



JAISHANKAR IN USA
FOR TALKS WITH BIDEN
ADMINISTRATION

P4



HIGH-VOLTAGE
DRAMA



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

'ISRAELI STRIKES IN
GAZA STRIP MAY BE
WAR CRIMES'

P6



RULLI WINS BATTLE
OF GOALIES IN
EUROPA FINAL

P12



WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 40 and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 72% Min: 22%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 41.2°C (+1) Min: 22.0°C (-5)

SUN RISES

05:25 hrs

MOON RISES

21:34 hrs

West Bengal Covid curbs extended till 15 June

MHA: Covid guidelines to continue

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 27 MAY

The West Bengal government today extended the existing restrictions to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the state till 15 June. The restrictions that are in place from 16 May to 30 May will now continue for another 15 days.

"Our Covid cases are slowly decreasing so we will continue the restrictions till 15 June. We are not calling this a lockdown or curfew. It is just that some restrictions have been imposed such that Covid is controlled but the economy is not hampered. Like already announced markets will remain open from 7 to 10 a.m. but complete restriction on movement will continue from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m." Miss Banerjee told mediapersons.

Bengal on Thursday registered 13,046 fresh Covid-19 cases, the lowest such figure since the last week of April, and 148 deaths. Kolkata saw 1,489 cases and 32 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Miss Banerjee said the jute industry has been given a further relaxation so that mills can operate with 40 per cent instead of 30 per cent strength. She said construction workers too can be allowed to work, provided their agency first conducts vaccination for them.

All restrictions for com-

HS in July,
10th in Aug

KOLKATA, 27 MAY

The Higher Secondary exam will be held in the last week of July and Madhyamik in the second week of August, announced chief minister Mamata Banerjee at Nabanna today, thus becoming one of the first states to announce dates for board exams. The examinees will appear for both the examinations from their home centres.

"We are the first to announce the board exams. The Higher Secondary exam is crucial in a student's life as it is a gateway for higher studies," said Miss Banerjee at a press conference.

bating Covid that are currently in place will continue. Offices, industries and transport sector, including metros will remain suspended. Only emergency services and home delivery will be allowed.

MHA guidelines: The Centre has directed states and Union territories to continue the ongoing Covid-19 guidelines till June 30 and asked them to go for intensive and local containment measures in districts with a high number of cases.

NOW THE DELUGE



Even as Cyclone Yaas spared Kolkata on the day of its landfall, torrential downpour of about 75 mm on Thursday resulted in waterlogging in several areas of the city. ■SNS

Yaas aftermath:
Mamata to meet
Modi

KOLKATA, 27 MAY

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Kalaikunda in east Midnapore on Friday to discuss the extent of damage caused by cyclone Yaas which has resulted in losses amounting to Rs 15,000 crore while a new doorstep scheme, 'Duare Traan' was announced today.

This will be the first meeting between the two after Miss Banerjee was elected the CM earlier this month. She will visit the cyclone-affected areas of Sandeshkhali and Sagar tomorrow before meeting Modi.

"The Prime Minister is coming to West Bengal on May 28... After the meeting with the PM, I'll go to Digha and on 29 May, I'll conduct an aerial survey in east Midnapore," the CM said. ■NS

DETAILS ON PAGE 4

Govt defends vaccine procurement policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY



The statement said the Centre ran the entire vaccine programme from January to April and it was quite well-administered compared to the situation in May.

sign manufacturers to sell shots in the country.

The statement, however, did not give out details of when and how many vaccines were ordered.

According to the statement, the Centre has engaged continuously with all the major international vaccine manufacturers right from mid-2020. "Multiple rounds of discussions have happened with Pfizer, J&J

& Moderna. The government offered all assistance to have them supply and/or manufacture their vaccines in India," it said.

"The central government is playing the role of an effective facilitator to enable more companies to produce vaccines from early 2020. There is only one Indian company (Bharat Biotech) which has the IP.

The government of India has ensured that three other companies/plants will start production of Covaxin apart from enhancing Bharat Biotech's own plants, which have increased from 1 to 4," the statement said.

The statement said that Covaxin production by Bharat Biotech is being increased from under 1 crore per month to 10 crore per month by October.

According to the statement, when the government of India ran the entire vaccine programme from January to April, it was quite well-administered compared to the situation in May.

"But states, who had not even achieved good coverage of healthcare workers and frontline workers in 3 months wanted to open up the process of vaccination and wanted more decentralisation. Health is a state subject & the liberalised vaccine policy was a result of the incessant requests being made by the states to give states more power," the statement said.

A tired frontline worker resting before taking a Covid victim for her last rites in Imphal, Manipur on Thursday.

SNS

Sikh man dead in US shooting: A 36-year-old Indian-origin Sikh man was among eight people killed in a horrific rail yard shooting in San Jose in the US state of California, according to media reports on Thursday. Taptideep Singh, who was a light rail operator at the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) was among those gunned down by a co-worker in the incident.

P10

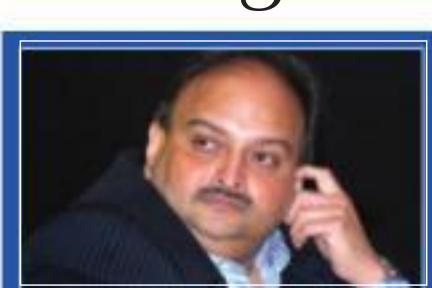
Delhi allows duty free import of black fungus drug: The Delhi High Court Thursday allowed duty free import of Amphotericin B, used for treating black fungus patients, primarily those affected by it after recovering from COVID-19, on furnishing of a bond by the importers till the Centre takes a final decision on waiving the customs duty on it.

P2

India in touch with Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda to bring back Choksi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY



Choksi, who had recently fled from Antigua and Barbuda, was captured in neighbouring Dominica

needs to return to India where he can face the criminal charges levelled against him," Antigua News Room, a media outlet, reported Browne as saying.

Choksi is wanted in a Rs 13,500-crore loan fraud in the Punjab National Bank. He was last seen going for dinner in his car in Antigua and Barbuda on Sunday. His staff had reported him missing.

Choksi and his nephew Nirav Modi allegedly siphoned off Rs 13,500 crore of public money from the state-run Punjab National Bank (PNB) using fraudulent letters of undertaking. Nirav Modi, lodged in a London jail, is contesting his extradition to India after repeated denial of his bail by courts.

He has asked Dominica to hand the diamantaire over to India directly. After news of Choksi's arrest in Dominica came on Tuesday night (local time), Browne told media that he has given "clear instructions" to the Dominican authorities to repatriate Choksi to India.

"We asked them not to repatriate him to Antigua. He

R&AW, IB heads get one-year extension

SNS & AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

The Narendra Modi government on Thursday extended tenures of Samantr Kumar Goel, secretary, Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), and Arvind Kumar, director, Intelligence Bureau (IB) for one year. The two 1984-batch IPS officers of Punjab and Assam-Meghalaya cadre respectively now retire on June 30, 2022.

Goel has been a hard-core operations man, while Kumar is known for a political reading of the internal situation. Both work under the close supervision of the Prime Minister. Home Minister Amit Shah and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

Goel and Kumar are experts on Pakistan and had given valuable inputs during the Balakot airstrike on Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camps across the Line of Control on February 26, 2019.

Goel, a 1984-batch IPS officer from the Punjab cadre, has served on the Pakistan desk and groups working against the interest of the country from Europe. Kumar of the same batch from Assam-Meghalaya cadre has served on important desks in the IB, including Kashmir and Left-Wing Extremism.

The extensions were cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India seeing downswing in Covid-19 second wave: Govt

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

India is witnessing a downswing in the second wave of Covid-19 and hopefully it will be sustained even when restrictions are relaxed, the government said on Thursday.

NITI Aayog member (Health) V K Paul told the media the country continues to see stabilisation of second wave in most parts, both by the number of cases and positivity rate, and despite a sustained and high overall testing coverage which is reassuring.

We are achieving this in face of very significant restrictions in most states in addition to other tools and operations, including testing and

Covid appropriate behaviour and vaccination efforts, he said.

Health ministry Joint Secretary Lav Agarwal said a steady decline in new Covid-19 cases has been recorded in India for the last 20 days, with 24 states witnessing a dip in active cases since the last week. He also said that while testing has increased manifold, a steady decline in weekly Covid-19 positivity rate has been seen since the last three weeks.

Paul said the vaccination pace should pick up in July.

India's Covid-19 infection tally climbed to 2,73,69,093 as 2,11,298 more people tested positive for the disease in a day, while death toll due to the disease rose to 3,15,235 with 3,847 fresh fatalities.

Row escalates: Twitter flags 'intimidation', govt says defaming India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

TWITTER TANGLE

► Twitter had marked several tweets by ruling BJP leaders on an alleged strategy document of Opposition to target the government over Covid as containing 'manipulated media', which prompted the police to visit its offices late on Monday.

It went on to express concern over the safety of its employees in India and said it will continue to be strictly guided by principles of transparency and protecting freedom of expression.

Within hours, Delhi Police issued a strongly-worded statement saying Twitter was purporting to be both investigating and adjudicating author-

ity and had "taken upon itself, in the garb of terms of service, to adjudicate the truth or otherwise of documents in public space". The reference being to the alleged 'toolkit' - the one that Twitter, which uses fact-checking websites, tagged as 'manipulated media'. Delhi Police is investigating it on a complaint by Congress of the 'toolkit' being fake.

Delhi Police said it had gone to the Twitter office to ask its India head to join the investigation as the messaging platform seemed to have information based on which it declared the 'toolkit' manipulated media. Shortly thereafter, the Ministry of Electronics and IT issued a statement saying India has a glorious tradition of free speech and democratic practices dating back centuries.

"Twitter's statement is an attempt to dictate its terms to the world's largest democracy through its actions and deliberate defiance, Twitter seeks to undermine India's legal system," it said.

Stating that Twitter has refused to comply with new digital rules requiring identification of the originator of a flagged message and appointing grievance redressal officers, the ministry said the purported commitment of the US-based firm to India not only sounds hollow but completely self-serving. "Twitter needs to stop beating around the bush and comply with the laws of the land," the ministry said.

It went on to highlight previously raised concerns around certain locations in Ladakh being shown as part of China, alleged reluctance to block content around a 'genocide plan' during farmers' protest, rampant proliferation of fake news and harmful content against India, and no action being taken on a type of coronavirus being called the Indian variant.

The statement at the same time said that Twitter employees are safe in India and there is no threat to their personal safety and security.

In its first official statement after Delhi Police visited the company's offices in Delhi and Gurugram to serve notice to its country managing director about the investigation into the 'manipulated media' tag, Twitter said it will continue to be strictly guided by principles of transparency and protecting freedom of expression. The company said it will comply with applicable law in India to keep its service available in the country but will advocate for changes to elements of these regulations that inhibit free, open public conversation."

"The rules only empower the ordinary users of social media when they become victims of abuse and misuse,"

WhatsApp users have nothing to fear: Prasad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY



Prasad posted on home-grown micro-blogging platform Koo, and also tweeted.

The government fully recognises and respects the right of privacy, he asserted.

"Ordinary users of WhatsApp have nothing to fear about the new Rules. Its entire objective is to find out who started the message that led to commissioning of specific crimes mentioned in the Rules," Prasad added.



The minimum health infrastructure is still inadequate
ASOK BHATTACHARYA, FORMER MAYOR, SILIGURI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
ON THE DAILY NUMBER OF COVID PATIENTS BEING RECORDED IN THE TOWN

Black fungus declared epidemic in Capital, LG issues regulations

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Amid rising incidents of black fungus in the national capital, the Delhi government on Thursday declared it an epidemic with Lt Governor Anil Baijal issuing regulations under the Epidemic Diseases Act to contain and manage cases of the deadly mucormycosis in the city.

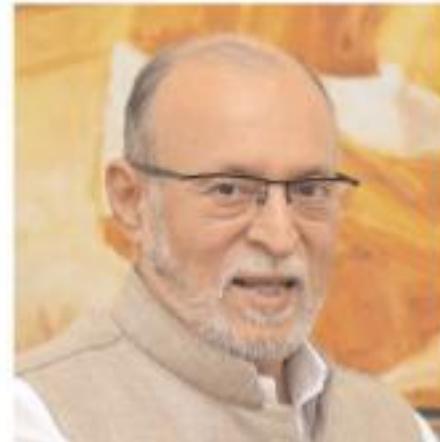
According to a senior official, 153 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis were recorded on Thursday, taking the total number of such cases in Delhi to over 770.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said there were around 620 cases of black fungus in the city.

A government notification released on Thursday said "the Lt Governor of NCT of Delhi is satisfied that the NCT of Delhi is threatened with the outbreak of a dangerous epidemic disease, namely mucormycosis, among immune-compromised patients, especially COVID-19 patients being treated with steroids and that the ordinary provision of law for the time being in force are insufficient for the purpose".

According to a notification issued by the Delhi health department, the new regulations have been issued under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.

The Delhi Epidemic Diseases (Mucormycosis) Regulations, 2021, to be valid for a year from the date of publication, states all healthcare facilities, government or private, will report each and every suspected or confirmed cases of black fungus in the national capital to the city health department through a medical superintendent or medical director or hospital in-charge or chief district medical officer of the district



concerned.

Nearly 20 states have declared black fungus or mucormycosis as a notifiable disease under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had recently said.

All healthcare facilities in Delhi will follow guidelines for screening, diagnosis and management of black fungus issued by the Health Ministry, according to the regulations.

"No person or institution or organisation will spread any information or material for the management of black fungus without prior permission of the health department," the new regulation stated.

The regulations further said that any person or institution or organisation disobeying these new norms on black fungus shall be deemed to be committing an offence under the Indian Penal Code's Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant).

Of the over 600 cases of black fungus reported here till May 26, around 200 were recorded on May 23 alone, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday.

Mucormycosis or black fungus is more common among people whose immunity has got lowered due to Covid, diabetes, kidney disease, liver or cardiac disorders, age-related issues, or those on medication for auto-immune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis.

HC allows duty free import of drug to treat black fungus till Centre decides on waiver

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

The Delhi High Court Thursday allowed duty free import of Amphotericin B, used for treating black fungus patients, primarily those affected by it after recovering from COVID-19, on furnishing of a bond by the importers till the Centre takes a final decision on waiving the customs duty on it.

The high court said the medicine is required to save lives of thousands of people suffering from Mucormycosis and the central government shall seriously consider waiver of customs duty till the drug is in short supply in India.

"We direct that if any import is made by any person of this drug (Amphotericin B), it shall be allowed on a bond furnished by the importer without the actual duty being paid, till a decision is taken by the Centre."

"The bond shall have the undertaking that in case the import duty is not waived, the duty shall be paid by the importer," a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh said.

The issue came up during arguments on a plea by a black fungus patient who was not getting the medicine.

While one of the advocates informed the court that the import duty on the medicine was in the range of 27 per cent, another one said it was 78 per cent.

The Centre's counsel said he was not aware of the exact percentage and will inform the court after taking instructions from the competent authority.



