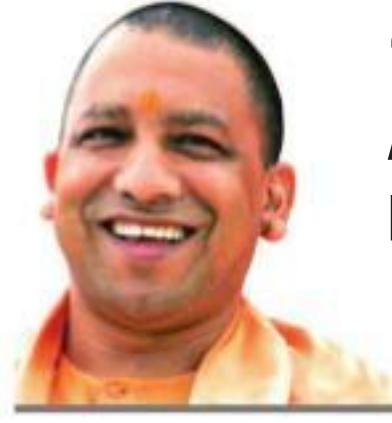


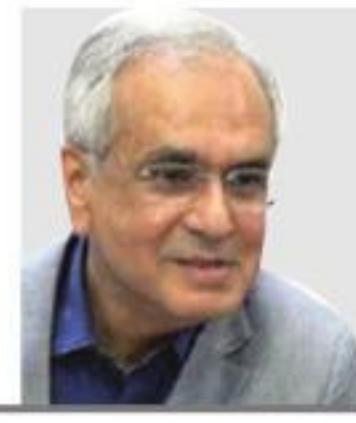


PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



'RISING POPULATION
A HURDLE IN
DEVELOPMENT'

P5



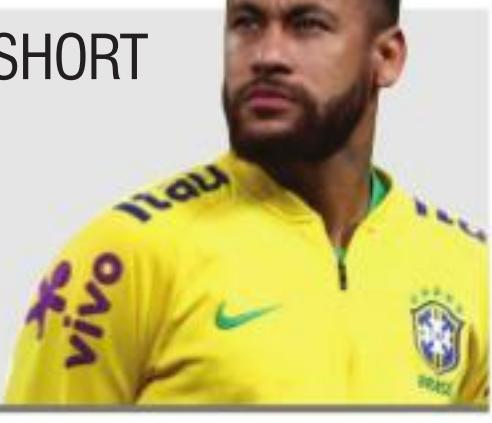
'INDIA POISED FOR
DOUBLE-DIGIT
GROWTH THIS FISCAL'

P8



AZAD PITCHES HIS NEW
POLITICAL OUTFIT AS
ALTERNATIVE TO BSP

P5



NEYMAR FALLS SHORT

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light rain/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 35 and 26 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 76% Min: 51%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 39.0°C (+ 3) Min: 28.8°C (+ 1)
SUN RISES 05:33 hrs SUN SETS 19:22 hrs
MOON RISES 08:21 hrs MOON SETS 21:21 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Chariots reach outside the Jagannath temple on the eve of Rath Yatra in Puri on Sunday. IANS

Richard Branson reaches space: Swash-buckling entrepreneur Richard Branson hurtled into space aboard his own winged rocket ship on Sunday in his boldest adventure yet, beating out fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos. Aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla became the third Indian-American woman to fly into space when she joined Branson on Virgin Galactic's first fully-crewed successful suborbital test flight from the US state of New Mexico. P10

Djokovic wins his sixth Wimbledon title: Novak Djokovic won the summit clash 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 against first-time finalist Matteo Berrettini to win his sixth Wimbledon title and record-equaling 20th Grand Slam trophy. He's now level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal in the list of most singles Grand Slam titles in men's tennis history. Indian-origin Samir Banerjee, meanwhile, won the boys' singles title. P12

2 terrorists of Al-Qaida-backed outfit arrested from Lucknow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW, 11 JULY



Two terrorists of the Al-Qaida-supported Ansar Ghazwatul Hind were arrested from the outskirts of Uttar Pradesh's capital Lucknow on Sunday, with government officials claiming they were planning explosions, including using "human bombs", at several places in Uttar Pradesh.

Minhaz Ahmed and Maseeruddin, both residents of Lucknow, were apprehended by the state police's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS).

They were planning to "unleash terror activities on 15 August (Independence Day) in different cities of the state", including Lucknow, Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order)

Uttar Pradesh ATS personnel outside the house where two terrorists were arrested, at Dubagga on Sunday

Prashant Kumar told reporters.

"The ATS has arrested two active members belonging to Al-Qaida-supported Ansar Ghazwatul Hind". Minhaz Ahmed, a resident of Lucknow's Dubagga area, and Maseeruddin, a resident of Lucknow's Madiaon area, have been arrested. Explosive

material has been recovered from them," he said.

Ahmed and Maseeruddin on the instructions of Umar Halmandi, the head of the Uttar Pradesh module of the Al-Qaida, along with their associates were planning to unleash terror activities on 15 August in different cities of the state, and capital Lucknow, the additional director general of police (ADGP) said.

"They were planning explosions at important places, memorials and crowded places, and also to use human bombs," Kumar said.

He also said that there are members of this module not only from Lucknow, but also from Kanpur. Raids are being conducted at different places to apprehend associates of these terrorists, he said.

the Southwest Monsoon was weak over several parts of the country.

On 1 July, the IMD said the moist easterly winds in the lower level from the Bay of Bengal are likely to establish gradually over parts of eastern India from 8 July, it had said.

On 5 July, the IMD again said the monsoon is likely to

PTI/SNS

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Giving rise to fresh worries about the Covid-19 pandemic spiking again, the R-factor, which indicates the speed at which the infection is spreading in the country, has risen recently, indicating a slowing in the decline of active cases while Kerala and some of the north-east states have emerged as regions of concern.

This is despite the nationwide tally of new cases remaining low, revealed an analysis by researchers at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences in Chennai.

The R-factor has increased slightly to 0.88 in June-end after being at its lowest-ever value of 0.78 from mid-May till late last month. An R-factor of 0.88 means every 100 infected persons on average pass on the infection to 88 other individuals.

The smaller the value of R is, the faster the decline.

This comes amidst the unlocking process by many states as the deadly second wave, which infected lakhs and killed thousands during its peak in April-May, shows signs of ebbing.

Sitabhra Sinha, who led the team of researchers, said the number of active cases is decreasing at a much slower rate for the nation as a whole, as well as in several individ-

uals. "Kerala showed a brief spike in cases and its R continues to hover close to 1. The north-east region is of great concern. Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura are showing a rise in the number of cases," Sinha noted.

When the second wave of the Covid-19 infection was at its peak, the overall R-value in the country was estimated to be 1.37 between 9 March to 21 April. It then progressively declined, falling to 0.82 in May 14-30. The R-value was 0.78 from May 15 to June 26 and 0.88 from June 20 to July 7.

Kerala reported 14,087 fresh Covid cases on Saturday along with 109 fatalities. On Sunday, it reported 12,220 new case and 72 fatalities.

Delhi cases: Delhi today reported 53 coronavirus infections - the lowest since 15 April last year - and 3 Covid-linked deaths as the positivity rate

dropped further to 0.07 per cent.

(SEE P2)

IMD's faulty monsoon forecasts spell no relief for N. India

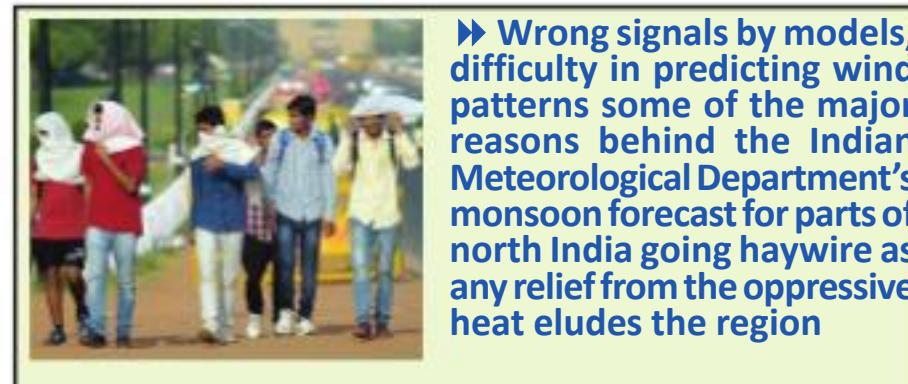
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Wrong signals by models, difficulty in predicting the outcomes of the interactions between the easterly and westerly winds were some of the major reasons behind the India Meteorological Department's monsoon forecast for parts of north India going haywire, experts pointed out as any relief from the oppressive heat eludes the region.

The Southwest Monsoon has reached almost all parts of the country but has stayed away from parts of north India. It is yet to reach Delhi, Haryana, parts of west Uttar Pradesh and west Rajasthan.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted that monsoon is expected to cover these parts by June - a little less than a month



► Wrong signals by models, difficulty in predicting wind patterns some of the major reasons behind the Indian Meteorological Department's monsoon forecast for parts of north India going haywire as any relief from the oppressive heat eludes the region

► The Southwest Monsoon has reached almost all parts of the country but has stayed away from parts of north India. It is yet to reach Delhi, Haryana, parts of west Uttar Pradesh and west Rajasthan

back, but its predictions are yet to come true.

In its forecast on 13 June, the IMD had predicted that the Southwest Monsoon will reach Delhi by 15 June. However, a day later it said conditions are not favourable for its further advancement in this region. Then began a long 'break-spell' during which

the Southwest Monsoon was weak over several parts of the country.

On 1 July, the IMD said the moist easterly winds in the lower level from the Bay of Bengal are likely to establish gradually over parts of eastern India from 8 July, it had said.

On 5 July, the IMD again said the monsoon is likely to

spread into northwest India covering Punjab and north Haryana by 10 July. However, there were no signs of any relief on 10 July.

We could have told (the delayed onset) in the morning itself. However, we are monitoring all the defined parameters/ criteria for onset of monsoon over Kerala. At present the criteria are not fully satisfied, IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said on May 30.

Mohapatra said the forecast models did not show consistency in the interactions of the easterlies and the westerlies - the two dominant wind patterns.

Mohapatra added that the accuracy of the models is reasonably good when it comes to forecasts up to two weeks but not as good for forecasts for four weeks.

M Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, who has spent over 35 years studying the Southwest Monsoon, said the forecast models gave wrong signals.

The models have picked up very well some of the broader events like a break in the monsoon and its revival a week ago. But when it comes to local forecasts, there is an issue, Rajeevan said.

With regards to the forecast of advancement of monsoon over parts of north India, including Delhi, it was too early. The IMD should not have issued the forecast. They could have waited for some more time, he said.

Tracking the interactions of the westerlies and the easterlies is the most difficult part in monsoon forecast, Mohapatra's predecessor KJ Ramesh said.

People's Padma: PM invites citizens to choose awardees

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

In a tweet, the PM said

India has many talented people who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots but we don't see or hear much of them

The nominations for the Padma awards 2022 are open till 15 September.

The Padma Awards, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri, are some of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day and seek to recognise achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

"India has many talented people, who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots. Often, we don't see or hear much of them. Do you know such inspiring people? You can nominate them for the #PadmaAwards. Nominations are open till 15 September. <https://padmaawards.gov.in/>," the PM tweeted.

Instituted in 1954, these awards are announced on the occasion of the Republic Day every year.

Bomb technique indicates role of Pak army in drone attack on Jammu IAF base

Security sources said that the 'pressure fuse' used is similar to the ones used by the Pakistani army

JAMMU/NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The 'pressure fuse' used in the bombs that were dropped on the Indian Air Force station in Jammu through drones in a first-of-its-kind attack indicates that some elements of the Pakistani army or the ISI helped terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba in fabricating the IEDs, according to security sources.

The improvised explosive device that pierced the rooftop of one of the IAF buildings at the airport carried less than one kg of RDX and a cocktail of other chemicals whereas the one that was dropped on the ground contained a little over one kg of the deadly explosives along with some ball bearings.

The sources said the IED used in the 27 June attack on the IAF station "definitely" used the technical expertise of the Pakistani military. The 'pressure fuse' used is similar to the ones used by the Pakistani army. A 'pressure fuse' is generally used in minefields, anti-tank mines and those dropped by the air force in the fuselage between the explosive and main detonator of a shell or an IED.

The explosive devices are activated by the pressure of either falling or external agent. However, in these sophisticated IEDs, the 'pressure fuse' had been deployed at the nose of the bombs so that they trigger with a force after falling on the ground, they said. PTI

Delhi unlocks more: educational meetings, training get the nod

All schools, colleges, and educational institutes in the city will however remain shut

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Continuing the process of staggered easing of the lockdown in the national capital amid a significant decline in the single-day number of Covid-19 cases, the Delhi government has now removed educational meetings and training activities from the list of completely prohibited activities.

The auditoriums and assembly halls in Delhi schools have been allowed to be used for training and meeting purposes from Monday, but physical teaching and learning will remain suspended, according to the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).

The Delhi government has

said in a statement that it will start the preparations and planning for the reopening of schools and other educational institutions now.

An order issued by the DDMA on Saturday said the auditoriums and assembly halls in schools and educational institutions can be used for training and meeting purposes with a 50 per cent seating capacity.

"There will be strict adherence to the standard operating procedure and other guidelines of the government, and compliance of Covid-appropriate behaviour," the Delhi government said, adding that the decision was taken by the DDMA in view of a considerable decline in the number of Covid cases and the overall improvement of the pandemic.

ic situation in the city. The DDMA order provides an opportunity to the educational institutions to resume their academic preparations, including trainings and meetings, for reopening whenever the situation improves further.

The decision will give a boost to the ongoing education projects of the Delhi government like teacher training in the offline mode also in a phased manner.

The Delhi government schools have planned staggered parents-teachers meetings between 19 and 31 July. These meetings can now provide an opportunity to the schools to get the views of parents on school reopening as well.

All schools, colleges, educational and coaching institu-

tions will, however, remain closed and online or distance learning will be allowed, the order said.

Other prohibited activities and services include cinema halls, multiplexes, spas, theatres, entertainment parks, political, social, cultural events and such other gatherings. These were banned with the imposition of a lockdown in Delhi on April 19 due to spiking coronavirus infections in the city.

Public transports, including the Delhi Metro, will continue to operate with a 50 per cent seating capacity. The DTC and cluster buses will also run with a 50 per cent seating capacity, the order stated.

The activities that are prohibited and restricted will remain so till 26 July morning.

it said. The Delhi government started a phased unlock process, beginning with construction and manufacturing activities, from 31 May.

With further improvement in the Covid situation in the city, more activities and services, including shops, markets, malls, restaurants, Delhi Metro trains and public transport buses, were opened with restricted timings and capacity.

Last week, the government allowed reopening of stadiums and sports complexes without spectators.

The number of Covid cases and the positivity rate have registered a steady decline in Delhi in the last few weeks, paving the way for a gradual resumption of various activities.

Monsoon tests patience of Delhi'ites, central Delhi most rain-deficient district in India



A vendor quenches his thirst on a hot afternoon in the Capital on Sunday. SUBRATA DUTTA

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

normal so far, putting it in the category of "large deficient" states.

"The conditions continue to remain favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon over Delhi, remaining parts of west Uttar Pradesh, some more parts of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan during the next 24 hours," the India Meteorological Department said in its latest statement.

Though it is going to rain in Delhi on Sunday, the arrival of the monsoon will be announced in Monday's mid-day bulletin -- based on observations at 8.30 am on July 12, IMD scientist Sunita Devi said.

According to the standard operating procedure, the monsoon onset is declared based on the rainfall reported during the past 24 hours ending at 8.30 am, she explained.

Devi said unlike the onset of monsoon over Kerala, pre-

dicting the arrival of the monsoon in northwest India is a complex process, as the variability is high because of less rainfall compared to the southern state.

The IMD had earlier predicted that the monsoon may reach Delhi by June 15, which would have been 12 days early, but the wind system entered a "break" phase. Last week, it said that Delhi will get its first monsoonal rains around July 10.

The weather department revised the prediction yet again on Saturday, saying the monsoon, the most delayed in the last 19 years, may reach the capital in the next 24 hours.

But it kept the city residents waiting on Sunday too.

In July 2002, the monsoon had entered the city on July 19. This is the most delayed monsoon since then.

390 Covid-hit families apply till 9 July under Delhi govt scheme

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

About 390 beneficiaries have applied till 9 July under a Delhi government scheme that will provide financial assistance to families who lost their loved ones to Covid, social welfare minister Rajendra Pal Gautam today said.

Of these, 220 applications are for a pension of Rs 2,500 per month and 170 for Rs 50,000 one-time ex-gratia.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and Gautam had launched "Mukhyamantri COVID-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana" on 6 July.

Under the scheme, Rs 50,000 ex gratia will be given to every family that lost a member to

Delhi logs 53 new virus cases, lowest since 15 April last year

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Delhi today reported 53 coronavirus infections — the lowest since 15 April last year — and 3 Covid-linked deaths as the positivity rate dropped further to 0.07 percent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital had yesterday reported 76 coronavirus infections and 1 Covid death.

COVID-19 and an additional Rs 2,500 per month will be given if the deceased was the sole

breadwinner.

"As on July 9, the Social Welfare Department has received

390 applications under this scheme. 220 beneficiaries have applied for a pension of Rs 2,500 per month and 170 have applied for Rs 50,000 ex gratia amount," a statement quoting Gautam said. Since the scheme was launched recently, it may take time for the beneficiaries to collect all the required documents. But the process of application will be fast-tracked in the coming days, it said.

Gautam said the representatives of the department will go door to door to help the beneficiaries fill up application forms. "Our representatives will not find faults with their documentation, rather they will help beneficiaries in the documentation process," the minister said.

The Delhi government had notified the "Mukhyamantri COVID-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana" on 22 June. The notifications stated, "The government will also consider a single member of the affected family to be enrolled as a civil defence volunteer. Besides, the state affirms to look after the health and education needs of the dependent children as per existing policy."

There is no income criterion to apply for financial assistance under the scheme.

"The deceased and dependent both should be from Delhi. Death should be certified as COVID-19 death or death within one month of testing Covid positive and verified by the health department as Covid death," it added.

Covid norms violation: Part of Sadar Bazar closed for 3 days

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

cause super spreading of the coronavirus," the DM said in the order.

Taking "immediate and stringent action to curtail the spreading of the virus", the market area will remain closed till 10 pm on July 13, according to the order.

"The market area from

Bara Tooti Chowk to Qutub Road, Sadar Bazar, Delhi, is hereby restricted to open with effect from

10:00 pm on 10 July 2021

to 13 July, 2021, 10:00 pm or further orders, whichever is earlier," it said.

The Central district magistrate (DM) said in an official order that shopkeepers, street vendors and people were found not following Covid-appropriate behaviour on Saturday. This could cause "super spreading of the coronavirus", the official observed.

"Due to a large football, the market's association and shopkeepers were unable to ensure Covid protocols on 10-07-2021 in the aforesaid market. The guidelines and directions of Covid protocol are being contravened in the above said market of Sadar Bazar, Delhi, which may

19, necessary action as per law would be taken against him/her under Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, Section 188 of IPC (Indian Penal Code) and other relevant applicable Acts," the order said.

Section 188 pertain to punishment for disobedience to order duly promulgated by a public servant.

Delhi was under lockdown from April 19 to May 30 during the second wave of the Covid pandemic.

Restrictions are being eased in a phased manner, and markets were allowed to open from June 7.

The administration has asked traders to submit an action plan within three days for ensuring and adopting Covid appropriate behaviour.

"In the event of any shopkeeper found violating this order or any act which may spread COVID-

Let us operate at 50 pc capacity in case of yellow alert: Delhi gyms to CM

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

50 per cent capacity.

"Gyms will be the first entity to be closed whereas parks, restaurants, bars etc will function at 50 per cent occupancy. Why are the gyms always targeted? There is no evidence of corona spreading from any gym but still our livelihood is the first one to be closed and the last one to open," the Delhi Gym Association said in the letter to Kejriwal on Saturday.

"We request you to please reconsider this decision and allow gyms to open at 50 per cent capacity," the letter read.

There are around 5,500 gyms and fitness centres across the national capital.

Chirag Sethi, Vice-President, Delhi Gym Association said the decision would create panic among members and owners of gyms and fitness centres.

"The industry has already suffered a lot during the past few months. This decision will badly impact the industry. The entire fitness industry might just collapse and the livelihood of lakhs of people will be at stake."

3 men held for armed robbery at property dealer's house

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

mation to the accused men about the availability of cash and jewellery at Lal's house, he said.

The incident that took place on July 7 around 1.30 pm was caught on camera. Four armed men posing as electricians entered Lal's house in his absence. All of them were carrying weapons and had their faces covered with masks to conceal their identity. While one of them was wearing a helmet, others were wearing a cap.

