



STATUS QUO AT LAC
CAN BE ACHIEVED,
SAYS CDS RAWAT

P5



'POOR KIDS'
EDUCATION
WORST-HIT'

P7



COSBY CASE: TOUGH
LESSONS FOR
LAWYERS, VICTIMS

P10



'SECOND-STRING
INDIA TOURING
SRI LANKA NOW'

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky with light rain/thundershower. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 39 and 26 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 0.00.4 Mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 73% Min: 35%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 41.3°C (+5) Min: 27.2°C (-1)
SUN RISES 05:28 hrs MOON RISES 01:22 hrs SUN SETS 19:23 hrs MOON SETS 13:39 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, Speaker Biman Banerjee and chief minister Mamata Banerjee during the inaugural session of newly constituted West Bengal Legislative Assembly, In Kolkata on Friday. SUBAL SAHA (See P4)

Tirath Rawat resigns as Uttarakhand CM:
Four months after he took charge, Uttarakhand CM Tirath Singh Rawat Friday night resigned from his post. Mr Rawat met the Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya late tonight, at the Dehradun Raj Bhawan and handed in his resignation, hours after his return from New Delhi where he had meet top BJP leaders, including BJP president J P Nadda. (P4)

Parl Monsoon session from 19 July to 13 Aug:
The Sixth Session of the 17th Lok Sabha will commence from 19 July and will continue till 13 August, an official communication said on Friday. Both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha issued official orders about the convening of the Monsoon session from 19 July.

5 LeT terrorists, Army jawan killed in Pulwama:
Five Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists, including a district commander, and an Army jawan were killed in an encounter between the ultras and the security forces in J&K's Pulwama district on Friday, police said. (P5)

All post-poll violence charges to be considered as FIRs: HC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 2 JULY

All allegations of post-poll violence are to be considered as FIRs by the state, a Bench of Calcutta High Court comprising acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal, Justices I P Mukerji, Harish Tandon, Soumen Sen and Subrata Talukdar that is hearing the matter on post-poll violence directed on Friday.

The court further directed the state government to arrange the medical treatment of the persons who were injured in the violence which took place in the wake of the recently held Assembly elections.

The state was directed to provide rations to those whose ration cards had been taken away and had returned home

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 2 JULY

The Trinamul Congress has written to the Prime Minister seeking the removal of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta from his present position over his meeting with the BJP's Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari.

In their letter, Trinamul MPs Derek O'Brien, Sukhen-du Shekhar Roy and Mahua Moitra stated that the meeting between Adhikari and the Solicitor General at the latter's Delhi residence, "reeks of impropriety" as the BJP MLA is an accused in the Narada and Saradha cases where investigations are underway.

The letter said that Adhikari was accused in various cases of cheating, bribery and illegal gratification, related to the Narada and Saradha scams.

The MPs also stated in their letter that the meeting was fixed at the Solicitor General's residence after Mr Adhikari met Union home minister Amit Shah.

They noted that Mr Mehta was appearing for the CBI in the Narada case in the Supreme Court and Calcutta High Court, besides advising the investigation agency in the Saradha chit fund scam.

Trinamul Congress Diamond Harbour MP Abhishek Banerjee stated Mr Tushar Mehta's efforts to dismiss

The Solicitor General of India is the second-highest law officer of the country after the Attorney General of India and advises the Government of India and its various organs in crucial legal matters.

Such meeting between an accused with the learned Solicitor General who is investigating such investigating agencies by whom the said accused is being investigated, is in direct conflict of interest with the statutory duties of the Solicitor General of India,

"Reports stated that Mr Adhikari entered Hon'ble SG's residence in the presence of a cavalcade of officers and stayed there for nearly 30 minutes. Does that imply that a meeting was indeed due?" Mr Banerjee asked. "As the episode gets murkier, one can only hope that the truth should surface," he said.

The Ministry of External Affairs today confirmed that a drone was spotted over the Indian High Commission in Islamabad last week, forcing New Delhi to lodge a protest with the Pakistani authorities.

"A drone was spotted over the Indian High Commission in Islamabad on 26 June and the matter has been taken up officially with Pakistan," Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing. He said India expected Pakistan to investigate the incident and prevent such breach of security.

This was the first such incident involving the Indian mission in Pakistan. It happened hours before a drone attack at the Indian Air Force station in Jammu in the wee hours of Sunday.

Two IAF personnel were injured in the attack in which improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were dropped by the drones. A day later, Indian army personnel fired at a drone at Kaluchak, also in Jammu. Preliminary investigations suggested the involvement of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) in the Jammu IAF station attack.

The drone over the Indian High Commission in Islamabad was spotted apparently when a function was going on inside the mission.

As if India was sure about the involvement of LeT in the Jammu drone attack, the spokesperson said the investigating agencies were carrying out a probe. He, however, made it clear that India has a "zero tolerance" policy against terrorism.

(With PTI input)

TMC seeks SG's removal for meeting Suvendu



speculations regarding his "clandestine" meeting with Suvendu Adhikari can only be valuable if he makes public all CCTV footage of when Mr Adhikari was in his residence.

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Drone seen over Indian mission in Islamabad; New Delhi lodges protest

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

JAMMU DRONE ATTACK

"What happened at Jammu was essentially a terrorist act which attempted to target our assets there. The attempt failed of course. The assets were not damaged."

RKS BHADAURIA
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL

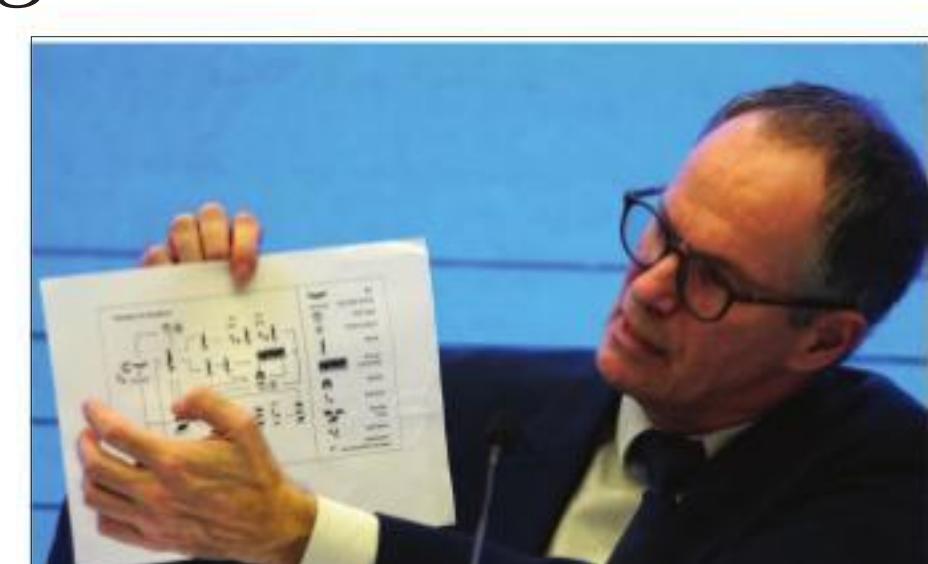
"All countries must take action, end terror havens and financing. We call upon Pakistan to take credible, verifiable and irreversible action against cross-border terrorism and bring perpetrators of Mumbai and Pathankot attacks to justice," he added.

Pakistan rejected India's claim of a drone flying over the premises of the Indian mission. "These preposterous claims have no basis in facts and no proof whatsoever has been shared with Pakistan to substantiate these allegations," Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said.

Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, speaking in an interactive session at a think tank, said the drone strikes in the Jammu airbase were an "act of terror" that was aimed at targeting key military assets.

The Chief of Air Staff said the IAF has carried out a detailed analysis in terms of implications of drones and other capabilities falling into the hands of non-state actors, and taking a series of measures to counter them. He said a detailed investigation into the attacks was underway and measures would be on the table based on the findings.

Concerns grow over WHO leading Covid origins probe



As the World Health Organization draws up plans for the next phase of its probe of how the coronavirus pandemic started, an increasing number of scientists say the UN agency isn't up to the task and shouldn't be the one to investigate.

Numerous experts, some with strong ties to WHO, say that political tensions between the US and China make it impossible for an investigation by the agency to find credible answers.

They say what's needed is a broad, independent analysis closer to what happened in the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The first part of a joint WHO-China study of how

with President Joe Biden ordering a review of US intelligence within 90 days to assess the possibility.

Early in June, WHO's emergencies chief, Dr. Michael Ryan, said that the agency was working out the final details of the next phase of its probe and that because WHO works by persuasion, it lacks the power to compel China to cooperate. Some said that is precisely why a WHO-led examination is doomed to fail.

We will never find the origins relying on the WHO, said Lawrence Gostin, director of the WHO Collaborating Center on Public Health Law and Human Rights at Georgetown University.

For a year and a half, they have been stonewalled by China, and it's very clear they won't get to the bottom of it.

Gostin said the US and other countries can either try to piece together what intelligence they have or create some new entity to investigate.

The first phase of WHO's mission required getting China's approval not only for the experts who travelled there but for their entire agenda and the report they ultimately produced.

Jeffrey Sachs, a professor at Columbia University, said the US must be willing to subject its own scientists to a rigorous examination and recognise that they might be just as culpable as China.

The US was involved in research at the laboratories in Wuhan, Sachs said, referring to US funding of controversial experiments and the search for animal viruses capable of triggering outbreaks.

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(With PTI input)

O P Chautala released from Tihar Jail

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala, who was serving a 10-year prison term in a teacher recruitment scam case, was released from the Tihar Jail here on Friday after completing due formalities, prison officials said.

The 86-year-old Chautala, was already out on parole.

According to officials, since Chautala has already served nine years and nine months of his sentence, he was eligible to get out of prison.

O P Chautala, his son Ajay Chautala, and 53 others, including IAS officer Sanjiv Kumar, were convicted and sentenced in the case of illegal recruitment of 3,206 junior basic teachers in 2000.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 2 JULY

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The first part of a joint WHO-China study of how

responsible possibly bats, perhaps by way of some intermediate creature.

But the idea that the pandemic somehow started in a laboratory and perhaps involved an engineered virus has gained traction recently,

with President Joe Biden ordering a review of US intelligence within 90 days to assess the possibility.

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(With PTI input)

Delhi Police books 5 farmers for protest outside Parliament

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Delhi Police on Thursday detained five farmers for protesting against the Centre's three controversial farm laws and raising slogans against the Central government outside the Parliament House here, police said on Friday.

The protesters were detained and taken to Parliament Street Police Station where they were questioned for several hours. The protesters were, however, released after the police booked them under Section 65 of The Delhi Police Act.

The city police have intensified security measures near Parliament and other Central government offices in New Delhi following the incident. Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and west-

ern Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at various Delhi's border points for seven months protesting against the three farm laws and demanding that the new law should have provision to ensure minimum support price (MSP) for their produce.

The three agricultural laws were enacted in September last year. The laws have been projected by the Central government as major reforms in the agricultural sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

The protesting farmers, on the other hand, have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating minimum support price and do away with existing "mandi" (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF SH. AASHISH GUPTA ACJ/CCJ/ARC-(South East) Saket Courts, New Delhi SS-53/2021

In the matter of : Mrs. Jagdish Kaur & Ors. — Petitioner Versus Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited & Ors. — Respondent

Whereas, an application U/s 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Mrs. Jagdish Kaur & Ors. 1 Mrs. Jagdish Kaur, w/o Late Sh. Kartar Singh Khurana, r/o W-71, Greater Kailash-1, New Delhi-110048.

2 Mr. Jagdish Kaur, Singh Khurana, s/o Late Sh. Kartar Singh Khurana, r/o #108, Silver City, Village Zirakpur, Dera Bassi, SAS Nagar, (Mohali), Punjab: 140507.

3 Ms. Harneet Khurana, d/o Late Sh. Kartar Singh Khurana, r/o W-71, Greater Kailash-1, New Delhi-110048.

4 Ms. Sarmee Kaur, d/o Late Sh. Kartar Singh Khurana, r/o Park View City-1, Sohna Road, Sector-48, Islamabad (97), Gurgaon, Haryana-122018, succ. to her son, Kartar Singh Khurana for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased.

And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 06-07-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Therefore, the public notice is hereby given/notice if any person has objection to the grant of Succession Certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear and file objections in writing, in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date/time.

Given under my hand and Seal on 06-07-2021.

ACJ/CCJ/ARC-(South East) Saket Courts, New Delhi Seal of the court

defendant(s)/respondent(s) General Public should appear in person or through coun-sel on 19-07-2021 at 10:00 a.m. For details log on to https://highcourtindia.gov.in/?r=district_notice&dis-trict=gurugram.

Dated, this day of 02-07-2021.

Civil Judge

Junior Division,

Gurugram

Seal of the Court

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Allotment letter Dated 20.10.2009 and Agreement to Lease dated 15.04.2010 with payment receipt of Plot no. 157, Pocket-E, Sector 20, Yamuna expressway industrial development area, allotted vide allotment no. YEA000807 have been lost. Whoever found kindly contact:-

Vinay Bharat Ram S/o Lt Dr. Bharat Ram, R/o C-107, 1st Floor, Anand Niketan, New Delhi. M. 9711136357.

That my Client Sh. Desh Raj Yadav, s/o Late Om Parkash Yadav, r/o H.No.1523 Sector 21, Villages Dunderaha, Tehsil & Distt. Gurugram, Haryana Disowned his son, Neelam Yadav @ Ethra Rao from his all moveable and immovable properties. If anybody deals with them shall do so at his own risk and responsibility.

Prashant Singla (Advocate)

Chamber No. 12,

Maharana Pratap Lane,

District Courts Gurugram

JAMSHEDPUR Continuous

Annealing & Processing Company Private Limited,

Registered Office: 5th Floor,

Tata Centre, 43-Jawahar Lal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700071,

West Bengal. Corporate Identity Number:

U27310WB2011PTC160845,

Contact: +91 9031000750,

Website: www.jcapcpl.com

Corporate E-mail id: communication@jcapcpl.com

Notice (Pursuant to Section 201 of the Companies Act, 2013) — Pursuant to Section 201 of the Companies Act ("the Act"), notice is hereby

given that the Company intends to make an application to the Central Government under Section 196, 197, 203 and rules made thereunder read with Schedule V and any other applicable Provisions of the said Act, for seeking approval of the Central Government to appoint Mr. Junichi Matsunaga (DIN-09119707), as the Executive Director of the Company with effect from April 15, 2021 to March 31, 2023.

For details log on to https://highcourtindia.gov.in/?r=district_notice&dis-trict=gurugram.

Dated, this day of 02-07-2021.

Prashant Kumar

Company Secretary

Place: Kolkata, West Bengal

Date: July 03, 2021

CHANGE OF NAME

BY VIRTUE of an affidavit before Notary Public Bhupeneshwar

On 02.07.2021, I have changed my name from Nitai Bera to Nitai Behera. Henceforth I shall be known as Nitai Behera for all purposes.

JAYANTI Biswal, W/o Dilip Kumar Swain have changed my name from Jayanti Swain to Jayanti Biswal by an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate Kendrapara on dated 17.07.2020. Hence I will be known as Jayanti Biswal for all purposes.

That my Client Sh. Desh Raj Yadav, s/o Late Om Parkash Yadav, r/o H.No.1523 Sector 21, Villages Dunderaha, Tehsil & Distt. Gurugram, Haryana Disowned his son, Neelam Yadav @ Ethra Rao from his all moveable and immovable properties. If anybody deals with them shall do so at his own risk and responsibility.

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Place: Kolkata, West Bengal

Date: July 03, 2021

TENDERS

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

Regional Office: Kolkata, Phone: 033 2288-1352

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION REQUIRED ON RENT FOR BO KALNA

We require office space of 800

soft (Hall type), in a good commercial locality of Kalna

preferably around station area Kalna.

Interested building owners

may apply in sealed envelope in two sets of format of Technical Bid & Financial Bid which can be

downloaded from our website www.uic.co.in or obtained from our Regional Office Kolkata at the address: B-10, Block D, Sector 1, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700 071 during office hours from 03/07/2021 to 28/07/2021. For

more details and information please visit or contact our above website and offices. The last date and date of submission of tender is 30/07/2021 at above address. No brokerage allowed.

Deputy General Manager, Regional Office Kolkata

COURT NOTICE

(U/O Rule 20 CPC)

IN THE COURT OF SH. VIKRANT Civil Judge (Juniper Division), Gurugram CS-13/2021

CNR No. HRGR02-001622-2021

Next Date: 19-07-2021

Shakti Kumar Salhotra Versus

General Public.

Publication is issued to:

General Public, Gurugram.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) General Public could not be served. It is ordered that

Initially, everyone around asked me to ignore the trolls, and so did I. But it only got more vicious with time.

BENGALI TV ACTOR SHRUTI DAS

AFTER FILING A POLICE COMPLAINT OVER ONLINE TROLLING FOR HER SKIN TONE

Capital

93 fresh corona infections, 2 more deaths in Capital

Positivity rate stands at 0.13%; active cases dip to 1,041; 313 patients under home isolation

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The national capital today reported 2 more Covid-linked fatalities and 93 fresh coronavirus infections with a case positivity rate of 0.13 percent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The number of active Covid cases in Delhi decreased to 1,041 from yesterday's 1,357.

As many as 407 Covid patients recovered from the disease in the last 24 hours, even as the recoveries again outnumbered the new infections.

Delhi had recorded four Covid deaths and 93 cases yesterday with a positivity rate of 0.12 percent.

A total of 73,565 Covid tests, including 51,317 RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests, were conducted across the city in the last 24 hours. The rest of the tests were rapid antigen ones, the bulletin said. The national capital had recorded 94 Covid cases at a



A health worker administers Covid-19 vaccine in New Delhi.

448 deaths — was reported on 3 May. Meanwhile, with today's fresh cases, Delhi's Covid caseload has increased to 14,34,374. Its coronavirus toll stood at 24,983, the health bulletin stated, adding that the case fatality rate was 1.74 per cent.

As many as 14,08,350 patients have recovered from Covid in the city so far, the bulletin said.

The number of patients under home isolation dropped to 313 from yesterday's 314 while the number of containment zones in the city fell to 1288 from 1,349 the previous day, the bulletin said.

Out of 15,208 beds in hospitals reserved for Covid patients, only 623 were occupied, it added.

Altogether 1,57,728 people were vaccinated against Covid in Delhi in the last 24 hours, including 31,959 people, who were administered the second dose, thereby making them fully vaccinated.

Nearly 80,57,875 beneficiaries have been vaccinated in the national capital till now, including 18,37,720 who have received both the shots.

Court defers order on whether to put Tharoor on trial in his wife Sunanda's death case

PTI
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

A Delhi court on Friday adjourned for nearly a month the order on whether to put Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on trial in a case related to his wife Sunanda's death in a luxury hotel here.

Special Judge Geetanjali Goel, who was scheduled to pronounce order today on framing of charges against Tharoor, adjourned the matter for July 27 after the prosecution sought a week's time to file written submissions. An application has been received on behalf of prosecution seeking one week's time to file written submissions. Copy is supplied to the counsels of the accused.

The application is allowed. Put up for orders/ arguments if any, on July 27, the judge said in the order.

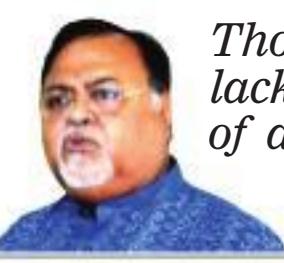
The court had earlier adjourned the matter for July 2 in view of the ongoing pandemic due to coronavirus.

