly involved in terror attacks in other countries? Should there be a different standard in their treatment?**

**KT:** The problem here is how do you estimate a person's radicalisation? We've seen this argument play out not just in India; Europe, the U.S., Canada and others are experiencing this phenomenon of IS foreign fighters. Many states are saying it was these people's choice to join a terror organisation and they are not the state's responsibility anymore.

As far as the national security question is concerned, there is no easy answer to it. It ultimately comes down to what a state's policy towards foreign fighters in general is. And if it is ad hoc, if it is on a case-by-case basis, it gives a lot of leverage to the state to decide what kind of action it would like to take towards that particular case. In the case of Arif Majeed, the government allowed him to return, but in the case of these women in Afghanistan, the government is not doing so.

**KPF:** Even if these particular young women were brainwashed and radicalised, and remain radicalised, we as a state have a duty to get them back and de-radicalise them. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says everyone has the right to leave any country, including his

**Even if these young women were radicalised, and remain radicalised, we as a state have a duty to get them back and de-radicalise them.**

K.P. FABIAN

own, and to return to his country, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights says no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

**The pictures that we saw coming out of the IS shook the world. People were being drowned alive and burnt alive, there was sexual slavery of Yazidi women, people were killed indiscriminately in Raqqa. When it comes to a threat like the one that the IS poses at the height of its brutality, is there a case for a different approach to returnees?**

**KPF:** No, this must be decided according to legality and morality. I do not accept the argument that India cannot handle the threat posed by these four women. And what happens to that four-year-old girl, especially in Afghanistan, where there is every likelihood of the Taliban coming back? The state has a responsibility to its citizens and it can't wash its hands of that responsibility.

**KT:** In reality, states have had very different approaches to IS returnees than in the past, for example, when foreign fighters joined the Mujahideen to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1990s. In the case of the IS, a lot of European IS returnees have been kept in the al-Hol camp in northern Syria. Apart from

the legal questions, there is also the political push back against allowing these fighters to come back to their original countries. In addition, when foreign fighters would sign up for the IS, they would destroy their own passports and have no papers to prove their claims. Now, the camp poses a different kind of problem – if these fighters are not moved out, IS ideology will fester in these camps and pose a fresh threat. So, there is a need for a broad-based global agreement on what to do with them.

**India has seen far smaller numbers joining the IS. According to estimates, the total number of people influenced by the IS is only between 100 and 300. Does that imply de-radicalisation programmes may be more successful here if these recruits are able to return?**

**KT:** It is hard to tell, and different States in India have different blueprints for de-radicalisation. In the U.K., we have seen people come out of these programmes and still commit acts of terror. With these returnees from Afghanistan, we are still not sure how they were radicalised. Who helped them go to Afghanistan? Until these questions are answered, it may not be possible for the state to be comfortable about allowing them to return.

**KPF:** Regardless of what India's experience is, all countries must respect international law. It is absolutely clear that Afghanistan has every right under international law to deport these recruits. Now, if Afghanistan has the right to deport them, where does it deport them to? These people have Indian passports. So, if you respect Afghanistan's right to deport them, it follows that you have to say that India has an obligation to accept them.

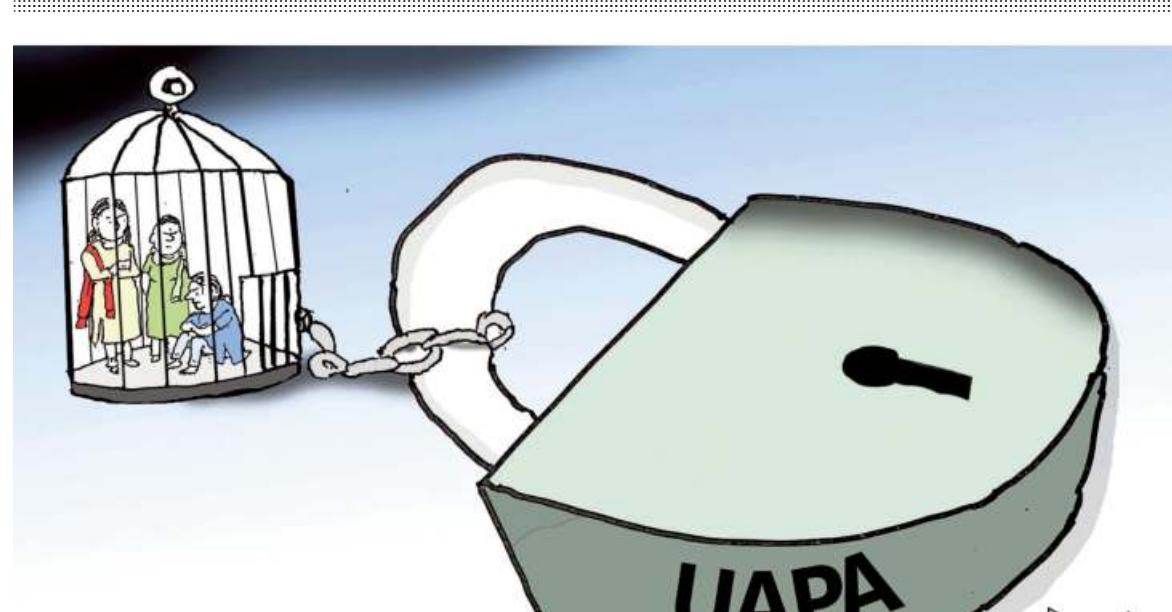
**Eventually then, is this a question of which laws could apply: international laws on the right to repatriate citizens or national security laws in India? And would the nature of the crimes be a factor in differentiating between one returnee and the other?**

**KPF:** In the case of Shamima Be-

rum, it is my view that such a decision would not have been made if she were not originally from Bangladesh or another country of that nature. If she were born to [Caucasian British] parents, for example, it would not have happened. Second, even under British law, you cannot strip a person of their citizenship if, as a consequence of that action, that person becomes stateless. The U.K. tried to maintain that she could have Bangladeshi citizenship, but Bangladesh declared that there is no question of her getting Bangladeshi citizenship because she was born in the U.K. I think it is necessary to look at these matters not only in terms of the law, which is always evolving, but also in terms of humanity. If we cannot look at young people who made a big mistake, and if we want to condemn them forever, well, I do not think we are behaving humanely.

**KT:** I think there should be differentiation on the basis of the crime committed. And of course, there should be differentiation on where the crime was committed. When it comes to foreign fighters, it's not just about the law that comes into play. Security concerns come into play, the legality comes into play, and politics comes into play, both foreign policy and domestic politics.

Thousands of people like Shamima Begum are still stuck in various camps across West Asia. The problem is formulations on what states should do were not made earlier, despite the problem seen with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan-Pakistan and then with al-Qaeda. This was also the first time where there was such an influx, specifically from Europe, into the IS. And there has been such chaos and confusion – from the security point of view, political point of view and legal point of view – about how these countries should treat people, who would want to come back and say they made a mistake. I think the answers will take time. The problem is the people who are currently stuck in this rut are facing the brunt of both the legal point of view and security point of view. I still believe that a lot of these recruits who have made the decision of joining these kinds of groups are going to face a lot of pushback from the various states that they originally came from.



### NOTEBOOK

#### Court-hopping at the click of a mouse

COVID-19 has changed the way reporters cover the Supreme Court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

A few years ago, an elderly reporter of inexhaustible zest and curiosity began his daily work of covering the Supreme Court from his usual spot – right under the judges' noses.

One of the judges, noticing the physical proximity of the man to the dais, turned to him frowning. "Who are you?" he asked as the reporter continued to jot down the court's observations, including this question, oblivious that the entire courtroom was now focused on him.

The veteran scribe collected his nerves admirably, bowed to the Bench, ever respectfully, and introduced himself and his employer. The judge asked him to keep his distance from the podium, probably move to the rear end of the courtroom. The reporter bowed and dutifully retreated, only to doggedly move forward within the

next few minutes to catch a juicy remark falling from the Bench during the hearing.

COVID-19 changed it all last year. Reporters stopped being physically present at Supreme Court hearings. The first few days were a jumble. The court experimented with allowing only three reporters entry into a courtroom. The rest had to wait outside or try to sneak in. This reporter, of rather bulky proportions, could not tiptoe past the ever-vigilant Delhi Police personnel stationed outside the courtroom.

Over the next few days, the virus flexed its muscles. The Supreme Court shed its physical operations and turned to virtual mode.

While judges and lawyers functioned from homes, reporters were invited to watch the proceedings online on desktop monitors arranged at a nearby annex building. On the bright side, we could gawk

at the lovely homes of senior lawyers displayed on the screens and overhear their chit-chat. We spotted a couple of shirtless male lawyers too. Though we missed the hurly-burly of the court and scampering from one courtroom to another, changing courtrooms on the screen with a click of a mouse saved sweat and time.

At times, though, poor connectivity irritated the judges. Echoes, the background noise of dogs barking, vendors and, once, even a mother scolding a child to finish his breakfast encroached into the hearings.

Things changed again before the second wave hit. The court opened a new press lounge inside the complex. Here, reporters could watch the proceedings on personal laptops instead of a common monitor. But by then the virus had caught up with us in earnest. Some of us fell sick along the world

around us. The court went through a harrowing time. Many lost their colleagues and close friends.

Then a new Chief Justice was sworn in. A former journalist himself, Chief Justice N.V. Ramana understood that, like judges and lawyers, reporters need to be safe while doing their job. In early May, the court, steered by its e-Committee headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, launched a software that allowed reporters to stay at home and watch Supreme Court proceedings on their mobile phones. Technology had brought the apex court's hearings into our homes.

But I still think about the elderly reporter. It has been quite a long time since I heard his breathless voice over the phone in the evenings after a 'physical' day in court, asking "Hey, what happened in \*\*\* case? I was in the other courtroom and couldn't make it here in time."

### The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1971

U.S. not willing to put pressure on Pak.