They held the family hostage and fled with Rs 8 lakh cash and gold ornaments, a senior police officer said.

He opened a Spa and recruited women for call girl services. To meet his expenses, he used them to honeytrap rich and wealthy businessmen, shoot their intimate pictures or videos and demanded money from them after threatening to upload them if they failed to pay up, they said.

Police said Singh along with Aryan Dixit (28) and another female associate, also a software engineer by profession, would target wealthy businessmen through "Tinder app". The woman

Software engineer among 3 held for 'honey-trapping' businessman

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

would initiate chats to lure the victim and later fix up a meeting, police said.

A software engineer and his two associates have been arrested for allegedly honeytrapping a businessman and demanding Rs 1 crore from him after threatening to upload his morphed pictures on social media platforms, police said on Sunday.

The main accused, Raj Kishor Singh, a software engineer based in Gurgaon, fell into bad company owing to his lavish lifestyle, they said.

He opened a Spa and

recruited women for call girl services. To meet his expenses, he used them to honeytrap rich and wealthy businessmen, shoot their intimate pictures or videos and demanded money from them after threatening to upload them if they failed to pay up, they said.

Police said Singh along

with Aryan Dixit (28)

and another female associate,

also a software engineer by

profession, would target

wealthy businessmen through

"Tinder app". The woman

technical surveillance was mounted, manual information was collected and location of the suspect was identified.

"A raid was conducted and one of the suspects identified as Rajkishor Singh was nabbed from Gurgaon who disclosed his involvement and revealed names of his two associates."

Another raid was conducted at DLF Phase II in Gurgaon from where the woman was arrested while her co-accused and friend Aryan Dixit was nabbed from south Delhi's Chhattarpur, he said.

During the search of their flat, two handbag fitted with spy camera, memory card, USB Pen Drive, laptop containing videos and pictures of victims, one mobile phone used to make extortion calls to the victim was also recovered, he added.

Police said Dixit, who is an MBA graduate has his own online garment business. Singh was also previously arrested in a case registered at Connaught police station, they added.

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</div



The advent of the mango season, like everywhere else, is awaited with bated breath in the national capital. In fact, for true mango lovers the mango season is nothing less than a festival. However, this year the arrival of the fruit which generally commences around end April with the arrival of the first crop of Safedas and Begumpallis from Andhra Pradesh took a severe beating amidst the raging Corona storm. But that has not prevented mango connoisseurs from savouring the "King of Fruits" once the going got easy on the pandemic front. You can find people jostling to buy their favourite varieties at the markets and thelewals and some even trudge all the way to the mandis. The life cycle of the mango season follows a definite pattern. Starting off with the Safedas and Begumpallis, the all-time favourite Alphonso from Ratnagiri finds a place in the mango basket next. With export avenues having dried up due to the pandemic, Delhi was fortunate to savour this exotic but much hyped variety in good numbers this year at reasonable prices. The ever-popular Dussheris of Malihabad (near Lucknow) and Langda of Benaras followed in quick succession in June and are still ruling the roost in almost all markets. Fortunately, due to an abundant crop, prices have been more than reasonable this year, ranging from Rs. 60-80 per kg even for the best picks of Dussheri and Langda. The true connoisseur worth his mango can distinguish each variety even with

their eyes closed — Alphonso or Hapoo (in Marathi parlance) by its distinctive flavour, Dussheri by its sweetness, the fibrous Langda by its elegant sweet-sour mix and Chausaby its dripping juice. When we were young, we feasted on a smaller but generally sour variety called the Chusni which had to be simply perforated with the teeth and sucked away till its last drop. It was very popular with children but the present-day sophistication has put an end to those innocent practices. Unfortunately, Delhiites are deprived of one of the tastiest varieties called Himsagar. Due to its relatively short shelf life, it hardly finds a place in the mango connoisseur's table due to the hazards of transportation from Malda and other parts of West Bengal, where it's predominantly grown. Sadly, mango exhibitions, a regular feature in Delhi till recent years, are not being organised by the Delhi Government these days and the chances of at least seeing some of the rare varieties like the Totapuri and Neelam of the South, Kesar of Gujarat and the Amrapali and Fazli of West Bengal are getting lost. Mango eating competitions were an integral part of such festivals of yore. While we wait for the late-comer but the juiciest and the sweetest of them all, Chausa, we rue such a narrow window of barely three months provided by the weather gods to the king of fruits, thereby compelling us to live on mango juices, aam papad and preserved mango pulp for the rest of the year!

TAILPIECE

"Today they are looking for hotels but, God forbid they don't have to look for hospitals tomorrow," said a friend after watching on TV screens how tourists have thronged hill stations and have been flouting Covid-19 guidelines despite the looming threat of the third wave of the coronavirus.

Contributed by: Deepak Razdan, Bhaskar Roy and Ashok Tuteja

India

HP mobile medical units help over 32K patients

'Jeevan Dhara' aims to provide healthcare services to residents of remote, inaccessible & unserved areas

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 11 JULY

The Himachal Pradesh government's mobile medical units, Jeevan Dhara, have helped people in the state's remote areas, providing OPD consultations to as many as 32,569 patients in such areas during the Covid pandemic period so far.

An official said that the HP government was determined to provide people of the state access to "equitable, affordable and quality health care services".

"To provide a complete range of health care services at doorsteps for the population living in remote, inaccessible, un-served and underserved areas, Jeevan Dhara, mobile medical units under the National Health Mission have been started. It is a step towards providing health care services in unfavourable topography of the hilly state of Himachal which was flagged off by chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on 18 November 2020," the state government official said.

He said the Jeevan Dhara



mobile units provide free consultation by medical officers, free drugs and screening for hypertension, diabetes and cancer.

It also provides outpatient services besides routine antenatal checkups in

the area of operation along with IEC sessions on a range of health issues. Besides, the Jeevan Dhara units were also being used for natural or man-made calamities or in disaster situations, epidemics or pan-

demics such as Covid-19 to provide services to affected populations, the official said. "The 10 Jeevan Dhara vans are providing its services in Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, Chamba, Kullu, Sirmour and Solan districts of the state."

Under the mobile medical units in the state, 955 camps are done till June 2021 and about 32,569 OPD screening and 17,778 lab tests have been done so far," he said.

He also said that with the evolving situation of the Covid pandemic, all the ten Jeevan Dhara units had been deployed for rapid antigen tests (RAT) and over 12,000 tests had been done through these vans in seven districts from 11 May 2021 to 7 July 2021. It includes, 672 RAT tests in Chamba district, 1,652 tests in Kangra, 1,668 tests in Kullu, 2,562 tests in Mandi, 1,803 tests in Shimla, 2,719 tests in Solan and 1,064 tests in Sirmour district.

"Free medical consultancy and screening were provided to the patients through these mobile vans and these were proving boon to the people of the state," he added.

Outgoing HP Governor lauds Thakur govt for ensuring devp

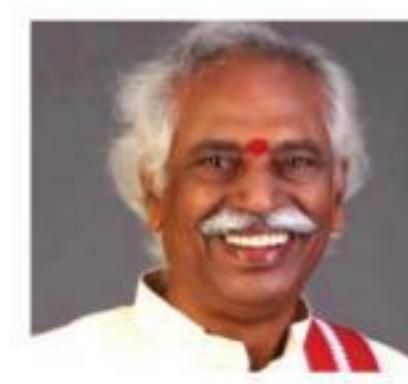
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 11 JULY

The outgoing Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, who had recently been shifted to Haryana, on Sunday lauded HP chief minister Jai Ram Thakur for the "rapid pace of development" and said the government is doing commendable work in the state.

Speaking at a high tea event that was hosted in his honour by the HP government, Dattatreya said Himachal is a beautiful state and the people are "hardworking, developing and content".

"There is a lot of purity, innocence and belongingness in the mind of people. It's very emotional moment for me. I am taking with me the sweet memories of the immense affection of the people of the state," Dattatreya said.

He said that during this



period he has got full cooperation from all sections, all political parties, social, cultural institutions and all organizations and all officers and employees of the government.

"Himachal is on the path of rapid development and the government was doing good work under the able leadership of Thakur," he said.

He further stated that he visited different parts of the state and he had seen development in the last corner of the state.

It had been his endeavour to focus more on tourism, skill development and technology.

taking all the precautions. Covid-appropriate behaviour, including social distancing among the inmates, is being strictly followed. The new inmates are initially isolated and later shifted to the barracks," Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel said.

The prisons department launched a Covid vaccination drive for the inmates in the 45-plus age category on

SJV signs MoU for Nepal hydel project

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 11 JULY

Satlij Jal Vidhyut Nigam (SJVN) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the development of 679 MW Lower Arun hydro electric project (HEP) in Kathmandu, Nepal. The MoU was signed by Nand Lal Sharma, SJVN chairman and managing director, and Sudesh Bhatta, CEO of Investment Board of Nepal (IBN).

The project is located in Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts of Nepal and it will not have any reservoir or dam and will be a tailrace development of 900 MW Arun 3 HEP.

The project will have four francis type turbines and on completion, the project will generate 2970 million units of electricity per annum. The project is scheduled to be completed in four years after commencement of construction activities.

No Covid-positive inmate, jail staff now: Delhi prisons dept

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

The Delhi prisons department currently has no inmate or jail staff who is COVID-19 positive, officials said on Sunday. However, they said Covid-appropriate behaviour is still strictly being followed.

"Even though there is no case of the coronavirus infection in the prisons present-ly, the jail authorities are

March 18, while the inoculation of the inmates in the 18-44 age group began on May 18.

As on Saturday, a total of 1,212 inmates above 45 years of age and 3,157 below 45 years of age in the Tihar jail were vaccinated against the viral disease. In the Rohini jail, 132 inmates above 45 years of age and 600 below 45 years of age have been administered the vaccine. In the Mandoli jail,

483 inmates aged above 45 years and 1,794 below 45 years of age have been vaccinated, according to data.

Since March, around 400 coronavirus cases have been reported among the inmates of the jails in the national capital and eight of them have succumbed to the disease. Among the prison staff members, over 200 have been infected with the virus since March.

Delhi's longing for rains



The number of ministers(Cabinet) has increased, not of vaccines



CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

TAKING A SWIPE AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

India

THUMBNAILS



Traffic jam at tourist resort hill station Patnitop in Ramban district on Sunday. ■ AGENCIES

Kalyan Singh recovering: The health condition of former Uttar Pradesh CM Kalyan Singh, who is admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow, is improving, the hospital said on Sunday. Singh, 89, was admitted to the ICU on the evening of 4 July due to an infection and reduced consciousness level.

PTI

Suraj Parmar suicide: The Bombay High Court has rejected the Maharashtra government's application seeking cancellation of bail to four accused in the suicide case of Thane-based builder Suraj Parmar in 2015. While three of the accused are sitting corporators in Thane civic body, the fourth one is a former corporator. Parmar had committed suicide by shooting himself dead in October 2015.

PTI

Chhattisgarh tap water connection: All 39 lakh rural households in Chhattisgarh will have access to pure drinking water through tap connection by 2023, state CM Bhupesh Baghel said on Sunday. The Centre has set a deadline to provide tap water connection to all rural households under the Jal Jeevan Mission by 2024, but in Chhattisgarh, we want to complete the target work a year before, he added.

PTI

New flights: SpiceJet will start eight new flights connecting Madhya Pradesh with Maharashtra and Gujarat from Friday 16 July onwards under the regional connectivity scheme UDAN, civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Sunday. PTI

PTI

Jammu & Kashmir have separate issues: Abdullah on party's delimitation panel

SRINAGAR, 11 JULY

Amid criticism that National Conference's proposal to the Delimitation Commission in Jammu echoed BJP's demands, party president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday said the issues in the two regions of the union territory were different from each other.

Speaking to reporters after paying floral tributes to his mother Begam Akbar Jehan at her mausoleum on the occasion of her 21st death anniversary, Abdullah said the different issues projected by the party's Jammu unit should not worry the people.

Jammu has separate issues, while Kashmir has separate issues. Why are you worried? the NC president told reporters when asked about the criticism by some quarters that the party's proposal to the commission in Jammu echoed the BJP demands in framing a new criterion to delimit constituencies.

In a reply to a question over the situation in Afghanistan and whether it would have any effect on Kashmir, Abdullah said he prays to God to bring peace to that country.

Afghanistan is a separate country. May God bring peace there and do whatever is right for the people there. I cannot say anything more than this because I have no relation with Afghanistan, he said. Earlier, Abdullah along with his son and NC vice president Omar Abdullah and other senior leaders of the party paid floral tributes at the mausoleum of Begam Akbar Jehan—wife of NC founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

PTI

Rising population hurdle in development: Adityanath

UPCM unveils a policy aimed at stabilising population and reducing maternal, infant deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW, 11 JULY



Chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday unveiled a policy aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh and reducing maternal and infant deaths in a time-bound manner as he termed rising population a "hurdle in development".

The Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030, unveiled on the occasion of World Population Day, also aims at bringing down the gross fertility rate among women to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030.

A few days ago, a draft Bill on population control was put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till 19 July. It says people having more than two children in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy.

It also seeks to prohibit promotions in government jobs for such people, while offering incentives to those limiting their children to two.

Unveiling the population policy on Sunday, Adityanath said, "Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about increasing population being a hurdle in development. Discussions on it have been going on for the four decades."

"The countries and states which have made efforts in this direction have seen positive results. However, more efforts are needed," he said, adding the Uttar Pradesh government was implementing this policy keeping in mind all sections of the society.

Besides seeking to achieve population stabilisation and reduce preventable maternal and infant deaths, the UP Population Policy also aims at preventing the death of children under the age of five years and improving their nutritional condition.

The CM said efforts to control population is linked to comprehensive awareness in the society. "We should not forget that the increase in population contributes to that poverty in the society. Hence, until all sections of society are made comprehensively aware, there will be a delay in fulfilling various goals. Every section of the society has to be associated with the awareness campaign," Adityanath said.

If there is no gap between the birth of two children, it affects their nourishment, he said, adding the efforts made

If voted to power, SP govt will conduct audit of Covid management in UP: Akhilesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW, 11 JULY

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday said if voted to power in the coming Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, his government will carry out an audit of Covid-19 management and take stringent action against officials for allegedly concealing data related to deaths.

He accused the BJP-led state government of hiding Covid-19 death figures and claimed that it hid data as it did not want to help the people. "After the Assembly elections in the state, and the formation of the SP government, an audit (of Covid-19 management) will be done, and officials who had concealed information will face stringent action.

in the past four to five years have yielded good results, but more efforts are needed.

The health of a mother and her child have to be linked with this, the CM said.

Hitting out at the BJP government over its draft population control Bill, Samajwadi Party MP Shafiqur Rahman

UP Panchayat polls: Police officer tells senior he has been slapped

LUCKNOW, 11 JULY

Officials who had breached their limits, their list has been prepared. In the pandemic, there was a time when it was felt that there was no government in UP. People were left to their fate," Yadav said.

Assembly elections are scheduled to take place in Uttar Pradesh next year.

"The SP chief also alleged that medicines were black marketed, people did not get beds and they had run from one place to another for oxygen, he said.

"When the teachers went on (panchayat poll) duty, it was said that only three teachers died (on poll duty due to Covid-19). Later, when organisations and we raised questions, the government had to admit that actually how many lives were lost," he said.

Barq

on Sunday asked where

will India get manpower in case

of war if people are not allowed

to procreate.

The parliamentarian from

Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal

said

it is Allah who decides

the number of lives

on earth and

no amount of checks can

control that.

A video of an Uttar Pradesh Police officer telling his senior over the phone that he had been slapped by BJP workers amid the violence during the elections for block panchayat heads has gone viral.

Polling for the 476 posts of block panchayat chiefs was held in UP on Saturday with scattered incidents of violence reported from 17 districts during the election process.

Several purported videos of clashes between supporters of rival parties, and police and workers of political parties were also posted on social media.

In one such video, which was also shown by news channels, Additional Superintendent of Police (city), Etawah, Prashant Kumar Prasad is heard telling a senior over the phone, "Sir, I have been slapped. BJP workers have also brought bombs." Etawah Police spokesperson confirmed the incident on Sunday.

The incident took place in Barphura block of the district. A case has been registered against two people. PTI

POSTER CHILD



Union home minister Amit Shah interacts with a girl ahead of the inaugural ceremony of Community Hall in Ahmedabad, on Sunday. ■ AGENCIES

Kejriwal promises 300 units of free power to every family, waiver of old bills in U'khand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DEHRADUN, 11 JULY

If elected to power in Uttarakhand, the Aam Aadmi Party will ensure free electricity up to 300 units per month to every family, waive old bills and give free electricity to farmers, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

Making the announcement in the hill state where Assembly elections are due next year, Kejriwal said his government has done it in Delhi and can do it in Uttarakhand also as the state generates power. "These things are guaranteed if we come to power in the state. If we can do it in Delhi, then why can't we do it in Uttarakhand, which not only produces electricity but also gives it to other states," Kejriwal said.

"There will be no power cuts. Free electricity doesn't mean long outages. When we took over in Delhi 7-8 hours long power outages were common. We set that right," said the AAP leader who recently promised free electricity to every household in Punjab that consumes up to 300 units of power if his party forms government in the state next year.

Kejriwal last year had announced a 100 per cent subsidy for those households which consume up to 200 units of electricity in Delhi. Consumers of 201-400 units received approximately 50 percent subsidy. In Uttarakhand, he said, every household will be provided 300

units of free electricity if the AAP forms the government.

The freebies announced on Sunday are being seen as his attempt to woo voters.

Uttarakhand power minister Harpal Singh Rawat had recently announced that the state government will give free electricity to people of the state up to 100 units.

The AAP leader remembered how he and his ministers went door-to-door to get transformers and wires replaced. He claimed that AAP workers touring different areas of Uttarakhand have found that exaggerated bills have been issued on a large scale to people "deliberately to dupe them".

"So we have decided to waive the old bills and start afresh if elected to power. We will also give free electricity to farmers for agricultural purposes," Kejriwal said.

AAP members reach Delhi BJP chief's house

AAP youth wing members were detained on Sunday when they went to cut the water connection to the house of Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta in protest against the Haryana government allegedly not providing the national capital its share of water.