The court had reserved order after hearing arguments from the counsel appearing for Delhi Police as well as Tharoor. During the arguments, while police had sought framing of various charges, including 306 (abetment of suicide), Senior Advocate Vikas Pahwa, appearing for Tharoor, told the court that the investigation conducted by the



SIT completely exonerated the politician of all the charges levelled against him.

Pahwa sought Tharoor's discharge in the case, saying there was no evidence against him to prove the offence punishable under either section 498A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty) or 306 (abetment of suicide)



Those who staged such a noisy protest during the Governor's address lack knowledge about legislative practices and have set a new precedence of anarchy

STATE PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER PARTHA CHATTERJEE
ON BJP'S PROTEST DURING THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH AT THE ASSEMBLY

17 Pb schools renamed after freedom fighters, martyrs

Punjab education minister says the move involves govt schools in a slew of districts

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 2 JULY

Punjab school education minister Vijay Inder Singh on Friday said as many as 17 government schools in Sangrur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Patiala, Hoshiarpur, SBS Nagar, Tarn Taran, Amritsar, SAS Nagar and Fatehgarh Sahib districts have been renamed.

After freedom fighters and martyrs of the state to give due respect to their valiant spirit.

Singh said that following the directions of chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh, the Punjab government's school education department has decided to rename these schools during a recent high level meeting.

Elaborating further, the minister said four schools of Sangrur district have been named after freedom fighters and martyrs. Government



Punjab school education minister Vijay Inder Singh

Senior Secondary School Dharmgarh, Government Middle School

Kalaudi as Freedom Fighter S. Baja Singh Government Middle School and Government Senior Secondary School Chahar has been renamed as Freedom Fighter Harnam Singh Government Senior Secondary School Chahar.

Meanwhile, Government Senior Secondary Smart School Haans Kalan of Ludhiana district has been renamed as Shaheed Uttam Singh Haans Government Senior Secondary School (Boys) Chohla Sahib in Tarn Taran district has been renamed as Lans Nayak Shaheed Shingara Singh Government Senior Secondary School (Boys) Chohla Sahib.

Singh said that Government Girls Senior Secondary School Nehru Garden, Jalandhar, has been renamed as Late Lala Jagat Narayan Government Girls Senior Secondary School Nehru Garden and Government High School Kandala in SAS Nagar district

Bilaspur, District Hoshiarpur as Shaheed Amandeep Singh Government Primary School Bilaspur, Government Senior Secondary Gobindpura district SBS Nagar as Desh Bhagat Master Kabul Singh Memorial Government Senior Secondary School, Gobindpura, Government

Primary Smart School Gosal, SBS Nagar has been named as Babbar Dalip Singh Government Primary School Smart School Gosal, and Government Senior Secondary School (Boys) Chohla Sahib in Tarn Taran district has been renamed as Lans Nayak Shaheed Shingara Singh Government Senior Secondary School (Boys) Chohla Sahib.

Singh said that Government Girls Senior Secondary School Nehru Garden, Jalandhar, has been renamed as Late Lala Jagat Narayan Government Girls Senior Secondary School Nehru Garden and Government High School Ajner in Fatehgarh Sahib district has been renamed as Shaheed Taara Singh Government High School Ajner.

"Many other schools of various districts have been renamed after the names of martyrs and freedom fighters recently acknowledging their extraordinary valour shown for the sake of the country," Singh added.

Capt must take responsibility for Punjab power crisis: Mann

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 2 JULY

With Punjab reeling under unprecedented power shortage amid an intense heatwave, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) state president Bhagwant Mann on Friday said as the power minister Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh must take moral responsibility for problems faced by people regarding electricity.

Addressing a Press conference, Mann said due to non-availability of electricity in the scorching heat, every resident of Punjab is protesting outside their homes. "Only one person is having fun sitting in his house and that is Punjab CM Amarinder Singh," he said.

The Member of Parliament (MP) from Sangrur, the AAP would gherao Captain Amarinder Singh's Siswan farmhouse on Saturday at 11 a.m. to wake him up from slumber. "Rulers will rejoice and the common people starve, it won't last long. On 3 July, the people of Punjab would check the meter of Captain Amarinder Singh's Siswan Farmhouse to find out how many hours of power outage was taking place there due to severe power outages in Punjab," he added.

Mann said due to non-availability of electricity from tube-wells, farmers were forced to carry paddy in their fields. He said that during the last elections, Amarinder Singh and the Congress had made many promises to the people but none of them were fulfilled. "On the contrary, the deadly power pacts and mafia rule implemented by the SAD-BJP government are going on in the same way under Captain Amarinder Singh," Mann added.



He said due to wrong agreements made by the Badals with the private thermal plants and non-cancellation of the agreements by the present Congress government, the power situation in the state had deteriorated. Referring to the faulty power agreements made by the Badals, Mann said that the private companies could shut down the thermal plants at their own discretion and in case of closure of the thermal plants the Punjab government would have to pay a fixed charge.

The AAP state president further said that so far around Rs 20,000 Crore had been paid to the private power companies by fixed charge which had looted the exchequer of Punjab.

"Like the Badals, Captain Amarinder Singh is bent on ruining Punjab economically and filling his house," said Mann. He alleged Amarinder had backstabbed the people of Punjab by not canceling the wrong power deals. "Today, when the farmers, laborers, businessmen, industrialists, employees, students, means every section is suffering due to lack of electricity; at that time Captain Amarinder Singh was enjoying 36 types of food at his farmhouse with Congress MLAs and on the other hand half of the Congress MLAs and ministers were rubbing their noses at the feet of 'Delhi Darbar' to save their seats," said Mann.

Presiding over a review meeting with officers concerned held here today, he said that by providing such a platform further improvements could be brought in the system.

The CM said there are many people who wish to work willingly for the society and do not expect anything in return.

Therefore, the officers concerned should complete all the necessary formalities required to prepare the platform at the earliest so that such volunteers can willingly start giving their services, he said.

Khattar said besides this, there are many such retired

Ensure PDS ration quality: Himachal minister to officials

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 2 JULY

Himachal Pradesh food, civil supplies and consumer affairs minister Rajinder Garg on Friday said the quality of PDS products should not be compromised and rates should also be kept reasonable.

After the review meeting of the food, civil supplies and consumer affairs department, Garg asked the officials to focus on increasing the business and lauded their role in ensuring supply of foodgrains in the state during Covid pandemic.

Garg directed officers of the corporation to strengthen the civil supplies system and said that the strategy should be devised to curtail the operational cost so that it could become a profit earning body.

He also directed to place the indent order well in time so that the supplies are received in the godowns of the state by 10th of every month and said efforts should be made to open new civil supplies shops in more hospitals of the state.



ational cost so that it could become a profit earning body.

He also directed to place the indent order well in time so that the supplies are received in the godowns of the state by 10th of every month and said efforts should be made to open new civil supplies shops in more hospitals of the state.

State civil supplies corporation managing director Lalit Jain made a presentation on various activities of the corporation and detailed various new initiatives and ventures being undertaken by the corporation with a view to increase its income.

The corporation has signed a memorandum of understanding with the convergence energy services limited for the supply of products related to energy solutions.

Besides this, agencies/vendors have also been empowered for the supply of fire fighting appliances and related accessories, different types of furniture items, disinfectant devices along with agarbatti and dhoop," he added.

Nadda to visit Himachal on 4 July

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 2 JULY

on a 3-day tour. Informing about this, state BJP general secretary Trilok Jamwal said that Nadda will arrive in Bilaspur on 4 July and on 5 July, he will visit Manali

where he will inspect Atal Tunnel Rohtang.

He will attend a party meeting in Kullu and leave for Delhi from the district on 6 July, Jamwal added.

Haryana to provide platform to those willing to serve society: Khattar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 2 JULY

Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, on Friday said recognising the dedication shown by volunteers during the Covid-19 pandemic and to further encourage them to serve society, a platform at the government level should be provided for all such people who are willing to serve the society selflessly.

Presiding over a review meeting with officers concerned held here today, he said that by providing such a platform further improvements could be brought in the system.

The CM said there are many people who wish to work willingly for the society and do not expect anything in return.

Therefore, the officers concerned should complete all the necessary formalities required to prepare the platform at the earliest so that such volunteers can willingly start giving their services, he said.

Khattar said besides this, there are many such retired



persons also in the society who want to do something for the society, hence it is very important to prepare an action plan while using their experiences.

This will not only benefit the society but will also give self-satisfaction to these experienced people who wish to serve the society, the CM said.

with their Ambu Bikes to provide immediate help to the injured. From giving first aid and to taking the injured to hospital these volunteers work round the clock to help every injured person, said Khattar.

The CM said it is very necessary to provide this kind of platform to the people who can serve the state with their dedication.

He directed the officers to prepare blueprint in this regard at the earliest. Khattar said that although Durga Shakti App and Dial 112 facilities are also there for providing assistance in emergency, but still there is a large section of the society who, while working in government service, wishes to serve the society.

He said that a feeling of serving the society should be inculcated among every one.

Spirits remain high, say protesting farmer leaders amid soaring temp

PTI
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Be it scorching heat or a spell of heavy showers, nothing can dampen the morale of farmers and they will not leave the protest sites at Delhi borders till their demand for repeal of the farm laws is fulfilled, a protester at Singhu said on Friday.

Farmer leaders said while the increasing heat is posing a challenge, no hurdle is difficult enough for them to give up on their fight, and that they have equipped themselves with all necessary facilities -- be it coolers, air conditioners or provision of cold drinking water.

Delhi has been reeling under a searing heat wave for the past few days, though a spell of rain in some parts brought some relief in the evening.

"It hasn't rained at Singhu yet, but we are anticipating showers. We are farmers, and like we welcome rains in our fields back home, we will welcome the rains here too. We have protested through rains during the winters, and now we are better prepared to continue our agitation through the monsoon as well," said Lakhbir Singh, vice president (Punjab) of the All India Kisan Sabha.

According to Kirti Kisan Union (Punjab) general sec-



It is true that the heat is becoming unbearable, but farmers have also figured out ways to beat it. Farmers have installed coolers, air conditioners and fans according to their individual financial capacities," he said.

Though electrical appliances were put in place a few months back in anticipation of the summer, what is posing an even bigger challenge is erratic electricity supply.

So many of us haven't had proper sleep for nights, because of the frequent power cuts, plus there are no trees here to cool the air, he said.

On Thursday evening, Lakhbir Singh said, a trans-

former near the Kundli police station broke down, and has not been fixed yet.

A section of the protest site at Singhu has been without electricity since last evening, he said.

For water provision, the protesters have been lucky to receive help from the Rana Golden Hut dhaba located near the protest site.

Lakhbir Singh said the dhabawala has provided them with water tanks which are filled with ice everyday to supply cold water. Small water coolers have also been placed at different points across the protest site to dispense cold and clean drinking water.

There are also freezers that have been installed within the big langars, he said.

Thousands of farmers from across the country, including Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at the Delhi borders, including at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur, to protest against the three farm laws, which they fear will do away with the Minimum Support price system, and leave them at the mercy of the big corporates.

The government, however, has been projecting the laws as major agricultural reforms.

In the last seven months

since November 2020, the farmers have agitated through crippling cold, rains, and now the unforgiving heat of northern India, but their spirits are only on the rise, leaders said.

There is no doubt that protesting through this heat is difficult, but our determination to get what we want is so high that fighting the heat is nothing compared to that.

We did not give up during the cold, and we are not giving up now, said Manjeet Singh, senior Vice-President of Bharatiya Kisan Union (Punjab).

To him, staying away from home is an even bigger challenge.

We have devised our ways to brave the summer. Coolers, fans and ACs have been arranged, but staying away from home is not easy. That is why, I would like to urge the government to listen to the farmers and repeal the three black laws, he said.

The unbearable heat has also taken a toll on the health of several farmers.

Lakhbir Singh said rising blood pressures and other heart problems were among the most common health problems at the moment.

About 10 people are falling ill on a daily basis.

Dalai Lama calls for vegetarian lifestyle

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 2 JULY

Tibetan spiritual leader the

NITI Aayog for the proposed policy and directed the transport department to give final shape to the draft policy by including the recommendations of industry players at the earliest.

During the meeting, it was decided to present the draft policy for approval of the state government in the month of August.

All the major industry players in the EV segment participated in the meeting and offered their observations on various challenges for implementation of EV policy in the state," he added.

Rajan Kapur, IIT Mandi professor also participated in the meeting and briefed about the work undertaken by the

institute in the field of innovation of electric vehicles especially in the three wheeler segment.

State transport authority secretary Ghanshyam Chand made a detailed presentation on the draft policy.

Various stakeholder departments of the state government also joined the virtual meeting along with transport director Anupam Kashyap, HRTC MD Sandeep Kumar, NITI Aayog advisor Sudeshna Sinha were present in the meeting.

The representatives of Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata automobile, Amazon, Flipkart, Hero Electric, EVS motors, Swiggy, Ola and Bajaj automobiles also participated in the meeting.

According to Kirti Kisan Union (Punjab) general sec-

retary Rachpal Singh, the frequency of power cuts have increased during the summer, with farmers having to survive the heat without electricity for two to four hours everyday, and having no trees to offer natural shade in Singhu does not help.

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former near the Kundli police station broke down, and has not been fixed yet.

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My case proves the gross misuse of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the NIA Act.

ASSAM MLA AKHIL GOGOI

India

Tirath Rawat resigns as Uttarakhand CM

There had been buzz that BJP would make another leadership change in state

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI/DEHRADUN, 2 JULY

Four months after he took charge, Uttarakhand CM Tirath Singh Rawat tonight resigned from his post.

Mr Rawat met the Uttarakhand Governor Babu Rani Maurya late tonight, at the Dehradun Raj Bhawan and handed in his resignation, hours after his return from New Delhi where he had met top BJP leaders, including BJP president J P Nadda.

There had been a buzz that the party may again go in for a change in the leadership in the state as the prospect of the Election Commission holding an assembly bypoll there looks uncertain.

Earlier in the day, Rawat told reporters the party will take a call about its political



strategy in the state, and noted that holding or not holding the bypoll is the EC's prerogative.

Uttarakhand had been abuzz with speculation that the BJP could pick a new leader as Tirath Singh Rawat needs to be elected as an MLA by September 10 to continue in the post.

What has made matters more complicated for him was that the EC had recently deferred holding some Lok Sabha and assembly bypolls due to the pandemic.

The poll panel had said it would not be appropriate to hold the electoral exercise till the pandemic situation improves significantly.

Rawat, currently a Lok Sabha member, had arrived in Delhi on Wednesday and had met Nadda on that night as well. He had also met Home Minister Amit Shah, sources said, adding that he had to postpone his departure to the state

as the party leadership asked him to stay put. The BJP has not made any comments regarding these developments.

Observers added that with the term of the assembly in any case coming to an end in less than a year, the EC is under no compulsion to order a bypoll for the vacant seats in Uttarakhand.

Scathing criticism by the courts of the string of elections held during the coronavirus pandemic may also contribute to the EC decision on Uttarakhand byolls, it is felt. Section 151A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 mandates the Election Commission to fill vacancies in Parliament and the state legislatures through byolls within six months from the date of their occurrence, provided that the remainder of the term of the new member is one year or more.

Left hits out at Centre over draft Cinematography (Amendment) Bill

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 2 JULY

Politburo said the Bill will give Centre "revisionary powers", enable them to "re-examine films" cleared by Central Board of Film Certification

nology rules give unprecedented powers to the executive to summarily take down content from digital news media platforms on imprecise grounds and without so much as giving the publisher a hearing."

The politburo statement read, "The Central government wants to add a provision to give it the right to revisionary powers on account of violation of Section 5B(1) (principles for guidance in certifying films) of the Act. This is tantamount to the withdrawal of films already certified and closed."

"Recently we have seen the right-wing forces led by the Hindutva brigade and casteist groups indulging in mob

censorship of films, not to their liking. Now the government itself wants the powers to stop films critical of its ideology."

It alleged that the autonomous powers of the Film Censor Board have already been "subverted in various ways by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry".

Citing an example, it said, in April, the appellant body to which filmmakers could appeal against cuts by the Censor Board to their films was arbitrarily dissolved by the ministry.

The CPI-M's state unit demanded immediate restoration of the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT) as demanded by noted film makers, and reasoned,

"The FCAT has been historically more progressive than the CBFC. It dispensed quick judgments, allowing the producers to release their films on time, saving them from financial loss."

102 new Covid cases in Darjeeling district, three deaths

SILIGURI, 2 JULY

Darjeeling district recorded 102 new Covid-19 cases, while the Siliguri Municipal Corporation, including areas that fall in Jalpaiguri district, found 33 new cases today, sources said.

Five cases were detected in Sulkia, 13 in Naxalbari, 12 in Matigara, 11 in Mirik, eight in Bijanbari, seven in Taktah, four in Phansidewa, three in Kurseong Municipality, two in Sukhia Pokhri, and one each in Darjeeling Municipality and Kharibari.

Meanwhile, 125 Covid patients recovered either in government hospitals or in home isolation in the district in the past 24 hours, officials said.

Covid deaths

Around three persons who had tested positive for Covid-19 died at the North Bengal Medical College and Hospital in the past 24 hours, government and hospital sources said.

SNS

Kerala HC declines to stay investigation in sedition case against activist Aisha Sultana

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOCHI, 2 JULY

However, the court directed the Kavaratti police to file a report regarding the stages of the investigation within two weeks.

be given more time to collect necessary material.

However, the court directed the Kavaratti police to file a report regarding the stages of the investigation within two weeks.

Aisha had approached the Court seeking to quash the FIR registered against her by the Kavaratti Police.

Appearing for Lakshadweep administration, Aman Lekhi, Additional Solicitor

General (ASG) of India submitted that the court can interfere in the investigation only in exceptional cases and not in a case like this. The investigation of the case is at the initial stage.

The ASG added that repeated assertions by the accused that the central government used a bio-weapon are seditious.

The ASG drew attention to the fact that during the panel discussion, Sultana did not make the 'bio-weapon' remark just once, but she repeated it several times and even declined to withdraw the alleged seditious assertion at the suggestion of the anchor.

Therefore, the offences

alleged would definitely stand, he argued.

Sultana's counsel submitted that the offence alleged against her did not come under Section 124 A of IPC as the words spoken or written have to bring about hatred, contempt or displeasure against a government and such words should have resulted in imminent violence.

The High Court had granted her anticipatory bail in the case last month, observing that prima facie, she did not have a malicious motive to subvert the government established by law merely using the strong words to express her vehemence in disapproval of the subject under discussion.

CBI probe against me illegal, even Kasab got benefit of rule of law: Deshmukh to HC

PTI
MUMBAI, 2 JULY

Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh told the Bombay High Court on Friday that the ongoing CBI inquiry against him over corruption charges was illegal and in breach of legal procedures, and said even 26/11 terrorist Ajmal Kasab got the benefit of the rule of law.

Deshmukh's counsel, senior advocate Amit Desai, told the HC that though the CBI inquiry was initiated following a high court order in April, the central agency did not seek prior sanction from the Maharashtra government to prosecute the NCP leader, who was at the

time a public servant.

This absence of sanction made the inquiry against Deshmukh, on the charges of corruption and misconduct, "illegal," Desai said. "We may be carried away by emotion but we cannot bypass the procedure and the rule of law. Even

a person like Kasab got the benefit of the rule of law in this country. Everyone in this country gets the benefit of the process of law," he said.

Desai was arguing before a bench of Justices SS Shinde and NM Jamadar that was presiding over a plea filed by Deshmukh challenging the FIR registered by the CBI against him in the aftermath of corruption allegations made against him by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh.