Washington, June 17: The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, had a 45-minute meeting with President Nixon here yesterday, during which the former is understood to have pointed out that only a political approach could restore normalcy in East Bengal and that the U.S. and the international community should do their utmost to see that the real representatives of the people there were restored to power. Mr. Swaran Singh stressed that the refugees were only a mere symptom – at the root of it lay the political problem which could not be solved either by the Pakistani Army or a civilian junta handpicked by the military overlords of Pakistan. Earlier in the day, the External Affairs Minister had a working lunch and a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. William Rogers, when he made the same points. At both meetings Mr. Swaran Singh emphasised that the refugee relief work for which the U.S. and other countries had made some contributions, was only a palliative and not a cure for the underlying problem. At any rate he had not undertaken his present tour of world capitals to raise donations for this purpose.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1921

#### Education in India

(From an Editorial)

At a time when many of the Western countries are engaged in solving the problem of educational reform it was naturally expected that the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India would discuss, in his report, the several educational questions in India and convey to the public what was intended to be done by the Government to secure satisfactory solutions for them. In the absence of any such illumination, his report on Indian Education for the year 1919-20 is rendered a vapid record of facts and figures relating to the educational activities in the country during the period under review. It takes a bird's-eye view of the educational progress in the country and does not attempt to do more than give a brief summary of important events recorded by the Directors of Public Instruction in several provinces and one looks into it in vain to find out what the future educational policy of the Government is and what lines of action are to be taken to make education in the country free from the charge of being merely literary.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## SC approves CBSE assessment formula

According to the scheme, the total marks awarded should be in consonance with the past performance of the school in Class 12 exams. A result committee under the principal would be formed in each school. It has been given the liberty to prepare the result by following the policy. The CBSE said it would declare the results by July 31, 2021.

In case any candidate is not satisfied with the assessment done, based on the policy, he or she would be given an opportunity to take the examinations to be conducted by the Board when the situation is more "conducive".

"Most of the candidates will be happy with this scheme... When there is a

manageable number you can consider holding a physical exam later," a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari addressed Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, appearing for the Union of India, which is the CBSE's controlling authority.

## CISCE formula

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) assessment formula would include taking into consideration the students' Class 10 ICSE Board exams, project and practical work in subjects, best marks obtained in school exams in Classes 11 and 12 and the best performance of the school itself in the past six years.

## CBSE scheme evokes mixed reactions

"Online examinations conducted in the past year are not a true representation of a student's capability and potential but considering Class 10 and 11 marks do even out things and help provide a result that a student could have achieved in an offline examination," Mr. Saraf observed.

Some students felt that the education system was such that it put so much emphasis on Board exam results that taking into account marks from previous results and assessments was not quite fair. They said there was scope for bias as grading was not being done by external examiners.

"Although Class 10 and 12 exams are standardised, there is a lot of scope for internal bias while considering Class 11 marks," said Aurora Urban, whose exams got cancelled. "Children are told that only Class 12 boards and clearing the JEE and NEET matter, so most of them never actually study till the final external board exam," she said.

Principals of schools welcomed the assessment scheme. Jyoti Arora, principal of the Mount Abu School, said the CBSE's submission of the criteria was a result of extensive consultations. "The CBSE consulted Sahodiyas across the country. Again, unusual decisions for unusual times. Considering all three classes is a balanced approach," she said.

Tania Joshi, principal of The Indian School, said the announcement had come as a much-needed relief to students. "Usually students perform well in the Class X boards so now the results combined with the other classes, will get balanced out. So it is a win-win situation," Ms. Joshi added.

Delhi University (DU) officials said they would take a call on the admission procedure at a later stage.

Rajeev Gupta, Chairperson of DU admissions, said, "We have to wait for sometime to understand the repercussions of the decision."

## Court rejects police stand; students freed

The Delhi Police argued that it also needed to verify the Aadhaar cards of the people who have been nominated as sureties by the three accused. For this, the trial court can pass an order directly to the authority concerned, they said.

"Do you follow this procedure in other cases as well?" the High Court asked the Delhi police. Both Ms. Kalita and Ms. Narwal, who were arrested in connection with the northeast Delhi riots last year, were granted bail by the Delhi High Court on Tuesday. Following this, they had moved the local court for securing immediate release order.

The Delhi Police have

moved the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict granting regular bail to the three students who were booked under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The case is likely to come up for hearing on Friday.

While granting bail, the High Court gave the Delhi police a dressing down for 'casually' invoking provisions of anti-terror laws against the three who had protested against the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

The High Court also ruled that no offence under the UAPA was made out against any of the three students.

## 'Wrote to PM thrice to withdraw Governor'

Earlier, the Trinamool Congress leadership, including several MPs, had written to President Ram Nath Kovind demanding the Governor's recall.

Ms. Banerjee described the Union government's attempts to "control Twitter" as unfortunate. "They cannot control Twitter, that is why they want to bulldoze my government and my party," she said.

Speaking on allegations of post poll violence, the Chief Minister said there were a few incidents, and she had asked the police to take strong action in such cases.

"There are no incidents

now. At the time when the State was under the Election Commission, there were some sporadic incidents. But all incidents were not political. In some cases, personal enmity was there. As the matter is sub judice, I won't speak. But I do not support any violence and whenever there is an incident, I have asked police to take strong action," Ms. Banerjee said.

The Chief Minister said the BJP was trying to create an atmosphere of violence. "There is no political violence, it is BJP gimmick violence," she said.

On Thursday, Mr. Dhankhar called on the President.

The Governor also called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the evening.

## CBSE to record Class 10, 12 marks throughout the year

Long-term plan to ensure year-round assessment emphasised for all classes'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is considering a system of continuous assessment for 2021-22, whereby all student scores – from unit tests, midterms, project work and pre-Board examinations – would be regularly recorded with the Board throughout the year, so that it would be possible to compute and declare final results even if COVID-19 prevents a final Board examination again, Controller of Examinations Sanyam Bhardwaj told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

"We are preparing a scheme, which will be implemented for the 2022 examination for Class 10 and Class 12. In case the pandemic persists, even then we will be



New methods: The CBSE was considering asking for each assessment to be submitted to it. ■ BIBEK CHETTRI

able to declare the result without such special schemes. We have started working on it, and discussions are going on," he said.

"We are trying to ensure that at regular intervals, we should note down the performance of the students and that should be with the CBSE only. The school will

be doing each and every thing and that will be with us, and if there is any problem, we should be able to declare the result, without having to ask the schools to apply this kind of formula to declare the result," he added, noting that the CBSE was considering the option of asking for each assess-

ment through the year to be submitted to the Board. This may lead to further standardisation of continuous assessment formats as well.

Dr. Bhardwaj was speaking soon after he notified the CBSE Tabulation Policy for the 2020-21 Class 12 results, which gives a lot of discretion to schools themselves and their results committees, to assign and revise marks in order to ensure they aligned with the school's historical performance.

"We are trying for a system to be brought into place, looking into the New Education Policy, in which we will see that year-round development should be recorded," he said, adding that this would not be for Class 12 alone, but for all students.

## SC to look into Class 11 State exams in Kerala

'Will examine why it was not cancelled'

## LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday decided to examine why Kerala has still not cancelled the Class 11 examinations conducted by its State Board.

"Counsel for the petitioners shall serve a copy of the petition on the standing counsel for the State of Kerala, as we are informed that it has not cancelled the 11th standard examination conducted by the State Board," a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari ordered.

The Bench was hearing a petition filed by child rights activist Anubha Shrivastava Sahai to cancel the State Board examinations due to the pandemic. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) cancelled the Class 12 examinations due to concerns over exposing children to infection. The CBSE and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations Boards on Thursday came up with an alternative assessment procedure to compute marks.

States, six had conducted the examinations and 18 cancelled them. "But four States [Assam, Punjab, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh] have not cancelled the examination as of now. Counsel for the petitioners shall serve the standing counsel for the above mentioned four States via email/on-line," the court directed.

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## IN BRIEF



Stan Swamy will remain in hospital, says HC

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said Father Stan Swamy, a Bhima Koregaon case accused, will remain at the Holy Family hospital till July 5, as he has critical medical issues and requires intensive care. Senior advocate Mihir Desai, representing him, told a Division Bench that Fr. Swamy was in the ICU.

## Rajasthan waives mandi duty on forest produce

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government has waived mandi duty and farmers' welfare cess for the forest produce sold outside the Krishi Upaj Mandi premises to extend relief to tribal population and the traders dealing with tendu leaves and timber and non-wood products. The decision has led to abolition of the duty regime which was in force for the last 40 years.

## 'Will give befitting reply to external aggression'

GUWAHATI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said India had never invaded any country, but would give a befitting reply to any external aggression. He avoided mentioning China while naming the "five countries" bordering the northeast at a programme to dedicate 12 strategic Border Roads Organisation (BRO) projects to the country.

## Job outcomes will be improved: Gangwar

NEW DELHI

Union Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar said on Thursday that India was committed to improving employment outcomes for the youth, a Ministry statement said. He said this after the signing of a statement of intent between the Labour Ministry and UNICEF here, it added.

## OFB corporatisation an anti-national step: CPI

NEW DELHI

A day after the Union Cabinet approved the corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), the Communist Party of India (CPI) on Thursday accused the Centre of taking the decision during the pandemic. CPI general secretary D. Raja called it an "anti-national step".

## Rules regulating cable TV network amended

Three-level grievance redressal mechanism provided

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry on Thursday amended the rules regulating cable television networks, providing for a "statutory" mechanism for complaints raised by citizens regarding any content broadcast.

At present, there are over 900 TV channels that are required to comply with the Programme and Advertising Code laid down by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting under the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021, provides for a three-level grievance redressal mechanism – self-regulation by broadcasters, self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies set up by TV channels, which should deal with the case in 60 days.

"If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the self-regulating body, he may, within 15 days of such



Currently, channels have to comply with the Programme and Advertising Code.

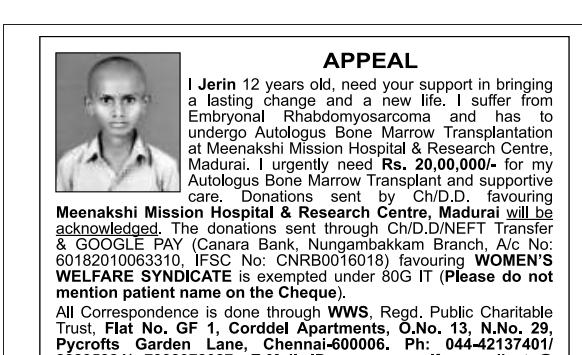
Centre. A viewer could file a complaint directly to the broadcaster, who would have to respond within 15 days. If the complainant was not satisfied with the response, the complaint could be escalated to the self-regulating bodies set up by TV channels, which should deal with the case in 60 days.

"If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the self-regulating body, he may, within 15 days of such

decision, prefer an appeal to the Central government for its consideration under the Oversight Mechanism," it said.

Such appeals would be dealt with by the Inter-Departmental Committee set up under the Oversight Mechanism. The Committee would be headed by the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and have members from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and representatives of other Ministries and organisations, including experts, as the Centre may decide.