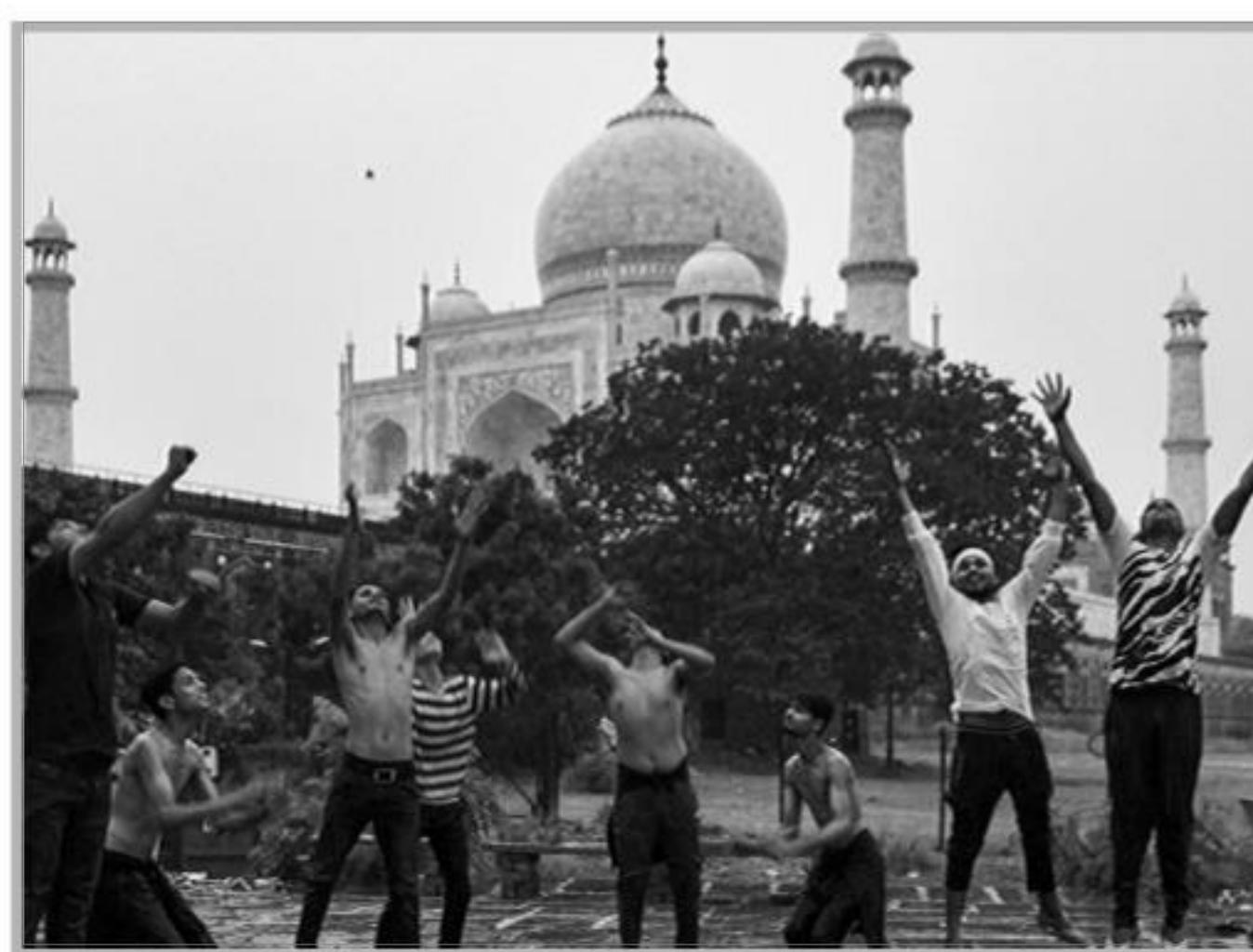
Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj had threatened on Saturday that if the BJP-led Haryana government does not release Delhi's "rightful portion" of water in 24 hours, the water supply to Gupta's house will be stopped.

protest, Madhya Pradesh Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said the upcoming project of the Laghu Udyog Bharati will provide skill development and create jobs.

"This land was allotted to the Laghu Udyog Bharati after considering all the aspects," he told reporters. Sarang said contrary to the claims made by Singh, no industrialist was seen during Saturday's protest.

Digvijaya Singh is always opposed to every new creation and brings negativity into every positive thing. The youths will be prepared for employment. Digvijaya Singh was CM for ten years but instead of giving jobs, he deprived the daily wagers of their employment. He is now feeling bad when something new is created," Sarang alleged.

MONSOON FUN



Youth enjoy rain near the Taj Mahal in Agra on Sunday. ■ AGENCIES

MP: Police use water cannons as Cong workers oppose land for RSS affiliate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, 11 JULY

Madhya Pradesh government's decision to allot land in an industrial estate to an RSS-affiliate associated with small industries prompted the Opposition Congress to protest under senior leader Digvijaya Singh here on Sunday where in police used water cannons.

The incident occurred when Singh, a Rajya Sabha MP, and other Congress workers tried to climb on a barricade during the protest at Govindpura industrial area, officials said. Police have filed a case against Singh and eight other Congress leaders along with 200 party workers for organising a protest without prior permission and violating Covid-19 rules.

Denying reports that a lobby within the BJP was active to finish her political career, Pankaja had referred to the legacy of her late father Gopinath Munde. Meanwhile, sources said Pankaja will meet BJP office-bearers on Tuesday and convince them to withdraw their resignations.

Thousands of workers of BJP were waiting to see Pri-

Police used water cannons but we will continue to fight against the land allotment till the association of industrial area is with us. The water got into my ears," Singh said.

He alleged Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan had given this land worth crores to the Laghu and Madhyam Udyog Bharati at the rate of ₹ 1 despite Opposition from the Industrial Association.

"This is the only park where workers take their lunch and rest, Singh said. The former CM said the Govindpura industrial estate was developed for ancillary units of the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) in Bhopal. The park land in the estate is being allotted to this organisation without changing the land title and securing due permissions. 95 per

cent of the industrialists are opposed to the land allotment to this body, he said. "I, CM Chouhan, former CM Balwant Singh had planted saplings in this park," Singh recalled.

Eyewitnesses said a heated argument broke out between Singh and Bhopal DIG Irsad Wali during the demonstration in the presence of police personnel. When Singh

said the Congress will demolish the foundation stone on the allotted land, Wali is heard saying the police will keep an eye on him, they said.

District Collector Avinash Lavanja told Singh work at the allotted land was allowed only after securing necessary legal permissions, including from the Industry Department.

Reacting to the Congress'

"

protest, Madhya Pradesh

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said the upcoming project of the Laghu Udyog Bharati will provide skill development and create jobs.

"This land was allotted to the Laghu Udyog Bharati after considering all the aspects," he told reporters. Sarang said contrary to the claims made by Singh, no industrialist was seen during Saturday's protest.

Digvijaya Singh is always opposed to every new creation and brings negativity into every positive thing. The youths will be prepared for employment. Digvijaya Singh was CM for ten years but instead of giving jobs, he deprived the daily wagers of their employment. He is now feeling bad when something new is created," Sarang alleged.

"The BSP has lost its identity and it is because of its own actions, not due to anyone else. Look at 2012 (UP assembly polls), 2014 (Lok Sabha polls), 2017 (state polls) and 2019 (LS polls), they are in decline," Aazad, also known as 'Raavan',

said. "Look at other states, now they (BSP) are getting less than 1 per cent votes, be it in Kerala, Assam, West Bengal. The BSP is in decline because its leaders don't want to work on the ground level and only go to the people during elections and the people are understanding this," he claimed.

Aazad alleged that the BSP was ignoring its founder the late Kanshi Ram's ideals and was working against those principles. The BSP became a national party in 12 years on the basis of those principles but that status is also in danger now, he said.

Pointing to the BSP's

BSP has lost its identity, Azad Samaj Party alternative in UP: Chandra Shekhar Aazad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Accusing the Bahujan Samaj Party of going soft on the Centre for the fear of Central probe agencies, Azad Samaj Party chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad on Sunday pitched his new political outfit as an alternative to the Mayawati-led party which he said was losing its identity by working against the principles of its founder Kanshi Ram.

The Bhim Army chief, whose political outfit Azad Samaj Party, launched last year, is seeking to establish itself as a defender of the rights of Dalits, other backward class-

ies and minorities, said a "grand alliance" is the need of the hour for the Uttar



This is an unconstitutional and communal move by the Modi-government to gain control of cooperative societies

SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER RAMESH CHENNITHALA
SLAMMING THE CENTRE FOR CREATING A NEW MINISTRY OF COOPERATION

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 12 JULY 2021

05

Baghel to play key role in Cong's UP poll preparation; meets Priyanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel is likely to play a key role in preparing the Congress organisation in Uttar Pradesh for the Assembly polls next year with a focus on strategising and booth management, sources said on Sunday.

Baghel, who had played a crucial role in the run up to the Assam Assembly polls with his team carrying out extensive booth training of party workers, met Congress general secretary in-charge Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, treasurer Pawan Kumar Bansal and Rajeev Shukla here at party chief Sonia Gandhi's 10 Janpath residence.

According to sources, Priyanka Gandhi has asked Chhattisgarh Congress leaders be sent to Uttar Pradesh, and during the meeting, an outline of booth management and worker's conference in the poll-bound state was discussed. There was also a discussion on intensifying the activities of the Congress organisation in UP.

On the recommendation of Baghel, his parliamentary advisor Rajesh Tiwari has been made AICC secretary-in-charge of UP.

Amid speculation about an agreement in 2018 that Baghel would be Chhattisgarh CM for two-and-a-half years after which the state's health minister, TS Singhdeo, would take over, Baghel told reporters he had taken oath after the high command asked him to and if the party top brass asks someone else to step in, it will be so.

However, sources in the Baghel camp said the party's top leadership has assured him that he would continue as the CM. P L Punia, AICC in-charge Chhattisgarh, said speculation over leadership change was only in the media and was not true.

Farmers protest at BJP events

Attack Haryana dy speaker's car, demand rollback of farm laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 11 JULY



Haryana deputy speaker Ranbir Gangwa's car came under attack in Sirsa district on Sunday as farmers held protests at various places in the state targeting events of BJP leaders. Police said the rear windscreen of the SUV broke as stones were pelted, but no one was hurt.

The day saw protesters gather at various places across the state, raising slogans against the government and demanding a rollback of the contentious farm laws.

Earlier in the day, at one such protest in Fatehabad, protesters removed metal barricades put up by the police as they marched towards a venue where Haryana cooperation minister Banwari Lal and Sirsa MP Sunita Duggal were attending a party function.

Duggal later travelled to Sirsa to attend another party event, where Gangwa, a BJP MLA from the Nalwa constituency in Hisar district, was also present.

Farmers carrying black flags had assembled outside the Chaudhary Devi Lal university there during the day and raised slogans against the government.

While the leaders were coming out after the function

ended, protesters targeted Gangwa's car, the police said.

Despite heavy police presence, some managed to surround the vehicle and banged against it with their hands.

"The deputy speaker was seated on the front seat at the time of the incident. The vehicle's rear windscreen was broken. It is not immediately clear if something was hurled at it or somebody broke it with hand or an object. Some stones were also pelted at the vehicle as we were trying to escort it out of the area," Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sirsa, Sanjay Kumar said.

He said Sunita Duggal was in another car when the incident occurred.

Farmer leaders later said many protesters were detained by the police. They claimed they were holding a peaceful protest when police personnel forcibly removed them from the site, to which they objected.

Another protest was held in Jhajjar, where farmers

assembled when they learnt that state BJP chief O P Dhankar was to attend a party event there later in the day.

With black flags in their hands, the protesters said they would not allow the BJP or its ally JJP to hold functions unless the farm laws are repealed.

In Ambala, a large number of protesters gathered on the Ambala-Saharanpur road when they learnt that the district unit of the BJP was holding a function. Protesting farmers have been opposing public functions of the BJP and the JJP in the state.

On Saturday, farmers clashed with police when they tried to force their way through barricades towards a venue at Jagadhari in Yamunanagar district where Haryana minister Mool Chand Sharma was to address a meeting.

Protests were also held in Hisar against Haryana BJP chief Dhankar and in Jind against state minister Kamlesh Dhandha.

Speaking to reporters in Punjab's Gurdaspur on Sunday, Haryana Bharatiya Kisan (Chaduni) chief Gurram Singh Chaduni said it has been more than seven months since farmers started their protest at Delhi's borders, but the government was not listening to them.

New Bill soon to make Kerala business-friendly: Industries min

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 11 JULY

Following allegation that Kerala is not conducive for investment and the Kitex group owned by industrialist Sabu M Jacob deciding to choose Telangana for its latest investments, state industries minister P Rajeev on Monday said the state government would bring a new Bill to protect industries and ensure a business-friendly atmosphere in Kerala.

Speaking to media here, Rajeev said the proposed Bill would be presented in the coming Assembly session itself. Also, the Bill will propose disciplinary actions against officials who make road blocks to industries.

The minister further said industrialists have complained there is a delay in getting approval from various government departments in different stages. Examining this, the government is planning to form district and state-level committees to resolve the grievances of the industrialists, he added.

Kitex had earlier planned to set up a Rs 3,500-crore project in Kerala. However, alleging harassment and "investor-unfriendly" climate in Kerala, the company decided not to proceed with the plan. In this situation, Kitex got invitation to start industries in Telangana and Jacob on Friday announced a Rs 1,000-crore investment in Telangana.

SNS

Union minister RCP Singh will soon throw out Nitish from JD-U: RJD

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 11 JULY



dent," he asked.

Chandravanshi, a JD-U leader who was associated with Nitish Kumar since the foundation of Samata Party, alleged that RCP Singh had misbehaved with him.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Sunday alleged that JD-U president and Union minister RCP Singh will soon throw out Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar and his key aides from the party.

Citing the Pramod Chandravanshi incident, RJD spokesperson Shakti Singh Yadav said: "The incident with Pramod Chandravanshi will soon be replicated with Nitish Kumar and his trusted leaders of JD-U."

"RCP Singh is working like

a dictator in the JD-U. The way his security personnel threw out Pramod Chandravanshi from his official residence is an indication of internal split in the JD-U. Why Nitish Kumar is not criticising the inci-

After Hasina's mango gift, Tripura CM sends pineapples to Bangladesh PM

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
AGARTALA, 11 JULY



Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Sunday sent the state's exotic and juicy pineapples to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who had sent juicy 'Haribhang'a mango from her country to her Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, and chief ministers of West Bengal and four northeastern states.

Tripura government officials handed over 100 boxes containing 400 pieces (around 800 kg) of the Kew variety of pineapple to the officials of Indian High Commission at the Agartala-Akhaura checkpost. The Indian High Commission official would hand over the pineapple to Hasina in Dhaka," Tripura Horticulture Department director Fanibhusan Jamatia told reporters.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the India-Bangladesh friendship would remain intact," the Tripura chief minister told the Bangladesh Prime Minister, according to an official of the chief minister's office.

Tripura annually produces 1.28 lakh tonnes of two

major varieties ~ Kew and Queen ~ pineapples in 8,800 hectares of hilly orchards across the north-eastern state and earlier exported pineapples and lemons to Dubai, Bangladesh and other countries and many Indian states.

President Ram Nath Kovind, at a function in Agartala in 2018, had announced the 'Queen' variety of pineapple would be Tripura's state fruit.

BJP's Namassivayam is Puducherry home minister

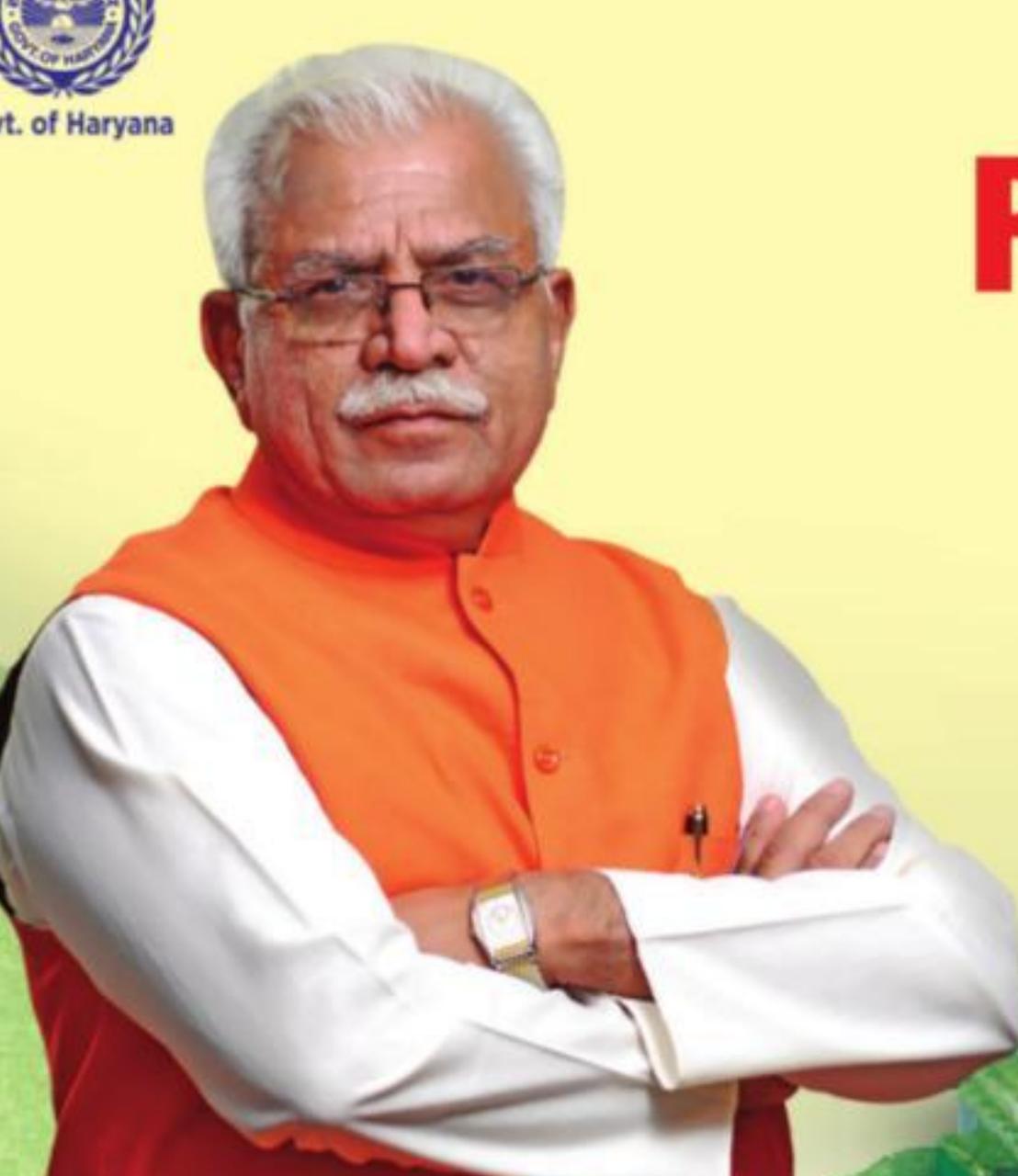
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUDUCHERRY, 11 JULY

chief minister N Rangasamy were sworn-in on 27 June.

Rangasamy was sworn-in on Sunday allotted the home portfolio in the AINRC-led NDA government in Puducherry, with the exercise being carried out two months after the bloc won the polls and the Cabinet members other than

and then CMV Narayanasamy helmed the department in the previous Congress government, which fell in February this year due to lack of majority. In its first representation in any Cabinet in Puducherry, 'home' was allotted to BJP's Namassivayam while CM Rangasamy would hold a number of portfolios, including revenue, general administration, health and family welfare and Hindu Religious Institutions.

Besides home, Namassivayam will handle electricity, industries and commerce, education, including collegiate education, sports and youth affairs and Sainik Welfare.



Safe Haryana

Prosperous Haryana

Shri Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

Inaugurates a world-class
State Emergency Response Centre (SERC)

1 24-hours surveillance across all 22 districts through the command centre in Panchkula

2 A dedicated team of 5000+ trained personnel

3 The police will reach the caller's location within 15-20 minutes

4 640+ ERV latest healthcare facilities and emergency wireless communication equipment

5 Hindi, Haryanvi, English and Punjabi language

Call us on the toll-free number
112

The call will be redirected to our command centre in Panchkula

The nearest ERV will be alerted

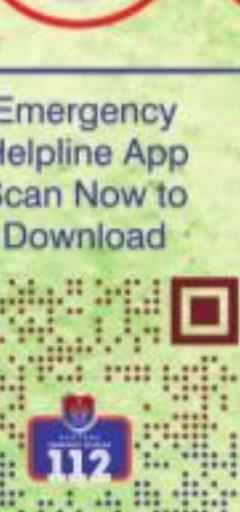
An Emergency Response team will arrive at the caller's location within 15-20 minutes

Our command centre will begin investigating the emergency within 24 hours

Just one call away

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112
We're always ready

Ambulance
Police
Fire Brigade



Emergency
Helpline App
Scan Now to
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Emblematic initiative

If there is one overarching takeaway from the reshuffle of the Union Cabinet effected by Prime Minister Narendra Modi it is his reliance on social engineering. First put into motion substantially by the Prime Minister's political mentor and former Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani in the 1980s when the BJP was pejoratively referred to as a "North Indian Brahmin-Bania party", social engineering and its many synonyms in Indian politics have since been mainlined by the saffron camp. Emblematic of this approach of the BJP has been the creation of a new Ministry of Cooperation as part of the governance rejig both in terms of individuals and structures. The importance placed by the Prime Minister on the ministry ~ which seeks to aid and guide the politically powerful and cash-rich cooperative sector in the country which is a significant employment generator in states such as Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu ~ can be gauged from the appointment of his most trusted colleague, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, to head it. Cooperatives in the states mentioned above have traditionally been led by women and men belonging to a cross-section of communities, ideologies, and political loyalties but Hindutva politics, whether of the inclusive or exclusionary variety, has till now failed to make significant inroads in this sector though individual BJP leaders may have had a measure of success. The sugar cooperatives in Maharashtra, for example, have in recent decades provided the electoral base for Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar; similarly, the Congress and the CPI-M have been dominant in the cooperative sector in states such as Karnataka and Kerala respectively. This social-political base (bolstered by the many educational and financial institutions established by visionaries in the cooperative belt) which has proven very handy electorally for a gamut of political parties in agrarian areas, is now under threat by what appears to be a concerted effort by the BJP to raise the stakes. The political fallout of this initiative, however, will be contentious because the cooperative sector is enumerated as a subject under the State List and opposition parties, especially of the regional variety, will resist any central guidance. That, however, is unlikely to prevent Mr Shah from implementing the Prime Minister's plans for the sector; indeed, it could be argued, he will relish the challenge given avoiding confrontation has not been his leitmotif in the past. A detailed blueprint of the priorities of the Ministry of Cooperation is still awaited but the cat has definitely been set among the pigeons. Senior Congress Party leader from Kerala Mr Ramesh Chennithala has written to his party leadership flagging what he termed this "RSS-BJP plot to take over a sector which has emerged out of inclusive, secular, social movements" and urged it to coordinate a response with other Opposition parties. The Centre's ordinance last year taking control of supervision of cooperative banks has already sparked a legal and political battle and its latest move is likely to ensure that stakeholder cooperation is unlikely going forward.