Central government standing counsel Kirtiman Singh submitted that the issue of waiving the import duty on such drugs will be communicated to the authorities during the day and a decision will be taken soon.

The bench said it was hopeful that the Centre will look at waiving the import duty.

Considering the fact that the drug is required to save lives of people being infected with black fungus which is infecting thousands of people across the country, the central government shall seriously consider waiver of complete customs duties on these drugs at least for the period when it is in short supply in India to treat the patients of Mycormycosis, it said.

The court was also assured by the Centre that the customs department shall clear all consignments relating to COVID-19 and black fungus without any delay.

The bench also referred to the judgment of Justice Rajiv Shakher, another judge of the Delhi High Court, holding as unconstitutional the imposition of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on import of oxygen concentrators by individuals for COVID-19 patients.

After Justice Shakher's

order on IGST, is it even fair for you (Centre) to levy such duties? You should completely waive it. There should be no bottleneck on the import of such things. Waive it for some time at least, the bench said.

The Centre's counsel agreed that it could be done temporarily for two-three months.

The bench orally observed that if apart from the channels explored by the Centre, any other state government or individual can import the medicine in their own, it should be allowed.

If the Delhi government makes efforts to procure the drug from sources other than those explored by the Centre, they should not be stopped, it said.

The court further said it was nobody's case that the Centre has put a ban on importing the drug and that it has not monopolised or canalised, therefore, it can be imported by an individual or a state.

According to the Union Health Ministry, mucormycosis or black fungus is a complication caused by a fungal infection. People catch mucormycosis by coming in contact with the fungal spores in the environment.

It can also develop on the skin after the fungus enters the skin through a cut, scrape, burn, or other type of skin trauma.

The disease is being detected among patients who are recovering or have recovered from COVID-19. Moreover, anyone who is diabetic and whose immune system is not functioning well needs to be on the guard against this, the ministry has said.

Pfizer jabs should be promptly procured for children: Kejriwal



SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Even as Delhi reels under an acute shortage of Covid vaccines, which has forced the Delhi government to halt the vaccination for 18-44 age group people, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today sought procurement of Pfizer vaccine as soon as possible to inoculate children.

The CM's statement came after the US pharma major sought fast-track approval for its Covid jab in India. The US company has reportedly told Indian authorities that its vaccine is suitable for everyone aged 12 years or above and can be stored for a month at 2-8 degrees Celsius.

"We shud procure this vaccine asap for our children," Kejriwal tweeted, tagging a news story on fast-track approval of the Indian government sought by Pfizer.

The Delhi CM and his AAP functionaries have squarely blamed the Narendra Modi-led central government's "missteps and mismanagement" for the Covid vaccine crisis gripping the country despite India being the number one vaccine manufacturing country in the world.

Kejriwal has been urging the Centre to explore suitable vaccine options, citing opinion of experts that a possible third wave of Covid in coming months may affect

children.

The Delhi government has also suggested that the Centre should vaccinate students and teachers if it decides to conduct class 12 Board exams delayed due to the raging second wave of the virus.

Pfizer, which has offered 5 crore doses to India between July and October, recently held a series of interactions with the Indian government officials. It has shared with authorities the most recent data points regarding efficacy trials and approvals for its vaccine in various countries and by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

AAP leader Atishi today said that about 34,000 people were vaccinated in Delhi yesterday and that the majority of jabs were provided by private hospitals, thereby

highlighting the acute shortage of Covid vaccines the Delhi government has been grappling with now. She said 42 per cent of the people (24.32 lakh) in the 45-plus category have received at least one dose of Covid vaccine.

"This is the fourth consecutive day that the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group has remained suspended," Atishi said.

"It's a cause for serious concern. Delhi has not received any more doses from the manufacturers so far. The makers have made

Delhi continues to reel under Covid shots crisis, with vaccination for 18-44 remaining suspended

it clear that they have been supplying vaccine to states according to the directions by the Centre," she said.

"As many as 34,147 people got vaccinated on May 26. Of this, most of the jabs were given at private hospitals," Atishi said.

She appealed to the central government to immediately approve vaccines such as Moderna, J&J and Pfizer, which have been approved for use by around 60 countries.

A total of 52.25 lakh doses have been administered in Delhi so far since the inoculation exercise started on January 16. As many as 11.79 lakh people have received both the doses.

Meanwhile, a drive-in vaccination centre for beneficiaries in the age group of 18-44 years was inaugurated by Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia today, officials said. The centre, located in a parking lot of a plush mall, is being run by a leading private health facility, they said.

"Deputy CM Manish Sisodia opened a drive-in vaccination centre dedicated for the age group of 18-44 years.

She said 42 per cent of the people (24.32 lakh) in the 45-plus category have received at least one dose of Covid vaccine.

"This is the fourth consecutive day that the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group has remained suspended," Atishi said.

"It's a cause for serious concern. Delhi has not received any more doses from the manufacturers so far. The makers have made

Classified

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to public at large that my clients Shri Deepak Bhattacharya son of Late Shri S.S.Bhattacharya and his wife Smt. Shanta Bhattacharya R/o F-27, Deep Vihar (F.F.), Delhi-110045 have severed their relationship with their son Shri Mayank Bhattacharya and her wife Smt. Deepali Bhattacharya because of their bad behavior and conduct. They have no interest, title of interest of any type in family affairs, self acquired movable and immovable property.

Kamal Kishore Kundra (Advocate), Enr.No.D/2140/07-C-465, Sec-18, Rohini, Delhi-89

THAT my client has lost original documents including Lease Deed No. 1072 of 1981, in favour of late Chittaranjan Sen, registered in Sub-Register Office, Cossopore, and Building Sanction Plan and Completion Certificate of the same premises, and also the Original Death Certificates of (1) Amar Nath Chaudhuri, s/o late Lochen Prasad Chaudhuri and (2) Sukumar Chaudhuri, s/o, late Lochen Prasad Chaudhuri.

Accordingly, diary has been lodged on 20-05-2021

at Bidhannagar East P.S., GDE No. 911 /21. If anybody finds these original documents, then requested contact the undermentioned within 30 days of this Notice and is also refrained from using the said documents for any purpose whatsoever.

Chittaranjan Thakur Advocate 74/A, R.K.Road Rishra P.S. Serampore District: Hooghly West Bengal Pin-712248 Mob: 9681099308

Capital adds 1,072 cases, 117 deaths; positivity rate 1.53 pc

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Delhi today recorded 117 more Covid-linked fatalities, its lowest since April 15, and 1,072 new coronavirus cases while the positivity rate dipped to a nearly two-month low of 1.53 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

This is the fifth consecutive day when the daily coronavirus infections in the national capital have remained below 2,000 and the second consecutive day when the cases are below 1,500.

On Monday, the national capital had recorded 1,550 fresh infections and 207 fatalities while its positivity rate was 2.52 per cent. On Sunday, 1,649 cases and 189 deaths were recorded, while the positivity rate was 2.42 per cent.

Since April 19, both daily cases and single-day death count had been spiralling with over 28,000 cases and 277 deaths recorded on April 20. The deaths count rose to 306 on April 22. On May 2, the city had registered a record 407 deaths tally, according to the official data.

Today's reported fresh cases were detected out of 70,068 tests,

the health bulletin said. Delhi's cumulative Covid case-load rose to 14,22,549 while its death toll mounted to 23,812, the bulletin said.

The count of the coronavirus patients in Delhi who recovered during the past 24 hours was 3,725. The city had currently 16,378 active cases whereas those recovering under home isolation numbered 8,247, the bulletin said.

Of 25,084 hospital beds meant for Covid patients in the city, 18,341 beds were vacant, the bulletin added. Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain had said yesterday that the significant fall in the number of daily Covid cases and the positivity rate dipping to less than 2 per cent was a result of the strict lockdown imposed in the city since 19 April.

This has also led to a large number of hospital beds meant for coronavirus patients remaining unoccupied in Delhi. About one-third of the ICU beds are also vacant, the minister had said.

All the nodal officers are directed to extend full cooperation to the judicial officers in getting proper medical care in COVID-19 treatment," stated an order issued by divisional commissioner Sanjeev Kharwar earlier this week.

The move comes a month after the Delhi government withdrew an administrative order to set up a 100 bed Covid

Covid: Delhi govt appoints nodal officers to help judicial officers get proper medical care

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

The Delhi government has appointed nodal officers to help judicial officers of various district courts of the city affected by COVID-19 in getting proper medical care, an official order said.

The additional district magistrates (ADMs) of the districts have been appointed nodal officers to facilitate judicial officers of seven district courts in Delhi, it said.

"All the nodal officers are directed to extend full cooperation to the judicial officers in getting proper medical care in COVID-19 treatment," stated an order issued by divisional commissioner Sanjeev Kharwar earlier this week.

The move comes a month after the Delhi government withdrew an administrative order to set up a 100 bed Covid

care facility at a five star hotel for High Court judges, staff and their families.

The Delhi Judicial Service Association (DJS) had last week submitted a representation to Delhi chief secretary regarding problems faced by the judicial officers of district courts in getting appropriate medical care amid the COVID-19 pandemic, an official said.

Among other things, the association had requested appointment of nodal officers, affected with Covid, in seeking appropriate medical care, the official said.

The concerned ADMs will coordinate and assist the judicial officers of Saket, Rohini, Karkardooma, Dwarika, Patiala House, Rouse Avenue and Tis Hazari district courts in making appropriate medical care available to them, he added.

to the death of wrestler Sagar. "Sushil is smart and he is mentally strong enough to manipulate the answers. This is why police need to take the help of a psychologist," officials said.

"He keeps changing his statement. We have questioned eight witnesses. After their testimonies, Sushil Pahalwan was cornered. Four of his associates have also been arrested and sent to four days of police custody. As a part of the investigation, Sushil Kumar will be confronted with these to ascertain the sequence of events and dig out as to what led to the incident," police added.

An incident of brawl among wrestlers was reported on 4 May at Chhatrasal Stadium in which some wrestlers were injured and had to be admitted to a hospital and one of them, Dhankar, died during treatment.

On 23 May, Sushil Kumar was arrested from the Mundka area in the national capital along with his associate Ajay Bakkarwala.

Plea for SIT probe into attack on protesting farmers' camp: HC seeks Centre, Delhi govt's stand

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought response of the Centre and Delhi government on a plea for an independent probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) into an alleged attack on farmers

camped on the outskirts of the national capital in protest against agri laws on January 29.

The Centre opposed the plea contending that it was "misconceived" and the prayer for an independent SIT was "unwarranted".



There are inflammable materials inside which helped spread the fire fast

REGARDING A BLAZE AT A VEST MANUFACTURING UNIT IN THE CITY

2nd Corona wave in HP deadlier, more virulent

The hill state logs more than double the number of Covid cases & deaths during 2nd wave as compared to 1st wave

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 MAY

The second Covid wave in Himachal Pradesh has proved to be far more virulent than the first wave with the state recording more than double the number of infections and deaths — 1,25,944 cases and 1935 deaths logged from 24 February 2021 till 26 May — as compared to the first wave during which 58,403 Covid cases and 982 deaths were recorded till 23 February 2021 from 20 March 2020 when the first case was reported.

An HP health department official said it has been more than 15 months after the first case of Coronavirus was detected in Himachal Pradesh.

On 23 February this year, there were only around 200 active cases in HP and till then, 58,403 positive cases and 982 deaths had been recorded in the hill state in the course of the first wave of the contagious, deadly viral disease.

There was a total of 99,287 Covid cases logged in HP till 30 April this year. The state however recorded 85,060 cases afterwards till 26 May.

The official, however, claimed that Himachal Pradesh had taken measures to enhance its healthcare infrastructure and service delivery as per the need dur-



ing this second wave, which had led to case fatality rate reduction to 1.54 as compared to case fatality rate of 1.68 in the first wave.

The state government had adequately increased its capacity of testing, isolating and treating.

A total of 10,63,922 tests were done in the first wave whereas 8,00,895 tests have been done till date during the second wave in such a short span of time," he stated.

He added that 70 ambulances were being used for conducting Covid tests at doorsteps and the government has also fixed the rate of the Rapid Antigen Testing by the private sector facilities at Rs 300 with Rs 500 being charged for tests through home visits.

group with at least 1st dose of Covishield vaccine.

The state government has also increased its Covid care facilities. As on 1 March 2021, there were 11 Covid facilities with 440 total patient beds and 32 ICU beds, which had been increased to 56 facilities, 3,860 total patient beds and 291 ICU beds," he said.

Informing about this, IGMC medical superintendent Dr Janak Raj said that Dharmasi has been discharged from Covid ward today as she had fully recovered and had tested negative for Coronavirus infection," he added.

He stated that despite her old age and breathing issues, she had been cured of viral infection which was a matter of pride for the entire medical team at IGMC Shimla Covid facility.

SJVN to setup 4 O₂ plants in HP



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 MAY

Besides, SJVN has provided cold chain equipment costing around Rs 1 Crore to the state government in support of its efforts to vaccinate the entire population of the state, chairman and managing director N L Sharma said.

Sharma assured all the possible support to the state government in its fight against Covid-19 pandemic and said SJVN had recently provided 50 semi-fowler beds to IGMC.

In addition to this, financial support of more than Rs 2 Crore, had been extended to procure ventilators, oximeters, other medical equipment, PPE kits, masks, sanitizers etc in various hospitals of the state, he said.

He further stated that for boosting the healthcare infrastructure in Himachal, SJVN was also supporting NGOs working in the fight against Covid and all these activities, the company had contributed Rs 7.5 crore.

"SJVN has also provided ventilators, oxygen concentrators, oximeters and other medical equipment to Hospitals in Bihar, Uttarakhand and other states where SJVN has its presence.

Jai Ram visits Virbhadra at IGMC Shimla

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 MAY

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday visited Indira Gandhi Medical College Shimla to enquire about the health of former chief minister Virbhadra Singh, who is admitted in IGMC Shimla.

He wished speedy recovery of Singh and he was accompanied by urban development minister Suresh Bhardwaj, IGMC principal Dr Rajneesh Pathania, medical superintendent Dr Janak Raj among other senior officers.

Singh had been admitted in IGMC Shimla since 30 April after he complained of cardiac and breathing issues after his return from Fortis Hospital Mohali in Punjab where he had undergone treatment for Covid infection.

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptender.gov.in

The executive engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all the e-tenders & Tender without assigning any reason thereof.

HC seeks Delhi govt stand on whether masks being made, sold in accordance with rules

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

A plea claiming sale of sub-standard masks for protection against COVID-19 infection was heard on Thursday by the Delhi High Court which sought the Delhi government's stand on whether facial covers were being manufactured and sold in accordance with the rules and regulations.

The PIL sought setting up of a regulatory body for determining the standards for manufacture and sale of masks, used for protection against COVID-19 infection, in Delhi.

The court also asked the petitioner to point out the specific instances where there have been non-adherence to the rules, regulations and standards.

With the direction, the bench listed the matter for hearing on June 4. The petitioner, Jai Dhar Gupta, has claimed that since the outbreak of COVID-19, wearing of fashionable masks matching a person's attire has become a trend. However, most of these masks are single layered and offer negligible protection against COVID-19 infection, he has claimed in his plea.