This third tier was not only kept aside to hear the appeals, it could take up complaints that come directly to the Centre.



I. Jerin, 12 years old, need your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. I suffer from Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma and has to undergo Autologous Bone Marrow Transplantation at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. I urgently need Rs. 20,00,000/- my Autologous Bone Marrow Transplantation support care. Donations sent to Ch.D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch.D.D./NEFT, Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No: 60182010063310, IFSC: CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT (Please do not mention patient name on the Cheque).

All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, No. G/F, Corder Apartments, O No. 13, 1st N.O. 29, Pirojji Chambers, Lala Chhatrapati-600006, Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/ 733978027. E-Mail ID: womenwsfreesyndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenwsfreesyndicate.org. Jerin

## Centre opens 14 disability early intervention centres

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually inaugurated the centres that are located at seven national institutes and seven composite regional centres of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

"Research studies suggest that early childhood [0-6 years] is a time of remarkable brain development...

Early intervention can provide specialised support and services for infants and young children at-risk or with disability and/or developmental delay and for their families to help them in their overall development, well-being and participation in family and community life," a statement from the Department of Empower-

ment of Persons with Disabilities said.

Through the centres, which have been started as a pilot, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are covered.

CM

NDE

## Roy gave up Z-category security: MHA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The "Z-category" security cover given to Mukul Roy, who returned to the Trinamool Congress last week along with his son, has been withdrawn as sought by him, according to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

After he quit the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Mr. Roy had reportedly written to the Central government asking for the withdrawal of the security cover. Accordingly, it was taken away. It is learnt that now, the State police would provide security to him and his son.

Mr. Roy had won on BJP ticket from the Krishnagar Uttar constituency. He had joined the BJP in November 2017 and was made national vice-president.

# SAD-BSP alliance in Punjab seeks action against Cong. MP

It demands Ravneet Singh Bittu's arrest for allegedly passing 'casteist' remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUDHIANA

Caste community.

They said the delegation brought it to the notice of the Police Commissioner that "conclusive evidence" was already available against Mr. Bittu in the public realm and that the police should not try to save him simply because he belongs to the Congress, the ruling party in Punjab.

### 'Deliberate slander'

Mr. Cheema said it was clear that Mr. Bittu had "deliberately slandered" the Dalit community to please his political masters by questioning why the "holy seats" of Anandpur Sahib and Chamkaur Sahib were given to the BSP under its alliance with the SAD.

"Bittu has effectively stat-

ed that holy seats have been given to unholy persons. This is intolerable as it goes against the Constitution, which guarantees equality to all, and is also against Sikh ethos and culture," he said in a statement.

Mr. Bittu had earlier represented the Anandpur Sahib Lok Sabha constituency in Parliament and knew about the history of the area, Mr. Cheema said.

"He knows that it was at Anandpur Sahib that Sri Guru Gobind Singh chose persons from the oppressed sections of society to create a casteless and classless society. It was also at Anandpur Sahib that the Guru made the proclamation 'Rangretta Guru ke beta' when the se-

vered head of Guru Tegh Bahadur was presented to him by Bhai Jaita.

"Bittu also knows that it was at Chamkaur Sahib that Guru Sahib gifted his 'kalgi' to the Dalit community. In the light of these facts, it is clear that Bittu deliberately insulted the sentiments of the Dalit community," he said.

BSP leaders Gurmail GK and Jeet Ram Basra also condemned the Congress MP for his remarks.

The Opposition parties in Punjab are slamming Mr. Bittu, an MP from Ludhiana, for allegedly insulting the Dalits by saying the SAD left "pious seats" like Anandpur Sahib and Chamkaur Sahib to its ally BSP.

## BJP members of House panel flag rising fuel prices

'Petrol and diesel should be brought under the GST regime'

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

An overwhelming majority of members of the Standing Committee on Petroleum, at a meeting on Thursday, felt that petrol and diesel should be brought under the GST regime to avoid the multiple taxation by the Centre and the States, which they claimed was responsible for the rise in fuel prices.

The committee is chaired by BJP member Ramesh Bidhuri. However, a select few, including CPI(M)'s K. Sivadasan, opposed the idea.

All the MPs, including those from the BJP, according to sources, expressed concern and posed sharp questions to Petroleum Secretary Tarun Kapoor.

The Congress recently pointed out that the prices of petrol and diesel had increased over 25 times in the last month and half. Both diesel and petrol have become dearer by over ₹6 since May 2, when results of the Assembly election in four States and a Union Territory were announced.

**A flogging horse'**  
Mr. Kapoor, according to the sources, quoting the example of Delhi, explained that the base price of petrol was merely ₹36. But it was being sold at nearly ₹97 a litre. The difference in the base price and the selling price was taxes both by the Centre and the State.

The Opposition members

said the spiralling costs had a cascading effect on other essential commodities. "Fuel is being used as a flogging horse to make up for all the revenue deficit. If this flogging is already hurting the common man, the government has to step in," one of them said.

A war of words erupted between Mr. Bidhuri and the Congress's Pradyut Bordoloi. A member said, "Mr. Bidhuri claimed that in 2003, the petrol price was ₹33 a litre, but by 2012, it had risen to ₹66, a 100% increase. To this, Mr. Bordoloi pointed out that during the UPA rule, international oil prices had shot up to \$144 a barrel, while the current rate was \$78."

## Vaccination not mandatory for students: MEA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The United States said that vaccination is not a "mandatory requirement" for Indian students to travel to the country, a senior official of the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

Responding to a question, Official Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said a "constructive solution" should be found to help Indian students returning to attend academic sessions in the United States.

The remarks came days after the U.S. Embassy here began processing student visas to enable them to resume on-campus education.

The official's comments pointed out the contradiction between the U.S. government and some leading academic institutions that are demanding vaccination before the students are allowed to return to the campuses.

## New Pak. law riddled with shortcomings, says India

It gives Kulbhushan Jadhav right to appeal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A new Pakistani law that will allow Indian death row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav's right to appeal is flawed, said the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday.

Addressing the weekly press briefing virtually, Official Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the Review and Reconsideration Bill 2020 has codified into law the earlier ordinance with its "shortcomings".

"The Ordinance, now the Bill, invites the municipal courts in Pakistan to decide whether or not any prejudice has been caused to Shri Jadhav on account of the failure to provide consular access. This is clearly a breach of the basic tenet that municipal courts cannot be the arbiter of whether a State has fulfilled its obligations in international law. Not only this, it further invites the municipal court to sit in appeal, as it were,

over the judgment of the International Court of Justice," said Mr. Bagchi.

Pakistan argues that the law is in line with the ICJ order, which urged Islamabad to undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the verdict. But Mr. Bagchi said the Bill is riddled with shortcomings. "It does not create a machinery to facilitate effective review and reconsideration of Shri Jadhav's case, as mandated by the ICJ judgment," he said, and urged Islamabad to take "appropriate steps to address the shortcomings".

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## Punjab Ekta Party merges with the Congress

Sukhpal Singh Khaira meets Rahul Gandhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Sukhpal Singh Khaira, former Leader of the Opposition and founder of the Punjab Ekta Party, on Thursday formally merged his party with the Congress after meeting former party chief Rahul Gandhi at the latter's Delhi residence.

Mr. Khaira's meeting comes just days before the party high command is expected to meet Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and former Minister-turned-dissident leader Navjot Singh on June 20 to work out a compromise and end the factionalism.

Mr. Gandhi's meeting with Mr. Khaira, who had walked out of the Congress and joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in 2015 and won from the Bholath seat on AAP ticket in 2017, is significant also due to its political messaging. On June 3, a day before Capt. Amarinder met the AICC panel to resolve the factionalism, the CM re-induced Mr. Khaira even before a formal nod from the central leadership.

Mr. Gandhi's meeting with Mr. Khaira not only puts a stamp of approval over his re-induction but can also be interpreted as a sign of a thaw between the two camps.



Kulbhushan Jadhav

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## Akhilesh has lost faith in his own leaders, says Mayawati

SP induces former BSP leader Amar Pal Sharma

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

As leaders and legislators, both former and current, associated with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh continue to engage with rival Samajwadi Party (SP), the latter's chief Mayawati has intensified her attack on SP leader Akhilesh Yadav, with whom she joined hands to fight the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

On Wednesday, yet another leader formerly associated with the BSP, former MLA Amar Pal Sharma, was inducted into the SP by Mr. Yadav.

Mr. Sharma, who won from Sahibabad in Ghazabād in 2012 on BSP ticket, was expelled by the party in the 2017 election for indis-



Mayawati

bad that to remain relevant in media, its chief himself is having to induct former MLAs who have been expelled by other parties or have become ineffective in their constituency, and small-time workers," said Ms. Mayawati.

The four-time former Chief Minister claimed that her party's local leadership was regularly inducting leaders from other parties, including the SP, after full scrutiny. Udaiveer Singh, SP MLC and a close aide of Mr. Yadav, dismissed Ms. Mayawati's attack as a mere "face-saving" comment. He said the flow of leaders towards the SP was an indication that people have read that the party could provide a viable alternative to lead the State.

## Shah launches helpline for cyber fraud

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has launched a national helpline, 155260, and its reporting platform for preventing financial loss due to cyber fraud. The helpline was soft-launched on April 1.

The helpline has been made operational by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, in coordination with the Reserve Bank of India, all major banks, payment banks, wallets and online merchants.

Since its soft launch, in a short span of two months, the helpline has assisted in saving more than ₹1.85 crore, with Delhi and Rajasthan saving ₹58 lakh and ₹53 lakh, said a government release.

## 'The fight against CAA-NRC will go on'

Grateful to the HC for saying what we believe in, says Devangana after release

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Upon their release from Tihar Prison on Thursday evening, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, Jamia Millia Islamia University student Asif Iqbal Tanha, said the fight was not over.

The three were lodged in jail under sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and were released two days after the Delhi High Court granted them bail.

Outside the prison after their release, Mr. Tanha said that the fight against injustice and against CAA-NRC [Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Register of Citizens] would continue. I am not scared of anyone but God," he said, adding that he was beaten in jail and faced hardships but accepted it all because of "the love I have been sh-

owered with and it's with that feeling I'll continue".