Gagging Films

The draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has circulated before introducing it in Parliament is not only an attempt to silence the film fraternity, but also an attempt to restore revisionary powers of the Union government struck down by the Supreme Court two decades ago. If a film is certified for public viewing by the Central Board of Film Certification, it would fall within the domain of the State governments. Therefore, it must be left to the States, as law and order is a state subject. The proposed legislation could thus be seen as an attempt to weaken federalism. The amendments would also deprive the CBFC of its functional autonomy. According to MK Stalin, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the Union Government, by attempting to amend the 1952 Cinematograph Act, is trying to go against the spirit of cooperative federalism and transgress the powers of the State governments and the CBFC, its own creation. In letters to the Union Ministers concerned, Stalin said, "The draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2021, has given rise to serious apprehensions not only in the minds of the film fraternity and film industry, but also among all well-meaning sections of society that cherish freedom of expression." The proposed amendment has made film making a very risky and uncertain industry because of the provision that enables the Union government to direct the chairman of the CBFC to re-examine a film after certification. It will only throttle the creativity of artists. The draft Bill to amend the 1952 Cinematograph Act comes just two months after the abolition of the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal, a statutory body that came to the rescue of film makers who sought to challenge the decisions of CBFC. If anyone is aggrieved by the decision of the CBFC, the only option left is to approach the High Court which is time-consuming and expensive for a film maker. Cinema in India has played a crucial role in nation-building right from pre-independence days through the last seven decades and emerged as a powerful medium. Freedom of expression is not subservient to the subjective satisfaction of the State. The right to freedom of speech and expression is guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution with reasonable restrictions listed under Article 19 (2), but such restrictions are to be imposed with great care and caution. The obsession of the government to exercise control and legislative overreach to curb any unfavourable expression does not augur well for democracy. The draft Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2021, has an uncanny resemblance to the pre-independence Dramatic Performances Act, 1876, which gave colonial rulers the power to prohibit any play that was likely to incite feelings of disaffection for the government.

In one boat

History teaches that no one ever wins in Afghanistan, not even the native Afghans, who remain amongst the most deprived, denied, and regressive societies on the planet. As history is poised to repeat itself, for once, no one will be celebrating the exit of yet another empire, not even those who worked surreptitiously to support the forces inimical to the exiting empire



The proverbial 'graveyard of empires' has once again demonstrated its ability to outlast violence and bloodshed to consume yet another 'empire' in the shape of the United States of America-led Western powers.

Historically, each time an 'empire' departed from the ungenerous swathes, the local tribes and their ruthless warlords took over to settle scores and assume power in their own way.

The accompanying undercurrents of the 'Great Game' that played out in Afghanistan, be it between Tsarist Russia and the British Empire, or the subsequent Cold War shadowboxing between the Soviet-propelled Najibullah's PDPA government and the ISI-CIA supported mujahideen, each exit of the interventionist 'empire' was followed by the vengeful takeover and mayhem by revisionist forces.

The ancient code of conduct, Pashtunwali, which binds the otherwise lawless tribes, is predicated, amongst other concepts, on the sense of Badal (revenge). It is this belief that haunts the scenario after the US troops withdrawal, when the return of the extremist Taliban, is almost certain.

History teaches that no one

called Doha Peace accord, there is growing palpitation in neighbouring Islamabad, Tehran, Dushanbe, Tashkent, Beijing and Delhi, and in Washington DC and Moscow, each for their own specific reasons. Taliban is the creation, a nurturing and phantom phenomenon that owes its genesis and sustenance to the deliberate, inadvertent, or even circumstantial lifeline provided by many foreign capitals, even if they suffer selective amnesia about their complicity.

The unmatched, consistent, and vested role of Pakistan in supporting the Taliban, towards its own selfish doctrine of Strategic Depth in Afghanistan, is morally indefensible and incalculable in scale. As the chief protagonist of the movement, Pakistan was always unscrupulous, because it always had to play the patented Pakistani 'double game'

which earned it the ire of Capitol Hill, as also across the Durand Line, where many Afghans recognized the pernicious role of the Pakistani.

If the late Lt Gen Hamid Gul (once the Director General of the Pakistani spy agency, ISI) was known by the infamous moniker 'Father of the Taliban' amongst the Afghans, he was also popularly recognised as the 'Butcher of Kabul'.

Sovereign sentiments aside, necessities of landlocked Afghanistan required that the Taliban also tacitly played along with the Pakistani 'establishment' to fight their internece wars ~ but the lingering battles kept the Taliban beholden, distracted and dependent on the Pakistanis, even when the ostensible Taliban gov-

ernment was in power (1996-2001). But not anymore, as the Taliban seems set to steamroll any opposition within and the Pakistanis wake up to the horrific consequences of 'overachieving' their objectives.

Strategic Depth had envisaged a dependent/vassal status for the government in Kabul and not a truly independent, irascible, and uncontrollable dispensation that could wreak havoc in the tinderbox of Pakistan. Taliban will be no one's men, and the first port of

their inevitable export of militant religiosity will be Pakistan. Shiite Iran will remain a sectarian thorn for the Sunni-supremacist Taliban, as would the ethnically different nations of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Memories of the former 'empires' of the United States and Russia are too fresh to be forgiven, whereas history and perception within the Taliban ranks would rankle against India. The short 76-km border with China may be inactive and irrelevant for the Taliban ranks, but for the Chinese, the possible 'nurseries' of Milmasty (hospitality in the Pashtunwali code that was afforded to Osama Bin Laden's Al Qaida) could be a concern with Uighur separatist organisations like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). China would rather have a moderate government like the current Ashraf Ghani set-up, as opposed to an unpredictable and puritanical Islamist dispensation of the Taliban.

The Arab Sheikdoms had woken up to the Frankensteinian reality of Wahabi extremism that they had unleashed and its boomeranged consequences ~

Osama Bin Laden's Arab forces were the obvious expressions of 'overachieving' their objectives, just as Pakistan has now 'overachieved' its Strategic Depth doctrine to its own discomfiture. While the battleground of the Middle Eastern theatre may continue pitching rivals against each other, only in Afghanistan will Saudi Arabia and Iran fear the same 'enemy'. The same applies to Washington DC and Moscow or Delhi and Islamabad (or even Beijing). No one will accept it openly, but everyone is on the same page on Afghanistan.

Given that Afghanistan was only a playground of competing interests, which has serendipitously and ironically become a point of convergence and alignment for all external stakeholders ~ chances that the 'Great Game' of the 21st Century stops (even selectively on Afghanistan) amidst the competing powers is impossible. The optimum solution amongst the bad choices available, would be to somehow 'contain' Afghanistan and its foreboding instincts within. As most people living on either side of the Durand Line do not recognise or respect it, the foremost challenge to 'contain' Afghanistan would be for Pakistan itself. Geography and ethnic/sectarian divides may aid sealing borders with the other countries, more practically.

The Taliban too, beyond a point are inward looking and do not harbour internationalist agendas unlike other terror organisations like the Islamic State, Al Qaida etc. ~ though the subliminal sentiment of Pashtunistan (including tracts deep within Pakistan), could erupt, and be well within their agenda. Pakistan will have no choice but to do another U-turn, this time with the acquiescence and support of almost all capitals in the world to renege on its past duplicitousness, shun and even militarily 'contain' Afghanistan.

That is the best bet, going forward.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

When the lights go out

"**B**atti gayera match hernai paimena" is an oft-repeated phrase among football enthusiasts in many parts of the country these days. Even as Copa America and Euro 2020 inch towards their finals, Nepali football fans have something other than the performance of their favourite teams to worry about: The frequent power outages that ruin their football viewing experience. Imagine staying up until quarter to one a.m. and still being unable to watch the match on TV and scrambling at the last minute to watch it on your mobile phone! But it is not only the football fans who are inconvenienced by unscheduled power outages.

As the monsoon rages on and heavy rainfall and lightning continues to be an everyday affair, the incidences of frequent electricity cuts have become all too common. Resultantly, Zoom meetings are interrupted as speakers' screens go blank, professionals are unable to meet their deadlines, and rice remains uncooked in electric cookers. And most of the time, people are not even prepared for such crises.

Short-term power outages remain a problem throughout the country, but people living in the Tarai, where summers are extraordinarily hot and humid, are especially inconvenienced. Unable to use their fans, people end up sleeping outdoors, leading to other risks including getting bitten by mosquitoes and reptiles.

THE KATHMANDU POST

People cannot continue to become collateral damage of a problem that can be solved if the authorities concerned were to do their jobs properly.

Nepal went through over a decade of darkness as the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) imposed power outages to "manage" electricity supply. As it turned out, it was often the result of a corrupt nexus whereby the authorities diverted precious electricity supply to business houses. That phase of darkness is thankfully over for some years now as electricity supply in large parts of the country remains mostly uninterrupted.

But all is not well with the electricity supplied by the NEA these days. As Nepalis have gotten used to living without a load-shedding timetable for a few years now, they do not keep power backup handy. In any case, backups are expensive and difficult to maintain, which makes it difficult for common Nepalis to keep them.

The NEA blames heavy rainfall and storms for the crisis, claiming that the damage to electricity transmitters, poles and wires hinder uninterrupted transmission of electricity.

When consumers call the utility helpline in their respective cities and towns, the most common response they receive from authorities is that the snag was because of a tree falling over the transmission line or a short circuit in a transmitter, and that they were attending to it.

But clearly, more than natural causes, it is the weak physical and technical infrastructure set up by the NEA that is to blame.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Key aspects overlooked

SIR, This refers to "Thoughts on the New Education Policy" by A K Merchant, published today.

The article overlooks some key aspects of the New Education Policy or NEP to be short. The overall emphasis in the new policy is on learning a single language and has led to needless acrimony and conflict. Unlike

other smaller nations, cultural homogeneity in a multi-ethnic, polyglot nation like India is not appropriate or desirable.

The authority's claim of NEP being geared towards preserving linguistic diversity in education is not borne out in action as the institutional push towards imposing Hindi continues. The

ruling party's policy of cultural homogeneity i.e. preference for Hindi runs the risk of linguistic hegemony. The three-language formula was never implemented with sincerity in the Hindi heartland. It is grossly unfair to non-Hindi-speaking Indians, especially in South and North East India.

Only the Non-Hindi

speaking people have to bear the cross of three languages. The third language should be optional and not compulsory. English and the regional language will more than meet the aspirational needs of our citizens. Education as per the Constitution is a state subject but the NEP has been formulated without consulting states with a drive towards centralization. The syllabus under NEP will likely be centrally prepared, with states adding some local flavour. The value and role of state-level secondary boards will be diminished.

Yours, etc., H N Ramakrishna, Bangalore, 9 July.

HAITI'S WOES

SIR, This refers to the editorial, "Horrific, abhorrent" (10 July). The brazen assassination of the President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse, has pushed the impoverished Caribbean country into more chaos. Though the Haitian police claimed that 28 foreign mercenaries, including retired Colombian soldiers, killed the President at his residence in Port-au-Prince, key questions ~ who the mastermind was, what the motive

SHODDY SERVICE

SIR, After the merger of United Bank of India and Oriental Commerce Bank with PNB, customer services of erstwhile branches of UBI have become very poor. As a customer and retired employee of UBI, I cannot get my Savings Bank Pass Book updated for more than one year. This has been going on in almost all branches of West Bengal. Pass Book updation is a legitimate claim of a bank customer and no bank can avoid it. But this particular bank is unfortunately trying to do away with this urgent piece of work for reasons best known to them. As we cannot verify transactions in our accounts, the security of our accounts is at risk as fraud in bank accounts is rampant now.

This serious lapse of the bank together with other lapses in general services and continuous harassment and misbehavior is not at all acceptable. The authorities are requested to take immediate action.

Yours, etc., Asit Kumar Sinha Ray, Jangipur, 9 July.

was and how a group of armed foreigners could walk into a presidential residence, shoot him dead and exit ~ are yet to be answered.

His opponents claimed that his five-year-term came to an end on February 7 and demanded his resignation. Moïse, who took over office in February 2017, months after his disputed election in 2016, claimed that his term would be over only in February 2022. When the Opposition formed a parallel government, Moïse alleged a coup and cracked down on them. Moïse, who came to power promising to strengthen Haiti's institutions, fix its economy, fight corruption and stabilize governance, himself faced serious corruption allegations, his government could not hold the 2019 parliamentary elections and the economy contracted under his watch. The outbreak of Covid-19 made matters worse. Now, Haiti stands at an uncertain future.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia, 10 July.



The discourse on the 1971 war for the liberation of Bangladesh has been understandably dominated by what happened on the eastern front and some very important battles of the western front have got less attention. However, the reality cannot be ignored that Pakistan had much more advanced weapons systems to deploy in the western sector and unless the Indian Army could hold its own against them, the rapid advance needed in the eastern sector would not have been possible.

In this context the battle of Basantar river (called Bara Pind battle by Pakistan) in the Shakargarh bulge area, near Samba in Jammu and Kashmir, was of crucial importance. Pakistan understood this importance and had assigned some very capable officers and heavy weapons for this attack, with a lot of stand-by forces. Their Patton tanks were considered much superior to the Centurion tanks used by the Indian Army.

The importance of this battle in the larger scheme of battle plans of Pakistan as well as its role in contributing to the overall result are evident from this statement made by a leading columnist and historian of the Pakistani Army, Major General A.H. Armin (Retd) of the Pakistan Armoured Corps. "The only occasion when a breakthrough could have occurred was when two squadrons of 13 Lancers attacked together in the afternoon, but a gallant last ditch stand by 2/Lt. Arun Khetrapal of Poona Horse averted the danger (for India)."

Arun Khetrapal was only 21 years old at that time. He came from a family of brave soldiers. His great grandfather had fought in the Sikh army against the British colonialists. His father M.L. Khetrapal was a serving senior army officer. Arun was known to be a brilliant student of the famous Lawrence School, Sanawar. He continued to be equally well regarded at the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy.

He joined the Poona Horse unit of the Army, and was in its A Squadron in the battlefield in 1971. A soldier who had the looks of a movie star and behaved like a very polite gentleman, Khetrapal was very popular among his colleagues. He had celebrated his 21st birthday a few weeks earlier.

It was December 16. In his Centurion tank, Khetrapal was rushing to help Squadron B which had just completed the difficult work of creating a bridgehead across the Basantar

Recalling the sacrifice of a brave soldier



river but had soon faced a Pakistani attack. As the attack had come sooner than expected, there had not been adequate time for clearing mines and Khetrapal along with other soldiers and tanks had to take the risk of rushing forward in mined areas. While crossing the river they came under heavy enemy fire as well.

Khetrapal responded with great courage and taking the battle to the enemy, he charged them with heavy fire from his tank and destroyed some enemy tanks. The ferocity of this assault and the overall brave resistance put up by Indian forces forced the Pakistani army to retreat for some time.

However, they returned soon with reinforcements and now the overall force and weapon advantage was even more with the Pakistani side. The unit led by Khetrapal faced a very strong attack. Knowing the

importance of checking the enemy in this crucial battle, the Indian soldiers fought very bravely. Khetrapal led from the front. In fact, he and the crew members of his tank are credited with destroying ten Pakistani tanks.

In the course of the fierce battle all of them were hit. One crew member died. Khetrapal was asked to abandon his damaged tank and return. But this would have resulted in increasing opportunities for the enemy to advance. So, he continued to fight, badly wounded, till the enemy advance could be halted in very difficult conditions. It is this last-ditch stand of Khetrapal which played a very crucial role in checking the Pakistani assault in a very important part of the western front, as stated by a Pakistani army historian quoted above.

In the last stage of the battle, a

wounded Khetrapal was involved in face-to-face combat with a highly capable Pakistani officer in a Patton tank. Both could understand they were facing brave and skilled adversaries, but the Pakistani officer did not know his Indian counterpart was badly wounded.

How Khetrapal fought was recalled 30 years later by this Pakistani officer, Khwaja Mohammad Naser, who had by then risen to the rank of a Brigadier. "He moved his tank with fearless courage and daring, totally unconcerned about his safety." He added, "I salute him for what he did at such a young age."

So intense was the battle that one would have to die. It so happened that it was Khetrapal who perished.

Second Lieutenant Arun Khetrapal was awarded the Param Vir Chakra and a prominent building of

the Indian Military Academy was named after the 21-year-old soldier.

In 2001 when Arun's father Brigadier (retd.) M.L. Khetrapal decided to visit his ancestral home in Sargodha (now in Pakistan), he was received and hosted by Brigadier Khwaja Mohammad Naser and his family in Lahore. It was only on the last day of the visit that Naser told Khetrapal Sr. about how his son had died from his fire in the battle. Initially taken aback, the father soon accepted the reality with the grace his son would have desired. Brigadier Naser then saluted Arun Khetrapal for his great courage and his father for the values the parents had given to their son. Khetrapal Sr. said goodbye to his host in Lahore with grace.

The writer is a journalist and author. His latest books include *Earth Without Borders* and *Man over Machine*.



took vitamin tablets or preferred cereals for the American prisoners.

My intentions were twofold. I wanted to demonstrably underline the human dignity of those prisoners. They were not human refuse, but valuable beings who had made mistakes and were paying a price, sometimes an unreasonably high price for their mistakes. They deserved to be regarded as human beings, their human pains and needs should be addressed.

One has to be unusually naïve or foolish to imagine that the people in jail are all bad and the people outside are all good. In the country where I was assigned, I knew also that the quality of marijuana was very good and the cost very low. It was tempting for American tourists to not only buy and smoke, but also buy and take home. That was when they got caught. Few seemed to care that they were behind bars for months when they should have been living a productive life outside.

As long as bad laws remained on statute books and punishment was used to exact a pound of flesh and not to rehabilitate wrong-doers, sham justice will be the rule rather than the exception in most countries.

I took the part of my work that related to prisoners very seriously. I set up a routine of monthly or bi-weekly visits to the prison, read up in advance about the prisoners' background and case history, and even

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IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

Lost behind bars



Illustration: Debabrata Chakrabarty

For a fairly law-abiding citizen, I have been behind bars more than most people. The experience has been scintillating. I met Gabriel who came for hiking in the Himalayas, loved the superb hashish he could buy for a trifling sum and bought the large stash that made him a trader in the definition of local laws. He became an indefinite guest of the prison authorities. Or Jeannie, who tried some marijuana that was unfortunately

laced with PCP by an enterprising vendor, had a violent reaction and acted dangerously unstable on the street. She was sent to prison instead of to a hospital. I spent time with them both and many more like them. Usually, I counseled them, got them a good lawyer and tried to help in other ways.

As a United States consul, I was responsible for American citizens who were in jail in a foreign land. I knew, by talking with colleagues, that

many consuls could not care less for jailed Americans. Like most people, they assumed that people who were put behind bars belonged there. They deserved their hardship.

My inclination was different. I felt I had a clearer idea of the justice system in most lands. I had read Camus and Koestler and had the interest to find out the way capital punishment operates in many countries. Rich, resourceful criminals are almost never executed. It is the poor,

who belong to a minority or disadvantaged group, who are hanged, injected with poison or killed more slowly in soul-killing confinement.