D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, was opposed by Delhi government standing counsel Sanjay K Tripathi who told the court that the standards for manufacture and sale have already been laid down by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The petitioner, an activist, contended that there was non-compliance of the rules and regulations with regard to manufacture and sale of masks.

After hearing both sides, the court sought the Delhi government to enforce the rules and regulations with regard to manufacture and sale of the masks.

The plea, which was listed before a bench of Chief Justice

Delhi hospital reports first white fungus case

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Delhi's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital (SGRH) has come across a first-of-its-kind case of white fungus which causes multiple perforations throughout the intestine in a COVID-19 patient, doctors said on Thursday.

White fungus (Candida) causing multifocal perforations in the food pipe, small bowel and large bowel in COVID-19 infection has not been reported in literature to the best of our knowledge, Dr Anil Arora, Chairman of the Institute of Liver, Gastroenterology and Pancreato-biliary Sciences at the hospital, said.

A 49-year-old woman was admitted to the SGRH on May 13 with complaints of severe abdominal pain, vomiting and constipation. She had undergone a mastectomy for breast cancer in December last year and had received chemotherapy for four weeks ago, he said.

ACT scan of the abdomen revealed free air and moderate amount of free fluid in the abdominal cavity suggestive of an intestinal perforation, the hospital said in a statement.

The doctors immediately placed a tube inside the abdomen and drained about one litre of bile-stained pus.

A team of surgeons led by Dr Samiran Nundy of the Department of Surgical Gastroenterology and Liver Transplantation conducted an emergency surgery on the patient the next day. PTI

102-yr-old HP tribal woman wins battle against Covid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 MAY

A 102-year-old tribal woman from Bhavanagar area of Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh on Thursday won the battle against Coronavirus at Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC) Shimla.

Informed about this, IGMC medical superintendent Dr Janak Raj said that Dharmasi has been discharged from Covid ward today as she had fully recovered and had tested negative for Coronavirus infection," he added.

He stated that despite her old age and breathing issues, she had been cured of viral infection which was a matter of pride for the entire medical team at IGMC Shimla Covid facility.



TENDER

JAMMU & KASHMIR POLICE HEADQUARTERS
Phone/Fax No.: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (Jmu)
Website : www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail :- phqjk@jkpolice.gov.in

TENDER EXTENSION NOTICE

Due to administrative reasons, date for tender submission and online opening of technical bids in respect of PHQ J&K NIT No. 34 of 2020 dated 18.08.2020 floated for purchasing Total Containment Vessel (TCV) is rescheduled as per following details :-

I). Last date for tender submission - 10.06.2021

II). Date of Online opening of technical bids - 12.06.2021

Other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged.

Sd/- (Rajinder Kumar Gupta) - JKPS,

No: DIKP-2122/21 AIG (Provision/Transport),

Dated: 27.05.2021 For Director General of Police, J&K Srinagar.

E-TENDER & TENDER CALL NOTICE

Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, GOI, invites e-tender & Tender for

(1) Automated Agarose Gel Electrophoresis System (2) Advanced Autoclave (3) Apheresis Machine, (4) Inhaled Nitric Oxide System at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar in Two Bid System". The e-tender document along with last date of submission of the tender can be viewed and downloaded from the official website i.e. www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in / www.tenderwizard.com and CPP Portal www.eprocure.gov.in.

The sealed e-Tender will be received through Speed post/ Reg. post/Courier/by hand only on or before due date & time by office of Sr. Procurement-Cum Store Officer, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar and the said e-tender will be opened on due date & time mentioned in the tender document in presence of bidders or their authorised representatives in the office chamber of undersigned. Incomplete tender document/ tender received after scheduled date & time shall be rejected.

Director, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar reserves the right to reject any or all the e-tenders & Tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Sr. Procurement-Cum Store Officer

AIIMS, Bhubaneswar

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRMs Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, Invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work.

Name of Work	Balance work of Design, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 25 KVAC OHE interconnection with Electrification of stabilizing line no. 8 & 9 at NDLS and Washington line at DL.
Approximate Cost of work	₹78,95,480.05/-
E-Tender Bid online Submission period	08.06.2021 (00:00 Hrs.) to 22.06.2021 (15:00 Hrs.)
E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	22.06.2021 (15:00 Hrs.)
Website Particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No.: 03A-TRD-NDLS-2021-22 Dated : 27.05.2021	1143/21

HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
e-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Shimla, Division No. I, HP/PWD, Shimla-3, H.P on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item rates, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPWPW for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost.	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid
1.	Annual Surfacing on Mashobra-Bhakhali road km. 0/00 to 18/360 (SH:- P/L Track coat 30mm thick bituminous concrete in km. 6/00 to 10/00) (Under AMP-2021-22).	8071755/-	07-06-2021	67500/-	17-06-2021
2.	Construction of road from shayar to Kuffer km. 0/00 to 0750 (SH:- formation cutting and C/O retaining wall).	2575800/-	07-06-2021	51600/-	17-06-2021

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptender.gov.in

The executive engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason

1077/2021-2022 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HIMACHAL PRADESH
JAL SHAKTI VIHAG

E. E., JalShakti Division No. 1 Una

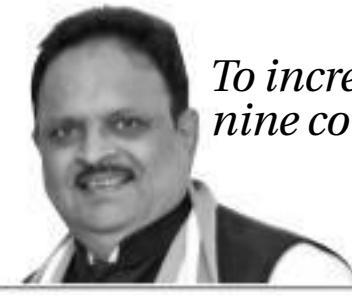
Telephone No : 01975- 226060,

E-mail : eeiph1@unajsp.nic.in

"Tender Notice"

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division No. 1 Una invites offline tender on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following works through offline process:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earliest Money	Cost of Tender Form	Time
1.	R/M of WSS Nangoli in Tehsil HardiDistUna HP (SH:- Drilling, lowering of assembly & development of 7" mini bore well 110 mtrs deep (Nr Dehran))	Rs.4,91,785/-	Rs.9836/-	Rs.250/-	One month.
2.	Providing Separate WSS to PGI Centre Centre at Malahat in Tehsil & DistUna HP (SH:- Drilling, lowering and development of 7" mini bore (Mini Twell) in a depth of 110 mtrs T/well No.4 at adjoining village Rampur along sawan river)	Rs.4,96,460/-	Rs.9929/-	Rs.250/-	Three months
3.	R/M of WSS Bhalasai in Tehsil HardiDistUna HP (SH:- Drilling, lowering of assembly & development of 7" mini bore (Mini Twell) in a depth of 120 mtrs at Bhalasai (Nr Gurudwara))	Rs.4,99,728/-	Rs.9995/-	Rs.250/-	Three months
4.	C/O Rain Water harvesting structure in Dera Baba Rani Ram in GP Palkwanj Tehsil HardiDistUna HP (SH:- Providing RCC Jacketing into existing pond) (Job No.1)	Rs.3,38,519/-	Rs.6770/-	Rs.250/-	Six months
5.	C/O Rain Water harvesting structure in Dera Baba Rani Ram in GP Palkwanj Tehsil HardiDistUna HP (SH:- Providing RCC Jacketing into existing pond) (Job No.2)	Rs.3,38,519/-	Rs.6770/-	Rs.250/-	Six months
6.	R/M of WSS Una Town in Tehsil & DistUna HP (SH:- Providing and laying of R/main & mini Twell to newly constructed OHSHR at Behlimalha ward No.10)	Rs.3,75,742/-	Rs.7514/-	Rs.250/-	Three months
7.	Restoration of rain drainage of WSS Haroli in distUna HP (SH:- SIE of Centrifugal pump set 75 HP set no.1) Under CRF Funds)	Rs.3,41,250/-	Rs.7450/-	Rs.250/-	Three months</td



To increase the supply of vaccines, global tenders were issued by the state govt in which nine companies participated including vendors of an Indian vaccine manufacturer.

RAJASTHAN HEALTH MINISTER RAGHU SHARMA

ASSERTING THAT RAJASTHAN MAY MOVE SC IF CENTRE DOESN'T INVITE GLOBAL TENDER FOR COVID VACCINES

THUMBNAILS



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi paying floral tribute to former PM Jawaharlal Nehru on his death anniversary, at his memorial Shanti Van on Thursday. ■ IANS

J&K statehood: Bhim Singh, President, J&K National Panthers Party and a noted Supreme Court lawyer, on Thursday urged the President Ram Nath Kovind to restore statehood of Jammu and Kashmir that was reduced to the level of union territory by the BJP government on 5 August 2019. ■ SNS

6 BJP councillors join Shiv Sena: Six BJP councillors from the Muktanagar Municipal Council in Jalgaon, who were considered close to Maharashtra NCP leader Eknath Khadse, have joined the Shiv Sena. Khadse, quit the BJP last year following his unclemorous exit from the Devendra Fadnavis-led state ministry in 2016 over land grab allegations. ■ PTI

Yaas affects 8L in J'khand

Around 15,000 people have been evacuated and moved to safety in the state



A bridge at river Kanchi after it collapsed due to heavy rain triggered by cyclone 'Yaas', in Ranchi on Thursday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RANCHI, 27 MAY

At least eight lakh people in Jharkhand have been affected by Cyclone 'Yaas', which barrelled through the state early on Thursday, unleashing copious rain that lashed parts of the state, including Ranchi, and throwing life out of gear in many areas, officials said. Around 15,000 people have been evacuated and moved to safety, and rescue operations are still underway in East Singhbhum district among other places, as water level in several rivers, including Kharkhai and Subarnarekha, continues to flow above the danger mark.

Cyclone 'Yaas', packing winds of up to 130-145 kmph, whiplashed the country's eastern coasts on Wednesday, before losing its force to an extent as it hollered on its destructive path to Jharkhand. One person has been killed due to lightning in

Bokaro. "At least eight lakh people have been affected by the calamity in Simdega, East and West Singhbhum and Sarakela-Kharsawan districts. Around 15,000 people have been evacuated from the vulnerable pockets. Operations are still underway in some areas, amid rising water level in some rivers," Disaster Management Secretary Amitabh Kaushal said.

RK Jenamani, a senior scientist of IMD, said the cyclone, which has now weakened into depression, is hovering over south Jharkhand, 75 km west of Jamshedpur.

"We have issued alerts for 'extremely heavy rainfall' in certain areas. In the last 24 hours, Chaibasa witnessed 207.8 mm rain, Mandar near Ranchi 182.2 mm, and the capital city 151 mm," he stated.

East Singhbhum Deputy Commissioner Suraj Kumar said trees fell like nine pins in many areas, and gale-strength winds snapped cables, causing power disruption.

PM reviews cyclone impact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviewed the impact of Cyclone Yaas at a meeting on Thursday during which he asked the central and states agencies to ensure that normal life is restored in the affected areas at the earliest.

The prime minister chaired the meeting during which officials made a detailed presentation on various aspects of preparedness, assessment of damage and related matters, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement.

According to another PMO statement, Modi will visit Odisha and West Bengal on Friday and will chair review meetings in the two states to assess the impact

of the cyclone. He will also undertake an aerial survey of the affected areas in the two states, it said.

At the meeting held on Thursday, it was informed that about 106 teams of National Disaster Response Force were deployed with 46 teams each in West Bengal and Odisha that rescued more than 1,000 people and removed more than 2,500 trees and poles that had fallen and obstructed roads, the PMO said. Defence forces, namely the Army and the Coast Guard, also rescued marooned people, while the Navy and Air Force were on the alert, it said.

"Reviewed the situation arising due to Cyclone Yaas. Discussed the preparedness, relief and rehabilitation efforts as well as other aspects," Modi tweeted.

natural disaster. As many as 500 teams are carrying out relief operations across the state. Giving details of the arrangements made to avert a major crisis, Director General of Police Neeraj Sinha said satellite phones have been provided to officers working in remote Maoist-hit areas, and necessary steps have been taken to ensure no disruption in communication due to the storm.

TEAM WORK



A gaggle of geese walk in a queue on a deserted street during COVID-induced partial lockdown in Guwahati on Thursday. ■ IANS

'Wrongful representation': IMA files police plaint against Ramdev

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Thursday lodged a police complaint against yoga guru Ramdev, seeking an FIR over his "dishonest and wrongfull representations" on allopathy.

In the complaint submitted at the IP Estate Police Station, the apex medical body said Ramdev has "wilfully and deliberately spread false, baseless and malicious information" about treatment of Covid patients by established and approved methods and drugs.

"We have received the complaint and enquiry is being conducted," a senior Delhi Police officer said.

The IMA's complaint dated 9 May said, "Swami Ramdev, in order to take advantage of the Covid situation, on a public platform in furtherance of his ulterior motives has put forth dishonest and wrongfull representations with regard to allopathic medicines and other allied treatment techniques of modern medical science for the Covid virus."

"In a video which has surfaced and is being shared widely throughout the social media, Swami Ramdev is seen wilfully and deliberately spreading false, baseless and malicious information with regard to the treatment of various patients suffering from Covid by established and approved treatment meth-

ods and drugs," it said.

The IMA had earlier written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that Ramdev be booked immediately under sedition charges for alleged misinformation campaign on coronavirus vaccination and challenging government protocols for its treatment.

making "insensitive" comments about allopathy and allopathic practitioners, a doctor said in Dehradun.

"Ramdev's statement is full of arrogance. It shows that he considers himself above the law," he said reacting to the latest video of Ramdev.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that Ramdev be booked immediately under sedition charges for alleged misinformation campaign on coronavirus vaccination and challenging government protocols for its treatment.

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THUMBNAILS



Food distribution at a school in Haiderpur, in the Capital on Thursday. ■ SNS

Islamic scholar dies in MP: Noted Islamic scholar, Freedom fighter and All India Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind's vice president Moulana Mufti Abdur Razzaq Khan (95) died in Bhopal after a prolonged illness on Thursday. Former Madhya Pradesh chief ministers Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh, and other senior leaders condoled Khan's demise. Many bid tearful adieu to the leader.

Black fungus medicine: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday ordered ramping up of stocks of alternate drugs for the treatment of mucormycosis, popularly known as black fungus, in the wake of shortage of Amphotericin drug. Punjab has so far reported 188 cases of black fungus with 23 of them having died. ■ PTI

Rajnath launches SeHAT OPD portal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Defence minister Rajnath Singh today commended the role being played by the DRDO and the armed forces in the fight against the second Covid wave while launching 'Services e-Health Assistance & Tele-consultation (SeHAT)' OPD portal. The portal provides telemedicine services to the serving armed forces personnel, veterans and their families. The services can be availed by registering on the website <https://sehatopd.in/>. This is the final version of the SeHAT OPD portal with advanced safety features. The trial version was made functional.

HC to hear plea to restrain 'media trial' of Sushil Kumar

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

A plea to restrain the media from 'sensationalising' the trial of wrestler and Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar in connection with the death of a 23-year-old man, and seeking rules for reporting criminal cases, was mentioned on Thursday before the Delhi High Court which agreed to hear it on May 28.

The petition was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh which allowed it to be listed for hearing on Friday.