In April this year, a bench led by High Court chief justice Dipankar Datta had directed the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry against Deshmukh, who resigned from the state cabinet after the order.

BJP ruckus forces West Bengal Guv to cut short his speech



West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee (centre), Speaker Biman Banerjee (left) welcome Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar at the Assembly in Kolkata on Friday.

SUBAL SAHA

SNS & PTI
KOLKATA, 2 JULY

Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was today forced to cut short his inaugural address at the newly formed Assembly amid sparring between him and the state government over the text prepared and whether he is bound to follow it or can deviate.

The ruckus by opposition BJP MLAs who took offence after finding "no mention" of post-poll violence in the speech compelled Dhankhar to truncate it.

Dhankhar could barely speak for four minutes as BJP MLAs, carrying posters and pictures of alleged victims of post-poll violence, rushed to the well of the House to stage a protest.

The address began at 2 pm sharp and ended at 2.04 pm, as his voice became inaudible amid the ongoing uproar, Assembly sources said.

He then tabled the speech and left for the day which was ripe with speculation of display of rift between Dhankhar and the government.

Dhankhar was escorted to his car by Speaker Biman Banerjee and chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

Assam Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari however attributed their cause of protest at the state government's alleged omission of post-poll violence in the text prepared by the state government.

"The speech, drafted by

Post-poll violence in WB: Shift cases outside state, says Suvendu

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 2 JULY

Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari today said that all cases of post-poll violence - in which BJP workers were murdered, faced arson, looted valuable, destruction of houses, and rape against their women - must be shifted to other states of India immediately so the victims get proper justice.

Addressing the media at the Assembly press corner, Suvendu said that West Bengal police which not only are inactive but also directly or indirectly sponsored the murders, arsons, attacks, rapes and molesta-

Under these circumstances the only way to provide justice to the victims is central agencies' probe against TMC miscreants who committed murders and violence and even heinous crime against women. All the cases should be on trial court in other states.

SUVENDU ADHIKARI
LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN WB

violence, deaths and attacks on BJP workers in the Governor's speech. "The government has no desire to justice to the victims of post-poll violence. So the Governor did not mention them. He has nothing to do on it because he has to read as the Government wrote," he said.

Meanwhile BJP's state president Dilip Ghosh today ridiculed former BJP's national vice-president and Krishnanagar North MLA Mukul Roy who joined the TMC but sat in the

Opposition BJP bench in the Assembly today during the Governor's speech.

Roy, however, did not tender his resignation as a BJP MLA

despite rejoining the TMC.

"He is shameless and to create a drama while sitting in the BJP bench. A few days ago he had accepted TMC's flag and re-induced himself in his old party," he said.

Ghosh also said probably Mukul wants to become the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) so he sat in the BJP's bench.

Meanwhile Suvendu denied that he had met Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta on Thursday.

"Did not meet the Solicitor-General yesterday. He did not allot any time to meet me," Adhikari said.



BHASIKAR MALLICK

BJP worker's dad denied vax

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HOOGHLY, 2 JULY

A temporary employee of Ramnagar gram panchayat in Tarakeswar allegedly denied vaccine to the aged father of a BJP worker. The panchayat upa-pradhan has assured to look into the incident and take necessary steps.

Kalu Biswas, BJP worker, said: "On Thursday an Asha worker handed over a Covid vaccination slip for the second dose to my father Poritosh Biswas who is 80. He was to be vaccinated on Friday. Today at 7.30

am I took my father and at 10.30 am Samir Sana a temporary employee of Purva Ramnagar gram panchayat started abusing us and forced my aged father out of the queue."

He added: "Samir shouted that as we are closely associated with the BJP my father won't be vaccinated. He insisted that we must break off all ties with the BJP. My father, after waiting for hours, was humiliated and came home without Covid vaccination."

Poritosh said: "I am horrified at the revengeful attitude of the ruling party's workers.

I have intimated the entire incident to the panchayat pradhan and the police."

The panchayat upa-pradhan Ashish Samanta said vaccination is for all. "Such an incident is unwanted. I will look into the incident and take appropriate step if any one is found guilty."

The BJP Arambagh organisational district president Biman Ghosh said the state government is more concerned to attack and suppress the BJP leaders and workers in the state than providing good governance.

Docs confirm man got two vaccine shots on same day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 2 JULY

Doctors who examined a Siliguri resident, Sujit Chandra Debnath, who has alleged that he had been administered the Covid-19 vaccine twice on a single day, confirmed that he had indeed received two shots.

Mr Debnath, in his mid 50s, alleged that health workers at the Siliguri Municipal Corporation (SMC)-run Urban Primary Health Centre (UPHC) at Chayan Para had vaccinated him with Covishield on 29 June. The health workers concerned, however, insisted that he had been given a single dose. The health department, on the other hand, has said it was looking into the matter.

"I examined him at his residence today and found that he had been vaccinated twice. It should be a matter of concern, as even two doses of medicines like antacids, paracetamol are not taken at one go. We have assured him that he should not be worried and will keep in touch with him. However, the fact should not be suppressed," said the coordinator of the SMC chapter of Covid Care Network and president of 'My Doctors, Siliguri,' Dr Kalyan Khan.

The condition of Mr Debnath is stable, and medical experts said he is unlikely to develop any serious reaction or symptoms. The SMC-run vaccination centre for mothers of children up to 12 years of age was opened at the Siliguri Kanchanjunga Stadium hall today. The state government has decided to prioritise such mothers for vaccination ahead of the pandemic's anticipated third wave, during which there are fears that a large number of children could be infected. The chairperson of the board of administrators of the SMC, Gautam Deb, said there will be 10 more vaccine sites under the SMC which will cover vaccination of the population in all 47 wards. Mr Deb said an extended vaccination centre of the Siliguri District Hospital will be set up on another side of the stadium.

LAC status quo can be achieved: CDS

Says India must be ready for 'any misadventure'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

India and China should be able to achieve status quo in eastern Ladakh in a gradual manner as both sides understand that it is in the best interest of ensuring peace and tranquillity in the region, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat said on Friday.

In an address at a think-tank, Gen Rawat, at the same time, said that India must remain prepared for "any misadventure" and respond accordingly as it has done in the past.

"All I would say that keep your guard up, remain prepared; do not take things lightly. We must also be prepared for any misadventure and respond accordingly. We have responded in the past and will do so in the future," he said replying to a question.

About the resolution of the prolonged standoff, Gen Rawat said both sides are engaged in negotiations at political, diplomatic and military levels to resolve the row.

"It will take time. I think in a gradual manner, we should be able to achieve the status quo because if you do not achieve the status quo and remain in this kind of a position, it could lead to misadventure at some time," he said. "Therefore, both the nations understand that returning to the status quo is in the best interest of ensuring peace and tranquillity to which our

nation is committed," he said. Asked whether China has gone back on its word on disengagement from remaining friction points, he said there is suspicion on both sides and India too moved a large number of troops and resources there.

"There is suspicion on both sides because while the other side has deployed their forces and created infrastructure, we are also not lagging behind anymore. We have also moved a large number of troops and resources. There is a kind of suspicion on both sides as to what can happen," the Chief of Defence Staff said. When referred to reports of China increasing military presence in the region, the Chief of Defence Staff said: "I think they realised that Indian armed forces cannot be taken lightly. Indian armed forces are no longer the armed forces of 1961. This is a strong armed force and it is not a pushover. They will stand up to what they worth. I think that is what has been realised."

At the virtual meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs, the two sides had a "frank exchange" of views and decided to maintain dialogue to reach a mutually acceptable solution for withdrawal of troops in all friction points to enable progress in the overall ties. Elaborating on the IAF's role, the Chief of Defence Staff talked about its air defence role and said one of the theatre

PTI
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Airpower has a huge role to play in any of the integrated battle roles, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria said on Friday, asserting the Indian Air Force was "fully committed" to the theaterisation of the armed forces.

Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria's comments on air power came soon after Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat talked about the IAF's air defence charter as well as its role as a supporting arm to the ground forces just as the artillery or engineers support the combatants within the Army.

Referring to the situation in eastern Ladakh, the Chief of Air Staff said China has bolstered its infrastructure in the past few months though the two sides have carried out a disengagement process in Pangong Tso areas.

Gen Rawat's comments about the supporting role of the Air Force came at a conference when asked about the growing perception that the Indian Air Force was not keen on setting up the proposed theatre commands integrating the capabilities of the three forces.

Elaborating on the IAF's role, the Chief of Defence Staff talked about its air defence role and said one of the theatre

commands will look at the overall management of the air space in the country.

"Do not forget that the Air Force continues to remain a supporting arm of the armed forces, just as the artillery or engineers support the combatants within the Army. They have an air defence charter and support the ground forces in time of operations," Gen Rawat said, adding the force has to understand its basic charter.

Both Gen Rawat and Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria were speaking at separate sessions of a conference organised by the Global Counter-Terrorism Council (GCTC) -- think tank. When asked about Gen Rawat's comments, the Air Chief Marshal said: "It is not a supporting role alone. The air power has a huge role to play in any of the integrated battle roles."

Asked about the IAF's views on the theaterisation of the armed forces, he said it was fully committed to the proposed setting up of the integrated theatre commands.

At the same time, he added, "We must get it right."

To a question on argument that IAF could have reservations for the theaterisation process as it does not want to split its assets which are fewer, Gen Rawat referred to the five operational commands of the force

that manage its resources.

"In an overall assessment, it is a known fact that there is resistance to change. One needs to be conscious of that and fight that inherent resistance. The nature and character of conflicts will continue to change," Gen Rawat said.

According to the plan, the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory under an operational commander.

At present, the Army, Navy and the Air Force have separate commands.

The theatre commands are being setup under a larger mandate of ensuring synergy among the three service chiefs to deal with future security challenges.

Gen Rawat took over as India's first Chief of Defence Staff on January 1, 2020, with a mandate to bring in convergence among the three services and restructure military commands to effectively deal with future security challenges.

When asked about the situation in eastern Ladakh, Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria said the Chinese side has enhanced its infrastructure in the region.

"After the initial disengagement which has happened, there is virtual kind of

status quo. Many of the infra that were developed particularly from the perspective of air assets... except for some aircraft that they have taken back from forward deployments, rest of infrastructure has been strengthened," he said.

The Chief of Air Staff said the IAF has been carefully monitoring the situation in the region.

"We are monitoring across very carefully and very closely. We are aware of what kind of assets are there and what needs to be done from our point of view; deployments and whatever action needed to be taken have been taken," he said.

India and China were locked in a military standoff at multiple friction points in eastern Ladakh since early May last year. However, the two sides completed the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February following a series of military and diplomatic talks.

The two sides are now engaged in talks to extend the disengagement process to the remaining friction points. India has been particularly pressing for disengagement of troops in Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang.

India has been insisting on returning to the status quo of April 2020 in the region.

Arindam Bagchi said, "Let me categorically deny claims that the External Affairs Minister met any Taliban leader. Such stories are false and mischievous," he said. Bagchi said India supports all peace initiatives and has been engaged with various stakeholders. India has been a major stakeholder in the peace and stability of Afghanistan. It has already invested nearly \$3 billion in reconstruction activities in the country.

India seeks justice for 26/11 & Pathankot attack: India once again asked Pakistan to take credible, verifiable and irreversible action against terrorist networks and proxies operating from its soil and bring the perpetrators of the 26/11 strikes and Pathankot attack to justice. "As far as terrorism and terror financing is concerned, we have a zero-tolerance policy," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

CBI arrests two ED officials in Gujarat in bribery case

PTI
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The CBI on Friday arrested a deputy director and an assistant director of the Enforcement Directorate for allegedly demanding a Rs 75 lakh bribe from the owner of a Gujarat-based firm under probe for Rs 104 crore bank fraud, officials said.

Deputy Director Purna Kumar Singh, a 2013-batch IRS officer, and Assistant Director Bhuvnesh Kumar, both posted in Ahmedabad branch of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), and two middlemen were nabbed for allegedly receiving Rs 5 lakh bribe through a middleman from the first instalment of the total bribe amount, they said.

The CBI also carried out searches at multiple locations, including the office of accused officials in Ahmedabad, officials said.

The owner of a company that is in the business of castor oil and steel pipes had come under CBI and ED probe in an alleged bank fraud case of Rs 104 crore, the CBI FIR said.

The businessman and his son were called to the ED office in Ahmedabad on April 22 and May 25 this year for

questioning in the case by Singh and Kumar, officials said.

On June 18, when the father-son duo went to the ED office as per the notices, both were beaten by Singh who also threatened to attach their assets, they said.

Singh told the businessman to cough up Rs 75 lakh as a bribe to settle his case and escape the beating, the FIR alleged.

The officer also allegedly told the businessman and his son to discuss the bribe amount in code language - a kilo for a lakh -- in the future verbal exchanges.

Nearly a week later, on June 26, Kumar called the complainant, but there was no response.

In the evening, the complainant called back Kumar and the officer told him to pay the first instalment of Rs 5 lakh along with instructions to route it through a particular 'angadi' (courier) firm and middleman in Delhi, the FIR alleged.

After getting the information, the CBI laid a trap and the middlemen were arrested. It was followed by the arrest of the two officers in Ahmedabad, officials added.

SC reputation to suffer if people's conviction undermined: Justice Bhushan

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Supreme Court's reputation will inevitably suffer if people's conviction in the institution is undermined, Justice Ashok Bhushan said on Friday in a virtual function held to bid him farewell as an apex court judge.

Justice Ashok Bhushan, who was a part of benches which delivered several key verdicts ranging from the historic Ayodhya land dispute case to upholding the validity of Aadhaar as also the one which held that Chief Justice of India is the "master of the roster", said that during his 5-year tenure his endeavour was to always safeguard and enhance the independence and reputation of the SC.

With the retirement of Justice Bhushan on July, the apex court, having the sanctioned strength of 34 judges including the CJI, would be left with 26 justices.

The reputation of the court is founded on the conviction of the people of this country. If that conviction is ever undermined, the reputation of this Court will inevitably suffer... I am proud to be part of this Court which by its judgments have strengthened democracy and the Rule of Law. I have had an opportunity of a lifetime, a privilege beyond description, to serve the cause of justice, alongside the finest Judges of this Nation, said Justice Bhushan.

N Dinajpur man, sons found dead in Punjab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIGANU, 2 JULY

The bodies of migrant worker Manglu Seikh, 35, and his two sons Md Ali, 8, and Md Shoi, 6, who were allegedly killed in Faridkot in Punjab last Monday, arrived in their village at Plaibari under the Itahar police station in North Dinajpur district this morning (photo).

Seikh had been working as a construction worker in Punjab, while the bodies of the

three were found hanging at their workplace. Punjab Police have arrested Seikh's wife and two children in connection with the incident, sources

said.

Seikh, his wife and two children had gone to Faridkot around four years ago, it is learnt.

A member of the local gram panchayat and TMC leader of the Palaibari region

A section of the local people in the village here and some relatives of the deceased believe that Manglu's wife had an extramarital affair with a man who worked at the same site.

Manglu found out about the love affair a few days ago and the couple had a heated argument over it. Manglu and his sons were killed soon after that," a source said.

A police officer at the Itahar police station said the bodies were buried in the village soon after they were brought home today.

in Itahar, Gautam Das said, "We suspected that they were killed by criminals in Punjab. The wife of Manglu Seikh and two men have been arrested by the Punjab Police. We will appeal to our Chief Minister Miss Mamata Banerjee to have a talk with the Punjab government about the arrest of the criminals soon."

A

police officer at the Itahar police station said the bodies were buried in the village soon after they were brought home today.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: http://cic.nic.in
Fax: 011-24368639, 24368641
Ph: 011-26139360, 61
DP/52/SW/2020

SHO
P.S. Vasant Kunj South, New Delhi
Ph. 011-26139360, 61
DP/52/SW/2020

CII, Consul Generals talk import-export

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 2 JULY

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recently organised a session on Facilitating Exports from East on Facilitating Trading Opportunities, Export Infrastructure, Export Finance & Marketing and Digitization of International Trade on the virtual platform. Consul Generals of neighbouring countries, regulators and industry experts addressed the virtual meet.

According to the Chairman, CII North Bengal Zonal Coun-

cil, Sanjay Tibrewal, Siliguri can be a hub in the PPP mode with Thailand on textile, toy industry, shoes and bags, as it has a lot of export potential due to its strategic location, sharing boundaries with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan and the Asian Highway leading to Myanmar and Thailand. "Apart from tea from Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai, Malda Mango also has a lot of potential for export," Mr Tibrewal said.

Addressing the inaugural session, Consul General, Consulate General of Thailand,

Sweeja Santipitaks, said: "Despite a contraction in trade due to the pandemic, India and Thailand trade has increased by 60 percent in the last five months."

Ms Santipitaks urged exporters to take advantage of Thailand's proximity for exports through both overland and sea routes. "As physical mobility came to a halt, Thailand has been relying heavily on digital transformation," she said, adding, "The country has taken digital marketing strategies on various levels and participated in a number of virtual trade shows in India."

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table & Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Two Malda youths drown in swollen Mahananda

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MALDA, 2 JULY

Two youths bathing in the sluice gate of the Mahananda river drowned, while another one was fished out and hospitalized at the Magura area under the Pukhuria police station in Malda this evening.

Police said the bodies have been sent for post-mortem and that they have started investigations into the matter.

Malda has been experiencing a good amount of rainfall for the past few days, while rivers have started swelling.

The deceased youths have been identified as Bibek Roshan, 21, and Asif Hossain, 22, while the hospitalized youth is Anwar Shaikh of

Kutubgunj area under the same police station, it is learnt.

According to sources and locals, the trio had gone there to have fun in the waters, but a sudden strong current washed them away.