For lesser crimes, as in civil cases, the balance tilts even more egregiously in favour of the well-heeled. Get good lawyers, get well-paid specialists and investigators, and you can go scot-free even if you drive over sleeping people in a drunken spree. In advanced countries as much as in the less advanced, as Harold Laski said long ago, there is a law for the rich and a law for the poor. Justice is blind, not because it is impartial but because it does not want to see.

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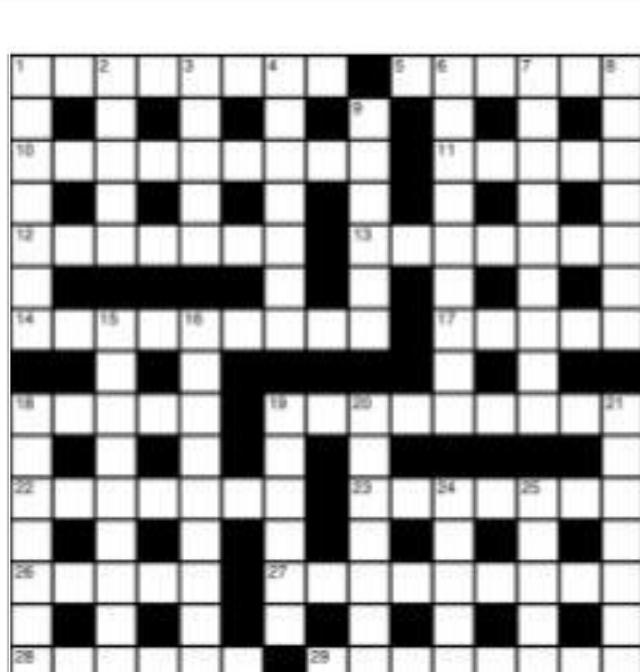
My other object was to underline the uncompromising nature of human rights that every person, in all circumstances, was entitled to. It was far beyond my power to guarantee it to every person, but by insisting on overtly displaying it to American prisoners I hoped to generate a broader awareness among the entire prison population. I knew I had generated talk: the prison wardens spoke of their surprise and sometimes even changed the way they treated their wards. The physical abuse that prison authorities routinely inflict on their hapless wards is an abomination, and I was glad that I could persuade some of them to acknowledge their error and try to work more humanely.

I reflect on the hours I spent behind prison walls as a great learning experience. Learning of others' pain is one of the better ways I can think of to remain resolutely human.

The writer is a Washington-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com

CROSSWORD

NO 28970



ACROSS

- 1 Shame of police officer vacuously slandering ethnic group (8)
- 5 Familiar river duck, small, vanishing from Irish county (6)
- 10 Shocking debts faced by, say, Sir Elton once (9)
- 11 Barely using energy, wife shows physical strength (5)
- 12 Prayer of Scotsman about English failure essentially (7)
- 13 Island job for rural vet, some say (7)
- 14 Cook, legend with wok, displaying practical skill (9)
- 17 Language of nameless politician
- 18 Once again needle retiring German banker (5)
- 19 Weed spread under logs (9)
- 22 First person to confront social worker is very determined (7)
- 23 Trade's somewhat erratic if far too westward-looking (7)
- 26 Truck that is bought to drop off heat-treated milk originally (5)
- 27 Echo of Conservative's ultimate career (9)
- 28 Can't stand trial following extremes of disease (6)
- 29 One expelled from Spain left, collected by river (8)

DOWN

- 1 Eid perhaps represents a problem for established services? (7)
- 2 Scanning his rota, unimpressed gendarme initially gives characteristic gesture? (5)
- 3 Imperial pint, maybe making a comeback (5)
- 4 Angry journalist is thwarted (7)
- 6 Hormone gets one frisky – or upset inside? (9)
- 7 Nicknames, informally, former White House intern's picked up (9)
- 8 City company finally invested in Geordie undertaking (3,4)
- 9 Tipsy chef is entertaining, mind! (6)
- 15 Attack indiscriminate gunshot outside US city (9)
- 16 Performer Jude's parents? They're legislature members (9)
- 18 Network Rail supporter, elevated to the Lords possibly without notice (7)
- 19 Having jilted Ray, threatened to go out, extremely disappointed (6)
- 20 Occasionally bonus to be available for result? (7)
- 21 Grant freedom (7)
- 24 Fashionable daughter, excited primarily leaving for Texas mission (5)
- 25 Hard place to find in North Wales (5)

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

OCCASIONAL NOTE

For thirty years a French physician, Dr. Cabanes, of Paris, has been making a special study of the influence of medicine on history. During the winter before last he delivered a series of lectures on this theme in Brussels. These lectures he has now revised and published in book form with the title *L'Histoire éclaircie par la Clinique*. It is said that the influence of variations in the health of kings and ministers and other persons of political importance on the course of events has attracted more attention in France than in other countries, perhaps because for some three centuries that country was an effective autocracy where the state of the mind of the ruler might have immediate and serious effects on policy. The book referred to contains much curious information. One of the kings of France best known to readers of English literature is Louis XI. This is largely due to Sir Walter Scott, who has presented his character as an enigma, mixture of astuteness, cunning, cruelty, and superstition. Dr. Cabanes has unearthed a letter written by this monarch to the Prior of Notre Dame de Salles at Bourges beseeching him to pray "to God and Our Lady of Salles for me that they may be pleased to send me a quartan fever, for I have a disease of which the physicians say I cannot be cured without having it."

NEWS ITEMS

EXTORTING A CONFESSION BY TORTURE

The Sessions Judge has delivered judgment in the case in which Ram Taran Chatterjee, Assistant Sub-Inspector of Police, Sultan Molla and Mahatapuddin Molla, constables, and Keramdi Bazar, chowkidar, were charged with offences sections 330 and 348 IPC, in respect of a boy named Anwar Ali, cook of Sultan Molla. Anwar Ali was suspected of having stolen Rs 20 belonging to the Assistant Sub-Inspector and was put under arrest, and it was alleged that the accused to extort a confession from the boy tortured him in various ways. The court convicted Ram Taran and sentenced him to one year's rigorous imprisonment and the two constables to one year's rigorous imprisonment and the chowkidar to six months' rigorous imprisonment. The case against Anwar Ali for theft was dropped.

DISMISSAL OF EUROPEAN EMPLOYEES

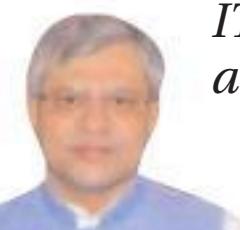
As a sequel to the reorganisation of the Traffic Department of the Port Trust, Rangoon, six senior European assistants, all with over 13 years' service, have been dismissed. A meeting was held yesterday by the Port Commissioners Association. Mr. Hamlyn, barrister-at-law, presiding, when resolutions were passed expressing great concern at the action of the Port Commissioners and characterising it as unjust and highly impolitic at a time of world-wide industrial crisis. The meeting resolved to urge the Commissioners to reconsider their decision and to assist the six members by all means in its power. It was decided that failing a satisfactory settlement of the case a representation should be made to the Lieutenant-Governor.

DEVELOPMENT OF MADRAS PORTS

Sir John Wolfe Barry and Mr. Lyster of London in their report to the Government on the possibilities of development combined with the future prospects of five ports situated in the Madras Presidency, namely, Tuticorin, Nagapatam, Mangalore, Malpe and Coonoora, point out that the development of Madras ports must be considered as a whole and not individually, that Tuticorin, both from its physical advantages and future trade prospects, is the most promising of the five ports upon which they were asked to report; that of the two ports Mangalore and Malpe the latter offers better natural possibilities for deep water development, and that although the present facilities at Nagapatam, Mangalore and Coonoora can probably be improved, these ports do not offer any natural advantages for deep water development.

IMPROVEMENT OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE

The Hon. Nawab Syad Nawab Ali Choudhuri, Khan Bahadur, Minister for Agriculture and Industries visited Suri on July 10. In the morning the Minister laid the foundation stone of the buildings of the Suri District Farm, and in reply to the speech delivered by Mr. Lambourn, the District Collector explained the policy he wanted to adopt in the improvement of agriculture. The members of the district and branch associations met the Minister at the Peace Memorial Hall and presented him with an address. The members of the cooperative societies of Birbhum also gave him an address. In the afternoon the Minister visited the village of Sultapur and inspected Rai Bahadur Abinash Chandra Banerjee's Farm and opened the new power pump established by the Rai Bahadur for the demonstrations of irrigation.



IT rules 2021 are empowering and protecting users and will ensure a safer and responsible social media ecosystem in India.

ASHWINI VAISHNAV

UNION MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

THUMBNAILS

India's coal import rises:
India's coal import rose 20.4 per cent to 19.92 million tonnes (MT) in the month of May. The country had imported 16.54 MT of coal in May last fiscal, according to data compiled by Ministry of Coal Services. "On a year-on-year basis, however, India's coal and coke imports in May 2021 were up 20.4 per cent as against 16.54 MT clocked in May 2020," it said. PTI

Hero Electric Vehicles:
Hero Electric Vehicles will invest Rs 700 crore by 2025 to rev up its business expansion, including setting up of a new manufacturing unit, for which it has raised Rs 220 crore to part-fund the activities, according to a top company official. PTI

India's power consumption rises: India's power consumption grew nearly 18 per cent in first week of July to 30.33 billion units (BU) compared to a year ago and returned to pre-pandemic level mainly due to easing of lockdown curbs and delayed monsoon, according to power ministry data. Power consumption during 1-7 July last year was 25.72 BU. PTI

Revolt Motors: Ratan Tata-backed EV maker Revolt Motors on Sunday said it has commenced delivery of the new batch of its electric bikes to customers. The bikes are being dispatched to the customers in various parts of the country from its greenfield (new) manufacturing plant at Manesar in Haryana, the company said in a statement. PTI

Alpha Corp: Gurugram-based reality firm Alpha Corp will invest around Rs 900 crore to complete three stalled projects of Earth Infrastructure that it acquired through insolvency process, a senior company official said. The three projects, comprising developable and saleable area of around 4.5 million sq ft, are located in Gurugram and Greater Noida. PTI

A month since launch, glitches still continue to mar I-T portal functioning

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

A month after its launch and two weeks after the finance minister reviewed its functioning, technical glitches continue to mar the functioning of the new income tax portal as certain key utilities like e-proceedings and digital signature certificate are not yet functional, say chartered accountants. Also, some overseas firms have been facing problems in logging in to the portal, they said.

The much-touted new income tax portal 'www.incometax.gov.in' had a bumpy start from the day of its launch on June 7 as it continued to face tech glitches, which prompted Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to call a meeting on June 22 with officials of Infosys which has developed the new web-

India poised for double-digit growth this fiscal: Kumar

RBI has pegged economic growth at 9.5 pc in the current fiscal indicating of a strong rebound

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

With India's story remaining "very strong", the economy will register a double-digit growth in the current fiscal and the disinvestment climate also looks better, said Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar.

He also asserted that the country is prepared in a far better manner in case there is a Covid wave as states have also their own lessons from the previous two waves.

"We are now hopefully getting past our (Covid-19) pandemic... and the economic activities will be strengthened as we get into the second half of this (fiscal) year given what I have seen for example various indicators, including the mobility indicators," Kumar said in an interview.

The Indian economy has been adversely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the recovery has been relatively sluggish in the wake of the second Covid wave.

Against this backdrop, the Niti Aayog Vice Chairman



exuded confidence that the economic recovery will be "very strong" and those agencies or organisations which have revised their GDP estimates downwards for this fiscal may have to revise them upwards again.

"Because, I expect India's GDP growth this (fiscal) year would be in double digits," he said. The economy contracted by 7.3 per cent in the financial year ended March 31, 2021.

Among rating agencies, S&P Global Ratings has cut India's growth forecast for the current fiscal to 9.5 per cent

from 11 per cent earlier, while Fitch Ratings has slashed the projection to 10 per cent from 12.8 per cent estimated earlier.

The downward revisions were mainly due to slowing recovery post second Covid wave.

Indicating the possibility of a strong rebound, the Reserve Bank has pegged economic growth at 9.5 per cent in the current fiscal that ends on 31 March, 2022.

Asked when private investments will pick up, Kumar said in some sectors like steel, cement and real estate, sig-

nificant investment in capacity expansion is happening already.

In the consumer durable sector, it might take longer because consumers might feel a little hesitant due to uncertainty on account of the pandemic, he said. "Full-fledged private investment recovery, we should expect by the third quarter of this (fiscal) year".

Responding to a query on concerns over a possible third Covid wave, Kumar said the government is much better prepared in case such a situation comes up.

"I think the government is far better prepared now to face the third Covid wave, if at all it does come up... I feel the impact of the third wave on the economy will be much weaker than it was during the second wave and the beginning of the first wave," he said.

According to Kumar, the government's preparation is very significant and also the states have learned their own lessons.

Recently, the government announced an additional Rs 23,123 crore funding, mainly

aimed at ramping up health infrastructure.

On whether the government will be able to achieve its ambitious disinvestment target this fiscal, Kumar said that despite the second COVID wave and its significant impact on the health side, markets have remained buoyant and they touched new heights.

"I think this sentiment not only will continue but it will strengthen as we go forward... India's story remains very strong especially with respect to the FDI which has now created a new record both for 2020-21 and between April to June in 2021-22," he said.

Pointing out that a good number of IPOs of startups are lined up, he said, "the climate for disinvestment is looking better and I am very hopeful that the disinvestment target would be fully realised."

The government has budgeted Rs 1.75 lakh crore from stake sales in public sector companies and financial institutions. Achieving the target will be crucial for the government's finances which have been stressed due to the pandemic and resultant increase in spending activities.

Recovery expected as lockdown has less impact on economy: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

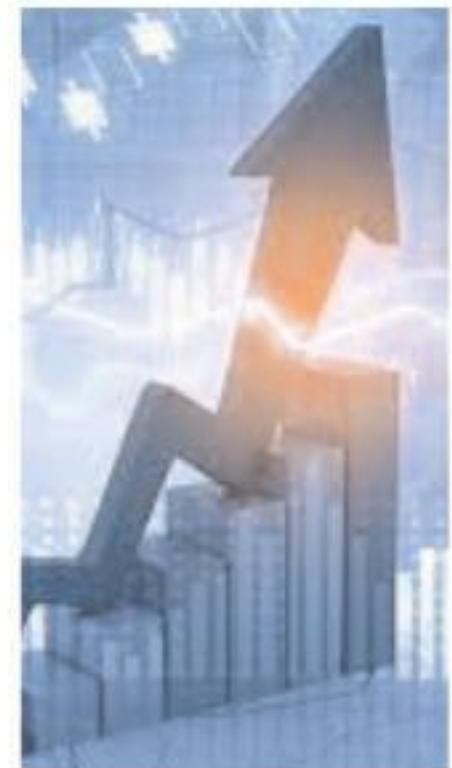
India's economy is expected to see a swift recovery from the impact of the second wave of Covid-19 as lockdowns were largely designed to limit social gatherings and did not affect economic activities much, a CII survey said.

About 60 per cent of CEOs participating in the survey expect that the recovery in sales of their companies would be better than that in the first wave of the pandemic.

CII CEOs poll of 119 top corporates indicate swifter economic recovery from the impact of the second wave.

The deadly second wave has not affected much of the economic activities as lockdowns were largely designed to limit social gathering and this has helped limit the impact of the second wave on economic growth when compared to the first wave," CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said.

The survey added that vaccination holds the key to mitigating the impact of the second wave on economic activity and boosting consumer sentiment. Over 60 per cent of the corporate leaders confirmed that their



firms were compelled to scale back operations during the second wave, it added.

As per the survey, about 81 per cent of the respondents expected that the second wave in India would not have an adverse impact on the exports for their sectors in the first half of the current year than the comparable period of 2019-20.

"The buoyant external demand is buttressed by large-scale global stimulus and the fast pace of vaccination coverage across key global economies," it added.

Government identifies items for customs exemptions review, seeks industry views

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY



The government has identified a host of customs exemptions for review and has invited suggestions from trade and industry bodies on the same.

Importers, exporters, domestic industry and trade associations are invited to give views on the subject for consideration by the government by August 10 on the 'MyGov.in' portal.

Some key products covered under the list include fabrics, games/sports requisites, magnetron for microwave manufacturing, specified parts for PCB, set-up box, routers, broadband modem, contraceptives and artificial kidney.

The list also includes magnetic tapes, photographic, filming, sound recording/radio equipment, parts/ raw material for manufacture of goods supplied for off-shore oil exploration, specified machinery/ parts covered in textile industry.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2020-21 Budget speech had announced

for review of the notification, amendment in wording of the notification for bringing clarity, consolidation, other relevant factors such as extent of use, etc, it added.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) last year too had conducted this crowdsourcing exercise to identify the customs duty exceptions which need to be reviewed. Following that, the government has now drawn up a list of notifications and invited stakeholder views for a comprehensive review.

Exemptions from customs duty have been given in public interest from time to time and a review of the Customs laws and procedures would help to align them with the needs of changing times and ease of doing business.

Six of top-10 valued companies lose ₹ 92,147 crore in market valuation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY



Six of the 10 most valued companies took a combined hit of ₹92,147.28 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries leading the losers' chart.

Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India suffered losses in their market capitalisation (mcap). On the other hand, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank posted gains in mcap.

The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services dived Rs 43,574.83 crore to Rs 11,86,563.20 crore and that of Reliance Industries declined

by Rs 35,500.88 crore to Rs 13,14,293.35 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever Limited tumbled Rs 9,139.9 crore to Rs 5,75,555.28 crore and that of Infosys dipped Rs 1,981.5 crore to reach Rs 6,65,930.24 crore.

ICICI Bank's valuation eroded by Rs 1,102.33 crore to Rs 4,42,302.42 crore State Bank of India's by Rs 847.84

crore to Rs 3,78,046.54 crore.

In contrast, HDFC Bank's valuation zoomed Rs 11,689.01 crore to Rs 8,30,002.67 crore.

Bajaj Finance added Rs 8,332.62 crore taking its valuation to Rs 3,70,380.58 crore.

HDFC's mcap jumped Rs 3,909.44 crore to Rs 4,50,850.54 crore and that of Kotak Mahindra Bank by Rs 763.21 crore to Rs 3,41,000.47 crore.

Reliance Industries continued to rule the top-10 companies' chart followed by Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank in that order.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark declined 98.48 points or 0.18 per cent.

Can BPCL get domestically produced LPG after privatisation? Government seeks legal opinion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY



as well as private companies such as Reliance Industries Ltd.

The Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2020, known as LPG Control Order of 2000, restricts sale of indigenously produced cooking gas only to state-owned oil marketing companies Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and BPCL.

It restricts supply of LPG produced by firms such as ONGC and GAIL to private firms. Private LPG retailers, called parallel marketers, have to use

imported gas for supplying to customers. The 2000 Control Order was issued as the nation is short in LPG production. Once BPCL is privatised, the 2000 order will bar ONGC and GAIL from selling LPG to BPCL, the officials said.

"Post divestment of the government's stake in BPCL, it shall cease to be a government oil company in terms of clause 2(g) of LPG Control Order of 2000," an official said.

With no access to indigenously produced LPG, BPCL won't be able to serve its customers and it would not be pos-

sible to shift the customers to IOC and HPCL cylinder equipment at customer end will need to be changed. Also, IOC and HPCL may not have the required infrastructure to cater to such a large customer base, the officials said.

As a way out, it is being considered to continue to treat BPCL as a government company for the purpose of the 2000 Control Order for three years, the officials said adding that a legal opinion has been sought to ascertain if such a move is tenable under the law.

The other alternative is to amend the LPG Control Order itself to allow private firms to access indigenously produced LPG. This would open up LPG retailing to other private firms.

Officials said law ministry opinion has been sought to determine if the term government oil company in the LPG Control Order necessary requires the company to be a government company and if BPCL post privatisation can be notified as a government oil company.

Received 94 grievances, actioned 133 URLs: Twitter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY



Twitter received 94 grievances and "actioned" 133 URLs between May 26, 2021, and June 25, 2021, the microblogging platform said in its maiden monthly compliance report as mandated by the IT rules.