The plea has been moved by a law student alleging that Kumar's career and reputation has been damaged by the media's reporting of the case against him in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of the 23-year-old wrestler.

On May 23, a Delhi court sent Kumar to 6-day police custody for interrogation in connection with the killing of a fellow wrestler, saying the allegations against him are serious in nature and that no one is above the law.

Kumar and his associates allegedly assaulted wrestler Sagar Dhankar (23) and two of his friends, Sonu and Amit Kumar, at the Chhatrasal stadium here on the intervening night of May 4 and 5. ■ PTI

Lakshadweep collector defends regulations

Says this is to check the incidents like drug abuse & increasing cases of kids sexual abuse

STATESMAN NEW SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
27 MAY

As protests grow against the sweeping new regulations introduced in Lakshadweep by the administrator Praful Khoda Patel, the island administration on Thursday came forward and defended the new rules stating that those regulations were introduced aiming at the betterment of the islanders and a misinformation campaign is being unleashed by some vested interests to portray the Union Territory's administration in poor light.

At a press conference in Koch, Lakshadweep Collector S Asker Ali said what is being witnessed now in Lakshadweep is a 'misleading campaign'.

"The present campaign that is going on, is totally misleading and is led by those outside of Lakshadweep. There is no tension on the Islands. It is also not representing the sentiments of the people. The administration is proactively considering the larger public interest," the Collector said.

Stating that the new regulations were introduced aiming at the betterment of the islanders, the Collector said that though Maldives and Lakshadweep have similar features, the former was miles ahead in terms of tourism growth. "The idea is to propel tourism in Lakshadweep islands, helping the local economy and providing better jobs for the people," he said.

Speaking on the development schemes taken up by the administration of the Union Territory, the collector said new hospitals are being set up at Kavaratti, Minicoy and Agatti while internet connectivity is boosted through the submarine optical fibre cable network. The Agatti airport is being modernised, he said.

As regards the removal of meat in the mid-day meal scheme in schools, he said this change is made in order to include fish which is readily available on the island. "This will also help the local fishermen, who could find ready demand for their catch," Ali said. Instead of meat, egg and fish have been included in the mid-day meal scheme.

Speaking on the widely criticised proposal to bring change in panchayat regulation that proposes to not allow people with more than two children to participate in the election, the Collector said the move will empower proper family planning and that it will empower women in the Islands. He clarified that the rule will not apply to people who already have more than two children.

Kerala Assembly likely to pass joint resolution supporting Lakshadweep people: The Kerala Assembly is likely to pass a joint resolution expressing solidarity with the people of Lakshadweep where the recent actions of the islands' administrator have drawn flak. M B Rajesh, the newly elected Speaker of the State Assembly, on Thursday said C M Iyer himself has proposed the resolution in the wake of recent developments in the archipelago. "The government will move the resolution in the ongoing session. I hope the opposition also will not have any objection and they will support it as many of its members have already raised such a demand. So, there is unanimity on the matter," he said. ■ PTI

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"Only parents of such children born after the date of implementation of the regulation will be barred from contesting," said the Collector.

As regards the introduction of Anti-Social Activities Regulations in the UT, he said such a law is being implemented considering the 'future' of Lakshadweep. "A few days back 300 case heroin and AK47 worth Rs 3000 cr were seized from the island. Apart from this, cases related to possession of marijuana, drug and POCSO cases were also reported. In the background of this, the authority decided to implement strict rules in Lakshadweep," he said. People of Lakshadweep have been protesting against the new regulations introduced by the Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Khoda Patel for the last so many weeks. As protests grow against the new rules, political parties and cultural leaders, film actors in Kerala came in support of the people of Lakshadweep.

People's representatives, leaders of Muslim organisations and political parties have joined a 'Save Lakshadweep' campaign, rais-



ing objection to the alleged "move to impose the RSS agenda on the island". They have lashed out at Administrator Praful Khoda Patel, who was the minister of state for home in Gujarat when Narendra Modi was the chief minister, for "trying to destroy the culture of the island" with his arbitrary decisions.

Raja Sabha MP, CPI-M's Elamaram Kareem has written to President Ram Nath Kovind, requesting him to urgently call back Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Patel for his anti-people reforms. Malayalam actor Prithviraj expressed his solidarity with 'Save Lakshadweep' campaign.

T'gana: Makers of AZ, Sputnik Vax interested

STATESMAN NEW SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 27 MAY

The state had to halt its vaccination programme above the age of 45 for a period of two weeks due to a severe shortage of vaccines

yet to start vaccinating those between 18+ age group although it has recently permitted private hospitals to do so. So far it has only vaccinated about 57 lakh people. The state had to halt its vaccination programme above the age of 45 for a period of two weeks due to a severe shortage of vaccines.

Out of the 10 lakh order placed with Bharat Biotech Telangana was able to get 2.5 lakh Covaxin which is being currently used to vaccinate people requiring the second dose.

Chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao assured that the entire population will be vaccinated free. He said: "This is the Team India spirit the Prime Minister of India keeps talking about, this is the time to demonstrate it." He reminded that the pandemic will not go away if one state vaccinates its population and another fails to do so.

Covid is my only focus: Yeddy on replacement

SNS
BENGALURU, 27 MAY

Chief minister B S Yediyurappa, seems confident of retaining his post notwithstanding the speculation surrounding his retirement.

He was focussing on tackling the Covid problem in the state, even as he asked his partymen to do their utmost to contain the spread of infection. The chief minister was responding to queries over the change of guard in the state and the BJP, especially after a few party leaders and ministers went to New Delhi last week in this connection. The speculation was that the central leadership of the party was keen on replacing him because of his age. Unperturbed, however, Yediyurappa said that "Covid is the only thing before me right now."

He said, "if someone went somewhere, you should also know that they were given the right answer. So, the only thing now is for us to work together to face Covid-19."

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



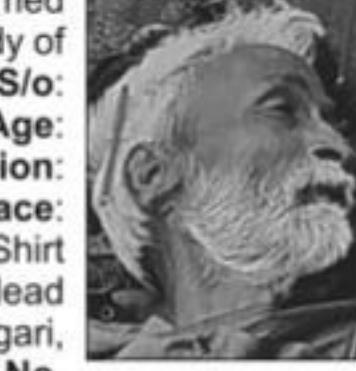
General public is hereby informed that this person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 50 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 170 cm, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Face: Long, Wearing: Grey & Black Sweatshirt and Blue Lungi, was admitted in Safdarjung Hospital vide MLC No. 142054/21, on 23.05.2021 in unconscious state from gate No. 4, Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi and was declared brought dead by the doctor on 23.05.2021. In this regard a DD No. 97A, dated 23.05.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this dead person but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this dead person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106346, 7065036231

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one unidentified dead body of male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: about 62 Years, Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 5' 6", Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Shirt and pant, who was found dead Near State Bank, Nand Nagari, Delhi. In this regard a case DD No. 54-A Dated 23.05.2021 has been registered at P.S. Nand Nagari, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the above deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

Sd/- SHO
P.S: Nand Nagari, Delhi
Tel.: 011-22137761

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

F.No.DC/OPS/TPT/2021/075648055/

PUBLIC NOTICE

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO PSV BADGE / PERMIT HOLDERS OF PARA TRANSIT PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES AND OWNERS OF E-RICKSHAWS

The Government of Delhi has approved a scheme for financial assistance of Rs.5000/- each to the individuals holding public service badge with valid driving license, permit holders of Para-transit vehicles (i.e. Auto rickshaws, Taxis, Gramin Sewa, Phatpathe sewa, Maxi cab, Eco-Friendly sewa, E-Rickshaws and school cabs etc.) and owners of E-rickshaws in Delhi to mitigate the hardships being faced by such persons during the lock down period due to spread of Covid-19.

An individual having both PSV Badge, Permit & ownership of vehicle will get financial assistance in one category only.

The eligible persons may file on-line applications on the website of the Transport Department at <http://transport.delhi.gov.in/>.

The beneficiaries of such scheme during last year's lock down are not required to file any application as the Government of Delhi has already transferred Rs.5000/- each in the bank accounts of such persons.

Only in case of left out persons and the persons who have obtained new PSV badges / permits / new registration of E-rickshaws should file fresh applications. The amount will be credited in their Aadhaar linked bank accounts.

- Help line number for any query/complaint -1076.
- Complaint/suggestions on e-mail ID. - mlofa2021@gmail.com

Last date of submission of applications 6.6.2021

DIP/Shabdarth/0078/21-22

Dy. Commissioner (Operations)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of passengers that the cancellation period of following earlier announced cancelled trains has been extended as per the details given below:-

EXTENSION OF CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Earlier Cancelled	Extended Upto
02033/02034 Kanpur Central-New Delhi-Kanpur Central Shatabdi Express Special	07.05.2021 to 31.05.2021	01.06.2021 to 30.06.2021
02179/02180 Lucknow Jn.-Agra Fort-Lucknow Jn. Intercity Express Special	15.05.2021 to 31.05.2021	01.06.2021 to 30.06.2021

Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website: www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in



SHORT TERMINATION / SHORT ORIGINATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

It is notified for the information of passengers that due to low occupancy and to meet other operational requirements, Railways have decided to Short Terminate / Short Originate the following Special Trains, as per the details given below:-

SHORT TERMINATION / SHORT ORIGINATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date (from the Originating Station)
04507 Delhi Jn.-Fazilka Express Special	at Bathinda Jn.	Bathinda Jn. - Fazilka	w.e.f. 28.05.2021
04508 Fazilka-Delhi Jn. Express Special	From Bathinda Jn.	Fazilka - Bathinda Jn.	w.e.f. 29.05.2021

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in) or NTES App.

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



RailMadad Helpline No. 139 Visit RailMadad Website :- www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

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The Blinken mission

U.S Secretary of State Antony Blinken's mission to Israel and the West Bank has served to underscore the importance that America attaches to the ceasefire effected by Tel-Aviv and the Hamas to end the fierce hostilities that spanned eleven days. The other objective arguably is to bolster the ceasefire in Gaza and help to speed up humanitarian assistance to the devastated Palestinian enclave. In parallel to the Blinken mission, Israeli authorities said they were allowing fuel, medicine and food earmarked for Gaza's private sector to enter the territory for the first time since May 10. In a rapid-fire survey of the Middle East, Blinken is also scheduled to visit Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, Cairo and Amman, with the United States harbouring "every hope and expectation" that the ceasefire - described as fragile - will continue to hold. "Our primary focus is on maintaining the ceasefire, getting the assistance to the people who need it," said a State Department official. Markedly, President Sisi's Egypt had brokered the truce, in coordination with America. Nonetheless, it is too early for wider peace talks between Israel, in political flux after four inconclusive elections in two years, and the Palestinians, divided by enmity between Hamas and President Mahmoud Abbas, who is backed by the Western powers. This is the dichotomy in the Middle East narrative.

President Joe Biden has said that a two-state solution is the only answer to resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict. He has pledged a major package with other countries to help rebuild Gaza. Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations collapsed in 2014. Blinken's agenda includes talks in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah with President Abbas. The right-wing Netanyahu, who usually avoids using the term "Palestinian state", had been on a stronger wicket with Donald Trump, who had cut off US aid to the Palestinians and promoted a peace plan that envisaged Israel holding on to most of its settlements in the West Bank. The volatile region now appears to be headed towards a paradigm shift in geostrategy. The hostilities were set off in part by Israeli police raids on the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem and clashes with Palestinians during the holy month of Ramadan. At least 253 people were killed in Gaza and more than 1,900 wounded, health authorities said, during the heaviest Israeli-Palestinian fighting in years. The Israeli military put the death toll in Israel at 13, with hundreds treated for injuries after rocket salvos caused panic and sent people as far away as Tel Aviv rushing into shelters. Palestinian officials put reconstruction costs at tens of millions of dollars in Gaza. Israel has blockaded the territory since 2007, in what Palestinians condemn as collective punishment. Egypt also maintains restrictions on its border with Gaza. Both countries cite security concerns for the measures. It devolves on Blinken to ensure that the truce endures.

High-voltage drama

The "hijacking" of a plane flying from Greece to Lithuania by the regime in Belarus has caused a flutter in the Western roost, with the European Union contemplating sanctions and the US State Department adopting a relatively mild view of "a shocking act". Western countries have condemned Belarus for diverting a plane flying over its territory to arrest a journalist who had earned Minsk's ire. The action in itself has been almost incredible. Belarusian authorities are said to have scrambled a MiG-29 fighter jet to force the plane - bound for Lithuania - to land, claiming a bomb threat. Police took the journalist, Roman Protasevich, away when passengers disembarked. The 26-year-old was aboard the Ryanair flight from Athens. The aircraft was due to land in Vilnius, but was still in Belarusian airspace when it was told to divert to Minsk, the capital of Belarus. Witnesses said the activist was "super-scared" and told fellow passengers he would face the death penalty because Belarus is the only European country that still executes prisoners. According to the state media in Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko had personally given the order for the move. The incident stoked sharp condemnation from across the European Union, with countries urging the immediate release of Mr Protasevich and a full investigation. The EU later summoned the Belarusian ambassador and informed him of the bloc's "firm condemnation". Several Belarusian officials, including President Lukashenko, are already under EU sanctions that include travel bans and asset freezes, imposed in response to the repression of opponents. Arguably, the domestic turmoil may also have played its part in influencing Monday's drama in the skies. Ever since he won a disputed election last August, Mr Lukashenko, 66, who has ruled the country since 1994, has cracked down on dissenting voices. Many opposition figures have been arrested, while others have fled into exile. The journalist too was living in exile in Lithuania since 2019 and was assisting an independent news outlet disseminate news about Belarus that the authorities in Minsk clearly deemed offensive.

EU leaders are due to discuss their response at a summit in Brussels on Monday. Nato ambassadors are due to meet on Tuesday. The package of measures being discussed includes a ban on over-flights of Belarus, a ban on entry to European airports by the national carrier, Belavia, and a suspension of ground transport links. "The outrageous and illegal behaviour will have consequences," was the warning advanced by Ursula von der Leyen, head of the European Commission. By all accounts, it has been a high-voltage and complex drama with the dramatis personae drawn from Russia, Europe, the United States of America and also of course, Belarus.

Lesson from Sitalkuchi

Patience under extreme provocation should be the guiding principle of the police and the security forces deployed on crowd control operations. For attaining this discipline, the imperative necessity is proper and well designed training programmes for the police and security personnel detailed for public order maintenance duties. Officers and men deployed for such duties must understand crowd dynamics and convergence motivations



The West Bengal police have set up a special team to investigate the firing by the Central Industrial Security Force at Sitalkuchi in Cooch Bihar district, resulting in the killing of four persons and injuring many others. The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee, called it a genocide and demanded resignation of the union Home Minister Amit Shah. She had further declared at a public meeting that she would direct the State CID to set up a special team to probe into the matter and see that guilty persons are speedily brought to book. But the fact to be borne in mind is that the CISF is one of the armed forces of the Union and no court without the sanction of the Central government as laid down under Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure can take cognisance of any offence committed by its personnel in discharge of their duties. Again, section 132 of the CRPC read with section 129 of the code, provides protection to CISF personnel for use of force for dispersal of unlawful assemblies. They cannot be prosecuted without the prior sanction of the Central government.