Ms. Kalita said, "Whenever women come together, stand against something ... protest, society criticises them ... they are vilified and called names - terrorists, obscene and what not," she said, adding that she was grateful to the High Court for saying "what we believe in",



Free at last: Natasha Narwal, left, and Devangana Kalita outside Tihar Jail on Thursday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

released. I would just want to say that our fight against CAA-NRC will continue and the fight for justice for the likes of Najeeb, Ikhlaq and Alimuddin will also continue. I am not scared of anyone but God," he said, adding that he was beaten in jail and faced hardships but accepted it all because of "the love I have been sh-

INTERVIEW | SRINATH REDDY

# 'We must use the available vaccines to protect the most vulnerable'

More data is needed on the ideal interval between two doses of Covishield but there should be no hesitancy, says president of the Public Health Foundation of India

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

*With the ideal interval between Covishield's first and second doses coming under debate, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) president Srinath Reddy said data on the Indian experience on the issue was still being gathered. He said there were reassuring reports of good protection being provided to healthcare workers. However, it was not yet clear how effective one dose of the vaccine is against the delta variant, which is the dominant variant now in many parts of the country. He said more information was needed on that aspect, especially for high-risk, older age groups.*

The time gap between Covishield's first and second dose has come under the scanner in India yet again. Should we be reverting to a shorter time gap?

■ The time gap issue initially surfaced due to the way the AstraZeneca trials were conducted internationally. The British-led international trial accidentally created two strands among the trial participants – a larger group which received the vaccine shots at a four-week interval (as per trial protocol) and a smaller group which received the second shot after 12 weeks. Interestingly, the second group showed higher

efficacy (81%). So, Britain decided to adopt a three-month dosing interval. A later large U.S. trial of the same vaccine, with 32,000 participants, also showed a high efficacy (76%). The WHO recommended an eight-12 week spacing.

Those trials were conducted when the ancestral wild virus was in circulation. Then came the variants, against which most vaccines showed lower efficacy. Even then, the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine offered adequate protection against the alpha variant. Against the delta variant, however, the first dose provided only 30% efficacy against sympto-

matic infection, according to data from Public Health England. Against serious illness and death, the vaccine seems to provide reasonable protection with one dose. A second dose demonstrably increases efficacy against both mild and severe infections. Hence, the U.K. switched to an eight-week interval.

Concerns have been raised about inadequate protection of a single dose against the Delta variant, in a French study. Two doses do provide better protection. Hence, the suggestion from international experts that the people at risk of severe disease must be provided that level of protection earlier.

[Data on] the Indian experience is still being gathered. There are reassuring reports of good protection being provided to healthcare workers. However, it is not yet clear how effective one dose is against the delta variant, which is the dominant variant now in many parts of the country. We still need that



Safe behaviour and vaccines will together protect us. We can't run fast on one leg

data, especially for high-risk, older age groups and persons with co-morbidities – not just in relatively younger and healthier healthcare workers.

I would like to close this by pointing out the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has stated that it will review recent evidence.

Let us leave it to that expert body, to review all available national and international evidence. In the

meanwhile, people need to be assured that vaccines are protective even against the delta variant. They should get both shots, whenever scheduled.

If there is a limited supply till July, let us use the available vaccines to provide maximum protection to the most vulnerable. There is no reason for vaccine hesitancy.

Has India vaccinated enough of its population? Is the pace of vaccination steady enough to allow opening of the country?

■ International trials are available for some mRNA vaccines, to provide evidence of efficacy and safety. Trials in younger children, some including even infants aged six months, are now in progress. Some trials of child vaccination are now on in India too.

We should wait for these international and domestic trials to be completed. If a nasal or orally administered mucosal vaccine proves safe and efficacious, that will be a boon for child vaccination.

I think we do need to open the country, but carefully. Vaccines protect against disease, once the virus infects.

For protection against viral transmission, we need to adhere to public health advisories, with discipline in our

behaviour for several months more. We must wear masks, avoid ill-ventilated and crowded places as much as possible and not allow super-spreader gatherings. Safe behaviour and vaccines will together protect us. We can't run fast on one leg.

Is there enough data to start children's vaccination?

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behaviour for several months more. We must wear masks, avoid ill-ventilated and crowded places as much as possible and not allow super-spreader gatherings. Safe behaviour and vaccines will together protect us. We can't run fast on one leg.

■ The worry is misplaced at present. Available vaccines are offering enough protection, at the right dose. Even if neutralising antibody levels fall with time, T cell immunity is likely to remain. In fact, that cell-mediated component of our immune system is capable of fighting the virus which has entered our cells, whereas antibodies can only attack the surface spike protein as it circulates in the blood. Memory T and B cells also store the image of the antigen and can readily reactivate our defence when the virus enters our body.

■ What is the way ahead?

■ We need to combine four components of response as we move ahead. They are protect ourselves from exposure to the virus and its entry into the body; prevent free passage of the virus by avoiding crowded places, non-essential travel and super-spreader gatherings; vaccinate as fast and as many as possible; and develop, evaluate and introduce new vaccines which can effectively protect against current and emerging variants.

## Number of COVID-19 tests declines rapidly

19.31 lakh samples were analysed on Wednesday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

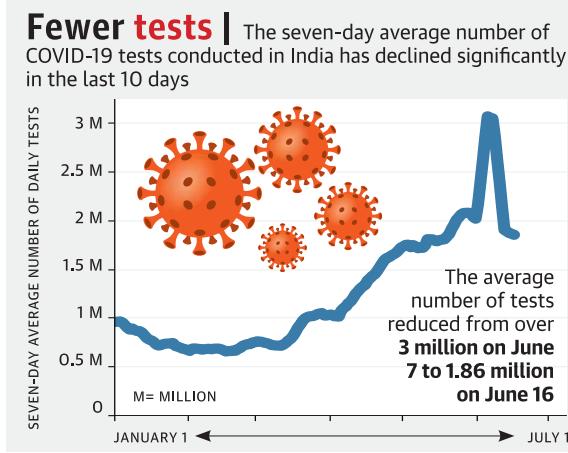
India recorded 57,837 new COVID-19 cases and 1,536 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Thursday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,97,57,425 cases and 3,83,467 deaths.

Kerala reported 12,469 new infections, followed by Maharashtra (9,830) and Tamil Nadu (9,118). Maharashtra recorded 636 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (210) and Karnataka (138). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins.

Around 19.31 lakh samples were tested in the country on Wednesday (the results for which were released on Thursday). The number of samples tested has come down drastically in the last ten days. The average number of tests conducted declined from over 30 lakh on June 7 to 18.6 lakh on June 16.

About 34.63 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Thursday, which is 6.6 lakh doses more than what was recorded in



the previous 24 hours. It is also 84,700 doses more than what was recorded during the same period a week ago. The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 31.26 lakh on June 16, which is more than the 26.69 lakh recorded a week before (June 9).

About 23.1% of adults in India, 43.3% of those aged above 45, and 46.8% of people aged above 60, have been administered at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8 p.m. on Thursday. While 15.9% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 3.6% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021.

India continued to record the highest number of 7-day (With PTI inputs)

## Boost facilities for children, say guidelines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Going by sero-surveillance reports, COVID-19 infection in children above 10 years occurs in similar frequency as that of adults, notes the "Guidelines on operationalisation of COVID care services for children and adolescents" released by the Health Ministry earlier this week.

While children have less severe disease than adults, intermittent surges in the number of cases are anticipated and so it is desirable to augment the existing facilities to provide care to children with acute COVID, it says.

The guidelines state that the majority of infections is asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic among children and it is uncommon to have moderate to severe COVID-19 in healthy children. Children with comorbid conditions have more severe manifestations and poorer outcomes; they should be a priority group for vaccination, once vaccines are approved for children.

"A combined effort from private and public sector is needed to handle any surge in future after the withdrawal of the lockdown, school reopening or as third wave strikes over next three of four months," said the guidelines, calling for paediatric-specific plans to be put in place.

## Birth, death registrations up in 2019

14 States/Union Territories achieved 100% level of birth registrations: report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The level of registration of births and deaths in the country improved in 2019, according to the "Vital Statistics of India Based on The Civil Registration System" report.

Some States and Union Territories were, however, lagging behind.

The report states that the level of birth registration increased from 87.8% in 2018 to 92.7% in 2019; and death registrations went up from 84.6% to 92% during the period.

While 14 States/Union Territories achieved 100% level of birth registrations, 19 States/Union Territories achieved the same level in cases of death.

### Sex ratio at birth

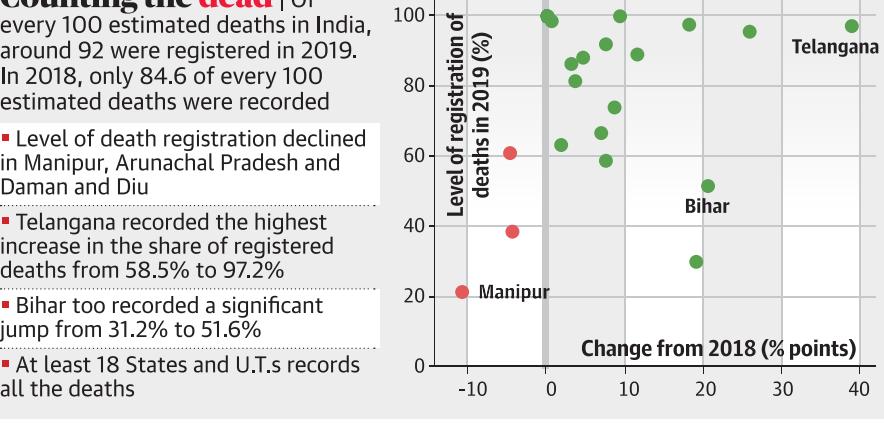
Based on the information received from 32 States/Union Territories, the share of institutional births in the total registered births was 81.2%. The number of registered births increased to 2.48 crore in 2019 from 2.33 crore in 2018. The share of male and female was 52.1% and 47.9%.

In the case of registration of births within the prescribed period of 21 days, 15 States/Union Territories achieved more than 90% registration of deaths within the prescribed period of 21 days.

The highest sex ratio at birth (SRB) based on registered events was reported by Arunachal Pradesh (1,024),

**Counting the dead** | Of every 100 estimated deaths in India, around 92 were registered in 2019. In 2018, only 84.6 of every 100 estimated deaths were recorded

- Level of death registration declined in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Daman and Diu
- Telangana recorded the highest increase in the share of registered deaths from 58.5% to 97.2%
- Bihar too recorded a significant jump from 31.2% to 51.6%
- At least 18 States and U.T.s records all the deaths



followed by Nagaland (1,001), Mizoram (975) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (965). The lowest SRB was reported by Gujarat (901), Assam (903) and Madhya Pradesh (905), followed by Jammu & Kashmir (909).