For any kind of information such as timings, composition and stoppages enroute passengers are advised to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

1485/21

IMPORTANT NOTICE

In continuation to the Notice "Special Trains-2021" which was published in various Newspapers on 01.07.2021. Following amendments are being issued:-

- Special Train No. 04559 Kochuvelli-Chandigarh Kerala Sampark Kranti Superfast Express Special will run on Monday & Wednesday instead of Monday & Saturday.
- Special Train No. 04564 Chandigarh-Madgaon Sampark Kranti Superfast Express Special will run on Tuesday & Sunday

Wall of Steel

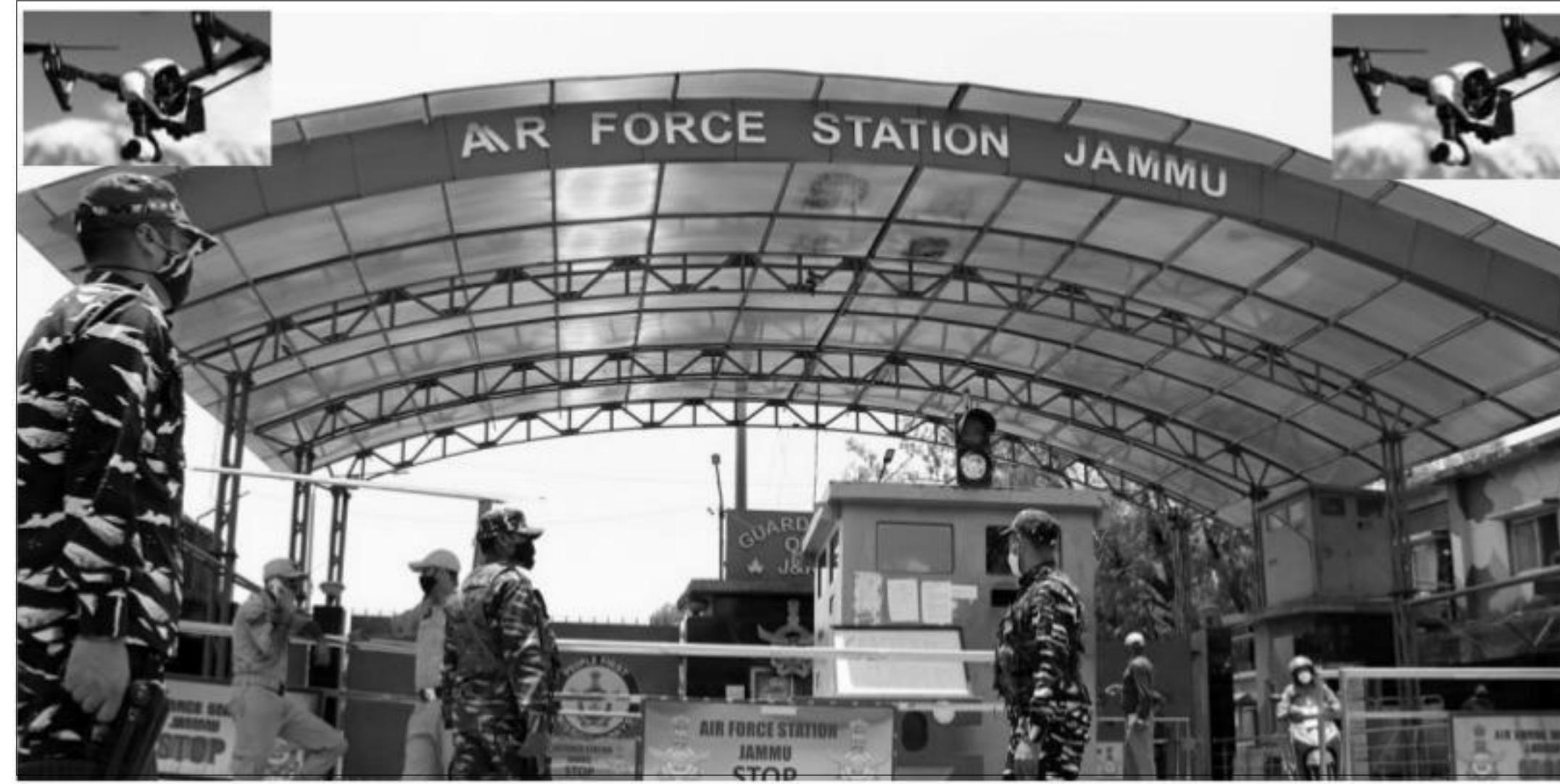
Thursday's centenary celebrations of the monolithic Communist Party of China did not after all compromise with grandstanding, as generally believed it would till about a week ago. The 100-gun salute was suitably salutary as thousands of performers assembled at Tiananmen Square. The predominance of the party was integral to President Xi Jinping's robust presentation ~ "For 100 years, the Chinese Communist Party has led the Chinese people in every struggle, every sacrifice, every innovation," said Xi, attired in a grey Mao suit, in a speech from a deck on the Gate of Heavenly Peace. "In sum, around one theme - achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." In a rousing opening, the performers chanted slogans celebrating the party's leadership as Mr Xi and other leaders watched. Markedly, the festivities did not include a military parade like the one in 2019 that celebrated the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, but the military still provided a backdrop. Squadrons of helicopters flew over, carrying red banners and forming the figure 100, followed by fighter jets, including the country's most advanced fighter jet, the J-20. The striking facet to Xi's presence was his stirring speech, verily his caveat that China would not be bullied by foreign forces. He skirted the recent convulsions in Hong Kong, but stressed that the "reunification" of Taiwan with the Chinese mainland is what he called an "unshakable commitment" of the CPC. Xi reminded his audience that the party was the only force capable of ensuring the country's rise. He also issued a robust warning against any foe that stood in the way. Notably, he cast the Communist Party as a saviour, fighting off foreign and domestic oppression, significantly once more skirting the mainland's policing in its protectorate of Hong Kong, and the persecution of Uighurs in Xinjiang province, not to forget the awesome spread of coronavirus from the province of Wuhan. The party's continued rule, he averred, was essential to ensure that China stayed on course towards becoming a wealthy and advanced world power. "The Chinese people have never been bullied, oppressed or enslaved the peoples of other countries, not in the past, not now and not in the future," he said. "At the same time, the Chinese people will never allow foreign forces to bully, oppress or enslave us. Whoever nurses delusions of doing that will crack their heads and spill blood on the Great Wall of steel built from the flesh and blood of 1.4 billion Chinese people." This was an apparent allusion to the United States of America which is trying to curb its "peaceful rise" and assertiveness in the strategic Indo-Pacific region. Thus has China's President-for-life played to the gallery of the people in a profound moment in history. Xi Jinping has ruled with an iron fist, imposing harsh crackdowns to quash dissent, and this was more than mirrored in his speech at the party's centenary.

Jacob Zuma

It would be pertinent to recall Thomas Fuller's words cited by Lord Denning more than four decades ago ~ "Be ye never so high, the law is above you". So indeed it was in South Africa on Tuesday when it scripted history. In an unprecedented predicament for a former Head of State, the ebullient Jacob Zuma has been found guilty of contempt of court and sentenced to 15 months in prison for defying a court order to appear before an inquiry probing wide-ranging allegations of corruption during his tenure in Johannesburg's presidential palace from 2009 to 2018. Zuma was not in court for the ruling and has been ordered to hand himself over within five days to a police station. He has his back to the wall not the least because if he fails to turn himself in within five days, South Africa's police minister and the police commissioner have been ordered to take him into custody. This is the first time in South Africa's history that a former President has been sentenced to prison. Tuesday's verdict has been greeted with profound endorsement by the populace. "Finally, Zuma will find himself where he belongs ~ behind bars," said opposition politician Herman Mashaba in reaction to the sentence. "This is indeed a victory for all South Africans who have become fed up with those who have looted our country with impunity," said Mashaba, former mayor of Johannesburg and leader of the ActionSA party. The judgment is equally a victory for the rule of law in South Africa, once again serving to highlight the independence of the nation's judiciary, indeed the pivot of the country's democracy. At the end of the day, Zuma appears to have met his nemesis on the judiciary's charge of contempt, one that has overshadowed the allegation of corruption. South Africa's apex court, the Constitutional Court, ruled that Zuma defied an order by the country's highest court by refusing to cooperate with the commission of inquiry, which is chaired by deputy chief justice Raymond Zondo. "The Constitutional Court holds that there can be no doubt that Zuma is in contempt of court. He was served with the order and it is impossible to conclude anything other than that he was unequivocally aware of what it required of him," said acting chief justice Sisi Khampepe. She added that in determining the jail sentence for Zuma, the court found it impossible to conclude that he would comply with any other order. The former President had expressed his unwillingness to appear before the commission, which has so far heard evidence directly implicating him in wrongdoing. Additionally, Zuma is standing trial to face charges related to bribes that he allegedly received during South Africa's 1999 arms procurement deal. The nation has been roiled by corruption at the helm coupled with the steadfast reluctance of the accused to face the court. South Africa bears witness to a slide from Nelson Mandela to Jacob Zuma.

Countering Drones

Can we afford the various layers of counter-drone systems which will be most effective? Before you start using these systems, you need to determine areas that need high priority anti-drone systems. Drone technology will keep maturing. By the time you get a counter to one system, drone technology will have moved to the next level



Shockingly, two drones from across the border allegedly dropped IEDs on the Indian Air Force's airport in Jammu, fortunately with minor damage but injuring two personnel, which is quite worrisome.

Two drones were spotted over the Kaluchak and Ratnachak military stations in Jammu late on the night of June 27. Alert security personnel fired at the drones but could not bring them down. Resultantly, alert has been sounded at all military stations to ward off such surprise attacks. Counter-measures have been put in place to pre-empt such drone attacks on forward bases. Snipers and jammers are in place, among other measures.

Small drones have been used to attack state actors. Counter-drone technology will have to be deployed as countermeasures to tackle this threat and at the same time we must make sure we are able to detect this risk. Usage of drone technology by non-state actors represents a very major jump in the way the insurgency is playing out.

We need to first understand what drones represent as a risk to the Indian state. Broadly, you can differentiate this into three aspects - privacy risk (illegal surveillance), penetration risk (drones are used to gather intelligence), and security risk (to attack installations, smuggle contraband). In Syria, ISIS has been using drones to drop payloads from the sky and so have the Taliban.

Drone detection can be RF-based or via conventional radars tuned to detect drones or via electro-optic payloads that use thermal imaging. Once identified, you can launch a kinetic energy weapon against the drone or jam it or confuse it by jamming

its GPS. Israel's Iron Dome and other missile systems act within seconds. Detection and action against drones will happen at a very fast pace but it will take some time to gain that kind of capability.

No single bullet is the solution. There are also economic challenges. Can we afford the various layers of counter-drone systems which will be most effective? Before you start using these systems, you need to determine areas that need high priority anti-drone systems. Drone technology will keep maturing. By the time you get a counter to one system, drone technology will have moved to the next level.

A drone attack is a watershed in asymmetric warfare and underlines the need for the armed forces to build capabilities to deter, detect and neutralise such aerial threats.

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat on June 28 told a TV channel that the three services, the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), academia and other stakeholders were working together to develop technology to counter the threat from drones at the earliest.

He said DRDO has already achieved some success and even demonstrated its anti-drone technology. DRDO has developed anti-drone technology to disable or shoot down hostile drones. Its anti-drone system has a range of two to three kilometres with radar capability to pick up the drone and then use frequencies to jam the unmanned aerial

vehicle. A top government official said DRDO has transferred the technology for the production of its anti-drone system to Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). "DRDO has written to the three services and informed them that the anti-drone system is available," he said. DRDO is also ready to transfer technology to private industry to produce the anti-drone system, he added.

Pakistan-backed terrorist groups and its Inter-Services

Intelligence have been using drones to smuggle arms, ammunition and drugs across the border into J&K and Punjab, but never have drones been used before for attacking a military base.

India has an estimated six lakh plus rogue or unregulated unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and security agencies are analysing modern anti-drone weapons like 'sky fence' and 'drone gun' to counter terror or similar sabotage bids by these aerial platforms. An official blueprint prepared by central agencies says that unregulated drones, UAVs and remotely-piloted aircraft system are a "potential threat" to vital installations, sensitive locations and specific events and a "compatible solution" is required to counter them.

Recent incidents like the lethal drone attack on Saudi Arabia's largest petroleum company and arms dropping by UAVs in Punjab from across the India-Pakistan border has alerted Indian security and intelligence agencies.

These agencies are now looking at some specific anti-drone

techniques like sky fence, drone gun, ATHENA, drone catcher and Skywall 100 to intercept and immobilise suspicious and lethal remote-controlled aerial platforms.

A drone gun is capable of jamming the radio, global positioning system (GPS) and mobile signal between the drone and the pilot, and forces the drone to ground in good time before it can cause any damage. This Australia designed weapon has an effective range of 2 kms. Another solution to block a lethal drone is the sky fence system that uses a range of signal disruptors to jam the flight path and prevent the drone from approaching its target, which could be a sensitive installation or event venue.

A Bengaluru-based company, BEML and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL) among others showcased the latest technology available in this domain to participants of a national conference, which included officials from the Indian Air Force (IAF), the airports' guarding force, CISF, Directorate General of Civil Aviation and Airports Authority of India among others, they said. A drone gun and sky fence look like feasible solutions and are being recommended to the government for consideration, a senior official in the security establishment said.

ATHENA, acronym for Advanced Test High Energy Asset, is another weapon under analysis as it works by firing a high-energy laser beam on a rogue drone resulting in its complete destruction in the air.

However, this is a very costly technology and is being currently tested by the US army, officials said. A 'skywall 100', is the ground version of the 'drone catcher' and it works by bringing down an UAV using a parachute that is hurled through a net from 100 meters distance.

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

ASIAN VOICES

Dogs that bite

There is no stopping Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli from making tongue-in-cheek remarks no matter how badly his political game is faring. It was no surprise when he took the reference of a rabid dog while taking a jab at his party rival Madhav Kumar Nepal. Responding to Nepal's claim that he had been offered the prime ministership by Oli, the latter said he would have to be bitten by a rabid dog to make such an offer to the former.

At one fell swoop, Oli managed to lower the debate of the already petty party politics while also stigmatising the mental health of human's best friend ~ the dog. Our interest today is not in the ideological tussle between the twin top leaders of the CPN-UML. They have anyway been bow-wowing each other for a long time now. Our concern is with how a dog remains a subject of fear and loathing even as authorities look the other way when it comes to managing stray dogs.

Dogs contribute almost 99 percent of human rabies deaths globally, running in the tens of thousands. The fact that almost 95 percent of the rabies deaths occur in poorer countries of Asia and Africa explains how the problem of rabies has to do with lack of management rather than the disease itself. As per the World Health Organisation, rabies causes an estimated cost of \$8.6 billion per year globally for want of proper preventive measures against the virus.

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable disease. As per a study, around 30,000 livestock and 300,000 humans get vaccinated against the virus in Nepal as a prophylactic measure.

But still, almost 32 people and 500 animals die of the disease each year in recent times. That, though, is a gross underestimate as a significant number of deaths in both humans and animals in Nepal are considered to be unreported.

The lack of proper veterinary services and health centres across the country means that rabies continues to be a threat to the population.

That must change. Although Nepal has made some progress in creating awareness about the viral zoonosis caused by dog bite ~ as well as other animals including monkeys, bats and jackals ~ over the years, the country still lacks a systematic national rabies control strategy.

Resultantly, much of the prevention and management of rabies falls on local bodies and hospitals. Shukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, for instance, is reported to receive almost 150 individual visits for anti-rabies vaccination annually.

Rapid urbanisation in many parts of the country has led to an increase of stray dogs, as it provides them with the food they require to sustain themselves.

In some cases, even dog owners resort to abandoning their pets when they show abnormal behaviour if not kill them altogether. As a result, dogs turn stray, come into contact with rabid dogs on the street, and turn hostile to humans.

CLASS 10 RESULT

SIR, The declaration of results of the 10th class examination by the Odisha education board has had a strong reaction. Many students are unsatisfied. Their plea is to increase marks and there are protests that the marks indicate a bias against government school students. This kind of blame game is vile.

The marks have been given as per the guidelines mentioned by the government. Every student and parent welcomed the decision of cancelling the exams due to Covid. This situation shows that human aspiration is now all about marks and students are being programmed to score only 90 per cent or above. Even the government has welcomed students reappearing for exams. Students and parents must understand life matters more than marks. Children holding strikes and crying over marks should understand life is much more precious.

Yours, etc., Manoj Kumar Jena,
Cuttack, 30 June.

Trickster who 'lies like truth'

SIR, This is with reference to your editorial "Fake Vaccines" The Sunday Statesman, June 27, 2021.

Though we are astounded at the audacious daring of the fraudster, a confidence trickster who "lies like truth" as Shakespeare had phrased it, should we really wonder at all? Isn't this the post-truth, post-ethics world, where lying like truth is the norm?

All statements by the

advocates of power are dubious, suspicious and equivocal. In such a bizarre cauldron of double standards, double speak, double agents, double lives, can we now say that truth temporarily defeated is greater than evil triumphant?

If MP Mimi Chakraborty had ignored the fact that no message was sent to her mobile after the first dose of vaccination that she received in the fake Kasba

vaccination camp, such a horrendous fake practice would have been going on even to this day. Ms Chakraborty needs to be complimented for her prompt action the moment she became suspicious.

Also, what seems absolutely bizarre, that in the cultural capital of India, Kolkata, where the recipients of the fake vaccines have been mostly educated people, not one person, neither young adults nor senior citizens smelt a rat! Quite often we talk of trust-deficit nowadays, but in this case this charismatic criminal could charm and probably hypnotise the people with whom he interacted.

Also we can't help but notice that digital India has consolidated and refined crime to unprecedented extremes.

Designing and printing letterheads of the West Bengal government and Kolkata Corporation, posing as a senior IAS officer, a Joint Commissioner, producing documents of multiple public sector organisations, stepping out of a car with a twirling blue light, accompanied by security guards, have been the forte of De-

banjan Deb. He was suave and successful for months or maybe years. Who knows! No one knows, and that is the crucial problem. Truth is stranger than fiction or films. This is a super screenplay for a Bollywood or Hollywood thriller movie, with a subtle Kafkaesque slant.

Names, facts, fabrications, truth, half-truth and untruth are cascading down the raised sluice gates of the sewers.

No fourth industrial revolution, no sophisticated use of technology, no advancement in artificial intelligence can compete with the evil genius of a wireless human mind.

The magnitude of the crafty deception and potential destruction of the lives of fellow human beings, both loved ones, and unknown others, perpetrated by the scamster Debanjan Deb and his accomplices defies definition.

Yours, etc., Sanjukta Dasgupta, Kolkata, 30 June.

CASH TRANSFERS

SIR, This is with reference to the report, "Stimulus package will not boost demand essential to revive economic growth : D Raja" in The Statesman today. I agree that these loans are not aimed at providing immediate aid to the pandemic-hit situation in the country. The new stimulus package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman seems to be an extension of the package implemented last year.

It is very essential, as Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee suggests, that immediate cash transfers take place to generate demand and boost economic growth. The Cash Transfer scheme is analogous with the Keynesian theory of economics which was used dur-

ing the Great Depression in the US under the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt.

A cash transfer to several affected areas of the economy will boost demand by consumers which in turn will motivate several sectors of the economy to increase supply. The requirement to increase supply would generate employment. This Pump Priming will create a domino effect and is very essential to revive the economy in these testing times.

Yours, etc., Motreyee Chowdhury, Kolkata, 30 June.



'Poor kids' education worst hit'



SANTANU MISHRA is co-founder and executive trustee of Smile Foundation, one of the country's leading voluntary organisations. He quit his corporate career at its peak and took up the responsibility of scaling up of Smile Foundation that he co-founded in 2002. In just over a decade, Smile Foundation has been able to mobilise and invest over Rs 400 crore for various welfare projects in education, healthcare, livelihood, and community engagement, which touch the lives of more than 1.5 million underprivileged children and their families across 29 states of India. More than 400 global organisations have partnered with Smile Foundation to achieve their corporate responsibility mandate, including the likes of Google, Microsoft, FIS, Airbus, Ericsson, Siemens, Philips, ANZ, and Mitsubishi. Smile Foundation has a special consultative status with the United Nations' Economic & Social Council, and has won over 30 awards and recognitions worldwide. In an interview with ABHIJEET ANAND, Mishra shares his thoughts on various crucial social issues. Excerpts:

Q. In what ways has the pandemic affected the learning of children, particularly those belonging to economically weaker sections?

A. The pandemic has had an adverse impact on school education. According to a report by UNICEF, more than 1 billion children are at risk of falling behind due to school closures aimed at containing the spread of Covid-19. Students in low income countries like India are particularly vulnerable to a forced break in education. Children from weak economic backgrounds face monumental challenges in accessing education. Smile Foundation conducted a pan India study among 42,831 students at various school levels which found that around 56 per cent of children have no access to smart phones - an essential tool for online education. So, there is a lot that needs to be done to address the digital divide and ensure continued education for students.

Q. Can you tell us something about the work being done by civil society

organisations to deal with the impact of the pandemic on school education?

A. Civil society organisations have helped ease the shock of the pandemic on large sections of the Indian society. Their initiatives have helped ensure last-mile delivery of essential goods and services.