In the Border Security Force (BSF), errant officers and men in such situations are dealt with under the BSF Act modelled on the Army Act and not handed over to the police for investigation and prosecution. I recall an incident which took place when I was posted as IG, BSF in Calcutta. In an encounter with cattle smugglers in Murshidabad district, a BSF contingent opened fire, killing ten villagers. The firing was unprovoked and lacked proportionality. After due enquiry, I suspended the delinquent personnel and ordered their prosecution under the BSF Act. The then Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu was irate and communicated through the state Home Secretary that the delinquent BSF staff must be handed

over to the state police for investigation and prosecution. We did not accept the view of the state government but firmly dealt with the offenders by taking action under the BSF Act. Later, I called on the Chief Minister and explained to him the rationale behind our decision.

However, in the instant case, the key issue regarding the CISF firing is whether there had been disproportionate use of force by the contingent leading to the death of four persons and whether the force was trigger happy or overreacted in panic. Over these questions and other related issues, the jury is still out. A high level official enquiry will definitely bring to light all the facts and circumstances leading to the sad denouement. But from reports that have appeared in the press, it seems that the tragedy could have been averted if the force had acted with caution and restraint. Prohibitory order under Section 144 CRPC had been promulgated in the area but the question looms whether opening fire without warning and not aiming below the knee of the assembled crowd was required and justified. The plea of the CISF contingent that it opened fire in self-defence has to stand the test of close scrutiny. As none of the CISF personnel suffered any serious injury, the plea of threat to life appears to be unconvincing.

Arguably, the central forces deployed for law and order and miscellaneous duties in states should function under the control of local police officers, who have more intimate knowledge of conditions and better understanding of local feelings, and act as a restraining and sobering

influence. A local police officer can parley with the mob and de-escalate tension. I recollect when I was posted as Range DIG at Rourkela in Orissa. The state government requested and received help of the CRPF to combat a difficult law and order situation following a student agitation. While patrolling in the town, some rowdy young students pelted stones at my car. The instantaneous reaction of the CRPF officer accompanying me was to shoot at them. I had to firmly restrain and expostulate him, and point out that this kind of overreaction and trigger happiness was uncalled for and would escalate the situation.

This brings to the fore the question of training of paramilitary forces to deal with unruly mobs. Patience under extreme provocation should be the guiding principle of the police and the security forces deployed on crowd control operations. For attaining this discipline, the imperative necessity is proper and well designed training programmes for the police and security personnel detailed for public order maintenance duties. Officers and men deployed for such duties must understand crowd dynamics and convergence motivations. Gustaf Lebon, in his authoritative book "Le Foule" has stressed the point that crowd membership tends to arouse a person's primordial impulses, while at the same time lessens his rational and sober reactions. It may be mentioned in passing that Lebon's views on crowd behaviour have been quoted at length in the Hong Kong Police Manual.

For effectively dealing with crowds and violent situations,

physical development. Different studies have shown that, in the last 100 years, while the average height of Indians has increased by 4.5 centimetres, average height of tribes has reduced by 8 cm. Apart from low immunity, ill-equipped medical infrastructure in rural areas leaves rural people struggling with the deadly virus. However, while rural India was largely spared by the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the second wave is shifting now from big cities to small towns and rural areas, including tribal areas. Indeed, the spread of Covid-19 pandemic in rural areas, especially in the tribal belt, has now emerged as a major public health challenge.

Yours, etc., Jaydev Jana, Kolkata, 25 May.

TELECOM PSUs

SIR, More than a year ago, the Centre had injected several thousand crore rupees into the revival of telecom PSUs BSNL and MTNL. As part of the same process, it offered lucrative VRS schemes to almost the entire work force including its crucial operational staff who attend to local faults. Unnerved, they adhered to it. As a result, today, a once prestigious PSU is counting

officers and men have to be rigorously trained to remain calm and unrattled in the face of grave provocations. In Japan, the Kidotai, (riot police) are trained to remain calm and unruffled under utmost pressure. Undoubtedly, discipline is stretched to the breaking point when men, tired and hungry, are forced to remain passive in the face of abusive taunts and physical attacks. Therefore, rigorous training is necessary for officers and men to overcome overreaction and panicky use of force.

However, these days, because of over deployment and pressure of challenging duties, training of the central armed forces often results in the victims refraining from knocking on the court's doors for justice. There is, therefore, a need to set up fast-track courts to deal with cases related to injustice based on caste and related forms of discrimination.

The caste system has been a blot on Nepali society for far too long already. The loose hierarchy of the discriminatory system was brought into force legally through the Civil Code of 1854. Ever since, the ruling class, which is mostly constituted of upper caste people, has used the caste system to maintain their hold on power positions. It is this historical structural hierarchy that inspires an individual or a group to suppress, exploit and dehumanise other individuals and groups. The divisive and dehumanising system has been abolished legally for almost six decades now, but the remnants of the system are very much alive in Nepali society.

Those belonging to the so-called upper castes have their interests in perpetuating the caste system as it is beneficial to them. It is natural for those who have long dominated social institutions and agencies to become insecure when anyone commits acts that challenge the rigid caste hierarchies. But this needs to change.

IN MEMORIAM

BASU, PRADYOT KUMAR — Left us this day 2012. Someone so special can never be forgotten. You are loved and missed each day. - Aruna & Rupayan.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Tribals at risk

SIR, This is with reference to your editorial, 'Challenge & Response' (*The Statesman*, 25 May). Nutrition and infection form a two-way relationship. While nutrition is a prominent factor regulating the body's defence mechanism against infections (immunity), infections are also known to affect the metabolism of nutrients and aggravate the state of malnutrition. So, malnutrition and infection represent a vicious cycle and children are among the major victims. Stun-

ted children - children having low height for their age - seem to have a poorer immune system. Malnutrition is more severe in rural than in urban India. While half of rural children are too short for their age (stunting) and 21 per cent have low weight for height (wasting), the corresponding urban fractions are 40 per cent and 17 per cent. Moreover, among tribal communities, malnutrition has reached macabre proportions, and in children below five it arrests the



physical development. Different studies have shown that, in the last 100 years, while the average height of Indians has increased by 4.5 centimetres, average height of tribes has reduced by 8 cm. Apart from low immunity, ill-equipped medical infrastructure in rural areas leaves rural people struggling with the deadly virus. However, while rural India was largely spared by the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the second wave is shifting now from big cities to small towns and rural areas, including tribal areas. Indeed, the spread of Covid-19 pandemic in rural areas, especially in the tribal belt, has now emerged as a major public health challenge.

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A BOND BROKEN

SIR, Ever since the outbreak of coronavirus, while hygiene measures remained the same as for previous pandemics, the social distancing norms have made the human experience unique. Notwithstanding the pandemic, social distancing presents the dangers of increasing social desolation, growing impersonality and individualism, and the loss of a sense of society as a whole. It prevents people from socialising effectively, which is a fundamental human need. In the present circumstances, social distancing measures have created a fear in one's mind that others are potential carriers of the deadly virus. What is particularly worrying is the fact that this cognitive effect could potentially remain in our society even after the disintegration of the virus. Whether at work places, or in restaurants, or in public spaces, our society has long been characterised by physical interactions between people. We are used to working in groups, going places, meeting people, and making conversations with them frequently. As we navigate through life, much of what fulfills us are the bonds we create with people, and more often than not, those bonds materialise through physical interactions. If we do not find ways to maintain physical and emotional connections, sadly it will make it more difficult for us to build and strengthen social bonds, and such an atmosphere may lead to an unfortunate future for our society.

Yours, etc., Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai, 24 May.

its last days. There is total chaos and disruption of services of BSNL. Complaints remain unattended for long and when status is enquired into, the recorded voice says 'work is in progress'. It reaches our ears that contractual workers have not been paid for long. There was a time when a landline connection served as a status symbol for a middle class household. In short, this has been a complete policy failure. Perhaps immediate re-employment of its old staff may address the persisting problems to some extent. Ever since the Finance Min-

istry decided to merge several PSU Banks, it portended a nightmare for common depositors. Our population has increased by leaps and bounds. This itself calls for setting up more branches. Instead, the branches are dissolved. The mammoth United Bank headquarters in BBD Bag area of Kolkata has got its name erased from the walls. Thus history is erased. I maintain accounts with the erstwhile Allahabad Bank. The old cheque books in my possession reflect the colossal wastage of stationery. Although I requisitioned for a new cheque

book on Indian Bank (the amalgamating bank), I am yet to receive one. I am a lay lady and do not have the expertise of those sitting in the AC rooms of North Block. I cannot but mourn the eagerness of the government to sell off its national carrier, Air India. Any suggestion to revive it will only be a waste of energy. The very sight of landing and taking off of AI planes and from foreign soils charges up our sentiments. Sadly, I am a witness to destruction of national assets.

Yours, etc., Rina Kapoor Hooghly, 22 May.



Maruti Suzuki decided to involve itself in scaling up production of oxygen generators by small scale units to help overcome the critical shortage of oxygen.

R C BHARGAVA
CHAIRMAN, MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA

THUMBNAILS

Paytm plans \$3-billion IPO: Digital payments giant Paytm is planning to come out with an initial public offer worth \$3 billion later this year, according to sources. The proposed initial public offer (IPO), if successful, would be the largest such offer. Coal India's Rs 15,200-crore IPO in 2010 is the country's largest one till date. The SoftBank and Alibaba-backed company is looking at raising about \$3 billion (over Rs 21,700 crore) at a valuation of well over \$25 billion, the sources privy to the development said. PTI

Fuel prices up again: Petrol price on Thursday crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Thane district of Maharashtra, while it was hovering a tad below that level in Mumbai, after fuel prices were raised again. Petrol price was increased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 29 paise a litre on Thursday, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The increase ~ 14th this month ~ took petrol and diesel prices to all-time high across the country. PTI

Jaypee Infra case: Asserting that its bid to acquire Jaypee InfraTech is legally compliant and better, Suraksha Group has urged homebuyers to support its resolution plan and vote against a proposal to allow more time for submission of new offers by the company and NBCC. In a video message on You Tube platform, Suraksha ARC managing director and chief executive officer Aalok Dave has sought to reach out to around 20,000 homebuyers whose investments are stuck in stalled projects of Jaypee InfraTech Ltd (JIL). PTI

ITC survey: Around 77 per cent Indian mothers consider digestive health to be extremely important while 56 per cent mothers think their families suffer from digestive health issues, according to a survey conducted by ITC Aashirwad Atta with Multigrains. Gas, acidity and indigestion were found to be amongst the top three issues as more than 50 per cent respondents reported suffering from at least one of these three, said the survey. SNS

Dizo: Dizo, the first brand under the Realme TechLife ecosystem, announced its global launch on Thursday. The brand aims to break the clutter of tech similarities and offer solutions that are aligned to the needs of every different consumer, according to a Press release from the company. SNS

Leverage Edu: Leverage Edu on Thursday announced the launch of "study abroad scholarship" worth Rs 5 crore for Indian students who are planning to study overseas for the upcoming academic intakes. The scholarship has a rolling application and the winners will be announced every fortnight, it said in a Press statement. SNS

RBI: Revival of pvt consumption, investment critical for growth

The apex bank expects 10.5 per cent GDP growth during the current financial year (2021-22)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

Amid uncertainties arising out of the second wave of Covid-19, the Reserve Bank of India today said that a durable revival of private consumption and investment would be critical for sustaining economic growth post-pandemic.

Observing that 2020-21 has left a scar on the economy, RBI in its annual report said: "In the midst of the second wave as 2021-22 commences, pervasive despair is being lifted by cautious optimism built up by vaccination drives."

The second wave of the pandemic has prompted revision of growth projections for the current fiscal and the consensus appears to be gravitating towards RBI's forecast of 10.5 per cent, the report added.

The pandemic, RBI cautioned, "is the biggest risk to this outlook. Yet, upsides also stem from the capex push by the government, rising capacity utilisation and the turnaround in capital goods imports."

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

For a self-sustaining GDP growth trajectory post-Covid-19, a durable revival in private consumption and investment demand together would be critical as they account for around 85 per cent of GDP... post-crisis recoveries are led more by consumption than investment. However, investment-led recoveries can be more sustainable and can also lift consumption in parts by better job creation. In either case, private demand plays a pivotal role.

In a separate box on what would drive growth recovery after the crisis, RBI said: "For a self-sustaining GDP growth trajectory post-Covid-19, a durable revival in private consumption and investment demand together would be critical as they account for around 85 per cent of GDP."

Typically, it added, post-crisis recoveries are led more by consumption than investment. "However, investment-led recoveries can be more sustainable and can also lift consumption in parts by better job creation. In either case, private demand plays a pivotal role," the report added.

The apex bank, however, expressed confidence that banks are better positioned than before in managing stress in balance sheets in view of higher capital buffers, improve-



ment in recoveries and a return to profitability.

"Stress tests indicate that Indian banks have sufficient capital at the aggregate level even in a severe stress scenario. Bank-wise as well as system-wide supervisory stress testing provide clues for a forward-looking identification of vulnerable areas," RBI said in its annual report 2020-21.

The report has emphasised the need for banks to keep a tab on the NPAs and accordingly earmark capital for the provision.

The report also revealed that the bank notes in circulation witnessed higher than average increase during 2020-21 on

account of precautionary holding of cash by people induced by Covid-19 pandemic.

The value and volume of bank notes in circulation increased by 16.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent, respectively, during 2020-21 as against an increase of 14.7 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively, witnessed during 2019-20, said the RBI annual report.

In value terms, the share of Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 bank notes together accounted for 85.7 per cent of the total value of bank notes in circulation as on 31 March 2021, as against 83.4 per cent as on 31 March 2020.

On inflation, the report said supply-demand imbalance may continue to exert pressure on food items like pulses and edible oils and prices of cereals may soften with bumper foodgrain production in 2020-21.

"Pressures from food items like pulses and edible oils are likely to persist in view of supply-demand imbalances, while cereal prices may continue to soften with the bumper foodgrain production in 2020-21."

RBI to ensure 'comfortable level' of liquidity in system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 MAY

The Reserve Bank of India today said it will ensure comfortable level of liquidity in the system during the current financial year and assured that monetary transmission will continue "unimpeded".

To counter the impact of Covid-19 first wave, the RBI had undertaken several conventional and unconventional measures to ensure ample liquidity in the financial system during the financial year ended 31 March 2021.

"The RBI will ensure that system-level liquidity remains comfortable during 2021-22 in alignment with the stance of monetary policy, and monetary transmission continues unimpeded while maintaining financial stability," according to the annual report 2020-21.

This is exemplified by the introduction of the secondary market G-securities acquisition programme (G-SAP) in 2021-22 under which the RBI has committed upfront to a specific amount

for open market purchases of G-secs with a view to enabling a stable and orderly evolution of the yield curve under congenial financial conditions, it said.