The number of registered deaths increased from 69.5 lakh in 2018 to 76.4 lakh in 2019. The share of male and female was 59.6% and 40.4%.

Based on the information received from 31 States/Union Territories, the share of institutional deaths in total registered deaths was 32.1%.

### Infant deaths

Eleven States/Union Territories achieved more than 90% registration of deaths within the prescribed period of 21 days.

In the case of registration of infant deaths, the share of urban area was 75.5% compared to 24.5% in rural areas.

In the north-east, Arunachal Pradesh reported 100% registration of births, but only 38.6% of deaths. Nagaland also registered 100% births, but just 30% deaths, while Manipur recorded 67.7% births and only 21.4% deaths. In Sikkim, there was 100% registration of deaths, but 61.2% registration of births.

**Full registration** However, Mizoram and Tripura reported 100% registration of both births and deaths. Meghalaya had 100% registration of births and 97.6% registration of deaths, while Assam reported 100% registration of births and 74% registration of deaths.

In Bihar and Jharkhand, the levels of registration of births were 89.3% and 84.3% and the levels of registration of deaths were 51.6% and 58.8%. In Daman & Diu, the figures were 50.7% and 61%. Listing the limitations, the

report said the level of registration of States/Union Territories and India level presented in the report was arrived at using the mid-year projected population of the respective States/Union Territories of 2011-2019 based on 2011 census (Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections, July 2020, National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) and, therefore, was not comparable with rates presented in previous reports.

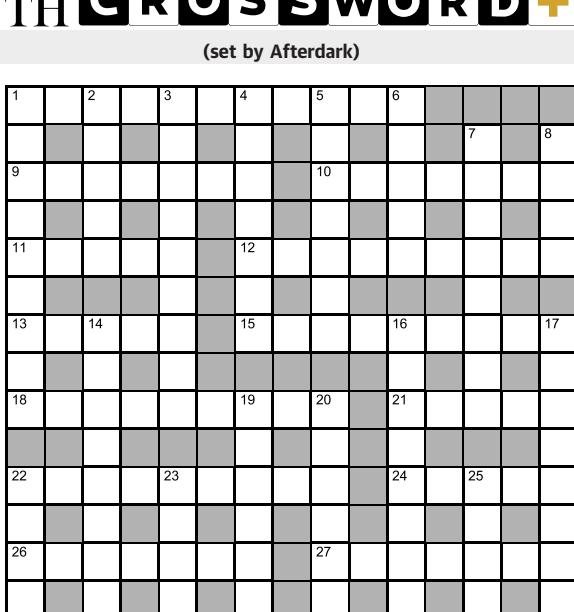
### Incomplete data

The level of registration was arrived at using Sample Registration System Rates for 2018 as the survey for 2019, which was scheduled for 2020, could not be completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, some States/Union Territories submitted incomplete or partial data, which was not included.

## TH CROSSWORD + 13277

(set by Afterdark)

Display keystrokes of genius.  
We are digital now. Come solve online.  
<https://rgo.page.link/jjpTn>



### ACROSS

- A good enemy countered with logic in 17th & 18th century Europe (3,2)
- Hid in Crimson Bay? No, the other way round (7)
- Permit lady to enrage? Not new (7)
- Currency's new, look at advisory (5)
- A rascal holds instalments irregularly dispensing cash to educators (9)
- One managed to get one tea perhaps (5)

- 15 Primarily energetic, Ali's disturbed to get sleep, back at hotel with Queen (9)  
 18 Edgy and unguarded, not having some sleep leads to irritation for babies (5,4)  
 21 Lawrence is in our custody faraway (5)  
 22 Some pepper and cilantro on digestion produce a hormone (9)  
 24 Bones; star shaped next to his heart (5)  
 26 With power, heat, atom can be new inside? It's an illusion (7)  
 27 Can upside down in cab accident, good insulated container (4,3)  
 28 Provide support to an insect at a stage of lifecycle (11)
- DOWN
- Rise when annuity's quietly removed by college (9)
  - Selection of Sen voicing a brief postscript (5)
  - Rule in favour of one country? Totally heartless (9)
  - Final stage managed somehow, Australia slips away while England is in front (7)
  - Say, Bill designed courses (7)
  - For starters, nature arranges crystals resembling elements like mother-of-pearl (5)
  - Poor man going after popular princess (8)
  - Cashes hidden by Cafe Espresso (4)
  - Appreciation of program by competitor, one who is old (8)
  - Riot if road is cut short and relaid? Even more certain (1,8)
  - Warning by hotel; root vegetable in India's not good, about to return (9)
  - In the position of draw; shot! (7)
  - Worker's vehicle is a small platform on four wheels (7)
  - One father or two fathers (4)
  - Prank of a jerk (5)
  - Here, Belarusians hold revolt (5)

## SUDOKU

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# Sri Lanka reports cases of delta variant amid a daunting third wave

Currently, there are about 62,000 active cases; people across the country voice concern over economic distress

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Thursday detected the highly transmissible Delta or B.1.617.2 variant of COVID-19 in five patients, amid a stubborn third wave persisting through a near-month-long lockdown in the country.

Spotting an unusual outbreak in a Colombo neighbourhood last week, the Allergy, Immunity and Cell Biology Unit at the Sri Jayewardenepura University conducted genetic sequencing, studying 13 recent samples, and spotted the Delta variant.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Dr. Chandima Jeewandara, director of the unit, said:

"The Delta variant comes with three main factors – it is highly transmissible, it causes severe disease, and it

eaves single dose vaccine," he said.

Thursday's finding points to the presence of the Delta variant in the community, a week after it was found in one patient in a quarantine facility.

"It is the worst we could have imagined at such a time," Dr. Jeewandara said, pointing to the current case load – about 62,000 active cases – and low vaccine coverage. "We are already dealing with a spike in cases with the Alpha variant. Delta poses a greater risk because our vaccine coverage is low, and among those who are vaccinated a majority have got only one dose," he said.

According to data published by the Epidemiology Unit of the Ministry of Health, more than 30 lakh people, or just over 16% of

the Sri Lanka's adult population, have got at least one dose of vaccine – Covishield, Sinopharm and Sputnik – as of June 16. Of those, only some 7 lakh, or less than 5% of the adult population, have got both doses.

## Slow drive

Meanwhile, nearly 6 lakh persons are awaiting their second dose of Covishield, delayed after India stopped exporting vaccines in the wake of its own devastating second wave. The Sri Lankan government is trying to tap other sources, while the country witnesses a steady surge in infections in the past fortnight, with daily cases spiking to over 3,000 on some days, despite a continuing lockdown allowing only essential services and select travel.



**Long wait:** People waiting in a queue to get their dose of COVID-19 vaccine in Colombo on Tuesday. • AFP

For a week now, less than 20,000 PCR tests were carried out a day, data from the Health Promotion Bureau showed, although medical professionals are calling for more testing. Further, Colombo-based Institute for Health Policy, an independent research institution, found an average test positivity rate of 13.8% during the last week, based on official data.

A high positivity rate and daily deaths – an average of 67 in the past week, coupled

with a slow vaccination drive, concentrated in the capital, only heightens the threat posed by the Delta variant, experts have cautioned.

The source of the Delta variant now detected in the community is yet to be established. The Sri Lankan Civil Aviation Authority's ban on travellers from India from disembarking, imposed early May, is in place, but visitors from select countries are allowed to enter. Observing it was "likely imported",

Dr. Jeewandara said: "Remember, the Delta variant has been detected not just in India, but in many other countries, including the U.K. and the U.S. It could have come from anywhere, we do not know yet."

## Economic distress

While health authorities grapple with the prevailing spike, and prepare to tackle the Delta variant, people across the country, especially daily wage earners, are reeling under the economic blow of the lockdown.

Scores of garment sector workers, domestic workers,

and falling prices for their produce. "Women engaged in small-scale farming and fisheries in our district are desperate for some respite. Most traders don't buy their produce any more. And in the event of a trader coming to their village to buy their produce, the women don't get to fix the price, but are forced to sell it for whatever the trader dictates," says Arunachalam Elangswari, of the Suriya Women's Development Centre in the Batticaloa district, in the Eastern Province.

"With the entire family at home now, that too with much less income, some women are eating only if there is something left after the rest of the family has had a meal," said the community activist. "The women are unable to buy sanitary pads, and we are hearing of many more cases of domestic violence in these past weeks."

# Hong Kong police arrest newspaper editors

Senior media figures have been accused of 'collusion with foreign forces to endanger national security'

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Hong Kong police on Thursday arrested five senior figures at the *Apple Daily*, a tabloid newspaper that had taken a strong stand supporting pro-democracy protests, under a new national security law.

The five, including publisher Cheung Kim-hung and Editor-in-Chief Ryan Law, have been accused of "collusion with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security," the *South China Morning Post* quoted a police statement as saying.

Thursday's search of the paper's offices by more than



**Major crackdown:** Ryan Law, second from right, *Apple Daily*'s Editor-in-Chief, being arrested in Hong Kong. • AFP

200 police officers was the second major move following last year's new national security law targeting a newspaper that had angered the pro-Beijing camp in Hong Kong for its coverage of the 2019 protests and calls for

democracy.

Hong Kong's national security police, the *Post* reported, cited "more than 30 *Apple Daily* articles calling for sanctions against the city and mainland China," saying the articles were "evidence

of a conspiracy to collude with foreign forces in violation of the national security law."

Prior to the passing of the law, the media in Hong Kong had broadly functioned with freedom that newspapers on the mainland are denied, under the "one country, two systems" model that guaranteed a range of rights following the 1997 handover.

**Attack on press freedom'** The ambiguity of the national security law and how it defines collusion has been criticised by journalist associations in Hong Kong. "The operation proves that the national security law has

been weaponised to target certain media outlets," Hong Kong Journalism Association chairman Chris Yeung King-hing told the *Post*. "Members of the public will refrain from sending tips to journalists on issues of public interest, as media outlets may not be able to guarantee the security of journalistic materials," he said.

Sophie Richardson, China director at Human Rights Watch, said Thursday's raid was "a new low in a bottomless assault on press freedom". "This has nothing to do with enforcing the law," she said, "and everything to do with politicised retribution."

# Chinese astronauts dock with new space station

The country plans to have a fully functioning station by 2022

ANANTH KRISHNAN

The first group of Chinese astronauts on Thursday entered the country's under-construction space station, a major step in China's plans to have a fully functioning station by next year.