The US-based company, which has been in the eye of a storm over its failure to comply with the new IT rules in India, has also named Vinay Prakash as its resident grievance officer for India to comply with the said rules.

Twitter, in the report titled 'India Transparency Report: User Grievances and Proactive Monitoring July 2021', said it had received 94 grievances via its grievance officer

impersonation (1), privacy infringement (6), IP-related infringement (nil), and misinformation/synthetic and manipulated media (1), as per the report.

In addition to the above data, we processed 56 grievances which were appealing Twitter account suspensions. These were all resolved and the appropriate responses were sent," Twitter said.

It added that the platform "overturned seven of the account suspensions based on the specifics of the situation, but the other accounts remain suspended".

were suspended over the issue of child sexual exploitation, non-consensual nudity, and similar content, while 4,179 accounts were suspended for promotion of terrorism.

Twitter, however, said the 'Proactive Monitoring Data' represents global actions taken, and not just actions related to content from India.

'Proactive Monitoring' refers to content proactively identified by employing internal proprietary tools and industry hash sharing initiatives, it added.

Twitter said each user complaint received via the India grievance channel is assessed under its terms of service (ToS) and rules, and any content that is determined to be in violation is "actioned" in line with its range of enforcement options.

This includes tweet level enforcement (like labeling of tweets, limiting visibility and removal), direct message-level enforcement and Account-level enforcement (includes permanent suspension) among other actions.

Twitter noted that going forward, it will publish this report on a monthly basis and that it will make improvements over time, based on feedback received from the government, or in accordance with internal changes that allow it to provide more granular data.

Companies including Google, Facebook and Koo have already published their maiden compliance reports as required under the IT rules. Companies including Google, Facebook and Koo have already published their maiden compliance reports as required under the IT rules.

Franklin Templeton MF unitholders to get ₹ 3,303 cr in fifth tranche from SBI MF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

There are clear early signs of a fourth wave starting.

PAKISTAN'S MINISTER FOR PLANNING ASAD UMAR
COMMENTING ON THE SPREAD OF COVID DELTA VARIANT IN PAKISTANThe Statesman
NEW DELHI, MONDAY 12 JULY 2021

09

Myanmar caught off guard as cases surge, oxygen dwindles

Consumed by violent political struggle, it has been slow to wake up to a devastating Covid surge

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANGKOK, JULY 11

Soe Win stood in line at a plant to buy oxygen for his grandmother, who is struggling with Covid-19 symptoms.

I have been waiting since 5 in the morning until 12 noon but I'm still in line. Oxygen is scarcer than money, said the resident of Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon.

Consumed by a bitter and violent political struggle since the military seized power in February, Myanmar has been slow to wake up to a devastating surge in cases since mid-May.

It has left many of the sick like Soe Win's grandmother to suffer at home if they cannot find a bed at an army hospital, or prefer not to trust their care to the widely disliked government.



Under Aung San Suu Kyi, the civilian leader ousted by the military, Myanmar had weathered its second coronavirus surge beginning in August last year by severely restricting travel, sealing off Yangon, and curbing election campaigning in virus hot spots where lockdowns were imposed.

Suu Kyi appeared frequently on television with stern but empathetic entreaties to the public on how to deal with the situation. Vaccine supplies were secured from India and China. Her ouster came less than a week after the first jabs were given to health workers.

Suu Kyi's removal by the military sparked widespread protests, and medical workers spearheaded a popular civil disobedience movement that

called on professionals and civil servants not to cooperate with the military-installed government.

Military hospitals continued operating but were shunned by many, while doctors and nurses who boycotted the state system ran makeshift clinics, for which they faced arrest. The pace of vaccinations slowed to a crawl, threatening an explosion in infections.

No wise person with a good heart and a sincere desire for truth would want to work under the junta's rule, said Zeyar Tun, founder of the civic action group Clean Yangon who helped out at quarantine centers.

Under Suu Kyi, the government and volunteers worked together to control the disease, but it is difficult to predict what the future holds under military rule.

Photos and news stories early last week of people lining up to buy oxygen in the city of Kalay in the northwestern Sagaing region brought home the reality that Myanmar's health care, already one of the world's weakest, was on its knees.

From Myanmar, our UN colleagues on the ground say they are concerned about the rapid increase in the number of recorded Covid-19 cases, UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said in New York.

The UN team warns that a major outbreak of Covid-19 would have devastating consequences on both people's health and on the economy.

They stress the importance of resuming the delivery of essential health services, implementing measures to prevent the spread of the virus, and to scale up vaccinations.

China vows retaliation after US blacklists companies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 11 JULY

China on Sunday said it will take necessary measures to respond to the US blacklisting of Chinese companies over their alleged role in abuses of Uyghur people and other Muslim ethnic minorities.

The Commerce Ministry said the US move constituted an unreasonable suppression of Chinese enterprises and a serious breach of international economic and trade rules.

China will take necessary measures to firmly safeguard Chinese companies' legitimate rights and interests, the ministry's statement said.



No details were given, but China has denied allegations of arbitrary detention and forced labour in the far western region of Xinjiang and increasingly responded to sanctions against companies and officials with its own bans on visas and financial links.

The US Commerce Department said in a statement Friday that the electronics and technology firms and other businesses helped enable Beijing's campaign of repression, mass detention and high-technology surveillance against Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

The penalties prohibit Americans from selling equipment or other goods to the firms. The United States has stepped up financial and trade penalties over China's treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, along with its crackdown on democracy in the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong.

Ethiopia's ruling party wins national election in landslide

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADDIS ABABA, 11 JULY

Ethiopia's ruling Prosperity Party on Saturday was declared the winner of last month's national election in a landslide, assuring a second five-year term for PM Abiy Ahmed.

The National Election Board of Ethiopia said the ruling party won 410 seats out of 436 contested in the federal parliament, which will see dozens of other seats remain vacant after one-fifth of constituents didn't vote due to unrestrictive reasons. Ethiopia's new government is expected

to be formed in October.

The vote was a major test for Abiy, who came to power in 2018 after the former prime minister resigned amid widespread protests. Abiy oversaw dramatic political reforms that led in part to a Nobel Peace Prize the following year, but critics say he is backtracking on political and media freedoms. Abiy also has drawn massive international criticism for his handling of the conflict in the Tigray region that has left thousands of people dead.

June's vote, which had been postponed twice due to the Covid-19 pandemic and

logistical issues, was largely peaceful but opposition parties decried harassment and intimidation. No voting was held in the Tigray region.

Abiy has hailed the election as the nation's first attempt at a free and fair vote, but the United States has called it significantly flawed, citing the detention of some opposition figures and insecurity in parts of Africa's second most populous country. The leader of the main opposition Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice party, Birhanu Nega, lost while oppor-

Israeli court annuls parts of surrogacy law excluding gays

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM, 11 JULY

Israel's Supreme Court on Sunday cleared the way for same-sex couples to have children through surrogate mothers, a move hailed by lawmakers and activists as a victory for LGBTQ rights.

The court ruled in 2020 that a surrogacy law, which had expanded access to single women but excluded gay couples, disproportionately harmed the right to equality and the right to parenthood and was unlawful. It gave the government a year to draw up a new law, but parliament failed to meet the deadline.

The court said Sunday that since for more than a year the state has done nothing to advance an appropriate amendment to the law, the court ruled that it cannot abide the continued serious damage to human rights caused by the existing surrogacy arrangement.

The change in the law is to take effect in six months to allow the formation of professional guidelines, it said.

The Aguda, an Israeli LGBTQ activist group, applauded the decision as a historic landmark in our struggle for equality.

Ultra-Orthodox lawmaker Aryeh Deri, formerly the country's interior minister, wrote on Twitter that the

court's decision was another serious blow to Israel's Jewish identity and that most of the nation desires safeguarding the tradition of Israel, preserving Jewish family values.

"Deputy Foreign Minister Idan Roll, an openly gay member of the Knesset, retorted: I am sure that most of the nation loves and respects my Jewish family that was created through surrogacy."

Etaï and Yoav Pinkas Arad, the gay couple who appealed to the court against the surrogacy law in 2010, said the ruling is a big step for equality not just for LGBTQ in Israel, but for equality in Israel in general.

Under the existing regulations, Israeli same-sex couples looking to become parents cannot engage a surrogate, and are often deterred by the additional costs of finding one abroad.

The state had argued that the law was intended to protect surrogate mothers but the court ruled that it would be possible to strike a balance that would not discriminate.

In contrast with much of the conservative Middle East, Israel is generally tolerant toward its LGBTQ community. Gays serve openly in Israel's military and parliament, and many popular artists and entertainers, as well as the country's current health minister, are openly gay.

Xi frustrated over officials waiting for his instructions to implement policies: New book

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 11 JULY

President Xi Jinping, who assiduously built the image of being "core" leader of the Communist Party of China (CPC), is frustrated with the officials for waiting for his instructions before acting, according to a recently published book by the ruling party.

The book, published by the CPC Central Party Literature Press last month, for the first time made public Xi's angry remarks, providing a rare glimpse into his meetings which otherwise were shrouded in secrecy.

Xi, 68, had expressed frus-



Central Committee for Discipline Inspection - CPC's top anti-corruption body, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported on Sunday.

"My written instructions are the last line of defence. If I didn't hand out instructions, would these officials do any work?" said Xi, who has emerged as the most powerful Chinese leader after the party founder Mao Zedong. He complained in the January meeting that some officials were good at paying lip service but don't walk the talk.

His outburst is contrary to his defence of China's one-party system and top-down approach for successful imple-

mentation of policies in comparison to the countries under democracies.

The book, titled Xi Jinping's Selected Remarks On Comprehensively Governing The Party Strictly (2021 version), also showed that Xi has pushed back against criticism of his tight grip over the party. It revealed that three years ago he had told another CCDI meeting: "Some have said that the centralisation (of power) by the party in the past five years has gone very well, and the next focus should be about promoting democracy within the party."

"These weird comments are made by people who are either confused, have ill intentions or are dirty themselves," he said.

Xi heads all the three power centres, the CPC, the military and the Presidency, and unlike his predecessors, he has the prospect of life long tenure in power following the constitutional amendment doing away with two five-year-term limit for the President.

Since Xi took over power in late 2012 he has launched a massive anti-corruption drive in which over 15 lakh party officials including over 50 top generals of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) were punished. The crackdown also helped him to quickly consolidate his power and sent shivers down the bureaucracy which in the last two decades was credited to build the massive infrastructure in the country handling billions of dollars helping China to become the world's second largest economy after the US.

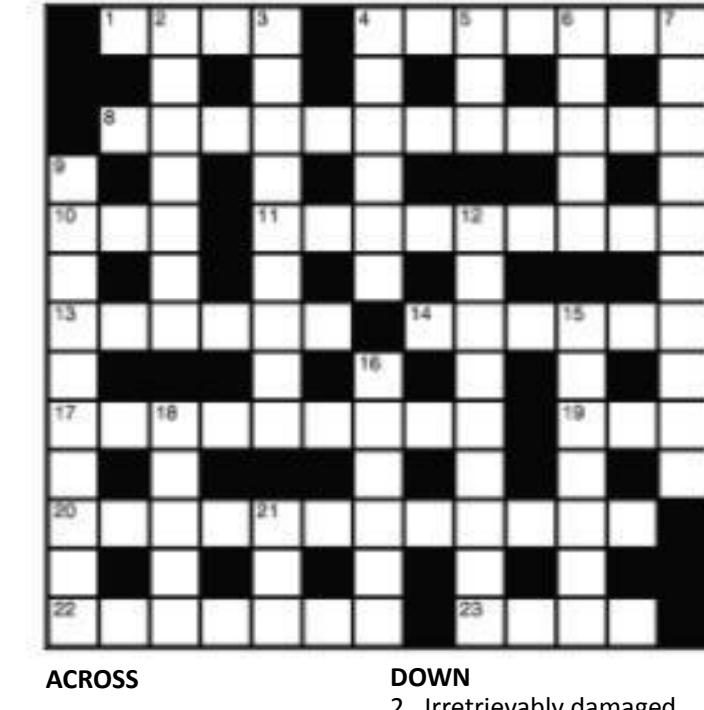
Observers say that the post-anti-graft crackdown of

Xi, the bureaucracy has shown signs of slowdown, often requiring reprimands from the leadership to push hard for the implementation of the policies and projects.

The written orders had become an increasingly important part of the leadership's top-down monitoring in recent years and suggested this had made officials more risk-averse, analysts said.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

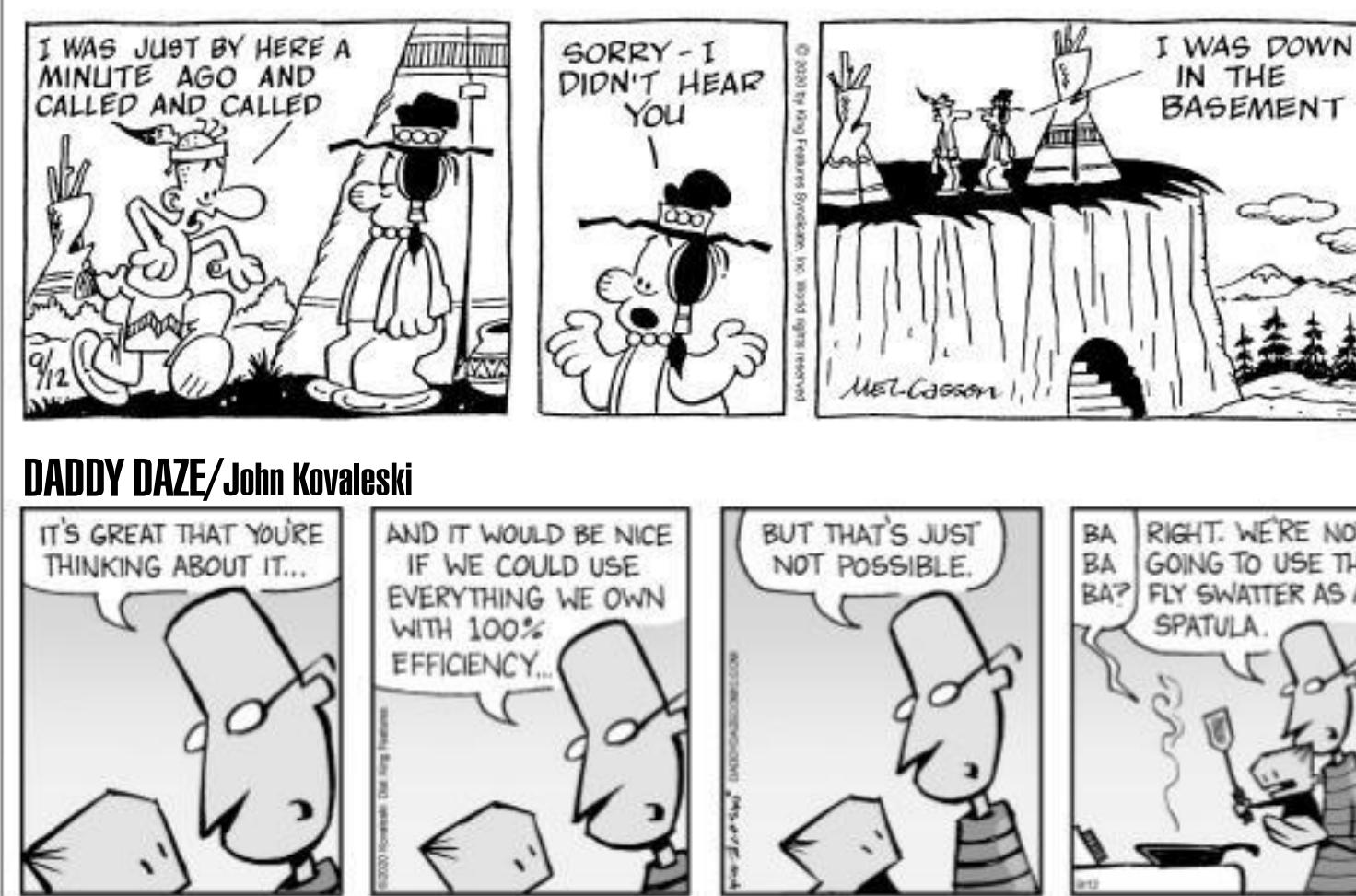
| ACROSS | DOWN | 7 |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Exhale audibly (4) | 2 Irretrievably damaged (2,5) | GREEDY MORT WALKER |
| 4 Flaws (7) | 3 Canvass bag (9) | WEAR A BROAD-BRIMMED HAT TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN FROM THE SUN |
| 8 Golf practice area (7,5) | 4 Hang freely (6) | © 2021 King Features Syndicate, Inc. |
| 10 Hawaiian garland (3) | 5 Animal hair (3) | MY HANDS NEED PROTECTION, TOO |
| 11 Pertinacity (9) | 6 Church decree (5) | |
| 13 Informal (6) | 7 Generalised idea (10) | |
| 14 Supernatural (6) | 9 Soft fruit (10) | |
| 17 Extortion (9) | 12 Be indecisive (9) | |
| 19 Narrow opening (3) | 15 Ointment (7) | |
| 20 Revised (12) | 16 Diverse (6) | |
| 22 Gave up (7) | 18 Church passageway (5) | |
| 23 Consumes (4) | 21 Unhappy (3) | |

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

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INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 41528187

Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

Air Canada Flight Inquiry and Reservation 25656421/25656431

Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 25652294 (Airport)

Port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palm Road 25671579, 18001803838

JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377

Qatar Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377

Sri Lankan Airlines Flight Inquiry and Reservation 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palm Road 25671579, 18001803838

Garuda Indonesia Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Malaysia Airlines Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Singapore Airlines Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Thailand Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

United Arab Emirates Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Vistara Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Xiamen Airlines Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Yemenia Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Zim Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Zurich Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Airbus Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Boeing Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Embraer Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Bombardier Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Airbus Flight Inquiry and Reservation 139-139-139-139

Boeing Flight Inquiry and Reservation



We have 30 months left in the mandate and the government is starting a new period. We have built a team to focus on fair economic recovery.

SPANISH PRIME MINISTER PEDRO SANCHEZ
ON CABINET RESHUFFLE

WEATHER

| CITY | MAX(°C) | MIN(°C) |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| SINGAPORE | 29 | 26 R |
| HONG KONG | 33 | 29 R |
| TOKYO | 30 | 24 R |
| LONDON | 19 | 15 R |
| DUBAI | 42 | 33 S |
| SAN FRANCISCO | 17 | 13 H |
| NEW YORK | 30 | 21 R |
| MOSCOW | 31 | 19 S |

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

THUMBNAILS



Pope Francis appears on a balcony of the Agostino Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome, on Sunday for the traditional Sunday blessing and Angelus prayer. AP

Beijing poised for heavy rainstorms: Beijing is poised for the heaviest round of rainfall this year, starting from Sunday evening. The Beijing Meteorological Observatory on Sunday morning issued yellow warnings for both rainstorms and gale. IANS

13 injured in Austria after car plows into crowd: A car plowed into a crowd at a Sunday market in the Austrian town of St. Florian, injuring 13 people at least three of them seriously, police said. It wasn't immediately clear why the vehicle had crashed into the stall, the police added. AP

Cuba adopts new measures for travellers: Cuba announced a new series of sanitary measures for domestic travellers with the aim of containing the spread of Covid. The new restrictions will apply to Cubans arriving at the airports of the tourist areas of Varadero and Cayo Coco, where they will have to go through a mandatory 14-day isolation in hotel facilities. IANS

Heatwave blankets US West as fires rage in several states

Death Valley in California's Mojave Desert records highest temperature in over a century

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO, 11 JULY

Firefighters struggled to contain an exploding Northern California wildfire under blazing temperatures as another heatwave blanketed the West, prompting an excessive heat warning for inland and desert areas.

Death Valley in southeastern California's Mojave Desert reached 128 degrees Fahrenheit (53 Celsius) on Saturday, according to the National Weather Service's reading at Furnace Creek. The shockingly high temperature was actually lower than the previous day, when the location reached 130 F (54 C).

If confirmed as accurate, the 130-degree reading would be the hottest high recorded there since July 1913, when Furnace Creek desert hit 134 F (57 C), considered the highest measured temperature on Earth.