The positive externalities of G-SAP 1.0 operations need to be seen in the context of those segments of the financial markets that rely on the G-sec yield curve as a pricing benchmark, it said, adding, the first tranche of the G-SAP of Rs 1 lakh crore has been received well and it has had a salutary effect on the evolution of G-sec yields.

In an effort to boost provision of immediate liquidity for ramping up Covid related healthcare infrastructure and services in the country, the RBI last month announced an on-tap liquidity window of Rs 50,000 crore with tenors of up to three years at the repo rate.

It was also decided to conduct special three-year long-term repo operations (SLTRO) of Rs 10,000 crore at the repo rate for the SFBs to be deployed for fresh lending of up to Rs 10 lakh per borrower.

Nifty at record closing peak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 MAY



Securities.

IT stocks remained in focus for second consecutive day as sustained visibility of earnings momentum attracted investors' interest back to this space. Further, banks, metals and auto also were in focus.

"Notably, short coverings also have supported momentum in various counters. Buying momentum remained visible in mid-cap and small-cap stocks and they have outperformed benchmark indices," he added.

Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services, said: "Market gained its momentum in the opening hours on hopes of a state-wise unlocking due to declining Covid cases. However, RBI's warning of the risk of a bubble in the equity market in its annual report made the market cautious, forcing it to end flat on the day of the monthly F&O expiry."

Kotak Bank, Axis Bank, Bajaj Auto, UltraTech Cement, Nestle India and PowerGrid.

On the other hand, HDFC, Bajaj Finance, ONGC, Bharti Airtel, HUL and Maruti were among the laggards, shedding up to 2.38 per cent.

"Domestic equities remained resilient and traded in a range amid futures and options (F&O) expiry led volatility," said Binod Modi, head-strategy at Reliance

Bank. After a choppy session, the NSE Nifty ended 36.40 points or 0.24 per cent higher at its new closing peak of 15,337.85 points. Its previous closing record was 15,314.70, hit on 15 February this year.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 97.70 points or 0.19 per cent higher at 51,115.22 points.

Banking, IT and energy stocks accounted for most of the gains.

SBI was the top performer in the Sensex pack, jumping 2.84 per cent, followed by

ITC, 2.71 per cent and NTPC, 2.67 per cent.

Banking, IT and energy stocks accounted for most of the gains.

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Banking, IT and energy



We chose that date because it's sentimental for me.

AMAZON FOUNDER JEFF BEZOS
ON PASSING THE BATON TO NEW AMAZON CEO ON 5 JULY

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26 H
HONG KONG	32	29 H
TOKYO	20	16 H
LONDON	20	10 S
DUBAI	36	28 S
SAN FRANCISCO	17	11 S
NEW YORK	28	15 S
MOSCOW	21	14 H

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

THUMBNAILS



Sculptures of angels on the St. Isaac's Cathedral are silhouetted against the full moon rising in the clouds in St. Petersburg, Russia. AGENCIES

Melbourne set for 4th lockdown: Australia's second-largest city was set to enter its fourth lockdown Thursday as concern grew over the rapid spread of infections from a coronavirus variant. The seven-day lockdown for Melbourne and the rest of Victoria state comes after a new cluster in the city rose to 26 infections, including a person who was in intensive care. Another 10,000 people have had some degree of contact with those already infected. AP

Production of another Covid vaccine: Production of another potential vaccine against Covid will begin within weeks, its developers Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline said Thursday as they launched a large trial enrolling 35,000 adult volunteers in the United States, Asia, Africa. The study will test vaccine candidate formulas against the original coronavirus that spread from Wuhan, China, and against the variant first seen in South Africa, the pharmaceutical firms said. If the trial is successful, regulators could approve the vaccine. AP

Sikh man killed in shooting in California

Samuel Cassidy, 57, a maintenance worker of California's Valley Transportation Authority, gunned down eight of his co-workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LOS ANGELES, 27 MAY

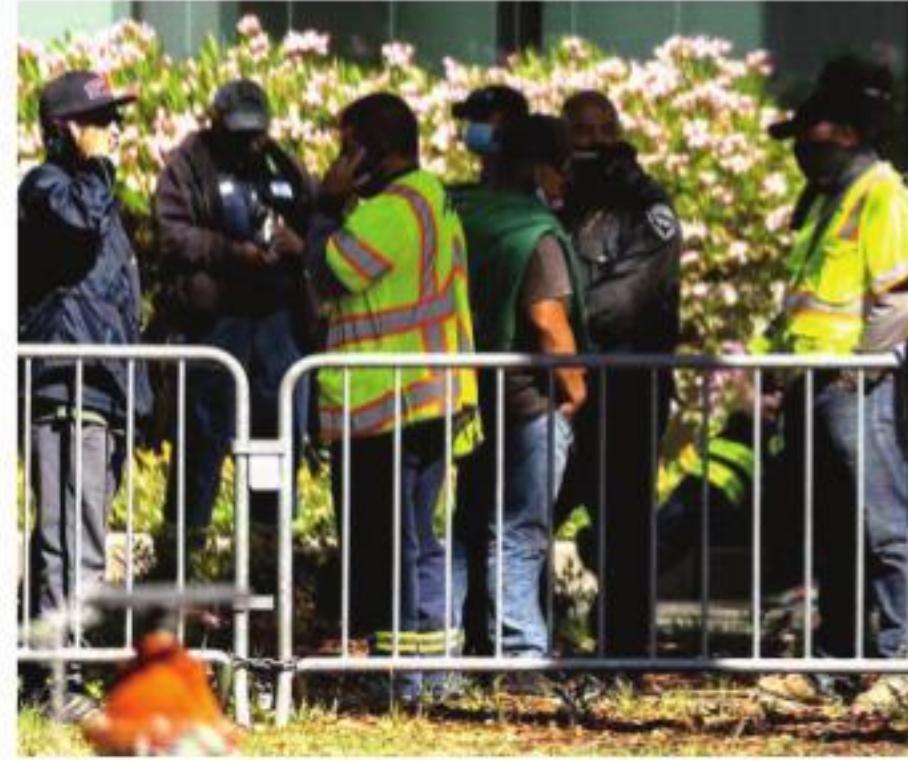
A 36-year-old Indian-origin Sikh man was among eight people killed in the horrific rail yard shooting in San Jose in the US state of California, according to media reports on Thursday.

Taptejdeep Singh, born in India and raised in Union City, California, has left behind his wife, three-year-old son, one-year-old daughter, and a grieving Sikh community in the San Francisco Bay Area, which described him as a "helpful and caring" man, The Mercury News reported.

Co-workers at the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) hailed Singh as a hero, saying he left the safety of an office room, where some colleagues were hiding, to help others escape the line of fire.

Samuel Cassidy, 57, a maintenance worker of the VTA, San Jose, on Wednesday gunned down eight of his co-workers and critically injured another in a one of the deadliest shootings in California state this year.

As police arrived at the



scene, the killer died of a self-inflicted gunshot.

Singh was a light rail operator at the VTA for nine years now. He worked at a separate building from where most of the other victims were found, giving the impression that Cassidy had selected his victims. Singh was fatally shot in the stairwell of a VTA building, the report said.

Singh's brother-in-law, P.J. Bath, another light rail operator at the VTA, confirmed that the shooter and Singh were in

different buildings initially but said nothing on the victims being pre-decided by the killer.

"He just happened to be in the way, I guess. He was always helpful to everyone and caring," Bath said. "We are in very deep grief," Singh's uncle Sakhwanti Dhillon told the San Jose-based newspaper.

"He told people, 'be careful, hide.' He was running around the building to save others' lives. He was a good person. He helped every-

body," Dhillon said.

Singh's brother Bagga Singh said he was told that his brother had saved a lady when he "rushed down the stairway, where he was eventually shot.

Singh may be considered a hero, but "he should have saved his life, too. We lost a good person," Bagga said.

Emotional scenes were seen at the Red Cross Center in the city where families of the victims gathered after the incident was reported.

Singh's family, including his father, hugged and cried.

The other victims of the shooting were identified as Paul Delacruz Megia (42), Adrian Balleza (29), Jose Dejesus Hernandez (35), Timothy Michael Romo (49), Michael Joseph Rudometkin (40), Abdolvalah Alaghmandan (63), and Lars Kepler Lane (63).

The motive behind the shooting is not yet clear. Minutes after the incident, a fire was reported at Cassidy's home, about 13 kilometres from the VTA office.

The fire was extinguished in an hour-long operation. Police said a separate investigation is going on in the fire.

Killer talked of workplace attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN JOSE (US), 27 MAY

An employee who gunned down eight people at a California rail yard and then killed himself as law enforcement rushed in had talked about killing people at work more than a decade ago, his ex-wife said.

He could dwell on things," she said. The two were married for about 10 years until a 2005 divorce filing and she hadn't been in touch with Cassidy for about 13 years, Nelms said.

At the White House, President Joe Biden ordered flags to be flown at half-staff and urged Congress to act on legislation to curb gun violence.

Every life that is taken by a bullet pierces the soul of our nation. We can, and we must, do more," Biden said in a statement.

Gavin Newsom visited the site and then spoke emotionally about the country's latest mass killing.

There's a numbness some of us are feeling about this. There's a sameness to this, he said. It begs the damn question of what the hell is going on in the United States of America? The shooting took place in two buildings and killed employees who had been bus and light rail operators, mechanics, linemen and an assistant superintendent over the course of their careers. One had worked for the agency since 1999.

In court documents, an ex-girlfriend described Cassidy as volatile and violent, with major mood swings because of bipolar disorder that became worse when he drank heavily.

Several times while he was drunk, Cassidy forced himself on her sexually despite her refusals, pinning her arms with his body weight, the woman alleged in a 2009 sworn statement filed after Cassidy had sought a restraining order against her.

ROYAL FUN



Britain's Prince William, left, and Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge land yachting on the beach at St. Andrews, Scotland, as their tour of Scotland continues. AGENCIES

Indian-American nominated to key administration post

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 27 MAY

US President Joe Biden has announced his intent to nominate Indian-American trade expert Arun Venkataraman to a key position in his administration related to foreign commercial service.

Venkataraman is the nominee for Director General of the US and Foreign Commercial Service and Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, Department of Commerce, the White House said.

With over 20 years of experience in advising companies, international organisations and the US government on international trade issues, Venkataraman is currently the Counselor to the Secretary of Commerce, advising the department on trade and other international economic matters.

Before joining the Biden-Harris administration, he was

Biden directs intelligence agencies to redouble efforts to trace origins of Covid-19

PTI & AP

WASHINGTON, 27 MAY

President Joe Biden has ordered the US intelligence agencies to redouble their efforts in investigating the emergence of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic and report back to him in 90 days, amid growing controversy about the virus's origins from a bio-laboratory in China.

Covid-19 was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. More than 168 million confirmed cases have since been confirmed worldwide and at least 3.5 million deaths reported.

The announcement comes after a US intelligence report found several researchers at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology fell ill in November 2019 and had to be hospitalized -- a new detail that fuelled fresh public pressure on Biden to order a detailed

investigation into the origin of the deadly virus.

"I have now asked the Intelligence Community to redouble their efforts to collect and analyse information that could bring us closer to a definitive conclusion, and to report back to me in 90 days," Biden said.

As part of that report, the president said he has asked for areas of further inquiry that may be required, including specific questions for China.

"I have also asked that



this effort include work by our National Labs and other agencies of our government to augment the Intelligence Community's efforts. And I have asked the Intelligence Community to keep Congress fully apprised of its work," he said.

Biden said the United States will also keep working with like-minded partners around the world to press China to participate in a full, transparent, evidence-based international investigation and provide access to all relevant data and evidence.

"The failure to get our inspectors on the ground in those early months will always hamper any investigation into the origin," he said.

The WHO probe has been criticised by the US, United Kingdom and other governments over its limited access to "complete, original data and samples."

"I have also asked that

China says politics behind call for virus origin probe:

China on Thursday accused the Biden administration of playing politics and shirking its responsibility in calling for a renewed investigation into the origins of the coronavirus pandemic that was first detected in China in late 2019.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said at a daily briefing that President Joe Biden's order showed the US "does not care about facts and truth, nor is it interested in serious scientific origin tracing."

Zhao also said the US must open itself up to investigations into its biological laboratories, including at the military's Fort Detrick base. "The US side claims that it wants China to participate in a comprehensive, transparent, evidence-based international investigation," Zhao said.

"The failure to get our

EU eyes Belarus sanctions targeting sectors close to leader



ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, 27 MAY

European Union nations sketched out plans for new sanctions Thursday against Belarus that will target economic sectors close to its authoritarian president, as they sought to strike back at him for the forced diversion of a passenger jet to arrest a dissident journalist.

EU foreign ministers meeting in Lisbon vowed to continue to ramp up the pressure on Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko whose disdain for democratic norms and human rights has made his country a pariah in the West.

The latest plans for sanctions, which could target the country's lucrative potassium industry among others, comes after Belarusian flight controllers instructed a Ryanair jetliner's crew to land in the capital of Minsk on Sunday, citing a bomb threat. No bomb was found, but 26-year-old journalist and activist Raman Pratasevich was pulled off the plane and detained.

EU leaders have denounced the move as a state-sponsored hijacking, while Lukashenko has defended his actions and accused the West of trying to strangle his country with sanctions.

The EU has already advised its airlines to avoid the ex-Soviet nation's airspace and barred Belarusian carriers from EU airports and airspace. The mineral is mainly used in the fertilizing industry.

Australian teenagers lose bid to block coal mine expansion

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CANBERRA, 27 MAY

A group of eight Australian teenage environmentalists lost their court bid on Thursday to force the federal government to ban a coal mine expansion.

But their lawyer claimed victory in the Federal Court's ruling that the government had a duty to prevent future climate harm.

The plaintiffs, aged 13 to 17, argued that Environment Minister Sussan Ley had a duty to protect younger people against climate change. Ley is considering whether to approve an expansion of Vickery mine in New South Wales state, and the teenagers sought an injunction preventing the expansion.

Justice Mordy Bromberg rejected their bid, while noting the expansion of the Whitehaven Coal-owned mine



would lead to an additional 33 million metric tons of coal being extracted over 25 years and 100 million metric tons of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Bromberg ruled that Ley did owe the children a duty of care under the law of negligence, but said he was not satisfied that a reasonable understanding had been established that Ley would breach her duty of care to the children. Bromberg found there was a real risk that the extension of the mine near the town of Gunnedah would cause a tiny but measurable increase to global average surface temperatures. Perhaps the most startling of the potential harms demonstrated by the evidence before the court is that 1 million of today's Australian children are expected to suffer at least one heat stress episode serious enough to require acute care in a hospital.

Bromberg said,

This is an amazing decision ... an amazing recognition that people in power must not harm younger people by their decisions, Barnden added.

Barnden said she would consider the judgment before making any public statement.

The case echoes a ruling in Germany last month in which the top court said the government must set clear goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions after 2030, arguing that existing legislation risks placing too much of a burden on curbing climate change on younger generations.

The verdict was a victory for climate activists from Germany and elsewhere who with the support of environmental groups had filed four complaints to the Constitutional Court arguing that their rights were at risk by the lack of sufficient targets beyond the next decade.