On Thursday afternoon,

the Shenzhou-12 spaceship, carrying the three astronauts, completed an "automated rendezvous and docking" with the Tianhe module, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said, adding this "signified that for the first time the Chinese

have entered their own space station".

Shenzhou-12 was launched on Thursday morning from the Jiuquan launch centre in the Gobi desert, and the astronauts entered Tianhe around six and a half hours later, the agency said.

The three-man crew will be in orbit for three months. This is the first of two manned space missions planned for this year, part of an intense schedule of launches aimed at completing the space station in 2022. The official Xinhua news

agency said the mission will "help test technologies related to long-term astronaut stays and health care, the recycling and life support system, the supply of space materials, extravehicular activities and operations, and in-orbit maintenance."

The Shenzhou-12 mission follows a busy few weeks for China's space programme, coming after last month's launch for the Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft, which carried vital supplies for the space station. At least five more missions are planned for the year.

# Iran goes to polls today

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TEHRAN

Iranian voters are set to elect a new President on Friday, with the ultraconservative Ebrahim Raisi expected to replace the moderate Hassan Rouhani after a host of candidates were disqualified.

The vote comes at a time when the recession-hit country is in talks with world powers to revive the nuclear deal.

# Russia is ready for further dialogue if U.S. is willing: Putin

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Moscow is ready to continue dialogue with Washington after his summit meeting with President Joe Biden, provided the U.S. was also willing to do so.

The two leaders held their first face-to-face meeting in Geneva on Wednesday to

ease soaring tensions between Moscow and Washington, with relations at their lowest since the end of the Cold War.

"We are ready to continue this dialogue to the same extent as the American side is," Mr. Putin said in televised remarks.

Biden is a professional, you have to be very attentive when working with him so as not to miss something," Mr. Putin said.

leaders "were able to understand each other on key issues".

When asked to describe Mr. Biden, Mr. Putin said the U.S. President's portrayal in the press has "nothing to do with reality".

Biden is a professional, you have to be very attentive when working with him so as not to miss something," Mr. Putin said.



**OIL AND NATURAL GAS CORPORATION LTD.**  
Assam & Assam Arakan Basin and Jorhat Asset  
**NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**  
EOI Ref. No.: ONGC/E/OJ/A&AA Basin/DGB/788452  
ONGC, Assam & Assam Arakan Basin, Jorhat invites Expression of Interest (EOI) to carry out "SUPPLY AND OPERATION OF GAS COMPRESSION AND CASCADING SYSTEM FOR OPERATION OF DGB SYSTEM IN CATERPILLAR ENGINES OF DRILLING RIGS AT JORHAT" as per the schedule given below:  
Download of brief details : 16.06.2021 to 07.07.2021.  
Registration of firms for EOI : 07.07.2021.  
Last Date for Submission of EOI documents : 09.07.2021.  
Date of EOI meeting : 20.07.2021.  
Mode of EOI Meet : online.  
For details of EOI and download of brief scope of work please log on to our website at <https://tenders.ongc.co.in>

**Government of India**  
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (Department of Fisheries)  
Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical and Engineering Training (CIFNET), Fine Arts Avenue, Cochin -16

## ADMISSION NOTIFICATION 2021

Applications are invited for the admission of BFSc(NS)/VNC/MFC for the year 2021-2022 and the application form and Prospectus can be downloaded from CIFNET website: [www.cifnet.gov.in](http://www.cifnet.gov.in) and applied with necessary documents.

BACHELOR OF FISHERY SCIENCE (NAUTICAL SCIENCE)	VESSEL NAVIGATOR COURSE(VNC) / MARINE FITTER COURSE(MFC)
<b>COURSE DETAILS</b>	
1. Four year degree programme ( 8 semester) with integrated practical & onboard training on ocean going fishing vessels	1. Two years trade course ( 4 semester) with practical training on board fishing vessel out at sea and these Courses introduced by DGFT, New Delhi under Craftsmen Training Scheme of NCVT
2. Affiliated to CUSAT, Kochi, recognized by UGC and approved by DG Shipping, Mumbai	2. The courses are conducted at CIFNET Kochi/Chennai/Visakhapatnam
3. The course will be conducted at CIFNET, Kochi only.	3. They are eligible for CDC.
4. They are eligible for CDC.	ELIGIBILITY : Pass in 10 <sup>th</sup> Standard with 40% marks in Maths and Science separately and the candidates who are appearing for 10 <sup>th</sup> exams during 2021 are also eligible.
AGE : 17 to 20 years as on 1 <sup>st</sup> October, 2021 max. age for lateral entry - 22 years	AGE : 15 to 20 yrs as on 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2021.Upper Age is relaxable to SC/ST by 5yrs
Intake capacity : (40+5)seats (Gen/Gen-EWS/OCB/SC/ST - 38, NRI -1, Foreign National - 1, Lateral Entry System -5 (refer prospectus )	Intake capacity : VNC - 20, MFC - 20 at CIFNET Kochi/Chennai/Vizag (Gen/EWS/OCB/SC/ST - 16 seats & State Government Sponsorship - 4 seats at each centre/course preferably from fishermen community)
MODE OF SELECTION : Based on MARKS obtained in 12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	MODE OF SELECTION : Based on MARKS obtained in 10 <sup>th</sup> Standard
Application fee : Rs. 500/- for General/OCB and Rs. 250/- for SC/ST	Application fee : Rs. 300/- for General/OCB and Rs. 150/- for SC/ST
1. Filled in application along with necessary documents like marksheet(SSLC/HSC), community certificate if Sc/ST/OCB/NCL/EWS and also the receipt/UTR number generated for the payment of application fee through online must be sent to "The Director, CIFNET, Fine Arts Avenue, Kochi-682016 "	
2. Last Date to receive the filled in application along with necessary documents is 15 <sup>th</sup> July, 2021	

A.K. CHOWDHURY, DIRECTOR

भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA	
परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY	
नानोसिंचन इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ आर्कन एन्ड न्यूक्लियर फ्यूल कॉम्प्लेक्स / NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX	
ई-निविदा अर्थात् ई-टेंडर	
ई-निविदा संख्या : 040-21718040/1646774202, even@nfc.gov.in	
भारत के साथपाठी की ओर से, अनिलदास इन (ई-टेंडर) के माध्यम से सकारा वर्ष प्रणाली में मद दर निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।	
On behalf of President of India, on line(e-tender) Two Part item rate tenders are invited from competent and well experienced eligible contractors for the following work.	
<b>Name of the Work</b>	General and Industrial Housekeeping and sanitation services for upkeep of areas and buildings at NFC, Hyderabad.
<b>Estimated Cost</b>	Rs. 630.41 Lakhs
<b>Estimated Money Deposit</b>	On non-Judicial stamp paper of Rs.100/- duly notarized in original, shall be submitted
<b>Duration of contract</b>	12 Months
<b>Due date for free view and download of e-tender</b>	18.06.2021 to 05.07.2021
<b>Due date for online submission of bids</b>	24.07.2021
<b>Due date for submission of hard copies</b>	04.08.2021
<b>Date of opening of bid</b>	04.08.2021

विस्तृत निविदा नोटिस और पात्रता मानरेंडों को नोटर्स की वेबसाइट [www.nfc.gov.in](http://www.nfc.gov.in) पर देखा जा सकता है। The detailed tender notice and eligibility criteria can be seen in NFC Website [www.nfc.gov.in](http://www.nfc.gov.in). निविदा दस्तावेजों को केवल [www.tenderwizard.com/DAE](http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE) की वेबसाइट पर डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। Tender documents can be downloaded only from website [www.tenderwizard.com/DAE](http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE). इसके लोगोंतातों के पास वैध कार्यालय-111 डिजिटल टेंडरिंग तथा निविदा का डाउनलोड होता है। The intended bidders must have valid Class-III digital signature and should enroll with [www.tenderwizard.com/DAE](http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE) for downloading the tender notice and participation. संस्कृत-हास्तांक अवधारणा (त्वं, पीएच, शी.एम.सी. एस. एम. ई.एम.) / Superintending Engineer (Q, PH, CMS & EM) / Senior Superintending Engineer (Q, PH, CMS & EM)

## MARKET WATCH

	17-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,323	-0.34
US Dollar	74.08	-1.04
Gold	46,863	-1.99
Brent oil	72.67	-2.96

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	646.90	-59.80
Asian Paints	3060.30	-41.60
Axis Bank	738.60	-11.20
Bajaj Auto	4053.90	-56.55
Bajaj Finserv	11818.55	-37.60
Bajaj Finance	61050.25	-31.35
Bharti Airtel	528.65	-8.10
BPCL	476.90	-4.35
Britannia Ind	3658.15	18.70
Cipla	950.95	-5.80
Coal India	152.15	-3.40
Divis Lab	4302.35	1.65
Dr Reddy's Lab	5286.50	-119.60
Eicher Motors	2673.75	-67.30
Grasim Ind	1458.20	-11.00
HCL Tech.	986.40	7.00
HDFC	2487.30	-34.15
HDFC Bank	1466.10	-18.50
HDFC Life	700.30	8.15
Hero MotoCorp	2914.10	-61.30
Hindalco	369.25	-11.00
Hind Unilever	2417.70	9.80
ICICI Bank	633.00	-7.10
IndusInd Bank	984.05	-29.65
Infosys	1495.30	14.70
Indian Oil Corp	114.60	-1.30
ITC	205.65	-2.20
JSW Steel	696.35	-9.05
Kotak Bank	1766.05	5.45
L&T	1487.55	-3.35
M&M	805.70	-0.45
Maruti Suzuki	6969.35	-144.90
Nestle India Ltd.	18059.05	93.85
NTPC	117.40	-2.40
ONGC	125.10	-1.60
PowerGrid Corp	239.85	-2.30
Reliance Ind	2215.65	4.05
SBI Life	983.30	-8.50
State Bank	420.25	-5.70
Shree Cement	28368.10	143.35
Sun Pharma	665.05	-3.50
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	745.00	9.10
Tata Motors	345.65	-3.70
Tata Steel	1103.75	-38.40
TCS	3317.75	43.40
Tech Mahindra	1080.25	11.10
Titan	1711.40	-3.55
UltraTech Cement	6704.05	117.45
UPL	835.05	-3.15
Wipro	558.70	3.45

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.88	74.20
Euro	88.14	88.52
British Pound	103.05	103.50
Japanese Yen (100)	66.71	67.03
Chinese Yuan	11.48	11.53
Swiss Franc	80.73	81.08
Singapore Dollar	55.11	55.36
Canadian Dollar	59.89	60.15
Malaysian Ringgit	17.84	17.93

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## TVS Motor unveils iQube e-scooter in Chennai

CHENNAI  
TVS Motor Company unveiled its electric scooter 'TVS iQube' here. The EV is already available in New Delhi and Bengaluru. TVS iQube is an urban scooter powered by an advanced electric drivetrain and next-generation SmartXonnect platform. Priced at ₹1,15,218, it is available for online booking and contactless delivery, the company said.