Programmes geared to ensure continuity of education deserve special mention for their perseverance over a protracted duration. At Smile Foundation, we started with the Shiksha Na Ruke initiative to deliver continued school education to children. Children are one of the worst affected groups; many now have no access to schools. While a lot of children have the means for online classes, underprivileged children are deprived of learning as they have no access to computers or smart phones. These children have already had difficult journeys, having fought the shackles of poverty, child labour, and much more to finally reach school. But the pandemic has increased their struggle to get education. For lakhs of such children, education has come to a halt. They can't afford smart phones, can't count on support from their

parents for home learning. Shiksha Na Ruke is a Smile Foundation initiative that is providing underprivileged children access to continuous learning. Continued education helps improve the mental wellbeing of children as they continue to learn and grow.

Q. Classes are now being held online. What is the best way to assess students in these conditions?

A. Students have now spent one full academic year online, in virtual classrooms. Therefore, online assessment or an outcome-based evaluation would do more justice given the situation. A mixed approach in setting up assessments such as including Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), case studies, and presentations will help students engage better in the subject at hand and develop 360-degree understanding of concepts.

Q. What is blended learning and how effective has it been in improving learning outcomes of students?

A. Through the Covid-19 pandemic, Smile Foundation has imple-

mented a blended learning approach under its Shiksha Na Ruke initiative to ensure continued education of school children to mitigate disruption. Smile Foundation's blended learning approach improves accessibility to education for students across India through multiple means - smartphones, tablets, television sets and even through radio. The blended learning approach includes methodology for continued learning, even after schools gradually re-open. Smile Foundation has been working with children for almost two decades. Children have been one of the worst sufferers of the pandemic. Less privileged children, who could not continue their education properly, have particularly suffered as they had little or no access to digital learning. Through Shiksha Na Ruke initiative, the Foundation is making efforts to provide continued access to education for all children through a blended learning approach so that they do not drop out of the fold of education.

Q. Given the fact that Covid has taken a toll on livelihoods, have you observed an increase in child labour?

A. As per data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the pandemic has impacted the employment of 1.5 crore Indians. The economy is stressed and is still recovering. These factors have led to an increase in child labour. Children from weak economic backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to get sucked into child labour to support their families. The shutting down of schools has compounded the problem for such students. It is therefore important for the government, corporates and the general public to support programmes like Mission Education and initiatives like Shiksha Na Ruke that work to ensure continued education for underprivileged students.

Q. Children may be considered to be an added burden for families with no income. Has this led to a spurt in gender inequality, child marriage and other issues related to child welfare?

A. It is an unfortunate reality that the burden of diminishing family income falls on children and they are at the receiving end of gender discrimination and child marriage. What is required is support for targeted interventions that prevent mal-practices like child marriage and gender discrimination. This, more than ever, is the time for all stakeholders to come together and consolidate strength to support movements for continued education of children. Education alone is the path to prosperity and the way out of all social ills. It has the power to transform lives and society as a whole.

Q. The government is trying to prioritise continuity in education of students. What kind of support does civil society expect from the government towards the achievement of this goal?

A. The government's efforts in the education domain are laudable. The emphasis on varied means of education - which is indeed blended learning - with a sharp focus on improving access for students is on point. The government should turn its gaze on increasing the ease of doing good, and support endeavours that improve people's lives tangibly and immediately. This will enable India to bounce back faster from the effects of the pandemic.

Civil war looms in Afghanistan

ZAHID HUSSAIN

With the revival of armed regional militias to stop the Afghan Taliban offensive, Afghanistan is edging towards a new civil war. Headed by old mujahideen warlords, these armed bands are fighting along the Afghan government forces in some areas, but in many cases they are defending their own regional fiefdoms.

It appears that we are returning to the 1990s following the downfall of the Najibullah government when several mujahideen groups fought each other, plunging Afghanistan into a devastating civil war and killing thousands of Afghans. Those events saw the rise of the Taliban movement, which swept away warlord rule and established the so-called Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. But the warlords returned to power after the American invasion. The withdrawal of the foreign forces and the looming threat of a Taliban takeover compelled them to raise their own forces. They don't seem to have much faith in government security forces to protect them. Some three decades later, the same former mujahideen commanders are once again arrayed against their old nemesis.

Most prominent among them are Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ismail

Khan and Ata Muhammad — the same old faces that symbolise four decades of conflict in Afghanistan. The Taliban offensive in northern Afghanistan in recent weeks has been a major reason behind the revival of the militias representing different ethnic groups, particularly the Tajik and Uzbeks.

Over the past weeks, the insurgents have achieved some spectacular successes in the region that has never been considered their stronghold. The Taliban have generally been seen as a Pakhtun-dominated movement, with eastern and southern Afghanistan as their main support base.

The Taliban have overrun many northern districts and have besieged some major towns. They now control major roads leading to Mazar-i-Sharif. In many areas, Afghan government soldiers have abandoned their posts without any fight. In some cases, the soldiers have joined the insurgents. The Taliban now control the main border crossing with Tajikistan, a main trade route.

While these militia movements have helped reinforce the government forces fighting the Taliban in many northern districts, they have also strengthened the warlord fiefdoms, thus weakening the authority of the government in Kabul. These armed groups are nominally aligned with the Afghan government, and

their organisation could further fracture the war-battered country along ethnic lines and empower regional strongmen.

Some analysts, however, contend that these militias may eventually serve as the last line of defence, with the security forces unable to counter the Taliban onslaught. But there is also the question of whether these ragtag armed groups can stand their ground against a more committed enemy. Many believe it could be a repeat of the events of the late 1990s when local strongmen were swept away by rampaging Taliban forces.

For many analysts, the Taliban's success in the north has not come as a surprise. While consolidating their military and diplomatic gains, the Taliban have also sought to secure the support of communities they had fought in the past in order to present themselves as a national movement. The Taliban had traditionally relied on ethnic Pakhtuns but made a clear shift to recruit members of other ethnic groups with a view to expanding their area of influence.

Over the years, the insurgent group made significant inroads into the non-Pakhtun belt in northern Afghanistan and inducted several Tajik and Uzbek commanders in its ranks, giving them more operational autonomy. The non-Pakhtuns assumed important positions in the Taliban leadership and held key posts

The Taliban also leveraged the peace deal with the US to their advantage in order to woo regional ethnic groups. With the withdrawal

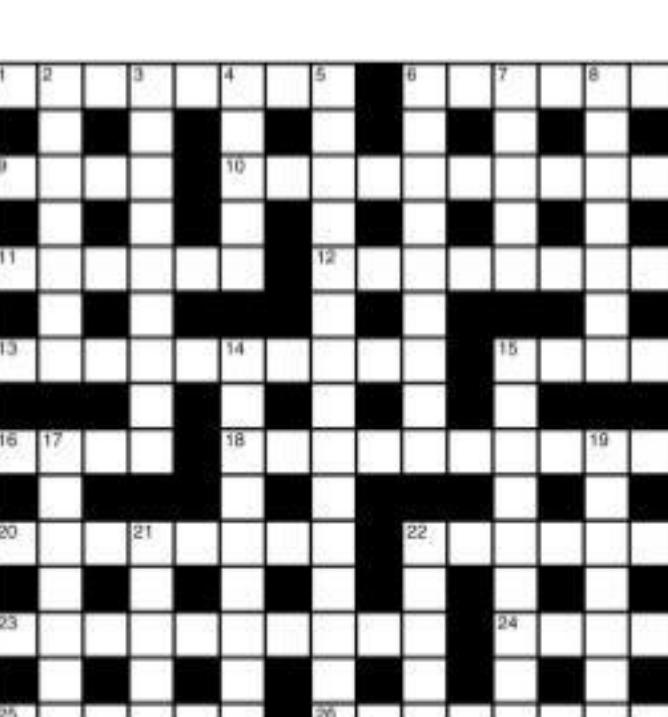
of US forces, joining the Taliban had once again become a serious option for many people and groups in Afghanistan. While internal discord has further weakened the Kabul government's position, the Taliban have shown a greater degree of pragmatism. Some warlords and power groups have reportedly struck separate deals with the insurgents, which has further weakened the Kabul government's position amid the American pullout.

With the latest military setback, the Afghan government has increased its reliance on regional militias. The growing dependence on the warlords is seen as a sign of the government's desperation. A US intelligence report says the Ghani government in Kabul could collapse within six months of the US withdrawal. That could further aggravate the power vacuum and lead to the fragmentation of the country along ethnic lines, with dire consequences for the entire region.

What is most alarming is the prospect of the disintegration of the Afghan army and the trained soldiers joining different warring factions. Although the Biden administration assured President Ghani during his visit to Washington last week of continued US financial, political and moral support, that may not be able to save Afghanistan from the looming civil war. It could be an unending war with no winner.

Dawn/ANN

NO 28961



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

SOLUTION FOR
26 JUNE

ACROSS

- 1 Go with coda in novel – it's Portrait of a Lady (8)
- 6 Degenerate star's name suppressed in awful snarl-up (6)
- 9 Family entertained by magic lanterns (4)
- 10 Throw party ending in fornication? Sure thing! (10)
- 11 Like La Mer, including A sharp (6)
- 12 Order from government not heartless (8)
- 13 I'm leaving chocolate spread you put out for dance (10)
- 15 Male legislator weed (4)
- 16 Generating a stink, but not initially suspicious (4)
- 18 Maybe John's pet, nursed

DOWN

- 20 One increasing guineas or shillings? (8)
- 22 Partner of blind men with time for hard work (6)
- 23 Rich source of water listed (4-6)
- 24 Immoral fellow one's seen at the roulette table (4)
- 25 Early IT system with tip for butterfly hunters (6)
- 26 Lesbian almost touching something precious (8)
- 20 rum (5)
- 21 European accepts amateur line judges in sport (10,5)
- 22 Yard in fetid area, no good place for Kim? (9)
- 23 One stands in pass, climbing with hesitation (5)
- 24 Ally hacking into American radar, say (7)
- 25 Falls to enter river cooler or hotter than others (9)
- 26 Maintain most of strength, getting hard to go on (4,5)
- 27 Four players after puzzle in media outlet (3,4)
- 28 One on the pitch who walks out (7)
- 29 He's abandoned Greek lady (5)
- 30 Finally become English Nationalist Party (3,2)

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

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The roads in Great Britain are coming into their own again, so far as passenger traffic is concerned, after having been supplanted by the railways. It has been assisted, no doubt, by the limitation of the railway services caused by the coal stoppage. With or without this factor, however, the road motor conveyances were bound to develop, and the numbers of motor-buses, and char-a-banc have been increased to an extraordinary extent. Last year's few motor services to sea-side resorts, according to our special cable message, have been rapidly extended until the whole country is covered with a network of motor routes; and the new services are competing effectively with the railways as regards both comfort and fares. Mail letters give some illustrations of the transformation thus being effected in the means of locomotion. There are, for instance, six motor char-a-banc services daily each way between Portsmouth and London; and cars run two or three times a week to places as far distant as Gloucester and Bristol. Moreover, the fares are lower than the railway fares, the result, as a correspondent says, being that no one travels by rail unless accompanied by heavy luggage. "It looks like a return to the old coaching days," writes a former Calcutta resident who has lately returned to England, "and I wonder, sometimes, whether the railways will ever again be able to compete with the roads for passenger traffic."

NEWS ITEMS

STRIKE
INCENDIARISM IN MADRAS

In connection with the Madras mill strike trouble a Press representative who visited the scene of the recent fire writes that it is stated that the Audi Dravidas, after vacating their huts and going to the Mill School poured petrol on the roofs of their huts, setting fire to them. A further report says that the police found it difficult to get to the scene of the fire on account of the danger of being sniped by strikers. A lorry containing 50 policemen from Vellore proceeding to the scene from Egmore Railway Station was fired upon, a constable being badly hit in the neck. As the police force under Mr. Pelly was, all told, about 200 the Police Commissioner consulted the Chief Presidency Magistrate as to the advisability to calling out the military.

SCHOOL BOYCOTT
FAILS IN BURMA

At a meeting of the Rangoon Teachers Association held last night Mr. Mark Hunter, Director of Public Instruction and president of the Association in the course of a speech dealt with the school and University boycott, and said inter alia that there had been a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the boycott and he would be glad to remove it. It seemed to him that the "National School" movement of Burma was the outcome of the schoolboys' boycott which was perfectly hopeless, and there was no real hope of it proving a success. It was meant to replace the public system of education which had many agencies and was of long standing, and had all the resources of the Government behind it.

MOULVI AKUBIR
RAHMIN IN
RANGOON

In connection with the arrival of Mouli Akubir Rahmin yesterday from Calcutta, Hashim, the leader of the volunteer workers of the Anjuman Tahsib Ul Ahlaq and thirteen others were arrested by the police yesterday for attempting to form an illegal procession, and by blocking the street near the residence of Mouli Abdulla Misri. They were charged this morning in the court of the Western Sub-divisional Magistrate under section 37, 39 and 40 of the Rangoon Police Act with attempting to form a procession without permission of the Commissioner of Police, with obstructing the public thoroughfare, and with disobeying police orders. The magistrate warned Hashim, the leader and the thirteen others to appear for the hearing of the case on Wednesday next.

WOMEN AND THE
MEDICAL
PROFESSION

Bombay, July 2
For encouraging women students to adopt the medical profession, the Government of Bombay have instituted four scholarships of Rs 40 each, tenable for one year, for the first year's course, at an arts college and then for a five years' full course at the Grant Medical College. Scholars from Sind will have the option of joining the Lady Hardinge College for Women in Delhi. In that case the tenure of her scholarship will be extended to seven years. Twenty-six more scholarships of Rs 20 each, tenable at medical schools at Poona, Ahmedabad or Hyderabad for a four years' course are offered for the training of female hospital assistants.



NTPC would exceed its target of 60 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2032.

GURDEEP SINGH

CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, NTPC

THUMBNAILS

LIC Housing Finance cuts home loan rates: Mortgage financier LIC Housing Finance on Friday said it has reduced its interest rates to 6.66 per cent for home loans up to Rs 50 lakh. The revised rates, valid till 31 August 2021, will be offered to new salaried individuals, a release said. The rate of interest will be linked to the borrower's creditworthiness, as reflected by their CIBIL scores, the company said. PTI

LIC chief gets extension: The government has extended the superannuation age of IPO-bound LIC chairman to up to 62 years by making amendment to the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Staff) Regulations, 1960. The changes made in the rules will be called the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Staff) Amendment Rules, 2021, according to a government notification dated 30 June 2021. PTI

IOC's oil purchase: India's top state refiner IOC has made its first purchase of crude oil from Guyana and entered into a contract to buy 3 million tons of US crude as it seeks to diversify its oil imports. "We have procured one Suezmax of Guyanese Liza crude and have also entered into a term contract for 3 million tons of the US crude for further diversification," Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) chairman Shrikant M Vaidya said. He said IOC is the first Indian state refiner to procure Guyanese crude. PTI

Audi electric SUVs: German luxury car manufacturer Audi has commenced bookings for its all-electric SUVs ~ Audi e-tron and Audi e-tron Sportback in India. Commenting on the announcement, Balbir Singh Dhillon, head of Audi India, said: "The future is electric and we are thrilled to open bookings for not one but two electric SUVs. The e-tron is not just one product but a brand in itself and we will launch several new models under this brand." SNS

Linc profit: Linc Pen & Plastics Ltd has reported a net profit of Rs 6.20 crore for the quarter ended 31 March 2021. The company's net profit stood at Rs 4.98 crore during the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal, said a Press release. Its total income, however, declined to Rs 94.90 crore during the quarter under review from Rs 100.93 crore, said the release. SNS

WazirX tie-up: WazirX, a cryptocurrency exchange, has announced its collaboration with TRM Labs, a blockchain analytics provider, to enhance anti-money laundering and anti-fraud measures for transactions conducted on the WazirX platform. TRM Labs provides a full-service platform for crypto compliance and risk management, including tools for wallet screening, transaction monitoring and investigations, said a release. SNS

Certain clarifications on e-commerce soon

Foreign online players allegedly violating FDI norms, say domestic traders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Amidst domestic traders continuously complaining alleged violations of FDI norms by foreign online players, Union commerce and industry Minister Piyush Goyal today said the ministry will "very shortly" come out with certain clarifications on the e-commerce sector.

Goyal said the ministry is not changing any policy on e-commerce for foreign direct investment as the policy is crystal clear.

"We will also come out with the e-commerce policy and whatever clarifications... Certain instances have come to our notice where the policy is not being followed in letter and spirit, we will obviously be clarifying that very shortly," he told reporters here.

The statement assumes significance as the minister recently stated that all e-commerce companies should follow the law of the land and not use muscle or money

POLICY PRESCRIPTION

Piyush Goyal
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

"We will also come out with the e-commerce policy and whatever clarifications... Certain instances have come to our notice where the policy is not being followed in letter and spirit, we will obviously be clarifying that very shortly."

power to hurt Indian interests as many of these large online firms have come into India and "very" blatantly flouted the laws.

He also said the consumer affairs ministry recently announced the draft e-commerce rules under the consumer protection law and after getting stakeholders' views, the final rules will be issued.

"This is a series which involves consumer affairs, the FDI policy, and e-commerce policy. We wanted to come out with the consumer protection rules of e-commerce first because we believe that our most important stakeholder is the consumer

and we wanted to make sure that consumer protection prevails over everything else," the minister said.

These draft rules have also sent a strong message to the world, as some time ago, there used to be a criticism that India's e-commerce policy is skewed against foreign investors.

"By announcing the e-commerce rules for consumer protection, we have demonstrated that our first and foremost concern is the consumer," he added.

CAIT has time and again alleged that the e-commerce players violated the Foreign Exchange Management Act and FDI rules.

Goyal reviews critical infra projects

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal has reviewed 59 issues in 20 critical infrastructure projects, with anticipated investment value of nearly Rs 2.7 lakh crore, an official statement said.

The minister issued directions and timelines to ensure expeditious resolution of pending issues for timely commissioning of projects, it said.

Among the projects that were reviewed include dedicated freight corridors along eastern and western routes, and Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC), it said.

The minister also emphasised the importance of regular multi-level monitoring of infrastructure projects that are critical to the economic growth. PTI

Exports jump by 47% to \$32.46 billion in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The country's exports rose by 47.34 per cent to \$32.46 billion in June on account of healthy growth in sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products, even as trade deficit aggregated at \$9.4 billion during the month, according to the data released by the commerce ministry today.

Exports in June last year stood at \$22 billion and \$25 billion in June 2019. In May 2021, the outward shipment was worth \$32.27 billion, while in April this year, it was \$31 billion. Imports in June 2021 grew by 96.33 per cent to \$41.86 billion, from \$21.32 billion in June last year. In June 2019, imports stood at \$41 billion.

"India is thus a net importer in June 2021 with a trade deficit of \$9.4 billion, widened by 1,426.6 per cent over trade surplus of \$0.71 billion in June 2020 (India was net exporter in June 2020) and narrowed down by 41.26 per cent over trade deficit of \$16 billion in June 2019," the ministry said in a statement.

Exports during the April-June period are the highest ever merchandise exports in a quarter in history of India," commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said briefing the media here.



June quarter this year jumped to \$95.36 billion as against \$51.44 billion in the same period last year.

compared to \$4.97 billion in June 2020.

"Oil imports during April-June 2021 were \$31 billion, a positive growth of 136.36 per cent compared to \$13.12 billion in April-June 2020," it said.

Exports of engineering, petroleum products and pharma during the first three months of this fiscal stood at \$25.9 billion, \$12.9 billion and \$5.8 billion, respectively.

Goyal also said that simplification of procedures, extension of timelines and licences resulted in the record performance of exports.