This month, German offi-

cials proposed that the country could bring forward the date for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045.

In Australia, the teenagers who filed the case were led by 17-year-old Anjali Sharma with the aid of a so-called litigation guardian, Catholic nun Sister Brigid Arthur, 86.

One of the children, 17-year-old Ava Princi, described the judgment as a relief and called on Ley to ensure the mine extension never occurs.

This is the first time a court of law anywhere in the world has recognized that a government minister has a duty of care to protect young people from the catastrophic harms of climate change, Princi told reporters.

My future and the future of all young people depends on Australia stepping away from fossil fuel projects and joining the world in taking decisive action," she said.

The EU has already advised its airlines to avoid the ex-Soviet nation's airspace and barred Belarusian carriers from EU airports and airspace. The mineral is mainly used in the fertilizing industry.

What we don't want to do is to drive the country in the arms of Russia, he said.

Luxembourg Jean Asselborn said the bloc was focused on the country's large potassium industry. The mineral is mainly used in the fertilizing industry.

Striking virtual performances

Kalpataru Arts and Kri Foundation organised a three-day online event exploring screen dance



Sangita Chatterjee in Chakshu

TAPATI CHOWDHURY

One savours dance through the lens of one's eyes. Then there is the lens of the camera, which captures the beautiful movements of dance so that one can look at them anytime, anywhere. How far the analogy of these two varying lenses is comparable is a good question.

A recent production, Chakshu, however, referred to the role of the camera lens in transforming visual bodies into televisualised forms. Capturing a narrative in the language of dance through the camera can help store the piece to be seen at a later time. It makes us question the environment of dance and takes into account the world around us.

Screen dance – an independent art by itself and a standalone future vertical of dance – through the perspective of the camera was the theme explored at length by Sangita Chatterjee, founder of Kalpataru Arts, in collaboration with Arshiya Sethi's Kri Foundation. Together, they came up with a three-day online event through a curation of dance films/screen dance/video dance and panel discussions with dance filmmakers, choreographers, dancers and patrons. It was an ambitious project carried out with success.

Kalpataru Arts is a socio-cultural organisation founded in 2013, by Chatterjee, a Kathak exponent, to promote Indian art and culture and create a transparent and healthy environment for art to evolve. It conducts festivals of dance and music, seminars, workshops, interview series and is now also committed to promote dance films. Kri Foundation has helped the genre foster for almost two decades under its DanzLenz vertical.

The curatorial vision for the festival, Chakshu, stressed on ideas that dance can also be filmed beyond traditional performative spaces and performance structures. That way, the form will have a greater mobility and longer shelf life. The pandemic has pushed the relationship of dance with camera to the foreground.

The second idea upheld collaboration, mentoring and handholding. The two organisations not only promoted partnerships between themselves but also facilitated intergenerational collaboration. Their mentoring, support and encouragement was reflected in the inclusion of films by first-time filmmakers. And the third idea delved into the spectrum of the films curated.

Day one saw generic dance films of great beauty while day two featured

films made during the pandemic. Day three included films made especially for the festival, by five classical dancers of the younger generation.

Aksharakaram by Justin McCarthy, dancer, and Jaya Jaitly, founder of Dastakari Haat Samiti, was presented under the direction of Kalpana Subrahmanyam.

Nikita Maheshwary's *Home, Article 19, Lines and Eve Teasing* were films with a strong political subtext. *Nrityagram: For the Love of Dance* by Nan Melville and *Nature of Nescience* by Shilpika Bordoloi were screened on day one.

The presentations of day two included *Red Stamp* by Sanjukta Wagh and Benish Mahmood.

Nehha Batnagar – director of *Forest and Mother's Love* – consciously chooses the outdoors for her performance films as she finds its grandeur both inspiring and humbling. Her works on animals to reach a larger audience had an interesting and different flavour.

Chatterjee's Quest: A Lockdown Diary of a Dancer, a short film on dance created during the pandemic to address the pressing question of a dancer, "Why I dance?" was thought provoking. It was an experiential film made as an organic process of healing, through dance and for dance,



Chatterjee's Mirage



Nehha Batnagar's Forest

during the pandemic.

Within...From Within by Kathak exponent Aditi Mangaldas, who dances within walls for a purpose, produced the film as a fundraiser for dancers in need during these difficult times. It was an empathetic gesture.

Dastak by Ananya Chatterjee and Darren Johnson, filmed outdoors at the Twin Cities – Minneapolis and Saint Paul – is a dance film made in the wake of George Floyd's death, exploring the brutalities on Native Americans and the crisis of homelessness. Along with *Grapple*, conceptualised by Santosh Nair and produced by Batterie Dance Company, day two concluded.

The third day showcased *Andal's Garden*, a one-of-its-kind production, and *Boxed*, both curated by Anita Ratnam.

Douglas Rosenberg as a professor of video/performance/installation and chairperson at the art department, University of Wisconsin, brought in a rich experience to the panel session. His film, *Circling*, was screened at the event.

Jam Upload Download Upload Jam (2020) by Sumedha Bhattacharya and *Divine Deus*, made especially for the festival, by Bharatanatyam dancer Pavitra Krishna Bhat are also worth mentioning.

Sakhi He... An Emovere by Anwesa Mahanta, also made for Chakshu, was presented as a film narrative through dance reflecting on multi-layered thoughts flowing like a stream of consciousness in a series of dance movements set to a cyclic pattern in varied contexts, in Sattriya style. It explored the concept of Sakhi, providing glimpses of the celebration of *Sakhitwa*, a prime element in the range of *Navadurga Bhakti* propounded by saint-poet Srimanta Sankaradeva. Drawing upon a composition by the Bhakti poet Madhavadeva, the film oscillates between the emotive layers latent in the text and the vivid moods of a contemporary mind.

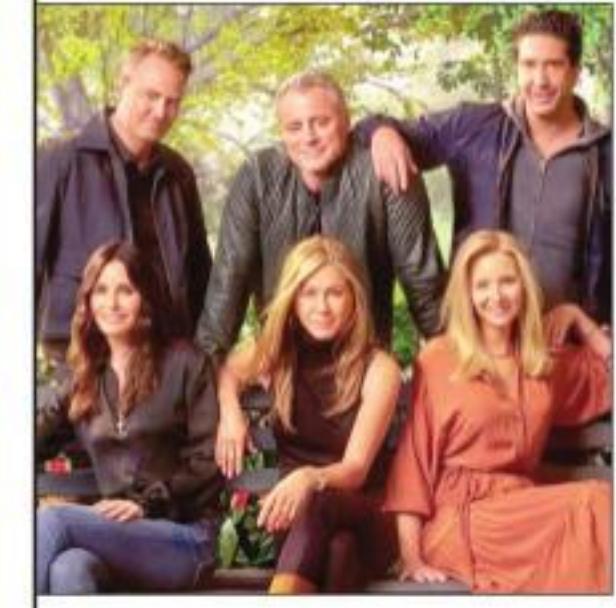
Raftaar Karo Kam by Prachi Saathi, *Eyeconic Tales of Love* by Swapnokalpa Dasgupta and *Mirage: A Lust for Life* by Chatterjee were also original creations exhibited at Chakshu. Everything that one chases in life ends up as a mirage though it still propels, motivates and encourages one to push forward, break limitations and keep pressing. It holds an element of hope.

Both Sethi and Chatterjee did a commendable job in presenting dance lovers with this festival during such stressful times.

The writer is a senior dance critic

SNIPPETS

India streaming



The much-awaited *Friends: The Reunion* which released last week in the United States, has been confirmed for streaming in India, too.

The one-hour special episode debuts on HBO Max in the US, marking the one-year anniversary of the platform. In India, the special will drop on Zee5.

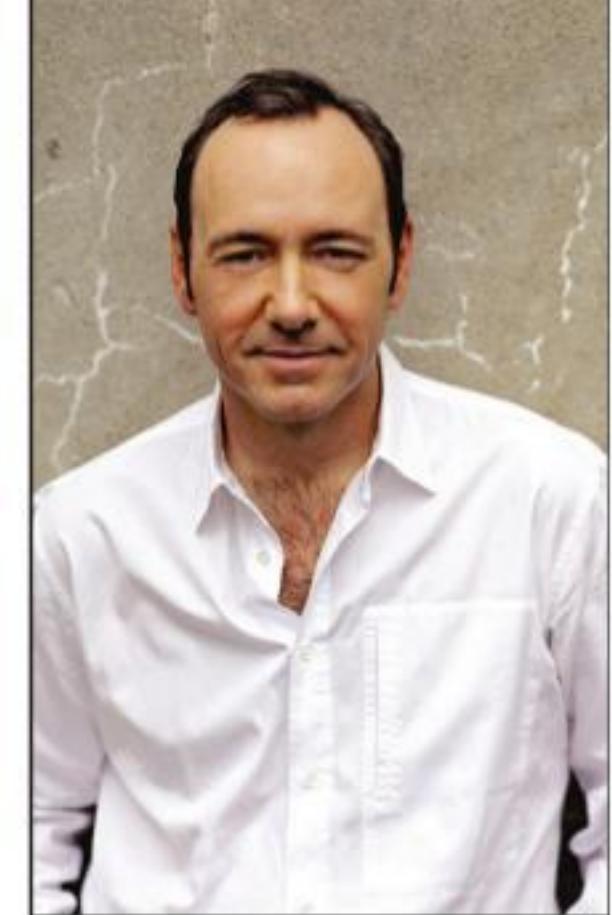
Friends, starring Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry and David Schwimmer, returns to the iconic comedy's original Stage 24 on the Warner Bros Studio lot in Burbank for a real-life unscripted celebration of the show.

It will feature special guest appearances including from David Beckham, Justin Bieber, Bangtan Boys, James Corden, Cindy Crawford, Cara Delevingne, Lady Gaga, Elliott Gould, Kit Harington, Larry Hankin, Mindy Kaling, Thomas Lennon, Christina Pickles, Tom Selleck, James Michael Tyler, Maggie Wheeler, Reese Witherspoon and Malala Yousafzai.

Ben Winston has directed the special and executive produced it along with Kevin Bright, Marta Kauffman, and David Crane.

"We are extremely excited to bring *Friends: The Reunion* exclusively on Zee5 for the Indian market. *Friends* is amongst the world's most-watched and loved sitcoms and it is a great opportunity for us to present their reunion, something that the world has been talking about," said Manish Kalra, chief business officer, Zee5 India.

Ironic comeback



Kevin Spacey is to make an acting comeback as a detective investigating a false claim of paedophilia. The Oscar winner, who has been accused by multiple people of sexual misconduct, will star alongside Vanessa Redgrave in the Italian drama, *The Man Who Drew God*, which will reportedly begin filming later this year.

Franco Nero, who is married to Redgrave and will also direct the film, plays a blind artist who is wrongly suspected of sexual abuse. Spacey will provide a cameo as a detective investigating the allegation.

Nero told ABC News that he is "very happy" that Spacey agreed to star in the film, adding, "I consider him a great actor and I can't wait to start the movie."

The Man Who Drew God will mark Spacey's first acting role in four years, after he was accused by at least 20 men of sexual misconduct at London's Old Vic theatre between 1995 and 2013. Other allegations against him included a sexual assault claim by actor Anthony Rapp, who alleged that Spacey assaulted him when he was 14 years old.

Spacey has categorically denied all claims of sexual misconduct, and no charges have been brought against him.

The actor was dropped from his Netflix series *House of Cards* amid the allegations, and also had his scenes completely reshotted in the 2017 thriller *All the Time in the World*. Christopher Plummer stepped in to replace Spacey in the film, and was subsequently nominated for an Oscar.

— The independent

SHOMA A CHATTERJI

According to the dictionary, murmur means "a low, continuous background noise". Bluepenpublishers.com has brought out a unique book by Amitava Nag, called *Murmurs: Silent Steals with Soumitra Chatterjee*, consisting of the author's informal conversations with the great film personality.

Nag has already authored the much discussed *Beyond Apu: 20 Favourite Film Roles of Soumitra Chatterjee*, followed by *Satyajit Ray's Heroes and Heroines*. He has been a film critic involved with European and international cinema from the time he was a student of science at Presidency College, Calcutta. The passion for cinema never deserted him and Nag continues to engage in the form through an outstanding digital magazine he edits called *Silhouette*. He has written several books on poetry and other books on cinema, both in English and Bengali as he has equal command over both languages.

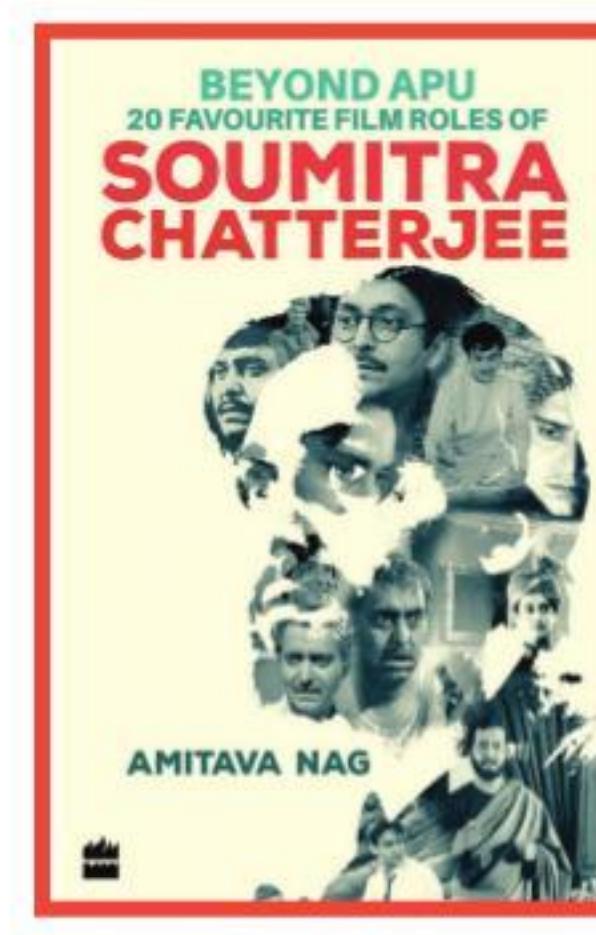
Murmurs has a brief but succinct foreword by Shyam Benegal, who was a great admirer of Soumitra Chatterjee through his admiration for Satyajit Ray. The distinguished filmmaker writes about the book, "This is a marvellous portrait of the great actor. You get to hear him, know him, in an extraordinarily intimate fashion. Once you have finished reading these musings of Soumitra Chatterjee, it is as though you were listening to a close friend, almost a confidante."

The book is divided into 20 brief chapters, which almost completely comprise ambivalent musings by the author about interactions with his subject – Soumitra Chatterjee. That spells out a seemingly insurmountable journey in itself – two men, distinctly different in age, experience and fame, have conversations, where the older man is the focus with the younger one looking in.