## Natco Pharma net drops 43% as revenue declines

HYDERABAD  
Natco Pharma reported a 43% decline in consolidated net profit for Q4 to ₹53 crore on the back of lower revenue in the base business. Total income dropped 25% to ₹359.7 crore. For FY21, the net profit slid 3.4% to ₹442.4 crore. Natco Pharma said it was able to sustain revenue during the year despite significant negative impact of the pandemic on the base business.

## SPORT

## Belgium breaks Danish hearts

Books a last-16 slot with a come-from-behind win

## EURO 2020

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
COPENHAGEN

Substitute Kevin de Bruyne set up one goal and scored the winner himself to give Belgium a 2-1 victory over Denmark in a European Championship game marked by an emotional tribute to Christian Eriksen in the first half.

De Bruyne came on after haltime for his first appearance since sustaining a facial fracture in the Champions League final and squared the ball for Thorgan Hazard to equalise in the 55th minute. He then scored in the 71st with a low shot from outside the area.

The win put Belgium into the round of 16 at Euro 2020.

## CII urges ₹3-lakh crore stimulus

Industry group pushes for cash transfers, fuel tax cut to help revive demand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Mooting 'urgent' fiscal support to shore up the economy, industry body CII on Thursday said the government has room to provide a ₹3-lakh crore stimulus and advocated a reduction in fuel taxes and enhancement in cash transfers to households to revive demand.

Stressing that livelihoods had taken a severe hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) president T.V. Narendran called for employment generation to be the central focus of policy measures and an expansion of the central bank's balance sheet to accommodate a fiscal push of 1.3% of GDP.

"The ongoing second wave has had a significant impact on economic activity



**Cash in hand:** It's not a good idea to raise resources via higher taxes at a time of recession, says T.V. Narendran. ■ K. PICHUMANI

in this quarter and a large part of the labour force faced health issues, either themselves or in their families," Mr. Narendran said, stressing that health exigencies and job losses had squeezed spending ability.

Terming the demand shock as a big area of concern for India's consumption-led economy, the CII

president said the cumulative impact of two waves on incomes, livelihoods and consumer sentiment, coupled with increase in household medical expenses, are likely to impact consumer demand for some time.

"There is always a temptation to raise resources through higher taxation to fund higher spending. But

we believe it's not a good idea at the time when the economy is in recession, and instead some tax reductions could incentivise spending," he said, calling for a reduction in excise duties on fuel, some temporary GST rate cuts and inclusion of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) under the GST regime.

High fuel prices are impacting businesses as well, he said, especially in sectors such as aviation where ATF costs are 60% of total costs.

"We will recommend that the Centre takes a balanced view on the need to manage inflation and push growth, and the way they deal with oil prices is one part of the puzzle that needs to be fixed," said Mr. Narendran, who is the global chief executive officer and managing director of Tata Steel.

## Flipkart challenges court order on antitrust probe

'Move to allow investigation erroneous'

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI

Walmart's Flipkart has filed a legal challenge against the restarting of an antitrust probe into the company, arguing in a court filing that the investigation would cause "irreparable injury."

The Competition Commission of India began an investigation in January last year following a complaint that Flipkart and Amazon promoted select sellers on their e-commerce platforms and used deep discounts to stifle competition.

The companies have denied wrongdoing and near-immediate legal challenges from the pair stalled the probe for more than a year until a court last week allowed it to resume, having dismissed arguments that the CCI lacked evidence.

The fresh appeal from Flipkart, filed on June 16, argues that decision to allow the probe to resume was erroneous and must be put on hold.

The filing, which was not made public, also urged the court to quash the initial CCI order for the investigation.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Wipro said its step-down subsidiary, Wipro IT Services, will issue U.S. dollar-denominated notes worth \$750 million on June 23.

The net proceeds of the notes, which are proposed to be listed on Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Ltd., are intended for refinancing existing debt and general corporate purposes.

A filing said the fixed rate, senior, unsecured notes will entail coupon rate at 1.5% per annum, payable semi-annually on June 23 and December 23 each year, starting December 23, 2021. The notes will be guaranteed by Wipro.

## Mercedes unveils S-Class car at ₹2.17 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Mercedes-Benz has introduced the seventh-generation S-Class car in India with prices starting at ₹2.17 crore for ₹400d 4MATIC and ₹2.19 crore for S450 4MATIC, ex-showroom.

"The S-Class has been one of the much anticipated luxury cars in the market with unparalleled customer trust and loyalty," said Martin Schwenk, MD & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India. Cumulatively, more than 8,000 S-Class cars have been sold in India.

"We are seeing demand for all our products. In the first six months, we have seen 50% sales growth over the same period last year. We will keep introducing new products to revive the market," added Mr. Schwenk.

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"We are

# History beckons as India and New Zealand battle for supremacy

In a contest for the ages, Kohli and Williamson eye a global triumph as evenly matched sides try to outwit each other in seaming and swinging conditions

## WTC FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SOUTHAMPTON

Virat Kohli carries the expectations of a billion while cricket romantics will pin their hopes on Kane Williamson when India and New Zealand engage in a battle to create a lasting legacy in pristine whites in the inaugural World Test Championship final starting here on Friday.

For the connoisseurs of the glorious game, Test cricket is the ultimate format and despite its aura, the 144-year-old history needed a facelift along with a context which the World Test Championship provided despite various bottlenecks, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Kohli, India's most successful Test captain, a trophy-less cabinet doesn't do justice to the champion performer that he has been for a decade. He needs a global triumph. Every captain needs it but perhaps the Indian captain wants it more.

Williamson stands in his way with a bunch of fine cricketers in international cricket.

If Williamson happens to stand with the ICC Test Mace on the Hampshire Bowl balcony, one might just smile and think that perhaps "Nice guys don't always finish last".

But, after two years and half a dozen series later, a battle-hardened Indian team will give its all in a match,

from which the winning team will also walk away with a \$1.6 million windfall.

Cheetheshwar Pujara would be ready to take more bruises on his body if Neil Wagner starts bowling short. Ajinkya Rahane has grown in stature.

R. Ashwin wouldn't mind one bit if he can fool Williamson, Ross Taylor or the dogged Henry Nicholls with a carrom ball or a slider.

Ishant Sharma has grown 14 years older since that epic WACA spell to Ricky Ponting and India's senior-most player deserves to win a World Championship as much as anyone else.

Man to man, there is very little to choose between the two teams even though playing New Zealand in conditions that aid seam and swing isn't easy.

### The teams:

**India (final XI):** Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheetheshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami.

**New Zealand (from):** Kane Williamson (Capt.), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Colin de Grandhomme, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner, B.J. Watling and Will Young.

**Umpires:** Richard Illingworth and Michael Gough; **Match referee:** Chris Broad.

Match starts at 3 p.m. IST.

## THE ULTIMATE Test

As Kohli's India and Williamson's New Zealand gear up for the summit clash of the World Test Championship (WTC), a look at their journeys and how the teams have fared against each other

### HOW THE TEAMS REACHED ROSE BOWL

#### INDIA

bt West Indies **2-0** (away), 2019  
bt South Africa **3-0** (home), 2019  
bt Bangladesh **2-0** (home), 2019  
lost to New Zealand **0-2** (away), 2020  
bt Australia **2-1** (away), 2020-21  
bt England **3-1** (home), 2021

#### NEW ZEALAND

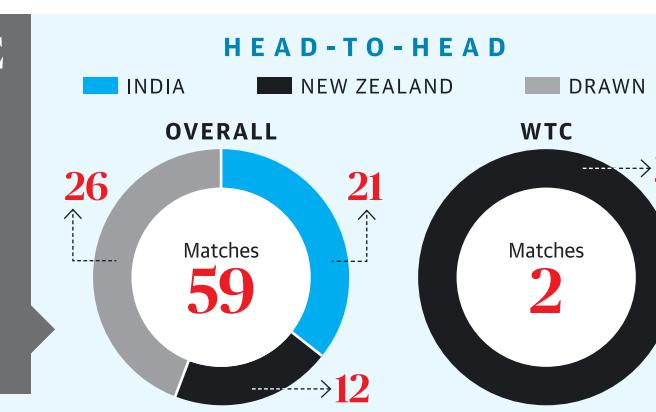
drew with Sri Lanka **1-1** (away), 2019  
lost to Australia **0-3** (away), 2019-20  
bt India **2-0** (home), 2020  
bt West Indies **2-0** (home), 2020  
bt Pakistan **2-0** (home), 2020-21

#### INDIA

Played **17** Won **12** Lost **4** Drawn **1**

#### NEW ZEALAND

Played **11** Won **7** Lost **4** Drawn **0**



### GROUND REALITY

WEATHER:  
Rain has been forecast on all five days of the Test

No, it [the weather] does not change [things] from our point of view as a team. For us, it is about covering all the bases KOHLI



## THE ARCHITECTS

### INDIA

	M	Inns	N.O.	Runs	HS	Avg.	50s/100s
Ajinkya Rahane	17	28	3	1095	115	43.80	6/3
Rohit Sharma	11	17	1	1030	212	64.37	2/4
Virat Kohli	14	22	2	877	254 n.o.	43.85	5/2

### BATTING

	M	Inns	Wkts.	BBI	Avg.	SR	5WI/10WM
R. Ashwin	13	24	67	7/145	20.88	46.9	4/0
Mohammed Shami	10	18	36	5/35	19.77	39.9	1/0
Ishant Sharma	11	20	36	5/22	17.36	36.3	3/0

### BOWLING

	M	Inns	N.O.	Runs	HS	Avg.	50s/100s
Kane Williamson	9	14	0	817	251	58.35	1/3
Tom Latham	11	18	1	680	154	40.00	5/1
Henry Nicholls	10	15	1	585	174	41.78	1/2

### BATTING

	M	Inns	Wkts.	BBI	Avg.	SR	5WI/10WM
Tim Southee	10	20	51	5/32	20.66	45.9	3/0
Kyle Jamieson	6	12	36	6/48	13.27	33.3	4/1
Trent Boult	9	18	34	4/28	29.29	59.0	0/0

### BOWLING

	M	Inns	N.O.	Runs	HS	Avg.	50s/100s
Kane Williamson	9	14	0	817	251	58.35	1/3
Tom Latham	11	18	1	680	154	40.00	5/1
Henry Nicholls	10	15	1	585	174	41.78	1/2

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## TV PICKS

**WTC 2021 final:** India vs New Zealand; Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.

**England Women vs India Women:** Only Test, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

**Euro 2020:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

**Golf:** US Open championship: Eurosport (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.

**Copa America 2021:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. (Saturday); Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Saturday)

## IN BRIEF

**Gujrathi returns to Champions Tour**

**NEW DELHI**  
The return of Vedit Gujrathi will see four Indian Grandmasters in the 16-player \$100,000 Goldmoney Asian Rapid online chess championship, which is part of the Champions Tour, beginning on June 26.