On services exports, the minister expressed confidence that the exports would touch \$350 billion by 2025, and may even go up to \$500 billion very soon.

Oil imports in June this year rose to \$10.68 billion, as

Rs 100.22 a litre while it costs Rs 101.14 in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

With this, petrol has crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar, Punjab and Ladakh. It is over Rs 99 a litre in Puducherry as well as Gangtok.

Rates of diesel, the most used fuel in the country, have crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Sri Ganganagar and Hanumanagar in Rajasthan as well in some places in Odisha.

The hike on Friday is the 33rd increase in prices since 4 May, when state-owned oil firms ended a 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

Petrol at ₹99 in Delhi & Kolkata; crosses ₹100-mark in Chennai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

FUEL GETS DEARER

City	Petrol price
Mumbai	Rs 105.24
Chennai	Rs 100.13
Delhi	Rs 99.16
Kolkata	Rs 99.04



The increase in petrol price ~33rd in two months ~ took rates across the country to fresh highs.

In Chennai, the petrol price rose to Rs 100.13 a litre. Diesel price in the city was unchanged at Rs 93.72 per litre.

Petrol in Delhi now comes for Rs 99.16 a litre and the same in Kolkata is priced at Rs 99.04.

Other metro cities ~ Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad in Punjab has the fuel priced at

Indian Sellers Collective calls for stringent anti-competition e-commerce policy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Indian Sellers Collective organised a virtually panel discussion to deliberate on various challenges faced by small retailers, merchants in the wake of the Covid pandemic, policy loopholes and unfair business practices of e-commerce firms that are creating livelihood challenges for them.

The panel delved into the proposed amendments in Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 to understand its efficacy in addressing various issues faced by small merchants from the large e-commerce players. Some key takeaways of the panel discussion were that the government has the intent to address the genuine concerns of consumers and small retailers and towards this, it has put in place laws to reg-

ulate e-commerce players in India which needs to be implemented in the right earnest. The panel concluded that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has a big role to play in protecting the interests of consumers and sellers alike and what is required is the strict adherence to e-commerce policies for both international and domestic online marketplaces.

The panelists were unanimous in their view that the Covid-19 pandemic has added to the financial woes of small retailers in India who are already facing unfair competition from large e-commerce players. These e-commerce players are using their financial muscle and exploiting policy loopholes to capture market share thereby driving small retailers, merchants out of business and destroying their livelihoods.

Equity indices snap 4-day losing run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 2 JULY

Equity benchmarks the Sensex and the Nifty broke their four-session losing run today as emergence of buying in financial, pharma and IT stocks negated losses in metal counters.

After a range-bound trading through the day, the BSE Sensex ended 166.07 points or 0.32 per cent higher at 52,484.67 points. Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 42.20 points or 0.27 per cent to finish at 15,722.20 points.

On the forex market front, the rupee logged its fourth straight loss on Friday, dropping another 19 paise to end at 74.74 to the US currency.

MARKET WATCH

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es. Sectorally, BSE consumer durables, energy, healthcare, telecom, realty, bankex and finance indices rose up to 1.23 per cent. On the other hand, power, metal, utilities and capital goods indices ended in the red.

Broadermid-cap and small-cap indices outperformed the benchmark, rising up to 1.01 per cent.

During the week, Sensex declined by 440.37 points or

0.83 per cent, while Nifty fell 138.15 points or 0.87 per cent.

"Domestic equities continued to trade in a range-bound manner with benchmark indices witnessing marginal gains. While financials, pharma and realty indices recovered modestly today, profit-booking was visible across metals and FMCG counters," Binod Modi, head-strategy at Reliance Securities, said.

Notably, mid-cap and small-cap indices continued to outperform as improved earnings visibility attracted investors towards this space, he noted.

Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services, said: "Amid lack of domestic triggers, main indices traded flattish and ended with minor gains. Domestic banking stocks gained although RBI in its Financial Stability Report indicates that Gross NPA percentage could climb to a baseline of 9.8 per cent by March 2022."

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul closed in the red, while Tokyo ended with gains.

Equities in Europe were trading on a positive note in mid-session deals.

On the forex market front,

the rupee logged its fourth straight loss today, dropping another 19 paise to end at 74.74 to the US currency.

NTPC plans IPO of renewable arm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

State-run NTPC has plans to list its arm NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd in 2022-23, to raise funds for achieving its ambitious target of 60 GW installed renewable energy capacity by 2032, which entails a total investment of Rs 2.5 lakh crore, a source said.

The source, however, did not disclose the quantum of money to be raised through the initial public offering (IPO) of the NTPC Renewable Energy, but said that the equity component of the firm would be around Rs 50,000 crore and rest of the requirement would be met through long-term loans, debentures, bonds and other such modes.

Last year in October, state-owned NTPC incor-

porated a wholly-owned subsidiary for its renewable energy business in the name of NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd.

Earlier this week, NTPC had indicated its intention to list NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd.

Participating in the virtual BloombergNEF (BNEF) summit, NTPC chairman and managing director Gurdeep Singh had said:

"We should not focus on one way of raising funds. We want to soon go to public for raising funds."

The chairman and managing director was talking about raising funds for NTPC's ambitious renewable energy (RE) target and stressed that the company would add 7-8 GW of renewable energy every year, which would not be an uphill task for it.

The revised guidelines will benefit 2.5 crore retail and wholesale traders. The move would also allow them to register on Udyam portal.

Commenting on the development, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said with this decision, traders will be able to avail requisite finances from banks and financial institutions under priority sector lending.

Besides, now the traders will be enjoying several other benefits of various other government schemes which are being enjoyed by the MSME category, said CAIT national president B C Bhartia and secretary general Praveen Khandelwal.

According to the Retailers Association of India (RAI), this will give retail micro, small and medium enterprises the support they need to survive, revive and thrive. This landmark decision will have a structural impact on the sector, helping it get formalised by giving better finance options for businesses. PTI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, 2 JULY

The ministry of electronics and information technology late yesterday evening released the approved list of 14 companies selected for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for IT hardware products. This is part of measures the ministry termed as "heralding a new era" in computer hardware manufacturing in India.

The PLI scheme notified this March offers Rs 7,325 crore incentives across four years for manufacturers of personal computers, laptops, tablets, servers and other information technology hardware.

Approved under category

MOVE TO BOOST PRODUCTION

► The

Covid: Pockets of Odisha continue to be in red zone

Central team to study disturbing trend in coastal Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

The COVID-19 daily infection in 10 districts of Odisha continues to be a cause of both with 76 percent of positive cases reported from these districts on Friday and the central government deputing a team to study why the incidence is not declining as in other areas despite prolonged lockdown.

The ten districts—Cuttack, Khordha, Jagatsinghpur, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Puri, Kendrapara, Bhadrak and Nayagarh—have logged as many as 2,468 cases out of 3,222 in the state in the last 24 hours.

The continued rise of cases in the coastal districts provided fuel to the Opposition BJP and Congress to lambast the mismanagement by the BJD government. The failure is glaring, they charged



while noting that Odisha is among the few states where the Covid graph has not come down in coastal belt despite the two month lockdown.

Meanwhile, the 46 fresh fatalities raised the death toll to 4,109. The high facilities (reconciliation as per health department officials) has also drawn flak from Opposition quarters which allege fudging of death records.

Currently three districts—Khordha, Cuttack and Balasore—are tagged in the red zone category with nearly 3000 cases or more active cases. Out of the 30 districts in Odisha, as many as 21 are in the green zone where the test positivity rate is below five percent and active cases remaining below 1,000 mark.

With 5,206 active cases, Khordha district accounts for the maximum numbers of active cases.

Cuttack district reported the maximum number of fresh infections at 622, followed by Khordha at 422 and Jagatsinghpur at 212.

The state currently has 30,950 active cases. As many as 8,80,997 patients, including 3,457 on Thursday, have recovered from the disease.

The total 74,000 samples examined for COVID-19 on Thursday, 3,222 tested pos-

itive for the infection, thus taking the daily TPR to 4.35% against Wednesday's 4.08 per cent positivity rate.

Even at the national level, pockets of Odisha has been a worrying feature and central team is expected to examine and guide the state.

Health department officers here, however, insisted that the situation in coastal districts are showing signs of improvement and by 15 July the graph will come down.

Another area of sharp criticism that has come about is with regards to the vaccination policy of Odisha government which, right from the onset, has reserved Covaxin exclusively for Bhubaneswar while providing Covishield for rest of the state.

This has resulted in a more people getting vaccinated in Bhubaneswar due to availability of Covaxin while the other districts of the state suffered shortages of Covishield.

Odisha will lose its edge if all the ore gets exported leaving the local units in distress. To make things worse there is an unprecedented surge in the prices of iron ore.

Later several other industries like the Pellet Manufacturers' Association of India (PMAI) and the Orissa Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association (OSIMA)

Iron ore scarcity hits Odisha industries

Inter-state export, artificially jacked up ore price killing local units

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

of the state government to end the iron ore crisis for Odisha based steel industry.

"In recent times the state-based iron and steel industry has been facing huge challenges due to low production of iron ore, rampant inter-state dispatches of ore, and thus the exponential increase in iron ore prices," CII Chairman, Manish Kharbanda wrote to the Principal Secretary, Department of Steel & Mines, Government of Odisha.

The CII also drew attention of the Odisha government and requested it to reactivate pre-emption of iron ore produced in the state to ensure adequate availability of raw material to state based industries.

Odisha will lose its edge if all the ore gets exported leaving the local units in distress. To make things worse there is an unprecedented surge in the prices of iron ore.

Later several other industries like the Pellet Manufacturers' Association of India (PMAI) and the Orissa Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association (OSIMA)

have sought the intervention

that "there is an urgent need to reactivate pre-emption rights of iron ore for State-based end-use plants to ensure the sustainable supply of usable ore for end-use plants based in the State safeguarding livelihood over 10 lakh people of Odisha".

The CII has suggested some additions to the existing pre-emption policy viz should include permanent pre-emption of mineral as per need for State-based plants, penalties for not supplying the pre-empted ore in the scheduled time and sale of iron ore from merchant mines through a government-run transparent e-bidding platform.

The CII has cited the policy of Karnataka government imposes a ban on export of ore outside the state.

Such a step will send a signal to investors to set up industries and provide real value addition within Odisha, noted the CII.

Husband forced to carry body of wife

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PHULBANI, 2 JULY

A tribal B K Kanhar and his aged father-in-law were forced to carry the dead body of Kanhar's wife and their two year-old girl child from the second floor of the district headquarters hospital and struggled to put the body on a hearse as nobody from the hospital was available to help them.

The insensitivity of the hospital staff outraged people of Kandhamal district when a video clip on the incident circulated on social media platforms today.

The Kandhamal Vikash Parishad, District United Citizens Forum demanded a probe and action against the errant hospital staff.

Kanhar alleged that he had with people but no staff of the hospital was available.

When contacted Dr. Rajarsi Patnaik, the Chief District Medical Officer of Kandhamal said an inquiry has been initiated and two of the staff have been suspended.

Over 3,000 child marriages averted in Odisha in last 3 yrs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

Thanks to joint initiatives by government functionaries and child rights activists, over 3,000 child marriages were averted in Odisha in the past three-and-a-half years.

As many as 16 districts—Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh, Koraput, Rayagada, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Gajapati, Keonjhar, Balasore, Deogarh, Boudh, Subarnapur, Kandhamal and Angul—are identified as regions where the evil practice is lurking its ugly head from time to time.

As many as 3,226 child marriages were stopped from 2017 till May 2021 as authorities backed by civil society groups swung into action to thwart the bids to marry off minors in contravention of legal provisions, said officials of Women and

Child Welfare Department.

The year-wise break-up of child marriages that were stopped due to government and community intervention stands at 2017- 324, 2018- 411, 2019- 657, 2010- 1,108 and 2021 (till May)- 726.

Meanwhile the government has drawn up an action plan for addressing the social malaise and vulnerabilities of girl children from the abhorrent practice.

The action plans are being implemented in districts and urban locations specific to eliminate child marriage. An inter-sectoral convergent action plan involving the departments of school and mass education, Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribes development, women and child development, panchayati raj, skill missions and sports & youth is being implemented across the State to eliminate child

marriage practice.

It's the girl children who are mostly being thrown into weddings at an early age. The action plan's focus is to keep girls in schools, continue their education, and bring back dropout girls to the education system, enrolment into skill development programmes and livelihood programmes for young women.

Poverty coupled with the ignorance/filthier parents has all contributed to the prevalence of this illegal practice.

Ironically majority of parents are unaware of the legal provisions of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which is a cognizable offence.

The number of child marriages in Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Mayurbhanj, Koraput, Keonjhar, Gajapati are more pronounced than the rest of the State, the officials informed.

NABARD sanctions ₹388 cr for drinkingwater, roads in Odisha



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

NABARD has sanctioned RIDF assistance of Rs.388 crore to Odisha government under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for setting up of four Mega Piped Drinking Water Supply Projects.

The cumulative sanction under RIDF for the current year and sanction since inception of RIDF stand at Rs.691 crore and Rs.28732 crore respectively, stated a release issued by NABARD today.

20 village roads across 15 districts.

On completion, these projects are expected to provide clean and safe drinking water to 2.57 lakh people in 467 villages. Further, the road projects are expected to improve the livelihood of 1.52 lakh people in 162 villages.

The water supply projects are to be in Koraput, Balasore, one each and two in Malkangiri district.

The sanction also includes construction/upgradation of

Odisha CM focuses on child health care

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

been reports of the possible third wave and it has a high probability of impact on children'.

Stating that the government has approved an action plan to create infrastructure including equipment and medicine including for paediatric care, the CM said training is key to success against the possible third wave.

The CM said "we have to be extremely cautious as there have

The CM also launched several Covid training capsules, awareness video and pocket book for frontline workers.

The CM claimed that the infection rate has currently come down and the situation is under control.

The training programme will be beneficial for doctors and paramedics. The training module has been designed with focus on technology and team work under the 5T module.

Petrol hits century in Bhubaneswar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

the ruling BJD remained silent.

Former finance minister Panchanan Kanungo (Congress) sarcastically told media persons to ask Mr Pradhan as to when LPG will be priced Rs 1000 per cylinder.

Kanungo alleged that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and the BJD were silent and insensitive to the price rise only to

remain in the 'good books' of PM Narendra Modi.

Union Minister Pradhan who controls Odisha BJP unit and is said to be the 'face' of the party here owes an answer to people of the state, he said while referring to reaction of traders and transporters who have said that prices of essentials are bound to rise.



Bapuji Nagar market jam packed during lockdown relaxation hours in Bhubaneswar. SNS

India's highest altitude marsh crocodile habitat found at Simlipal Tiger Reserve

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

The Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district has entered the record books for housing the endangered mugger species at the country's highest altitude habitat of these reptiles.

The mugger, marsh crocodile, population occurs up to an altitude of 822 metres above sea level (masl) in the STR making it the highest altitude habitat for this species in India", according to a research paper published in the Herpetological Bulletin of British Herpetological Society.

An India Forest Service (IFS) officer Jagyandatt Pati,

ther research is required in this regard, he added.

Earlier the mugger was reported at altitudes up to 420 masl in Corbett Tiger Reserve which was listed as its highest altitude by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The muggers are tagged as vulnerable species and are accorded highest degree of protection as these animals figure in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

In Odisha, the mugger is found in river systems of the STR, the Mahanadi river system of the Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary, the Ghodahada reservoir in Ganjam district besides the Saberi river in Koraput.

put district. As per the latest census conducted of these species in 2019, the water bodies in Simlipal are home to 82 muggers, otherwise called as marsh crocodiles. The STR has a sustainable population of muggers since the reptile's reintroduction programme in 1981, Pati said. A mugger reintroduction programme took off in the STR's river systems after the establishment of the Ramatirtha Captive Breeding Center in 1980.

The Simlipal Tiger Reserve, a part of the Deccan Peninsula Biogeographic zone and Chhotanagpur Biotic province covers 2750 sq km in the Mayurbhanj district. Mugger were released in West Deo, Budhabalanga and Khairi river systems inside the reserve.

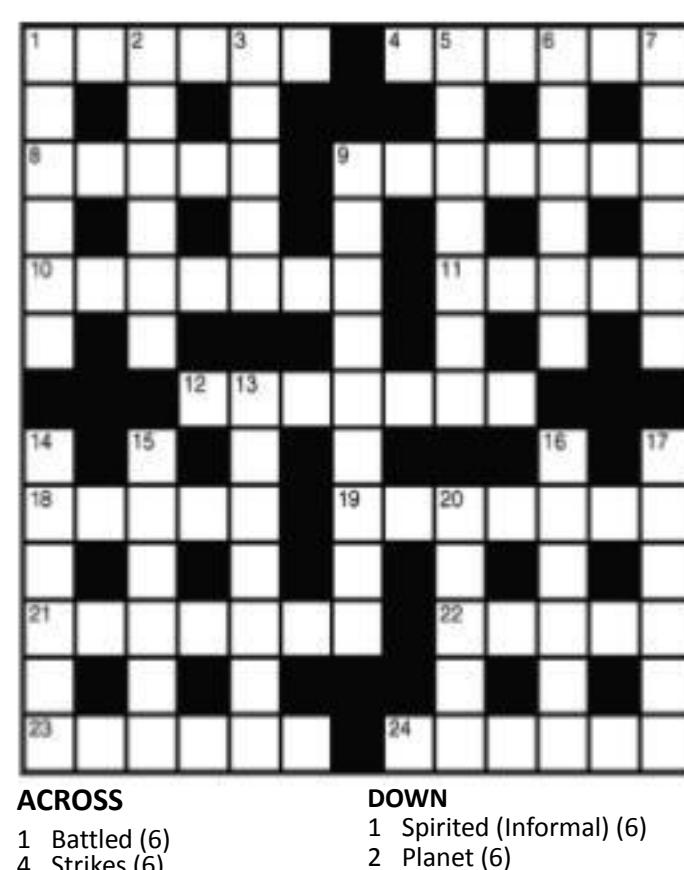
During our survey, 90% of individuals observed were recorded above an altitude of 750 masl with the lowest record being from 380 masl.

From 1981, the reintroduction programme for mugger in the STR, coupled with the relocation of much of the human population away from the reserve, has successfully resulted in the establishment of a sustainable population of muggers.

Incidentally Odisha is the lone State in the country where three species of crocodiles—salt-water, gharial and mugger—are found inhabiting the river systems.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Battled (6)
4 Strikes (6)
8 Not fitting (5)
9 Opposite (7)
10 Temper (7)
11 Motionless (5)
12 Unfavourable (7)
18 Saying (5)
19 Throb (7)
21 Become infatuated by (4,3)
22 Make obscure (5)
23 Every time (6)
24 Stretchy fabric (5)

DOWN
1 Spirited (Informal) (6)
2 Planet (6)
3 Rabbit's cage (5)
5 Labo urers (Informal) (7)
6 Foundation garment (6)
7 Detective (Informal) (6)
9 Publican (9)
13 Cook in oil (4-3)
14 Palm tree (6)
15 Immature (6)
16 Arrangement (6)
17 Metalworker (6)
20 Stretchy fabric (5)

Solutions to yesterday's crossword

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586226, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

U.P. Roadways 23868709

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

Haryana Roadways 23861262



I look forward to working with Congress to implement these necessary reforms and promote a work environment that is free from sexual assault

US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

BACKING CHANGES IN MILITARY SEXUAL ASSAULT PROSECUTION

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	31	27 R
HONG KONG	32	29 R
TOKYO	24	17 R
LONDON	23	12 S
DUBAI	42	29 S
SAN FRANCISCO	20	11 S
NEW YORK	22	13 H
MOSCOW	14	07 H

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

THUMBNAILS



Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg and other climate protesters gather for a protest against climate change in front of the Swedish Parliament building in Stockholm, Sweden on Friday.