Murmurs is in a genre of its own. It



Nag (on the right) with Chatterjee

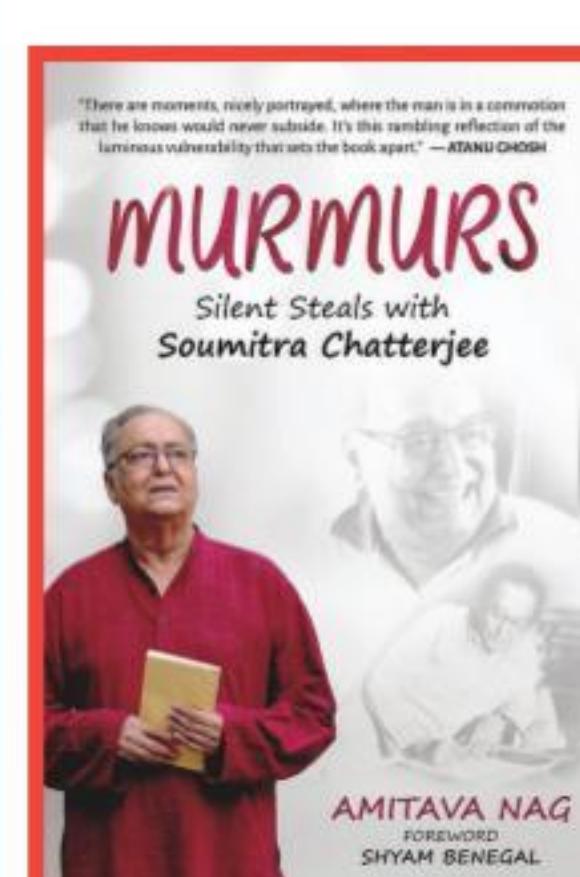


remind us of timelessness. Eternity."

The lines fit into the massive expanse of Chatterjee's genius while also reflecting, at an ideological level, a dream the letter-writing author aspires to achieve. He ends the chapter with just a single sentence, "Soumitra Chat-

HUMMING WITH RESTRAINED PASSION

Amitava Nag's incredible book of conversations with Soumitra Chatterjee reads like an intimate close-up of the screen icon's life



terjee reminds me of the same – the unrepeatable moments of standing still." I do not imagine anyone else has been able to describe the massive tree of talent and accomplishment called Soumitra Chatterjee quite in the same way.

In the chapter "Letters and Interviews", the author describes how he looks at the practice of letter writing, which is almost a lost art today. Then, extremely slowly, he approaches the moment when he decided to write a letter to Chatterjee. He reminisces about that red, cylindrical box that held up hopes for many young people, destroyed the hopes of some older

ones and how, neither of the two letters he wrote to Chatterjee elicited any response. It is more about the author than his subject.

"Care", the author describes in elaboration, a young woman who was Chatterjee's caregiver over a certain period of time. Writing how marriage changed her into a confident, slightly plump and talkative woman, Nag goes into detail thus, "the increased weight laid bare the different colours of skin on her arms due to some infection. I don't think she was bothered. She smiled at me, asked me how I was for these years in between." This chapter, therefore, is more about the author's reminiscences about his own experiences in which his subject has no role to play, except in the form of the woman who was his caregiver.

One great merit of the book, in its entirety, lies in the fact that Nag doesn't try to intrude into the private world of Chatterjee or pester him with probing questions on his personal life. Not even once. And yet, the book unravels layers of both the author and his subject with subtlety, restraint and respect, which could have easily descended into a gossip magazine article in less able hands.

The only reservation I have about *Murmurs* can be expressed more by a question than comment. The author always refers to his subject by the personal pronouns *he*, *his* or *him* but never by his proper name. One would love to know why.

The writer is a senior film critic



GAME PLAN

Naomi Osaka (*in photo, left*) says she is not going to speak to the media during the French Open, starting on Sunday. The world's highest-earning female athlete wrote on Twitter that she hoped the "considerable amount that I get fined for this will go towards a mental health charity."

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Support for Olympics: The European Union's two top officials expressed support Thursday for holding the Tokyo Olympics despite growing opposition to the event in Japan because of the coronavirus pandemic. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel discussed the games with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga during a virtual EU-Japan summit.

CL prize money grows: Champions League teams will get more prize money for the next three years from a near 8% rise in total revenue to 3.5 billion euros (\$4.27 billion) from broadcast and sponsor sales tied to UEFA's three club competitions. Total revenue is set to rise by 250 million euros (\$305 million) annually through 2024 compared to the 2018-21 period, the European Leagues group said Thursday in an online conference.

Chennaiyin FC charity: The Chennaiyin FC Foundation has pitched in to support coronavirus-hit people by distributing dry ration kits to marginalised communities of the city affected by the deadly disease. The CFC Foundation has joined hands with the ISL club's official associate sponsor ACKO Insurance in supporting Akshaya Patra Foundation's initiative to distribute the dry ration kits, a press release said.

Athletes vaccination: Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on Thursday said all the Tokyo Games-bound athletes and officials have got their first COVID-19 vaccine and they will get their second doses before their departure from the country for the multi-sporting spectacle. IOA's statement came a day after it had sought details from the national federations about the vaccinated athletes and officials, who are set to travel to Tokyo Olympics which opens on 23 July.

Djokovic reaches Belgrade Open semifinals: World No.1 Novak Djokovic eased past Argentina's 96th ranked Federico Coria in straight sets to reach semi-finals of the Belgrade Open on Thursday. Djokovic beat Coria 6-1, 6-0 in just 56 minutes to record his 952nd career win as a professional. Djokovic will now face either compatriot Dusan Lajovic or qualifier Andrej Martin.

No change in home schedule: England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will not tweak its home schedule for any reason, England director Ashley Giles said on Thursday. "I'm not aware of anything official, any requests to shift anything. As far as we're concerned and what we're prepared for, the matches will be where they are," Giles is quoted as saying by ESPN-Cricinfo. "I'm not surprised there's all sorts of speculation. Everyone wants to get their cricket in. But we've not received anything official and we're cracking on."

Mancunians suffer shootout heartbreak

MANCHESTER UNITED 1
VILLARREAL 1
(10-11 PENALTIES)

MARK CRITCHLEY
GDANSK, 27 MAY

A substitution involving Ole Gunnar Solskjaer famously secured Manchester United one triumph in Europe. His substitutions as a manager may have cost them another. A former player synonymous with making an impact off the bench was reluctant to do the same from the touchline, waiting until the 100th-minute of this Europa League final against Villarreal fell on a special date in United's history. Not only was this Sir Matt Busby's birthday, it was also exactly 22 years since that night at the Camp Nou in 1999 and the moment which cemented Solskjaer's legend. The 26 May also now represents the biggest disappointment of his managerial career. And his game management will be the major talking point. It was a similar story during their elimination from this competition this last season at the semi-final stage against Sevilla, when the United manager did not appear to fully trust those kept in reserve. That he should feel unable to do two years on the run is worrying, to say the least, and will put further scrutiny on those above him who are responsible for spending and recruitment.

It was down to David de Gea, who had failed to save his last 40 penalties by that point, to show he was better at taking them. He was not. Rulli saved. Given that lamentable penalty-saving record, it may have been wise to use one of the five substitutions Solskjaer made in stoppage time on replacing

him for Dean Henderson, who looked like United's established No 1 a few weeks ago. Henderson may have at least scored his penalty.

But in truth, United should have not been taken to this distance by La Liga's seventh-placed, who played an organised, disciplined but limited gameplan under Unai Emery.

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Despite Solskjaer's best attempts to keep his opponents and journalists guessing, Maguire was not fit enough to



they came too late to make an impact and did not change the dynamics of the game. Donny van de Beek, a marquee £40m signing, went unused. Solskjaer has never found a way to make some members of his squad work in a first-choice line-up, hence why the likes of Harry Maguire and Marcus Rashford have played so many minutes.

Despite Solskjaer's best attempts to keep his opponents and journalists guessing, Maguire was not fit enough to

start. The United captain was among the first out in a new navy checked club suit to inspect the Stadion Miejski's pitch an hour-and-a-half before kick-off and was among the substitutes but took no significant part in the warm-up, bar a couple of casual stretches.

Fred was not deemed available to play from the off either, meaning Paul Pogba lined up in central midfield and there was space to accommodate all four of Edinson Cavani, Bruno Fernandes, Mason Greenwood and Marcus Rashford. It was the boldest possible line-up that Solskjaer could field. United need to start just as strongly.

Before the first goal, they were in control. Villarreal were happy to cede territory but United's press hemmed them in and snuffed their attempts to counter-attack out at the source. Dominating the ball without creating chances is an old habit that they have struggled to kick under Solskjaer, though, while

Rashford faces racist abuse

GDANSK, 27 MAY

Manchester United forward Marcus Rashford said today he had faced "at least 70 racial slurs" on social media after his team's loss. "At least 70 racial slurs on my social accounts counted so far," Rashford wrote on Twitter less than 90

minutes after the game finished. "For those working to make me feel any worse than I already do, good luck trying." Rashford added he was outraged that he was sent a mountain of monkey emojis in a message from a person using a profile which identified them as a teacher. AP

Rashford particularly struggled to find spaces in between Villarreal's deep-set and disciplined low block. Something needed to change but, in terms of personnel, it was unclear exactly what Solskjaer could do. He had already played his strongest suit.

The same 11 United players re-emerged for the second half and, with no immediate improvement, were still over-reliant on the bounces falling their way. Thankfully, they did. Rashford's long-range follow-up from a half-cleared corner hit sent Villarreal goalkeeper Geronimo Rulli diving to his left, only for Alfonso Pedraza to block the shot. The rebound hit Scott McTominay, fell kindly onto Cavani's right foot and Rulli could not dive back to his right in time to stop the ball from rolling into the unguarded net. THE INDEPENDENT

Tokyo warned

TOKYO, 27 MAY

Ex-F1 driver Chandhok calls for more diversity in sport

NEW DELHI, 27 MAY

A physician representing a Japanese medical body warned today that holding the postponed Tokyo Olympics in two months could lead to the spread of variants of the coronavirus. Dr Naoto Ueyama, chairman of the Japan Doctors Union, said the International Olympic Committee and the Japanese government had underestimated the risks of bringing 15,000 Olympic and Paralympic athletes into the country, joined by tens of thousands of officials, judges, media and broadcasters from more than 200 countries and territories.

Since the emergence of Covid-19 there has not been such a dangerous gathering of people in one place from so many different places around the world, he said, speaking in Tokyo at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. AP

Chandhok competed in Formula 1 between 2009-2010. He is now a well-respected commentator and alongside seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, one of the few non-white faces seen in the paddock.

Speaking to PTI from the UK after posting about his recent experience at a restaurant on social media during the Monaco GP last week, Chandhok said he would not dwell on the past but focus on contributing to make the sport more diverse including having more Indians on board. He didn't reveal in which country the incident took place. "I'm not really interested in talking about the past (about that incident) - the key is to talk about the future. We need to understand and learn why more people from non-white haven't been able to get involved in the sport and Formula 1 plus Lewis via his Hamilton Commission are doing some very important research to understand that.

"Formula 1 at the moment has really taken up the cause of improving diversity within the sport. Historically, this is a sport where over 90% of the people involved have been white and therefore as one of the few people from a minority ethnic background, I'm very encouraged to see that F1 as a sport and the teams as participants are taking steps to change that balance," said Chandhok.

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Mary Kom, Sakshi march into final at Asian Boxing Championships

AGENCIES
DUBAI, 27 MAY

Six-time world champion MC Mary Kom (51kg) (*in photo, left*) and Sakshi (54kg) stormed into the Asian Boxing Championships finals after notching up gruelling victories in their last-four stage bouts here on Thursday. While Mary Kom prevailed 4-1 over Mongolia's Lutsaihan Altansetseg, two-time world champion Sakshi upstaged top-seeded Kazakh Dina Zholaman 3-2.

However, Monika (48kg) settled for a bronze medal after going down 0-5 to second-seed Alua Balkibekova of Kazakhstan.

The seasoned campaigner Mary Kom made a defensive start

and took her time in the first round. The six-time world champion made the Mongolian opponent work hard and looked in good touch in the next round as she landed timely and powerful punches that put pressure on Altansetseg.

Mary Kom, who was out of action and playing only second event since the lockdown after being recovered from dengue, kept her calm and used all her experience to take charge of the game and completed a 4-1 win. Having won six medals

already in the Asian Championships, including five gold, Mary Kom will be up against Kazakhstan's two-time world champion Nazym Kyzaibay who entered the final beating Sri Lanka Nadeeka Pushpakumari with the referee stopping contest (RSC) after the first round.

Earlier in the 48kg last-4 match, Monika gave her all and fought hard but fell short against the second seeded Kazakh boxer Alua Balkibekova as she suffered a 5-0 defeat and secured bronze medal for the country. The International Boxing Association, AIBA has allocated USD 4,00,000 prize money for the prestigious event which is jointly hosted by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and UAE Box-

ing Federation. The gold medalists of men's and women's categories will be awarded with USD 10,000 while both the silver and bronze medal winners will take home USD 5,000 and 2,500 respectively.

With 15 medals confirmed in the on-going event, Indian contingent achieved their highest medal haul, bettering previous best of 13 from the 2019 edition in Bangkok where they finished third with two gold, four silver and seven bronze medals.

The on-going event has witnessed the presence of 150 boxers from 17 countries including strong boxing nations such as India, Uzbekistan, Philippines and Kazakhstan.

Having secured medal in each category in women sec-

tion, later tonight, 8 more Indian boxers including Simranjit (60kg), Sakshi (54kg), Jaismine (57kg), Lubabtsaihi (64kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), Pooja Rani (75kg), Saweety (81kg) and Anupama (+81kg) will play their respective semi-finals.

Five men boxers, including defending champion Amit Panghal (52kg), Shiva Thapa (64kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Varinder Singh (60kg) and Sanjeet (91kg) will be seen competing in the last-4 stage on Friday.

Shiva Thapa, who has secured a record fifth successive medal at the Asian Championships, will take on top-seed Bakhtiyor Usmonov of Tajikistan.

Panghal will square off against Kazakh boxer Saken Bibosinov.

Langer under pressure to change coaching style

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY, 27 MAY

India's top tennis player Sumit Nagal stopped short of a hat-trick of Grand Slam main draw appearances following a straight-set

defeat in the second round of the French Open qualifying event.

The Haryana youngster crashed out of the clay court major with a 3-6, 3-6 loss to Alejandro Tabilo of Chile last night.

Nagal broke the serve of his rival, ranked 23 places below him at 146, twice but dropped his own serve five times. With the defeat of the 23-year-old from Jhajjar, India's challenge has ended in the qualifiers. PTI

ty 20 World Cup and home Ashes," he added. The report stated that leadership consultant Tim Ford, who oversaw the re-integration of Steve Smith and David Warner into the team two years ago after the ball-tampering bans, had conducted a second review.

"Ford interviewed players virtually towards the end of the home season, with their responses to be kept anonymous.

In a wide-ranging exercise, which checked on player welfare at the end of a difficult season, he asked for their thoughts on the team's values and what needed updating since they last underwent the process with him two years ago.

"It's part of our ongoing commitment to on-and-off-field improvement and we expect it will have a similar benefit in the team's preparation for the forthcoming Twen-

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