**The players:** Magnus Carlsen (Nor), Ding Liren (Chn), Levon Aronian (Arm), Anish Giri (Ned), Wesley So (USA), Alireza Firouzja (FIDE), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol), Vedit Gujrathi, Daniil Dubov (Rus), Peter Svidler (Rus), Vladislav Artemiev (Rus), Salem Saleh (UAE), B. Adhiban, Hou Yifan (Chn), D. Gukesh, and Arjun Erigais.

**Milkha Singh 'stable and improving'**

**CHANDIGARH**  
Legendary Indian athlete Milkha Singh is "stable and improving" under the constant supervision of a medical team, after having recovered from COVID-19, PGIMER officials said here on Thursday. The 91-year-old was on Wednesday shifted out of COVID ICU to another section of the PGIMER hospital. PTI

## COPA AMERICA

## TODAY'S SCHEDULE

## GROUP A

Chile vs Bolivia  
2.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Argentina vs Uruguay  
5.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Live on Sony Ten 2 and  
Sony 6 (SD & HD)

## India names tried-and-tested squad

The Rani Rampal-led team for Tokyo Olympics has mix of youth and experience

## HOCKEY

**UTHRA GANESAN**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian women's hockey team for the Tokyo Olympics was announced on Thursday with coach Sjoerd Marijne sticking to a largely tried-and-tested mix of youth and experience.

The 16-member Rani Rampal-led side has a core group that has been together for more than three years now. While eight of the players were part of India's previous outing in 2016 at Rio Olympics, 12 of them participated at the 2018 World Cup, where India reached the last-eight and the Asian Games, finishing runner-up.

Besides Rani, others from the Rio squad include Savita Punia, Deep Grace Ekka, Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Monika, Nikki Pradhan, Navjot Kaur and Vandana Katariya, with a total of 1,492 caps between them.



**Carrying India's hopes:** The Indian women's hockey team for the Games. ■ TWITTER/THEHOCKEYINDIA

"This team has worked very hard over the last few years and has made progress consistently. There's a good mix of experienced players and new talent, which is excellent," chief coach Manjre said.

"We look forward to tak-

ing on the best in the world in Tokyo. This is a team with a lot of potential and drive which we hope to channelise to our best performance yet," he added.

This will only be the ninth-ranked team's third Olympic appearance and se-

cond consecutive one.

**The squad:** Goalkeeper: Savita;

Defenders: Deep Grace Ekka,

Nikki Pradhan, Gurjit Kaur, Uddita;

Midfielders: Nisha, Neha

Goyal, Sushila Chanu, Monika,

Navjot Kaur, Salima Tete; For-

wards: Rani Rampal, Navneet

Kaur, Lalremtsami, Vandana Ka-

tariya, Sharmila Devi.

## Manish found cheating, stripped of Natl. u-18 title

Aronyak Ghosh elevated as the winner

## CHESS

**RAKESH RAO**  
NEW DELHI

Five days after the completion of the National under-18 online rapid chess championship, the All India Chess Federation (AICF) on Thursday took away the title from Odisha's Manish Kumar and named Bengal's Aronyak Ghosh champion.

The development followed the ruling of the Fairplay panel that found conclusive evidence against Manish of using unfair means on his way to the third place in the National

under-16 event on Tuesday.

The members of the Fairplay panel had doubts over Manish's play even in the under-18, but there was no conclusive evidence. But during the under-16 championship, Manish was found cheating. The committee unanimously decided to nullify all his results," confirmed AICF secretary Bharti Singh Chauhan.

As a result, Aronyak and Ayush Sharma, who tied with Manish for the title, were elevated as winner and runner-up respectively. Sanjay Gupta took the third spot.

## Harika in last eight

D. Harika beat former World champion Alexandra Kosteniuk of Russia to move into the quarterfinals of the Women's Speed Chess championship on Wednesday night. In a closely fought encounter that went into the four-game tie-breakers, the Indian won 14.5-12.5.

Harika's fine victory came after India's campaign got off to a disappointing start with Koneru Humpy going down to Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva on the opening day last Saturday. The other Indian in the fray, R. Vaishali will meet China's Lei Tingjie on Saturday.

## Hawks, Clippers post wins

## NBA PLAYOFFS

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
LOS ANGELES

Top-seeded Philadelphia 76ers and Utah Jazz were on the brink of elimination from the NBA playoffs on Wednesday after Atlanta Hawks and Los Angeles Clip-

pers notched up against-the-odds victories on the road.

**The results:** EC: Philadelphia 76ers 106 lost to Atlanta Hawks 10 (Hawks lead series 3-2).

WC: Utah Jazz 111 lost to LA Clippers 119 (Clippers lead series 3-2).

IOA signs MPL as principal sponsor for Olympics

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association on Thursday announced an ₹8 crore sponsorship deal with MPL Sports Foundation till the end of 2022 and covering major events in the period.

The deal will see MPL coming on board as the principal sponsor for the Indian contingents at the Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Asian Games & Commonwealth Games.

In addition, it will also supply the official sports kit for the contingents at the Asian and Commonwealth Games, the IOA said in a statement. Interestingly, it does not include the Olympics kits which will remain unbranded.

Meanwhile, Amul has signed a ₹1 crore deal till December 31 this year specifically covering the Tokyo Olympics.

## Three share lead; title-race wide open

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

A.R. Ilamparthy (Tamil Nadu), Sandip Nagare (Maharashtra) and Venky Akkarakaran (Kerala) shared the lead with 6.5 points after seven rounds of the National under-14 online rapid chess tournament on Thursday.

With 22 players following the leaders at six points, and four rounds to go, the title-race is wide open.

After Ilamparthy and Akkarakaran drew their seventh-round game on the top board, Nagare defeated Alekhyu Mukhopadhyay to emerge as the only winner from the first seven boards.

## Vijayakrishna passes away

**SPORTS REPORTER**  
BENGALURU

Former Karnataka all-rounder B. Vijayakrishna passed away here on Thursday following a cardiac arrest, the Karnataka State Cricket Association stated. He was 71.

A left-arm spinner and southpaw batsman, Vijayakrishna played 80 First Class and two List-A matches. In First Class cricket he scored 2,297 runs (average 25.8) and took 194 wickets.

Vijayakrishna was part of the Karnataka team that won three Ranji Trophy titles – 1973-74, 1977-78 and 1982-83.

Vijayakrishna represented Karnataka with distinction in a 15-year domestic career. Despite his considerable talent, Vijayakrishna could not break into the Indian team.



B. Vijayakrishna.

## Bopanna and Divij lose

## INDIANS ABROAD

**SPORTS BUREAU**

HALLE

Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan were beaten 6-3, 7-6 (3) by Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen of Belgium in the quarterfinals of the €1,455,925 Halle Open on Thursday. The Indian pair collected 90 ATP points and €14,340.

In the ITF men's event in Tunisia, Siddhant Banthia and USA's Alexander Kotzen

made the doubles semifinals.

**Other results:** €1,455,925

Halle Open: Doubles (quarterfinals): Sander Gille & Joran Vliegen (Bel) bt Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan 6-3, 7-6(3).

€132,280 Challenger, Nottingham: Pre-quarterfinals: Kamil Majchrzak (Pol) bt Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-4, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Doubles (quarterfinals): Alexander Kotzen (USA) & Siddhant Banthia bt Nicolas Bruna (Chi) & Imanol Lopez Morillo (Esp) 7-6(5), 6-4.

## Berrettini stops Murray

**AGENCIES**

LONDON

Andy Murray's grasscourt return was cut short in brutal fashion at Queen's Club as Italian top seed Matteo Berrettini dished out a 6-3, 6-3 defeat to the five-time winner on Thursday.

After Ilamparthy and Akkarakaran drew their seventh-round game on the top board, Nagare defeated Alekhyu Mukhopadhyay to emerge as the only winner from the first seven boards.

reer win over Murray. "I did not play very well," said Murray, adding that just being back on court was not a barometer of success for him.

In another match, second seed Denis Shapovalov beat defending champion Feliciano Lopez 6-2, 6-3.

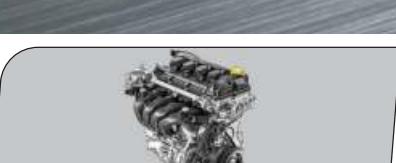
Third seed Alexander Zverev was bounced out by France's Ugo Humbert 7-6 (4), 3-6, 6-3 in the Halle Open pre-quarterfinals.


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DEHLI		(GT Karnal Road) (GT Karnal Road)	(Budh Vihar) (Azadpur)	(Narela)	(Narela)	(Peeragarh)	(Badli)	(Prashant Vihar)	(Wazirpur) (Pitampura)	(Mathura Road)	(Nehru Place)	(Lajpat Nagar)	(Daryaganj)	(9560036262)	(999903333)	(999903333)	(997190011)	(8745887458)	(999903688)	(26712222)	(9999519157)	(892968145)	(958279749)
WEST		Competent	Rana Motors	D.D. Motors	Magic Auto	T.R. Sawhney	Competent	Magic Auto	AAA Vehicleleads	Competent	Bagga Link	Rohan	Fairdeal	Rohan	Vipul	Fairdeal Cars	Rohan	Platinum Motocorp	Platinum Motocorp	Bagga Link	T.R. Sawhney	Vipul	Competent
DELHI		(Shivaji Marg)	(Janakpuri)	(Mayapur)	(Sec-20, Dwarka)	(Rajouri Garden)	(Najafgarh)	(Dwarka Sec-13)	(Mundka														