AP

Man charged with assault of UK medical officer: Police in London said a man charged with common assault after England's chief medical officer was harassed in a park in central London will appear in court on Friday. The Metropolitan Police said Lewis Hughes, 23, was charged on Thursday. An investigation was launched after Prof. Chris Whitty, high-profile scientists during the coronavirus, was accosted by two men in St. James's Park on Sunday evening. AP

Paris airport workers block terminal: Paris airport workers protesting pay cuts on Friday blocked a busy terminal at a Charles de Gaulle Airport and skirmished with police, prompting flight delays and causing travel chaos and confusion among passengers. Police fired pepper spray to try to disperse the protesters at the 2E terminal, primarily used for international travel. AP

Vatican to combat vaccine hesitancy: The Vatican's bioethics academy and the World Medical Association called Friday for an all-out effort to combat vaccine hesitancy and correct the myths and disinformation that are slowing the fight against the coronavirus. AP

Trump Organisation, CFO indicted on tax fraud charges

CFO Allen Weisselberg is charged with a massive tax fraud involving more than \$1.7 million

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK, 2 JULY

Donald Trump's company and its long-time finance chief were charged on Thursday in what prosecutors called a sweeping and audacious tax fraud scheme in which the executive collected more than \$1.7 million in off-the-books compensation, including apartment rent, car payments and school tuition.

Trump himself was not charged with any wrongdoing, but prosecutors noted he signed some of the checks at the center of the case. And one top prosecutor said the 15-year scheme was orchestrated by the most senior executives at the Trump Organisation.

It is the first criminal case to come out New York authorities' two-year investigation into the former President's business dealings.

According to the indictment, from 2005 through this year, the Trump Organisation and Chief Financial Officer Allen Weisselberg cheated tax authorities by conspiring to pay senior executives off the books by way of lucrative fringe benefits and other means. Weisselberg alone was accused of defrauding the federal government, state and city out of more than \$9,000,000 in unpaid taxes and undeserved tax refunds.

The most serious charge against Weisselberg, grand larceny, carries five to 15 years in prison. The tax fraud charges

against the company are punishable by a fine of double the amount of unpaid taxes, or \$250,000, whichever is larger.

The 73-year-old Weisselberg has intimate knowledge of the Trump Organisation's financial dealings from nearly five decades at the company. The charges against him could enable prosecutors to pressure him to cooperate with the investigation and tell them what he knows. Both Weisselberg and lawyers for the Trump Organisation pleaded not guilty. Weisselberg was ordered to surrender his passport and was released without bail, leaving the courthouse without comment.

In a statement, Trump demanded the case as a political Witch Hunt by the Radical Left Democrats. Weisselberg's lawyers said he will fight these charges. The case is being led by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. and New York Attorney General Letitia James, both Democrats. Vance has been investigating a wide range of matters involving Trump and the Trump Organisation, such as hush-money payments to women on Trump's behalf and whether the company falsified the value of its properties to obtain loans or reduce its tax bills.

The news comes as Trump has been more seriously discussing a possible comeback run for president in 2024. He has ramped up his public appearances, including holding his first rallies since leaving

the White House. In announcing the grand jury indictment, Carey Dunne, a top deputy in Vance's office, said: Politics has no role in the jury chamber, and I can assure you it had no role here."

The Trump Organisation is the entity through which the former president manages his many ventures, including his investments in office towers, hotels and golf courses, his many marketing deals and his TV pursuits. Trump's sons Donald Jr. and Eric have been in charge of day-to-day operations since he became President.

In addition to exposing the Trump Organisation to fines, the criminal case could make it more difficult for the business to secure bank loans or strike deals a hit that comes at a particularly bad time, with the company already reeling from lost business because of the coronavirus and the backlash over the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

Companies that are being indicted, whether they are

private or public, big or small, face serious collateral consequences, said Daniel Horowitz, a white-collar defense attorney. Companies in the financial services industry are reluctant to do business with them. Their access to capital is limited or cut off."

Weisselberg came under scrutiny in part because of questions about his son's use of a Trump apartment at little or no cost. Weisselberg's son Barry who managed a Trump-operated ice rink in Central Park paid no reported rent while living in a Trump-owned apartment in 2018, and he was charged just \$1,000 per month far below typical Manhattan prices while living in a Trump apartment from 2005 to 2012, the indictment said.

Allen Weisselberg himself, an intensely private man who lived for years in a modest home on Long Island, continued to claim residency there despite living in a company-paid Manhattan apartment, prosecutors said.

By doing so, Weisselberg

concealed that he was a New York City resident, and he avoided paying hundreds of thousands in federal, state and city income taxes while collecting about \$133,000 in refunds to which he was not entitled, prosecutors said.

According to the indictment, Weisselberg paid rent on his Manhattan apartment with company checks and directed the company to pay for his utility bills and parking, too.

The company also paid for private school tuition for Weisselberg's grandchildren with checks bearing Trump's signature, as well as for Mercedes cars driven by Weisselberg and his wife, and gave him cash to hand out tips around Christmas. Such perks were listed on internal Trump company documents as being part of Weisselberg's compensation but were not included on his W-2 forms or otherwise reported, and the company did not withhold taxes on their value, prosecutors said.

Trump's company also issued checks, at Weisselberg's request, to pay for personal expenses and upgrades to his homes and an apartment used by one of his sons, such as new beds, flat-screen TVs, carpeting and furniture, prosecutors said. Two other Trump executives who were not identified by name also received substantial under-the-table compensation, including lodging and the payment of automobile leases, the indictment said.

Over six million EU citizens apply to settle in post-Brexit UK



ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 2 JULY

ing up a new job or renting a property. The scheme was introduced in March 2019 as part of the UK's plans to leave the EU.

One of the main impacts of Brexit was the end of freedom of movement, whereby anyone in any EU state can live and work anywhere else within the bloc.

In a statement, Friday, Britain's Home Office said of the 6.02 million people who had applied, 400,000 applications were made in the final month before the end of the EU Settlement Scheme.

"Having more than 6 mil-

lion applications to the scheme is an unprecedented achievement and I am delighted that we have secured the rights of so many EU citizens - our friends, neighbours and family members," Home Secretary Priti Patel said.

The Home Office said that the 5,700,000 people with pending applications will have their rights protected until their application is decided and that there will be "indefinite scope" for anyone who missed the deadline to make a late application.

People who submitted an application by the deadline have received a certification that they can use if they need to prove their immigration status for any reason, such as tak-

ing up a new job or renting a property. The scheme was introduced in March 2019 as part of the UK's plans to leave the EU.

Under the scheme, EU citizens in the country will be guaranteed their rights, including access to benefits and healthcare, in the UK.

Any EU citizen who hasn't applied could now potentially lose their rights or even be subject to deportation.

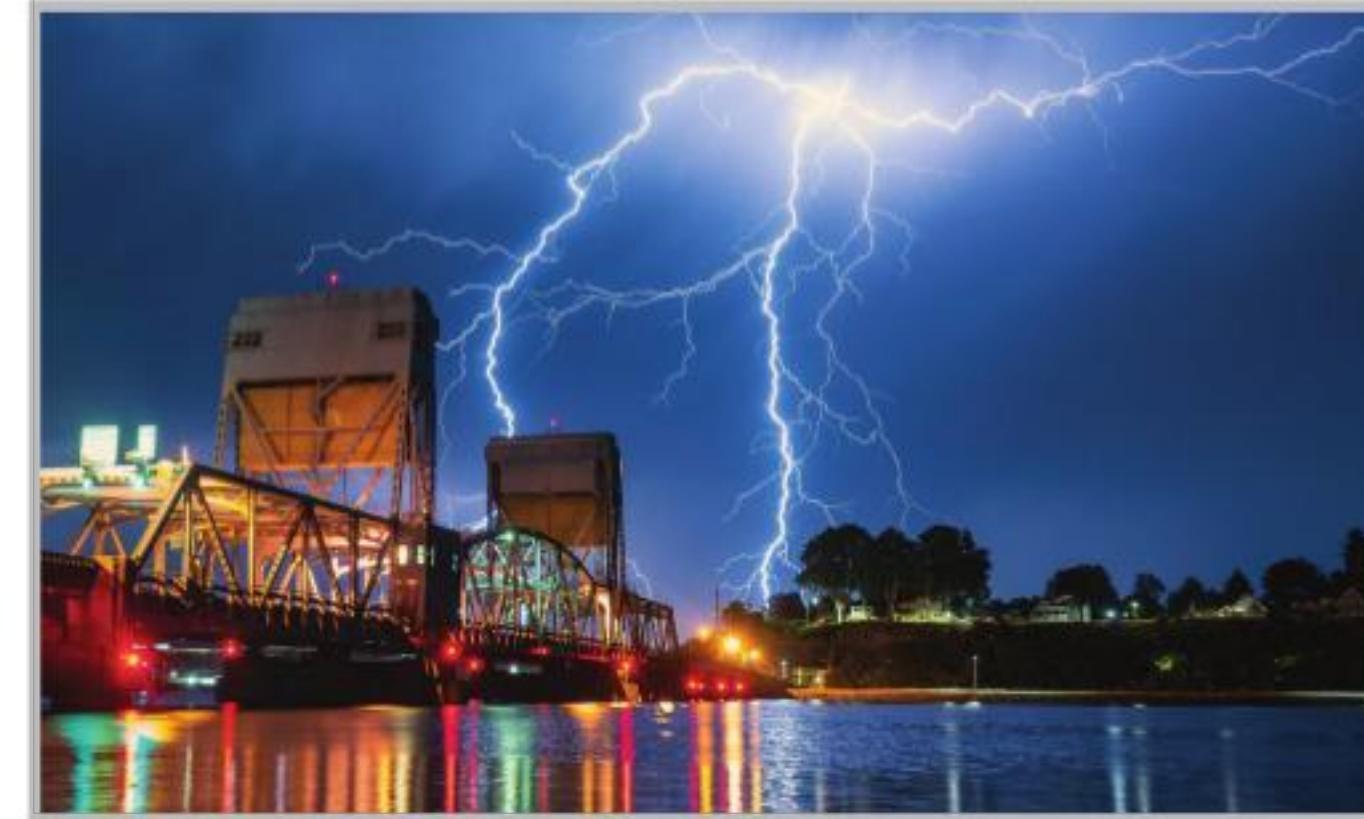
Similar schemes have been

in place in the EU with regard to the one million or so British citizens who live within the bloc.

Those applying for post-Brexit residency permits in France also faced a deadline on Wednesday.

One key concern is that the immigration policy could leave a disastrous legacy similar to Britain's "Windrush" scandal, when many people from the Caribbean who legally settled in the UK decades ago were wrongly caught up in tough new government rules to crack down on illegal immigration.

BOLT FROM THE BLUE



A bolt of lightning strikes over Lewiston, Idaho, behind the Interstate Bridge that spans the Snake River into Clarkston, Washington, on Thursday morning.

Conservative US top court upholds state voting restrictions

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

Flexing its new strength, the Supreme Court's conservative majority on Thursday cut back on a landmark voting rights law in a decision likely to help Republican states fight challenges to voting restrictions they've put in place following last year's elections.

The court's 6-3 ruling upheld voting limits in Arizona that a lower court had found discriminatory under the federal Voting Rights Act. It was the high court's second major decision in eight years that civil rights groups and liberal dissenting justices say weakened the Civil Rights-era law that was intended to eradicate

discrimination in voting.

The decision fuelled new calls from Democrats to pass federal legislation, blocked by Senate Republicans, that would counter the new state laws. Some lawmakers and liberal groups also favour Supreme Court changes that include expanding the nine-justice bench.

The court's decision, harmful as it is, does not limit Congress' ability to repair the damage done today: it puts the burden back on Congress to restore the Voting Rights Act to its intended strength, President Joe Biden said.

Republicans argue that the state restrictions are simply efforts to fight potential voting fraud and ensure election integrity.

Biden's Justice Department had actually taken the position that the Arizona measures did not violate the Voting Rights Act, but favoured a narrower ruling than the one handed down Thursday.

Justice Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation last year to replace the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg entrenched the right's dominance on a court that now has three appointees of former President Donald Trump.

In an opinion by Justice Samuel Alito, the court reversed an appellate ruling in deciding that Arizona's regulations on who can return early ballots for another person and on refusing to count ballots cast in the wrong precinct are not racially discriminatory.

The federal appeals court in San Francisco had held that the measures disproportionately affected Black, Hispanic and Native American voters in violation of a part of the Voting Rights Act known as Section 2.

Alito wrote for the conservative majority that the state's interest in the integrity of elections justified the measures and that voters faced modest burdens at most.

The court rejected the idea that showing a state law disproportionately affects minority voters is enough to prove a violation of law.

In a scathing dissent, Justice Elena Kagan wrote that the court was weakening the federal voting rights law for the second time in eight years.

NSA discloses hacking methods it says are used by Russia

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

disrupt the 2016 and 2020 American elections.

NSA Cybersecurity Director Rob Joyce said the campaign was "likely ongoing, on a global scale." Brute force attacks involve the automated spraying of sites with potential passwords until hackers gain access. The advisory urges companies to adopt methods long urged by experts as common-sense cyber hygiene, including the use of multi-factor authentication and mandating strong passwords.

Issued during a devastating wave of ransomware attacks on governments and key infrastructure, the advisory does not

disclose specific targets of the campaign or its presumed purpose, saying only that hackers have targeted hundreds of organizations worldwide.

The NSA says GRU-linked operatives have tried to break into networks using Kubernetes, an open-source tool originally developed by Google to manage cloud services, since at least mid-2019 through early this year. While a significant amount of the attempted break-ins targeted organizations using Microsoft's Office 365 cloud services, the hackers went after other cloud providers and email servers as well, the NSA said.

The US has long accused Russia of using and tolerating cyberattacks for espionage, spreading disinformation, and the disruption of governments and key infrastructure.

The Russian Embassy in Washington on Thursday "strictly" denied the involvement of Russian government agencies in cyberattacks on US agencies or private companies.

The embassy said, "We hope that the American side will abandon the practice of unfounded accusations and focus on professional work with Russian experts to strengthen international information security."

Hard lessons for lawyers in Cosby case; tougher for victims

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PHILADELPHIA, 2 JULY

The seven justices who reversed Bill Cosby's conviction this week spent months debating whether he had a secret agreement with a prosecutor that tainted his 2018 criminal sexual assault conviction.

But criminal law experts believe the court acted reasonably in finding that a prosecutor's word should be honoured, even by a successor. One called the ruling a wake-up call for prosecutors who might try to quietly resolve a case without a paper trail or make a deal over a handshake.

It probably would have been much better lawyering to get it all in writing, Loyola Law School professor Laurie Levenson, a former prosecutor, said of the hidden deal in the Cosby case. It's a teachable moment. I think, for prosecutors across the nation. It's a big lesson.

Levenson, too, fears the

sentence was swift, with #MeToo activists worried it would have a chilling effect on survivors. And lawyers for another high-profile man convicted of sexual assault, Harvey Weinstein, praised the decision.

They urged their colleagues to condemn the tactics, lest others follow suit and make promises that later entrap defendants who agree to talk.

For survivors of sexual assault, it's got to be another incredibly upsetting, frustrating moment, she said. So (there are) good lessons for prosecutors and hard lessons for survivors.

The court heard arguments in December. On Wednesday, a majority of the justices 6-1, found Cosby's case should be overturned. But the justices split 4-2 on whether he should go free or face a third

trial. The two dissenting justices questioned if Cosby had ever really been promised immunity or whether an abuse of power led to former Montgomery County prosecutor Bruce Castor's odd and ever-shifting explanations of his promise to Cosby.

They urged their colleagues to condemn the tactics, lest others follow suit and make promises that later entrap defendants who agree to talk.

Castor said he discussed the agreement with a Cosby lawyer who had died since. And he said he issued a signed Press release to announce the end of the investigation. Several courts have since parsed the wording of that press release, which opines that both parties in the case could be seen in a less than flattering light, and cautions that Castor would reconsider this decision should the need arise. Castor, in the wake of that decision, sued Cosby in federal court.

against Cosby.

No legal documents were drafted. No immunity agreements went before a judge. Even Castor's top assistant, who had led the initial investigation, said she knew nothing about it. Neither did Castor's lawyer, according to testimony at the sometimes surreal preliminary hearing in February 2016.

Castor said he discussed the agreement with a Cosby lawyer who had died since. And he said he issued a signed Press release to announce the end of the investigation. Several courts have since parsed the wording of that press release, which opines that both parties in the case could be seen in a less than flattering light, and cautions that Castor would reconsider this decision should the need arise. Castor, in the wake of that decision, sued Cosby in federal court.

Waiting is unbearable: Biden consoles Surfside families

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SURFSIDE (FL), 2 JULY

President Joe Biden drew on his own experiences with grief and loss to comfort families affected by the Florida condo collapse, telling them to never give up hope even as the search for survivors paused early Thursday, a week after the building came down.

Addressing some of the families touched by the tragedy, Biden spoke in deeply personal terms as he offered his prayers and support in the private meeting. "I just wish there was something I could do to ease the pain", he said in a video posted on Instagram by Jacqueline Patoka, a woman who was close to a couple and their daughter who are still missing.

Few public figures connect as powerfully on grief as Biden, who lost his first wife and baby daughter in a car collision and later an adult son to brain cancer.

Biden spent more than three hours privately

The bad news is that Covid-19 may never go away. The good news is that it is possible to live normally with it in our midst.



SINGAPORE HEALTH MINISTER ONG YE KUNG
AT A PRESS MEET

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 03 JULY 2021

11

THUMBNAILS



Youths crawl on the ground while holding wooden mock rifles during a military summer training camp organised by the Islamic Jihad group, in Gaza City.

AP

Four injured in Pakistan blast: Four people were injured in a blast in Quetta, capital of Pakistan's Balochistan province, local reports said. The explosion targeted a security forces' convoy in the city on Thursday night.

IANS

Indonesia begins Covid vaccination for children: Indonesia's Health Ministry has launched a mass Covid vaccination for children aged 12 to 17 years old. At least 100 students received their first doses in a vaccination event at a public high school in Jakarta on Thursday.

IANS

Bangladesh records highest daily deaths: Bangladesh has recorded the highest-ever daily Covid-19 deaths amid the new ongoing lockdown enforced to curb a resurgence of the pandemic, the country's Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said. On Thursday, 143 people succumbed to the virus, which increased the overall death toll to 14,646.

IANS

Zimbabwe closes highest courts over Covid spike: The Judicial Service Commission of Zimbabwe (JSC) has announced the immediate closure of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts, following an ongoing resurgence of Covid infections in the country. JSC recently closed down several other courthouses following Covid-19 infections among users, as cases continue to surge in the country.

IANS

US hands Bagram Airfield to Afghanistan

The withdrawal from Bagram Airfield is the clearest indication that the last of the 2,500-3,500 US troops have left Afghanistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL, 2 JULY

After nearly 20 years, the US military left Bagram Airfield, the epicentre of its war to oust the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaeda perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America, two US officials said Friday.

The airfield was handed over to the Afghan National Security and Defense Force in its entirety, they said on condition they not be identified because they were not authorized to release the information to the media.

One of the officials also said the US top commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Austin S. Miller, still retains all the capabilities and authorities to protect the forces.

The withdrawal from Bagram Airfield is the clearest indication that the last of the 2,500-3,500 US troops have left Afghanistan or are nearing a departure, months ahead of President Joe Biden's promise that they would be gone by 11 September.