About 300 miles (483 km) northwest of the sizzling desert, the largest wildfire of the year in California was



raging along the border with Nevada. The Beckwourth Complex Fire a combination of two lightning-caused fires burning 45 miles (72 km) north of Lake Tahoe showed no sign of slowing its rush northeast from the Sierra Nevada forest region after doubling in size between Friday and Saturday.

Late Saturday, flames jumped Interstate 395 and was threatening properties in Nevada's Washoe County. Take immediate steps to protect large animals and livestock, the Truckee Meadows Fire

Protection District tweeted. The blaze, which was only 8% contained, increased dramatically to 86 square miles (222 sq km) as firefighters sweltered in 100-degree temperatures.

It was one of several threatening homes across Western states that were expected to see triple-digit heat through the weekend as a high-pressure zone blankets the region.

Pushed by strong winds, a wildfire in southern Oregon doubled in size to 120 square miles (311 sq km) Saturday as it raged through heavy timber

in the Fremont-Winema National Forest near the Klamath County town of Sprague River.

The National Weather Service warned the dangerous conditions could cause heat-related illnesses, while California's power grid operator issued a statewide Flex Alert from 4 pm to 9 pm Saturday to avoid disruptions and rolling blackouts.

The California Independent System Operator warned of potential power shortage, not only because of mounting heat, but because a wildfire in southern Oregon was threatening transmission lines that carry imported power to California.

Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an emergency proclamation on Friday suspending rules to allow for more power capacity, and the ISO requested emergency assistance from other states. On Saturday, Newsom issued another proclamation allowing the emergency use of auxiliary ship engines to relieve pressure on the electric grid.

Palm Springs in Southern

California hit a record high temperature of 120 F (49 C) Saturday. It was the fourth time temperatures have reached 120 degrees so far this year, the Desert Sun reported.

In California's agricultural Central Valley, 100-degree temperatures blanketed the region, with Fresno reaching 111 degrees F (44 C), just one degree short of the all-time high for the date.

Las Vegas late Saturday afternoon tied the all-time record high of 117 F (47 C), the National Weather Service said. The city has recorded that record-high temperature four other times, most recently in June 2017.

NV Energy, Nevada's largest power provider, also urged customers to conserve electricity Saturday and Sunday evenings because of the heat wave and wildfires affecting transmission lines throughout the region.

A wildfire in southeast Washington grew to almost 60 square miles (155 sq km) as it blackened grass and timber while it moved into the Umatilla National Forest.

Billionaire Richard Branson reaches space in own ship



ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 11 JULY

nine days.

He also became only the second septuagenarian to depart for space. (John Glenn flew on the shuttle at age 77 in 1998.) With about 500 people watching, including Branson's wife, children and grandchildren, a twin-fuselage aircraft with his space plane attached underneath took off in the first stage of the flight.

The space plane then detached from the mothership at an altitude of about 13 kilometres and fired its engine, reaching the edge of space. The entire flight up and back aboard the sleek white ship, named *Unity*, took just under 15 minutes.

Virgin Galactic conducted three previous test flights into space with crews of just two or three.

The flamboyant, London-born founder of Virgin Atlantic Airways wasn't supposed to fly until later this summer. But he assigned himself to an earlier flight after Bezos announced plans to ride his own rocket into space from Texas on July 20, the 52nd anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Branson, who has kite-surfed the English Channel and attempted to circle the world in a hot-air balloon, denied he was trying to beat Bezos.

'An incredible day' as Lee statue removed in Charlottesville

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHARLOTTESVILLE, 11 JULY

Cheers erupted on Saturday as a Confederate statue that towered for nearly a century over downtown Charlottesville was carted away by truck from the Virginia city where it had become a flashpoint for racist protests and deadly violence.

It was a day of palpable joy and immense relief for scores of residents and visitors who lined neighboring streets to watch the larger-than-life figure of Gen. Robert E. Lee as it was hoisted from its pedestal and taken, at least for now, to storage.

The statue's removal came more than five years after racial justice activists had renewed a push to take down the monument, an initiative that drew the attention of white supremacists and other racist groups, culminating in the violent "Unite the Right"

rally in 2017.

"I'm ecstatic that we're here now. It's sad that it's taken so much to get us to this point. But this is an incredible day," said Don Gathers, a local Black activist who long advocated for the statue's removal.

Work to remove Lee's statue, and one of Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson shortly after, proceeded peacefully and without interruption. It was a project held up for years by a long, winding legal fight coupled

with changes in a state law that protected war memorials.

Also removed Saturday was a statue depicting Sacagawea, and explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, which has been criticized for a depiction of the Native American guide and interpreter some view as subservient and weak.

Couples, families with small children and activists looked on Saturday. The crowd intermittently chanted and cheered as progress was made fairly quickly. Hymns at one

point wafted down the street as musicians performed from the front steps of a church.

"Good atmosphere, good vibes, good energy," said Jim Henson, a resident of a nearby community who came to witness the "historic" event.

Ralph Dixon, a 59-year-old Black man born and raised in Charlottesville, was documenting Saturday's activities, a camera draped around his neck.

Dixon said he was brought as a schoolchild to the park where the Lee statue stood.

"All the teachers, my teachers

anyway, were always talking about what a great person this was," he said.

After the Lee statue was

gone, both workers and the crowd moved to a park about

two blocks away for the Jackson statue removal. It took

nearly an hour after a crane

lifted the statue off its pedestal to situate the piece on a truck and secure it.

Bulgarians elect new House amidst corruption worries

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SOFIA, 11 JULY

Bulgarians are voting in a snap poll on Sunday after a previous election in April produced a fragmented parliament that failed to form a viable coalition government.

Latest opinion polls suggest that the rerun could produce similar results but also a further drop in support for former Prime Minister Boyko Borisov's GERB party, after the current caretaker government made public allegations of widespread corruption during his rule.

NATO and EU member Bulgaria has been repeatedly criticised for not tackling corruption.

President Rumen Radev, a vocal critic of Borisov, urged Bulgarians to vote massively in the election to bring irreversible changes for the better. "I voted for Bulgaria where its citizens live with dignity and the young people have a future," he said after voting.

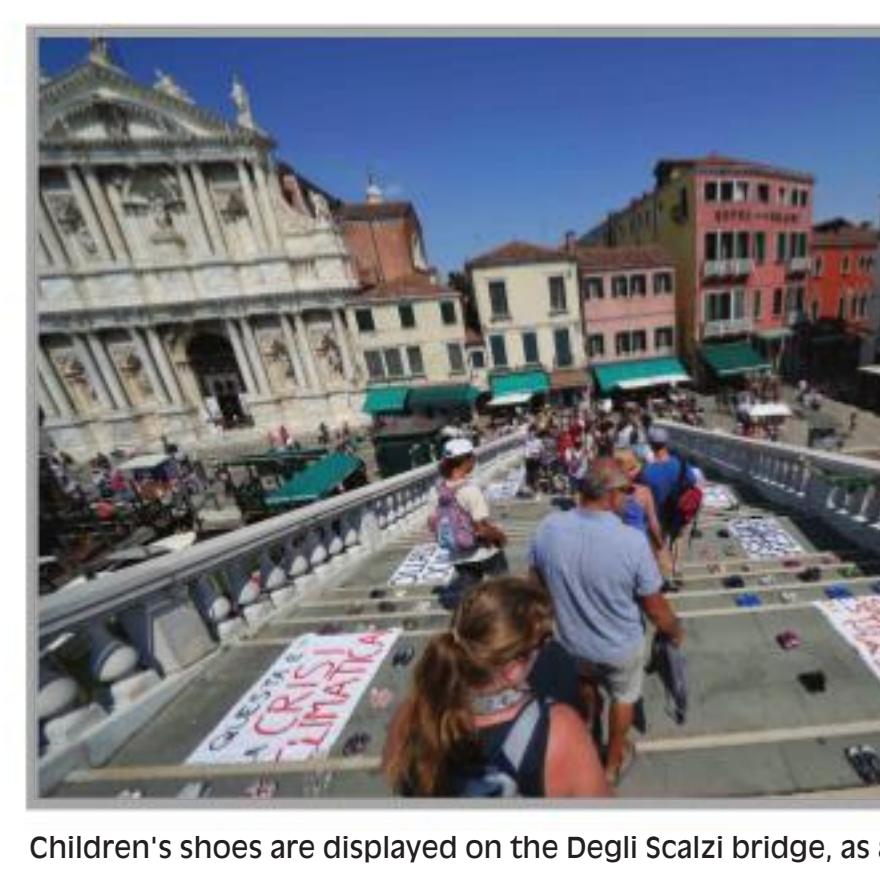
Whilst Ivanov of the Democratic Bulgaria party said the

country must move on from the current situation of corruption and lack of perspective.

Our goal is to see a government that is ambitious, that really has the guts, frankly speaking, to do the necessary reforms, because removing Boyko Borisov from power is just the beginning, not the end, of dismantling the corruption system, Ivanov said. Despite the serious setbacks that Borisov's GERB party suffered, the reputation of the 62-year-old political maverick remains high among those who have expressed fears over the relaxed measures amid continuing rise in infections. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has also warned that lifting all restrictions in one go would be "reckless".

"Given Sajid Javid now

GREEN PROTEST



Children's shoes are displayed on the Degli Scalzi bridge, as a protest against climatic change during a G20 Economy and Finance ministers and Central bank governors' meeting in Venice, Italy, on Sunday.

Black Sea drills showcase strong NATO-Ukraine defense ties

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABOARD USS ROSS, 11 JULY

Ukraine and NATO have conducted Black Sea drills involving dozens of warships in a two-week show of their strong defense ties and capability following a confrontation between Russia's military forces and a British destroyer off Crimea last month.

The Sea Breeze 2021 maneuvers that ended Saturday involved about 30 warships and 40 aircraft from NATO members and Ukraine. The captain of the USS Ross, a US Navy destroyer that took part in the drills, said the exercise was designed to improve how the equipment

and personnel of the participating nations operate together.

"We'd like to demonstrate to everybody, the international community, that no one nation can claim the Black Sea or any interna-

tional body of water, Cmdr. John D. Said aboard the guided missile destroyer previously deployed to the area for drills."

Those bodies of water belong to the international community, and we're committed to ensure that all nations have access to international waterways.

The Russian Defense Ministry said it was closely monitoring Sea Breeze.

The Russian military also conducted a series of parallel drills in the Black Sea and southwestern Russia, with warplanes practicing bombing runs and long-range air defense missiles' deploying to protect the coast.

Gangs complicate Haiti effort to recover from assassination

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PORT-AU-PRINCE, 11 JULY

Gangs in Haiti have long been financed by powerful politicians and their allies and many feel they may be losing control of the increasingly powerful armed groups who have driven thousands of people from their homes as they battle over territory, kill civilians and raid warehouses of food.

The escalation in gang violence threatens to complicate and be aggravated by political efforts to recover from last week's brazen slaying of President Jovenel Moïse. Haiti's government is in disarray; no parliament, no president, a dispute over who is prime minister, a weak police force. But the gangs seem more organized and powerful than ever.

While the violence has been centered in the capital of Port-au-Prince, it has affected life across Haiti, paralyzing the fragile economy, shuttering

schools, overwhelming police and disrupting efforts to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

The country is transformed into a vast desert where wild animals engulf us, said the Haitian Conference of the Religious in a recent statement decrying the spike in violent crime. "We are refugees and exiles in our own country."

Gangs recently have stolen tens of thousands of bags of sugar,

rice and flour as well as ransacking and burning homes

in the capital.

That has driven thousands of people to seek shelter at churches, outdoor fields and a large gymnasium, where the government and international donors struggle to feed them and find long-term housing.

Those included dozens of disabled people who were forced to flee last month when gangs set fire to the encampment where they settled after being injured in the catastrophic 2010 earthquake.

A cigarette dangled from the mouth of an older woman who washed clothes in a large camp on these crutches, said 44-year-old Obas Woyly, who lost a leg in the quake. Bullets were flying from different directions.... All I was able to see was fire in the homes. He was among more than 350 people crammed into a school converted into a makeshift shelter where hardly anyone wore face masks against disease.

I was running for my life

in the camp on these crutches,

said 44-year-old Obas Woyly,

who lost a leg in the quake.

Bullets were flying from different directions.... All I was able to see was fire in the homes.

He was among more than 350 people crammed into a school converted

into a makeshift shelter where hardly anyone wore face masks against disease.

Programme aimed at reducing gang activity and an influx

of aid following the earthquake helped quell some of the problem, but once that money dried up and aid programme shutdown, gangs turned to kidnappings and extortion from businesses and neighbourhoods they control.

Gangs are in part funded by powerful politicians, a practice recently denounced even by one of its reputed beneficiaries Jimmy Cherizier, a former police officer who heads a gang coalition known as G9 Family and Allies.

He complained that the country is being held hostage by people he did not identify: They reign supreme everywhere, distribute weapons to the populous quarters, playing the division card to establish their domination.

Cherizier known as Barbecue, has been linked to several massacres and his coalition is believed to be allied with Mose's right-wing party. He criticised those he called bourgeois and exploiters, adding: We will use our

North-East Half a century later

The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 seemingly began an unending process of administrative reconstruction in the region



RANGAN DUTTA

It will not surprise a discerning observer of the North-east to know that there is little enthusiasm in the region about the 50th anniversary of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act on 31 December this year. Such is the case even though it was the first key reform after Independence to shape the political identities of hill tribes by departing from the usual criteria for granting of "statehood" such as financial viability. It is because of a perception — widely prevalent in the region — that the "reorganisation" is an unfinished task.

Several facts are cited in support of the view. First, continuing violent movements for separate statehood in the Sixth Schedule areas of Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Bodoland in Assam. Second, similar demands in the hill areas of Manipur and growing unrest in tribal areas of Tripura. Consequently, a major part of the North-east, including the whole of Assam, continue to be "disturbed areas".

Be as it may, the NEA (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 was a game-changer as it recognised the strategic importance of the "North-east areas" or "areas East of Siliguri". The British viewed it as the "Eastern frontier" of Bengal Presidency under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act, 1873.

Separation of the Naga Hills and Tuensang areas from Assam and creation of Nagaland under the State of Nagaland Act, 1962 were the first steps to reorganise the composite state of Assam.

The NEA (Reorganisation) Act was preceded by the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act, 1969 to establish Meghalaya as an "autonomous state" within Assam's hill areas. That was done before the liberation struggle in East Pakistan would settle down as a need was created for strengthening the administration of the region bordering East Pakistan. Thus, the granting of full statehood to Meghalaya, the Union Territories of Tripura and Manipur, UT status to the North East Frontier Agency, and separation of the Mizo district from Assam as an UT under the NEA (Reorganisation) Act — all of these changed the political and administrative set-up of the region as never before.

Furthermore, establishment of the North Eastern Council under the NEC Act, passed by Parliament in 1971, as a "regional planning body" put in place a common development platform for the first time in the North-east. The constituent units of the region didn't really add up to an economy, and thus needed integration into the larger Eastern Indian economy and those in its neighbourhood, such

as Bangladesh and Myanmar. No doubt that it was a historic initiative.

Things, however, didn't work out as expected because of continuing insurgency in Mizoram, tribal unrest in Tripura and the outbreak of widespread ethnic violence from 1979-80 on the "foreign nationals" issue, which took state and Central authorities by surprise and destabilised the North-east. Assam, the worst-affected state, experienced "no real growth" for the 1980s and 90s as noted in the approach to the 12th plan document of the Planning Commission.

Further restructuring of states was not hindered though as extension of the Sixth Schedule to the Tripura Tribal Areas District in 1984 by the 49th Amendment to the Constitution was followed by the granting of full statehood to Mizoram in 1986 after signing the Accord with the Mizo National Front on 30 June 1986, thereby ending 20 years of Mizo insurgency. It may be recalled that under a state legislation enacted in 1979, autonomous district councils were already functioning in the tribal areas of Tripura, just as district councils were functioning since 1971 in the hill areas of Manipur under a state law.

It is clear that the 1971 reorganisation was in a way the beginning of a seemingly unending process of administrative reconstruction in the North-east, ostensibly to meet the

aspirations of distinct groups. After analysing such developments, one gets the feeling that identity assertion has been incentivised under state policy without any significant economic or social growth.

There are at present nine autonomous councils in Assam including three established under state laws enacted in September 2020 for Moran, Motok and Koch Rajbaris. They are presently in the other backward classes group but under active consideration for inclusion in the list of Scheduled Tribes. The six remaining councils set up earlier covered Scheduled Tribes plains areas.

The three districts under the Sixth Schedule in Assam are Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao, which were notified as such after being originally enacted in the Constitution. On the other hand, the Bodoland Territorial Administrative District was put under the same status only after the 2003 Bodo Accord.

In Assam, there are also 33 development councils for "backward communities", interestingly including Assamese Brahmins and Kaitas, Manipuris, Gorkhas, and even Bengali and Hindi-speaking people. Suffice to say they make little administrative sense.

It is about time a proper evaluation of such councils was carried out to know why their activities made no

difference to the performance of Assam in attaining the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Assam has been ranked at the bottom of the list of states, only above Bihar, in this year's assessment by the NITI Aayog. As if that was not enough, a few days ago the state government's department of welfare of plains tribes and backward classes asked all councils to report on the 33 communities, including the ones mentioned above.

The emphasis on the "indigenous" in development discourse across the North-east misses the fact that the concept of indigeneity doesn't exist in the Constitution. In a recent article Hiren Gohain, distinguished public intellectual, argued that it would be a kind of "separate development" that is not envisaged in the Constitution and *prima facie* not in tune with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas" which captures the spirit of Indian democracy.

In this situation, the proposal to add six groups in Assam, presently in the OBC category, to the list of Scheduled Tribes would further expand the base of demand for "separate development" and given the resource crunch, it would be hard to implement. It might give rise to what Pankaj Mishra called "resentment" in his book *Age of Anger* — a feeling of hatred and envy in the minds of "others" kept out.

The autonomous councils set up in the North-east after reorganisation in 1971, including nine under the Sixth Schedule and the development councils in Assam, would add up to about 50 in total. It might seem to be a continuation of reorganisation of the region by other means and has produced an unviable political power structure with multiple power centres. They have rendered development initiatives of the NEC and Union ministry of development of the North-eastern region less effective.

Given the historical fact of China's long involvement in aiding and abetting "insurgencies" in the North-east, this kind of social engineering policy would only divide and promote inefficient use of scarce resources — to the advantage of our adversaries.

What the North-east needs is a regional administrative platform, if not a government, to address the common issues of development, especially the growth of infrastructure and security. Though the same was implicit in the NEC, the deepening spread of identity politics obstructed growth of the appropriate institutions of regional development and thereby, slowed down implementation of significant initiatives, such as the Act East policy. It is time now to correct course towards a cohesive North-east — one that is not broken into "narrow domestic walls" as Rabindranath Tagore wrote.

The writer is a retired IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre and has served as a scientific consultant in the office of the principal scientific advisor to the Government of India

PLUS POINTS

Minority affairs



With an aim to nurture the socio-political and economic interests of indigenous Muslim minority families in Assam, the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government has decided to form eight sub-groups for valued recommendations on various issues like health, education, skill development, women empowerment, financial inclusion and preservation of cultural identity, among others, which would be implemented over a period of five years.

The sub-groups, with a chairman from the indigenous Muslim minority community and a member secretary from the government, will come up with their approvals on assigned matters within three months. And based on their recommendations, the government is expected to prepare a roadmap for all round development of the community in the state.

Conveying a meeting for interactions with intellectuals and leading citizens from the religious minority community recently, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma asserted that comprehensive development of the community should be accelerated, so that it becomes a significant contributor to the growth narrative of Assam while keeping its cultural identity intact.

Noted Assamese author Padmasree Eli Ahmed, acclaimed physician Padmasree Dr Illias Ali along with Syed SK Alam, Wasbir Hussain, S I Ahmed and Nekibur Zaman, among nearly 150 eminent Muslim personalities from eastern and central Assam, participated in the meeting, where state minorities welfare and development minister C M Patowary, education minister Ranoj Pegu along with others were also present.

—Nava Thakuria

Empowering colleges



Governor of Assam Jagdish Mukhi, who serves as the chancellor of all state universities, recently constituted a three-member committee on empowerment of three autonomous colleges, which are going to implement the National Education Policy 2020. The committee is expected to submit its report within 30 days.