It was clear soon after the mid-April announcement that the US was ending its forever war, that the departure of US



An Afghan Army soldier walks at the gate of Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

the Resolute Support mission would appear to have to continue in order to give international troops the legal authority.

The US will also have about 650 troops in Afghanistan to protect its sprawling embassy in the capital. Their presence is understood to be covered in a bilateral agreement with the Afghan government.

The US and NATO leaving comes as Taliban insurgents make strides in several parts of the country, overrunning dozens of districts and overwhelming beleaguered Afghan security forces.

In a worrying development, the government has resurrected militias with a history of brutal violence to assist the Afghan security forces. At what had all the hallmarks of a final press conference, Gen. Miller this week warned that continued violence risked a civil war in Afghanistan that should have the world worried.

At its peak around 2012, Bagram Airfield saw more than 1,00,000 US troops pass through its sprawling compound barely an hour's drive north of the Afghan capital Kabul.

The departure is rife with

symbolism. Not least, it's the second time that an invader of Afghanistan has come and gone through Bagram.

The Soviet Union built the airfield in the 1950s. When it invaded Afghanistan in 1979 to back a communist government, it turned it into its main base from which it would defend its occupation of the country.

For 10 years, the Soviets fought the US-backed mujahideen, dubbed freedom fighters by President Ronald Reagan, who saw them as a front-line force in one of the last Cold War battles.

When the US and NATO inherited Bagram in 2001, they found it in ruins, a collection of crumbling buildings, gouged by rockets and shells, most of its perimeter fence wrecked.

It had been abandoned after being battered in the battles between the Taliban and rival mujahideen warlords fleeing to their northern enclaves.

The enormous base has two runways. The most recent, at 12,000 feet long, was built in 2006 at a cost of \$96 million. There are 110 revetments, which are basically parking spots for aircraft, protected by blast walls.

US to keep airstrike option in Afghanistan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

or other groups, will be taken over by Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the top US commander for the Middle East. Officials said there have been several US airstrikes in support of the Afghans in recent weeks, using warplanes based outside of Afghanistan, and those strikes will continue.

The new US commander inside Afghanistan will be Navy Rear Adm. Peter Vaseley, who will head the security mission at the US Embassy. He is already in Kabul.

Vaseley will have 650 US troops in the country, based largely at the embassy to secure the diplomatic mission, a force that will remain indefinitely.

In addition, until September, McKenzie will have the authority to keep up to 300 more troops in Afghanistan to help with security, including at the airport, said the officials.

Pakistan will not give bases to US

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
ISLAMABAD, 2 JULY



demand to Pakistan for providing bases to operate after its withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"Pakistan is not going to give military bases to the US; we are not going to fight their proxy war. Nearly 70,000 people were martyred since the US did it the first time," said a member of the parliament, who was present during the briefing.

"The US is once again leaving behind an unfinished job," he added.

The parliamentarians were also informed that the reason

why US has taken a quick decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan is because "it doesn't want to see peace in the region", said a parliamentarian.

Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and DG ISI, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed gave detailed presentations to the parliamentarians on what they called "Pakistan-sponsored and coordinated efforts for the Afghan peace process".

A senior lawmaker stated that Pakistan has tried its best to make the Taliban and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani come to the table for talks. However, he added that since the US has announced its withdrawal date, the Taliban are not ready to sit down for talks. "The US dream of introducing a democratic system could not be achieved as it is not acceptable to the Taliban, who wish to run the system based on Shariah," he added.

PPP leader: Asif Zardari admitted to hospital



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI, 2 JULY

tion and exhaustion from travelling for court appearances and the budget session.

PPP co-chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari cancelled his Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) visit where the election campaign is underway and reached Karachi to look after his father, Anjum said.

Zardari's elder sister Bhakta also arrived in Karachi to be with her ailing father along with her other sister Aseefa, he said.

Anjum said that Zardari had been attending Parliament sessions in Islamabad since Monday. After he met with party leaders, he had exertion.

In October last year, the 65-year-old former president and husband of the country's first woman prime minister Benazir Bhutto was admitted to a private hospital due to low sugar level.

Pak court lifts ban on TikTok

ISLAMABAD, 2 JULY

A top Pakistani court on Friday withdrew its earlier decision to ban the popular Chinese short video-sharing platform TikTok for spreading immorality in the country.

The Sindh High Court (SHC) on June 28 had asked the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), the telecom regulator, to suspend the TikTok app on the complaint by a citizen regarding "immorality and obscenity" on the mobile app.

The PTA informed access to the app was already blocked by it but it also requested the court to review its decision.

The high court accepted the plea to lift the ban but it asked the PTA to expedite the process on the petitioner's request and issue a ruling by 5 July.

Prosecutors seek prison for Americans in Ghosn escape trial



ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, 2 JULY

The trial in Tokyo of two Americans charged with helping Nissan's former chairman, Carlos Ghosn, flee Japan wrapped up Friday with prosecutors seeking prison terms of more than two years for each of them.

The Americans, former Green Beret Michael Taylor and his son Peter Taylor, were arrested in Massachusetts last year and extradited in March. They acknowledged guilt when their trial opened last month and have apologized for their alleged roles in Ghosn's escape.

Ghosn was arrested in November 2018 and fled in December 2019 to Lebanon while out on bail awaiting trial.

The maximum penalty in Japan for helping a criminal is three years in prison. Prosecutors demanded a sentence of two years and 10 months for Michael Taylor and two years and six months for his son.

The Taylors' defense argued for suspended sentences for the two, who spent 10 months in custody before their extradition.

Chief Judge Hideki Nirei said sentencing was set for July 19. The Taylors' case has sped along compared to most Japanese trials, which tend to drag on for many months, if not years.

France: West will stop Syria aid if no delivery cross-border

ASSOCIATED PRESS
UNITED NATIONS, 2 JULY

France warned Russia on Thursday that if humanitarian aid deliveries are allowed only across conflict lines within Syria and not from neighbouring countries Western nations which provide almost all the money will stop the funding.

During the meeting, the members were informed that the committee members were given a detailed briefing on the security situation of the country and the region at large, the situation with India and the Kashmir issue, and Pakistan's role in the Afghan peace process, especially on the US

bases to the US.

"Pakistan is not going to give military bases to the US; we are not going to fight their proxy war. Nearly 70,000 people were martyred since the US did it the first time," said a member of the parliament, who was present during the briefing.

"The US is once again leaving behind an unfinished job," he added.

The parliamentarians were also informed that the reason

why US has taken a quick decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan is because "it doesn't want to see peace in the region", said a parliamentarian.

Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa and DG ISI, Lt Gen Faiz Hameed gave detailed presentations to the parliamentarians on what they called "Pakistan-sponsored and coordinated efforts for the Afghan peace process".

A senior lawmaker stated that Pakistan has tried its best to make the Taliban and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani come to the table for talks. However, he added that since the US has announced its withdrawal date, the Taliban are not ready to sit down for talks. "The US dream of introducing a democratic system could not be achieved as it is not acceptable to the Taliban, who wish to run the system based on Shariah," he added.

As I said repeatedly, 92%

of humanitarian relief. He said cross-line doesn't work, pointing to the Syrian government's rejection of 50% of cross-line requests this year.

As I said repeatedly, 92% of humanitarian relief to Syria is provided by European Union, US, Canada, Japan basically, The French ambassador said.

This is Western money, and nobody should expect this money to be reallocated through cross-line which does not work.

De Riviere said: This is a hard choice to make, and we hope to be able to continue to finance humanitarian relief in Syria.

The Security Council approved four border crossings when aid deliveries began in 2014, three years after the start of the Syrian conflict.

In the end facts are facts, De Riviere said, and if you close the cross-border mechanism ... the northwest of Syria will suffer a reduction of 50% of

crossings on 10 July, and Russia has come under intense pressure from the UN, US, Europeans and others who warn of dire humanitarian consequences for over a million Syrians if all border crossings are closed.

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For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Raina beaten: Ankita Raina's first appearance in Wimbledon's main draw ended in disappointment as the Indian and her American partner Lauren Davis lost 3-6, 2-6 to the US pair of Asia Muhammad and Jessica Pegula in 70 minutes on Court No 11.

Green light: Swimmer Maana Patel's participation in the Tokyo Olympics has been cleared confirmed through the universality quota. She will take part in the 100m backstroke event and is the third Indian swimmer to have qualified after Srihari Nataraj and Sajan Prakash.

Uphill struggle: The under-fire Indian women's cricket team would be desperate to end vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur's prolonged lean patch as they seek to stop England from completing a 3-0 sweep in the final One-Day International in Worcestershire on Saturday.

Mariners' loss: Two-time Indian Super League champions Chennaiyin FC on Friday announced the signing of central defender Salam Ranjan Singh on a multi-year deal. The 25-year-old from Manipur joins the southern Indians after a stint at ATK Mohun Bagan.

World record: In Oslo, two-time world champion Karsten Warholm broke a 29-year-old record in the 400m hurdles in the Diamond League. The Norwegian clocked 46.70 seconds to break the mark of 46.78 set by American Kevin Young in the 1992 Olympics final.

Tournaments cancelled: The Women's Tennis Association and the Association of Tennis Professionals Tours both cancelled tennis tournaments scheduled in China and Japan later this year, though the WTA said its finals were "still under discussion."

Kroos retires: Germany midfielder Toni Kroos says he is retiring from the national team after 106 appearances for his country. The 31-year-old Kroos says in a podcast that his decision is irreversible. Kroos' last game was on Tuesday in Germany's 2-0 loss to England in the round of 16 of the European Championship.

Para-archers pull out: Indian para-archers were on Friday forced to pull out of the Final Paralympics Qualification and World Ranking Tournament in Czech Republic beginning on Saturday after their visas were rejected by the host nation.

Verstappen fastest: Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen carried on where he left off last weekend, topping the first practice session Friday at the Austrian Grand Prix on Red Bull's home track. The Dutch driver won here last Sunday to extend his lead over defending champion Lewis Hamilton to 18 points.

CANNABIS KERFUFFLE

American sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson (in photo, left) has tested positive for cannabis and she is unlikely to get the chance to challenge for the Olympic 100m title in Tokyo later this month. The positive test came at the US Olympic trials last month where Richardson established herself as a gold medal contender by winning the 100m in 10.86 seconds.

Ranatunga doesn't want 'second-string Indian team'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, 2 JULY



Sri Lanka's World Cup-winning former captain Arjuna Ranatunga (in photo) has criticised the country's cricket board for agreeing to host a "second-string Indian team" in a white-ball series later this month, saying that it is nothing short of an "insult".

India and Sri Lanka are to compete in three One-Day Internationals and as many Twenty20 Internationals beginning on 13 July. With India's major stars like skipper Virat Kohli and his limited-overs deputy Rohit Sharma in England for a forthcoming Test series, the team here are being led by opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan and feature half a dozen uncapped players.

"This is a second-string Indian team and their coming here is an insult to our cricket. I blame the current administration for agreeing to play with them for its television marketing needs," Ranatunga, a government minister until two years ago, told reporters at his residence. "India sent their best team to England and a weaker side to play here. I blame our board for that,"

added the legendary cricketer, who had led Sri Lanka to the 1996 ODI world title. The visiting team have just completed their compulsory quarantine.

India's National Cricket Academy chief and celebrated former captain Rahul Dravid is the head coach for the tour. Ranatunga spoke also about the current poor run of the Sri Lankan team. Sri Lanka lost their first T20 series in a row when they went down 0-3 to England last month.

Their were also forced to send back three senior players from their current tour of England for breaching bio-bubble protocols. Ranatunga said that the lack of discipline was also the fault of the administration and when he was at the helm, he had also added that the series would have very little bearing on the

Ranatunga's 'second-string team' barb on Dravid's Day 1 with seniors

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
COLOMBO, 2 JULY

The first practice session of the Indian limited overs team here on Friday started on a jarring note after former Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga termed them second string and dashed out at Sri Lanka Cricket for staging such a side.

The Shikhar Dhawan-led team, which comprises some of India's white-ball format regulars, ended room quarantine on Thursday night and took the field on Friday morning to prepare for the ODI series beginning on July 13. The Indian team is allowed to practice within quarantine from July 2 to 4 after which they will be fully out of quarantine but remain in bio-bubble.

Though the team coach Rahul Dravid, who is on his first assignment with a senior Indian national team, had said before departure that they want to win the series, he had also added that the series would have very little bearing on the

selection of T20 World Cup squad. Dravid hinted that this tour was meant only to give experience to Indian youngsters.

"I am sure the selectors and management would have a fair idea by now as to what kind of squad they are looking for T20 World Cup. Can't read too much into it (the Sri Lanka series). There might be odd spots and people might raise their hands up and knock on the doors," Dravid had said prior to departure. Ranatunga hit at his country's board for lacking pride and accepting a sec-

ond-string Indian side. He asked his country's board to play second-string players. The top Indian Test players are in England for the Test series against the host. "The Indian squad that came to Sri Lanka is not their best; it is a second-level team. Didn't our sports minister or cricket administrators know this?" Ranatunga told Sri Lankan media. "Sri Lanka [cricket] may have gone down, but as a cricketing nation we have an identity, we have dignity, we should not be sending our best to play an Indian B team."

Malik handed two-year ban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

His hopes of competing in the Olympics over, Indian wrestler Sumit Malik was on Friday banned for two years by the sport's world governing body UWW after his B sample also returned positive for a prohibited stimulant.

The 28-year-old has one week to decide if he would accept the sanction or challenge it. Malik was handed a provisional suspension last month for failing a dope test during the World Olympic Qualifier event in Sofia, where he had qualified for the Tokyo Games in the 125kg category. His B sample was opened on June 30 and expectedly that also provided the same result.

As specified substance was found in Malik's B sample, giving him the same result and the UWW has banned him for two years from June 3. He has a week to respond. Hecan call for a hearing or accept the sanction," a source in the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) told PTI. Sources close to Rohtak-based Malik said they will soon take a decision.

"We are discussing the matter with our lawyer," said the person who is interacting with Malik on the matter.

CWG archery, shooting c'ships cancelled due to Covid-19

AGENCIES
BIRMINGHAM, 2 JULY

The 2022 Commonwealth archery and shooting championships, which were scheduled to take place in Chandigarh in January next year, have been cancelled due to the problems posed by Covid-19 pandemic.

The decision, taken by the Commonwealth Games India (CGI) Executive Board "with the support" of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), was made "after careful consideration of several factors, including the continued uncertainty created by the ongoing global pandemic".

CGF president Dame Louise Martin said in a statement on Friday that, "We are disappointed that the 2022 Commonwealth Archery and Shooting Championships will no longer take place, however, this is the right decision to take in the current climate."

The Commonwealth archery and shooting championships would have been held as separate events from the ones at the main games in Birmingham. The medals from the events were not to be added to the final CWG tally.

The championships were part of an agreement reached between the Indian Olympic

Association (IOA) and the CGF. The IOA had threatened to pull out of Birmingham CWG 2022 after shooting was dropped from the list in 2019. Later in December, the IOA withdrew its warning during the Annual General Body after a meeting with Louise Martin and then-CEO David Grevemberg in November. The cost of the shooting event was to be borne by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI). The expenses of the archery event were to be taken care of by the Indian government.

Shooting has traditionally been India's strongest sport in the CWG. Although shooting is not a compulsory CWG sport, it has always been present at the Games except the 1970 edition in Edinburgh, Scotland. Archery is one of the optional sports of the quadrennial event hosted only twice, in Brisbane 1982 and Delhi 2010.

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Nishikori, a two-time quarter-finalist here in 2018 and 2019, lost to Thompson in four sets, 5-6, 4-6, 7-5, 3-6. The seasoned Japanese allowed himself five double-faults and 49 unforced errors compared with 22 by his opponent. Though he put in a better first serve than his opponent, Nishikori won only 64 per cent of the points on his first serve compared with 81% by Thompson. In the first round, he had defeated Alexei Popyrin of Australia 6-4, 6-4, 6-4. No. 18 seed Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria was shown the door by Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan, who won 6-4, 7-6, 7-6. The Kazakh slammed 34 aces to four by Dimitrov. Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut lost some steam after winning the first two sets in his second round match. He advanced after winning a nerve-jangling five-setter against Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia -- coming through the bruising contest 6-3, 6-3, 6-7, 3-6, 6-3.

Bopanna-Mirza win historic all-Indian Wimbledon match

AGENCIES
LONDON, 2 JULY



The experienced pair of Rohan Bopanna and Sania Mirza defeated the brand new combination of Ramkumar Ramanathan and Ankita Raina 6-2, 7-5 in the historical-Indian mixed doubles first round match at the Wimbledon here on Friday. It was the first time in open era that two Indian teams competed against each other at a Grand Slam tournament.

The contest finally brought a Grand Slam debut for Ramkumar, who has made 21 attempts to qualify for the singles main draw of a tennis major.

While the first set ended quickly in favour of the veterans, Ramkumar and Raina presented a good fight in the second set, which even they led for a brief period with a break of serve. Bopanna was clearly the best player on the court with his powerful serve and solid ground strokes from the base-

line as well as the ability to execute a superior net game.

On expected lines, Ramkumar served big while Raina gave her all after growing in confidence.

Mirza's serve is still not at its best and would improve as she plays more matches.

Mirza has moved has also moved to women's doubles second round with Bethanie Mattek-Sands while Raina and her American partner Lauren Davis lost in straight sets to the US pair of Asia Muhammad and

won 20 Grand Slam singles titles, the most in the Open Era, was in great form as he defeated his French opponent, 7-6, 6-1, 6-4, spending nine minutes less than two hours at the Centre Court.

The Swiss maestro sent down 10 aces, had no double-fault, and won 84 per cent of the points on his first serve. He also hit 50 winners compared with 20 by Gasquet. Though the 39-year-old world No 8 made 26 unforced errors, Gasquet could not capitalise on these as he himself committed 23.

Overall, it was a clinical display by Federer, who had finished runner-up here in 2019. Federer, who had undergone surgery twice on his troublesome right knee in 2020, skipped the Australian Open and lost in the fourth round at Roland Garros.

Earlier on Thursday, the Wimbledon campaign of unseeded Japanese Kei Nishikori came to an end with his loss to Jordan Thompson of Australia.

We are targeting family audiences, says Deepak, founder of Creative Monkey Games

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 2 JULY



The gaming industry of India has been evolving at a rapid pace and many experts say it will be a huge market for established players as well as many start-ups in coming days. Deepak Aravind (in photo), founder and CEO, Creative Monkey Games, said that company is looking forward to increase it's market share in India. Deepak has recently launched 'Ludo Emperor', first casual game for family audiences.

"The rise of the mobile gaming industry has been exceptional in the past few years. As mobile technology tends to evolve, mobile gaming will play a greater role in the years to come. Gaming in India has become one of the most exciting industries in recent years and it tends to grow more. Our games like World Cricket Live and World

Cricket Battle 2 have become popular throughout the world, with millions of downloads and active users. We have recently launched our first casual game "Ludo Emperor" targeting family audiences. Our Ludo game has many exclusive elements like new rules and new game play which are not present in any of the existing Ludo games in the market," he said.



Jessica Pegula on Thursday night. The 14th seeds disposed off the challenge from the Raina-Davis pair 6-3, 6-2 in 70 minutes.

Federer, Zverev advance; Nishikori, Dimitrov ousted

Eight-time champion Roger Federer advanced to the third round at Wimbledon with ease, getting the better of Richard Gasquet of France in straight sets yesterday. Sixth seed Federer, who along with Rafael Nadal has