Headed by Assam government's education adviser professor Mihir Kanti Chaudhuri, the committee also comprises state higher education principal secretary B Kalyan Chakravarthy and Jagannath Barooah College (Jorhat) principal Dr Bimal Barah as its members. The high-powered committee will work out ways and means to empower the autonomous colleges by assessing the resources required for the purpose.

Mentionable is that chairing a review meeting held at Guwahati Raj Bhavan on 29 June, Mukhi agreed to grant more powers to North Lakhimpur College (Lakhimpur), Jagannath Barooah College (Jorhat) and Nowrang College (Nagaon) for implementing the NEP 2020. He also asked the government to fill up all vacant faculty positions as early as possible and ensure that no contractual teachers remain on the roll.

Mukhi directed state education minister Ranoj Pegu to transfer the secondary education courses in these institutions to other senior secondary schools so that they can concentrate exclusively on quality degree courses. Minister Pegu expressed hope that the colleges concerned would concentrate on rendering quality education by using their autonomy.

—NT

IN A MIRE OF DISTRESS

The pandemic's second wave in Manipur has made the Centre sit up and take notice



patched medical teams to six states across the country, including Manipur. At the end of the tour in a press conference in Imphal, Dr L Swasticharan, chief medical officer in the Union ministry of health and family welfare, stressed on the need for intensive data analysis to tackle the situation. He further said that Manipur needed to strictly adhere to the "Comprehensive Guideline for Management of Covid Both in Adults and Children" issued by the Directorate General of Health Services.

After the team submitted its report, Rajesh Bhushan, secretary of the Union MoHFW, wrote to Rajesh Kumar, officer on special duty to the CM of Manipur, pointing out the need to focus on six important aspects to curb the spread of the virus. He wrote that a positivity rate of more than 10 per cent in about eight of Manipur's 16 districts was indeed alarming as was the increase in the number of deaths in the last four weeks (13 June-4 July). He stressed on the necessity for a critical analysis of the situation.

Bhushan pointed out the need for a microanalysis of areas showing high positivity during the last few weeks, underlined the importance of maintaining the positivity rate below five per cent and asked to increase testing to aid early identification. On infrastructure, he asked the state to have a continuous vigil regarding occupancy of critical beds (oxygen-supported and intensive care unit) and plan for augmentation of health-care infrastructure in districts where occupancy was more than 40 per cent for any bed category. He also wrote that trained human resources infrastructure, logistics and procurement should be planned considering the geographical spread of the pandemic and touched on the need for timely

disclosure of all infrastructure availability-based details on public portals or media with a view to avoid misinformation.

Taking a serious note of the distressing rise in fatalities, the Union health secretary suggested strict adoption of the ministry's clinical management protocols, and greater focus on making them more effective, smooth and prompt. He also stressed on the need for closer monitoring of home isolation cases and to put in place processes whereby smooth hospitalisation of patients can be done. It was also directed to monitor overall facilities including those for deaths, identify any weak spots and undertake the required corrective actions promptly. Finally, Bhushan spelled out the need for enhancing the vaccination drive by revamping vaccination sites, improving efficiency and utilisation, deploying strategic sites to get the shots near containment zones and speedier means to that effect.

From all the aforementioned directives, it is clear that Manipur has gone back to March 2020 when the pandemic first hit the country. It is apparent that no lesson has been learnt or the issue given the seriousness it deserved. But someone should be held accountable. If it is the bureaucracy, then a shake-up is called for. On the other hand, if the fault lies with the political bosses, then Biren Singh should be answerable as he also holds the health portfolio in Manipur.

The writer is the Imphal-based Special Representative of The Statesman

Birthday celebrated



The 86th birthday of Tibetan spiritual and political leader, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, was celebrated in Arunachal Pradesh's Bomdila last Tuesday, says a report in the Itanagar-based Arunachal Times. Followers of the Tibetan spiritual leader gathered at the Thupchog Gatseling monastery on the occasion and prayed for his good health and long life.

About 100 years ago when my grandfather returned to Manipur as the first modern medical practitioner of the state, he faced severe social ostracism and was shunned publicly as a person who handles dead bodies. So much so that the Maharajah of the time had to issue an edict to the effect that any person found ostracising Dr Thokchom Govardhan would be subjected to imprisonment.

By the 1930s, that negative social sanction had withered away. But when black fever broke out in Manipur and everybody had to be inoculated, he found out that one relative openly expressed his unwillingness to be administered a shot. My grandfather informed the local police who arrested the relative and brought him to the clinic for a jab.

The reason for bringing up such an old tale is to point out the fact that the same taboo was also faced by Covid frontline workers when the first wave hit the country in March last year. But soon, thanks to a sustained campaign, particularly on social media, the present ostracism petered out.

Meanwhile, chief minister N

Biren Singh has been defending the rise in petroleum prices as an outcome of the free vaccines and rice being given for Covid relief. On the other hand, some legislators have been offering Rs 10 lakh as compensation to the next of kin of anyone dying on account of Covid vaccination. It might make them hog the headlines but sends a wrong signal to the public by creating doubts about the safety of vaccines.

The tragedy seems to be that the state isn't learning any lessons from past experiences. Covid trains started arriving at Manipur's railhead of Jiribam around April 2020 from various metro cities and thousands of Manipuris who were stranded there poured in along with the Covid virus. Even after that, the second wave this year caught the administration unawares. The situation is dire as positive cases and deaths keep rising

daily.

At the time of writing this article, 1,229 people have already died due to Covid with a daily score hovering around 10. Altogether 74,341 people have been found to be positive with the virus, out of whom 35,060 have been subjected to home isolation.

The figure that remains unclear is the total number of hospital beds available for Covid patients.

The Manipur government has

taken pride in publishing the photo-

graph of a building, said to be a 100-bed Covid block at the state-run Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences, in the pages of its calendar this year. Its functionality and occupancy rate are unknown. When I attempted to get a 74-year-old Covid patient admitted in JNIMS two months ago, she was initially denied on the grounds that the hospital had no oxygen supply, but the authorities present refused to give the same statement in writing. It warranted intervention of the then director to finally have the patient admitted and treated.

The question is how many people could have access to the director for availing the hospital's services?

There also seems to be no standard operating procedure when it comes to treatment. State-run Covid care centres have been admitting patients but they are reportedly not provided meals and must often wait for doctors to arrive on their morning rounds before getting treated, even for emergency conditions. That said, local newspapers are filled with pictures of legislators and ministers inaugurating dedicated Covid centres in their respective areas.

This apathy of state-run institu-

tutes has led moneyed patients to private hospitals which openly fleece all comers. While out on the streets, SOPs prescribed for the public seem to be only on paper, for how can one explain a traffic jam in Imphal in the middle of a lockdown?

That all was not well with the

Government of Manipur's approach to tackling the Covid menace became clear when the Centre recently dis-

closed medical teams to six states across the country, including Manipur. At the end of the tour in a press conference in Imphal, Dr L Swasticharan, chief medical officer in the Union ministry of health and family welfare, stressed on the need for intensive data analysis to tackle the situation. He further said that Manipur needed to strictly adhere to the "Comprehensive Guideline for Management of Covid Both in Adults and Children" issued by the Directorate General of Health Services.

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OSAKA RETURNS

Naomi Osaka (in photo, left) returned to the spotlight for the first time since withdrawing from the French Open in May and skipping Wimbledon, posing on the red carpet at The ESPYS on Saturday night. The world's highest-paid female athlete faced a slew of photographers in New York, with one being heard urging her, "Nice smile" as cameras clicked furiously.

For more updates

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THUMBNAILS

Athletes regulations: Track and field athletes who are unable to feature in a particular phase of competition after testing positive for COVID-19 during the Tokyo Olympics will be replaced by the next-best placed competitor from the previous round, according to the Sport-Specific Regulations (SSR) announced on Sunday. The regulations said the athletes unable to compete due to COVID-19 reasons will not be disqualified and will be marked as DNS (Did Not Start).

Shooting regulations: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has approved replacement in the mixed team shooting events of the upcoming Tokyo Games if an athlete from a participating nation tests positive for COVID-19 just before the competition. However, the same leeway has not been granted to the individual events in shooting, which will see 356 athletes from as many as 100 countries competing for glory in Tokyo, with the women's 10m air rifle and 10m air pistol events drawing maximum participants.

Windies win: Shimron Hetmyer made 61 in a 103-run partnership with Dwayne Bravo which set the West Indies on course to a comprehensive 56-run win over Australia in the second Twenty20 international. Bravo went on to make an unbeaten 47 on Saturday as the West Indies made 196-4, plundering 123 runs from their last 10 overs against a limp Australian attack.

Anand wins: Former world champion Viswanathan Anand defeated long-time rival Garry Kasparov for the second consecutive time, in the 13th round of the Croatia Grand Chess Tour's Blitz event on Sunday. The victory came for the Indian maestro after three straight draws in rounds 10, 11 and 12.

Sport

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Argentina beats Brazil to win Copa title

AGENCIES
RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 JULY

Two long droughts ended at the Copa America final: Argentina won its first major title since 1993 after a 1-0 win against Brazil. And Lionel Messi finally lifted his first major trophy for the national team, filling in one of the biggest gaps in his decorated career.

Argentina's winning goal at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday came in the 22nd minute after Rodrigo de Paul made a long pass to Angel di Maria. The 33-year-old veteran striker counted on some sloppy defending from left-back Renan Lodi to take control and lob it past goalkeeper Ederson.

When the match ended, a tearful Messi knelt down and put his hands on his face. Then most of his teammates ran in his direction to celebrate and threw him into the air.

Once criticized by Argentinian fans for his quietness, he went to the few hundred guests chanting his name at the Maracana and chanted with them. Messi kissed the trophy before lifting it into the air during the presentations.

The match at the Maracana started with some surprises. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni made five changes from the starting lineup that beat Colombia on penalties in the semifinal. Gonzalo Montiel, Cristian Riomero, Marcos Acua, Leandro Paredes and Di Mara took the places of Nahuel Molina, Nicolas Tagliafico, Guido Rodriguez and Nicolas Gonzalez.

Brazil, a team recognized for its steadiness, did not make any changes from the team that advanced to the final.

The teams were cautious early in the match, barely offering chances. When Argentina opened the scoring in a rare Brazil defensive mistake and Di Maria's classy finish, the match became more physical and Argentina successfully stopped the ball



from getting to Neymar.

Neymar tried hard with dribbles and passes, but the Selecao barely threatened Argentina's goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez in the first half. Argentina sat in the back, hoping for counter-attacks.

Brazil coach Tite tried to change the dynamic of the match by replacing defensive midfielder Fred for Roberto Firmino, and managed to do so for much of the second half. But though the Selecao had more ball possession there were few real opportunities.

Messi's performance in the final was not as impressive as in previous matches of the tournament, during which he scored four goals and had five assists. He had a clear opportunity in the 88th minute, tried to dribble Ederson, but the Brazilian goalkeeper stopped him.

"I can't cry yet," Di Maria said after the match. "We dreamed

of getting this, and we fought. Many people criticized us and asked us not to come back (to the national team)."

The title, however, provides the superstar some relief after all the questions throughout his career on his effectiveness playing for the national team.

The South American trophy is a relief for Argentina, which won its last major title when Messi was only 6 years old. Saturday's victory in Rio gave the team its 15th Copa America title, this time unbeaten, equaling Uruguay's total. Brazil has won the South American title nine times.

Messi, who has several titles with Barcelona, had reached the final of Copa America three times and lost all of them in 2007, 2015 and 2016. Now he will have good memories at the Maracana, where Argentina lost the 2014 World Cup final to Germany.

Brazil became last-minute hosts of Copa America two

weeks before kick-off after original organizers Colombia and Argentina withdrew.

Many players protested against the tournament taking place as the COVID-19 pandemic causes thousands of deaths a day in South America, even more so in Brazil where 532,000 have died.

Officials allowed a few thousand fans into the Maracana for the decider, the only match in the tournament to have spectators. There was very little social distancing in celebrations, and some fans removed their masks.

Messi pays his debt

Argentina finally made Lionel Messi cry with joy.

After losing four times in finals, early exits in major tournaments and even a decision to retire from the national team, the superstar celebrated a much-awaited title with Argentina at Saturday's 1-0 win against

Brazil in the Maracana Stadium.

The title ended Argentina's 28-year drought of major trophies, with Messi as the best player with four goals and five assists. The captain also broke the team's record for international appearances with 151 matches. When Maradona took the team to glory in 1986,

officials allowed a few thousand fans into the Maracana for the decider, the only match in the tournament to have spectators. There was very little social distancing in celebrations, and some fans removed their masks.

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Brazil has World Cup hopes dented after Copaloss

AGENCIES
RIO DE JANEIRO, 11 JULY

Brazil trusted its defense even more than Neymar to keep its Copa America title. It was a move that failed.

Argentina's 1-0 victory at the Maracana Stadium on Saturday proved that the Selecao's defensive prowess was not as strong as its players and coach have shown. Now coach Tite will have to rethink some of his alternatives, as he promised to use Copa America as a testing ground ahead of the World Cup in Qatar.

Silva acknowledged Brazil was under par.

"It was not the Brazil team it usually is in the first minutes. When you concede in a match like this, it is hard to come back," he said.

In the second half it was only one team trying to play, the other was just stopping the match. But we can't use excuses, we couldn't play our game in the first half."

Right-back Danilo and midfielder Fred, both starters at the Maracana, did not make clear mistakes in the final, but neither supported Brazil up front. Neymar was isolated for most of the match.

American World Cup qualifiers in which Argentina struggled. He took the team to Russia, but the round-of-16 defeat against France came as turbulent news for the team.

Messi became more aggressive in the 2019 Copa America, much to the pleasure of Argentinian fans who considered him to be too cold, too European. Under a coach with little experience, Lionel Scaloni, he was surrounded by young players who got the best of him.

On Saturday Messi kissed the Copa America trophy and lifted it at age 34. The biggest gap in his decorated career is now closed.

Losing semifinalist to get shot at gold medal if finalist contracts COVID-19: IOC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

If a wrestler contracts COVID-19 infection ahead of his title clash during the Tokyo Olympics, the losing semifinalist will get a shot at gold medal, according to the regulations published for the Games by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

However, there was no clarity as to what will happen to the finalist, who was at least assured of a silver medal.

The wrestling competition in 18 weight categories - six each in freestyle, women and Greco-Roman -- will begin from August 1.

India will field seven wrestlers, including four women.

The IOC published the Sports Specific Regulations (SSR) for all the sport disciplines on Saturday to make it clear what happens of the athletes get infection during the competition.

"In Wrestling, if an athlete is not able to compete due to COVID-19, the athlete will not be disqualified and will be marked as 'DNS' (Did Not Start). The opponent receives a bye into the next round," the regulations stated.

"In case the athlete has reached the final and is no longer able to compete due to COVID-19, the athlete eliminated in the respective semi-final will fill the vacant place and compete in the final," it added.

As of now India is set to field a women's doubles team of Sania Mirza and Ankita Raina in the tennis competition of the Games.

As per the regulations for tennis, the IOC clarified that, "athletes unable to start the competition due to COVID-19 will not be disqualified and will be marked as DNS."

"In case the athlete has started

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BCCI working group members for compensation for all age-groups

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JULY

ed the competition and can no longer compete due to COVID-19 will be marked as W/O (walkover). The opponent will receive a bye and the minimum result of the athlete is protected."

Hockey regulations

The losing semifinalists in hockey might get a shot at Olympic gold in the Tokyo Games if one of the finalist teams is forced out because of COVID-19 as the affected side's last-four stage opponent would be elevated to the summit clash.

This has been made clear in the Games' Sport-Specific Regulations (SSR) unveiled on Sunday. The SSR has been developed jointly by International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Federations (IFs) to determine the impact of a confirmed positive COVID-19 case and its management in competition formats and structures.

"In Hockey, teams unable to compete due to COVID-19 will not be disqualified and will be marked as 'DNS' (Did Not Start). In case a team in the knockout stages is no longer able to compete due to COVID-19 their minimum ranking achieved will be protected and, if time allows, their opponent will advance to the next round."

"Therefore, if a team is unable to participate in the final, the team that was eliminated by the COVID-19 impacted team will be brought into the final to compete for the medal on the field of play."

"Normally, the moment we get any positive result we will be another round of RT-PCR tests conducted yesterday and the results were supposed to come today. We

Sourav Ganguly.

"The working group has just been formed and we will work with the guidance of Jay Shah (BCCI secretary). A time frame has not been set yet but I feel compensation, whatever the amount may be, should be given to all age-group cricketers," Jaydev said.

The other members of the panel include former India captain Mohammad Azharudin, Karnataka's Santosh Menon, Assam's Devajit Saikia, CAB's Avishek Dalmiya, Uttar Pradesh's Yudhvir Singh and Delhi's Rohan Jaitely.

Yudhvir said: "It is only one of our tasks (compensation package). We will also give our

inputs to the board on how to conduct the season.

"As far as compensation goes, we should definitely look at the U-19 and U-23 cricketers also. COVID has robbed them of a crucial year. All the members will meet soon and discuss the way forward and the BCCI will take the final call."

Adomestic player earns Rs 15-16 lakh per season but it was not the case last season with the Ranji Trophy being cancelled for the first time in 87 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Only the T20 and 50-over competitions were held at the senior level.

Jaydev also informed that veteran batsman Sheldon Jack-

son is all set to return to Saurashtra after spending a season with Puducherry.

Jackson, who is part of the Kolkata Knight Riders squad this IPL season, had moved to Puducherry as outstation player after guiding Saurashtra to their maiden Ranji Trophy in March 2020. "He has got the NOC from Puducherry and we are happy that he is back. He is a senior and an important player for us," Jaydev added.

The 2021-2022 season domestic season begins with the women's one-day competition in September-October while the men start the year with the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

India set England 149-run target in 2nd women's T20

AGENCIES
HOVE (ENGLAND), 11 JULY

India scored 148 for four against England in the must-win second women's T20 International here on Sunday.

England had won the first T20 via Duckworth-Lewis method.

Young Shafali Verma (in photo) scored a 38-ball 48 while Smriti Mandhana made 20 in their opening partnership.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who has been struggling for form, chipped in with a



25-ball 31.

Brief Scores:
India: 148 for 4 in 20 overs.
(S Verma 48, H Kaur 31; MVilliers 1/9, N Sciver 1/20).

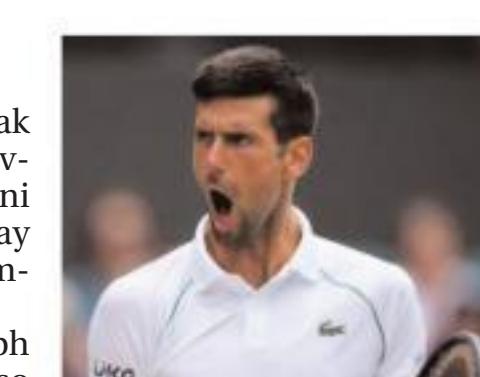
Djokovic triumphs at Wimbledon

LONDON, 11 JULY

World number one Novak Djokovic beat Italian seventh seed Matteo Berrettini 6-7(4) 6-4 6-4 6-3 on Sunday to win his sixth title at Wimbledon.

His third straight triumph at the All England Club also earned the Serbian 20th Grand Slam title, equalling the men's record haul held by Switzerland's Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal of Spain.

Having also won the Australian Open and the French Open titles in 2021, Djokovic has now completed the third leg towards achieving the Golden Slam. No man has ever won the four slams and an



Olympic gold in the same year.

The 34-year-old, who came into the title clash having beaten Berrettini in both of their previous meetings, opened a 5-2 lead in the first set with an early break but the

Samir Banerjee lifts Wimbledon boys' singles title

AGENCIES

LONDON, 11 JULY

Indo-American tennis player Samir Banerjee lifted the Wimbledon boys' singles title on Sunday, a remarkable triumph for the youngster who was testing his skills in a Grand Slam for only the second time in his fledgling career.

All of 17, the boy from New

Jersey just wanted to win a

match at the biggest stage in

the junior circuit, but little did

he know that he would be the

last boy standing at the hal-

lowed grass courts.

Up against compatriot Vic-

tor Lillo, the teenager won 7-

56-3 in the summit clash that

lasted one hour 22 minutes.