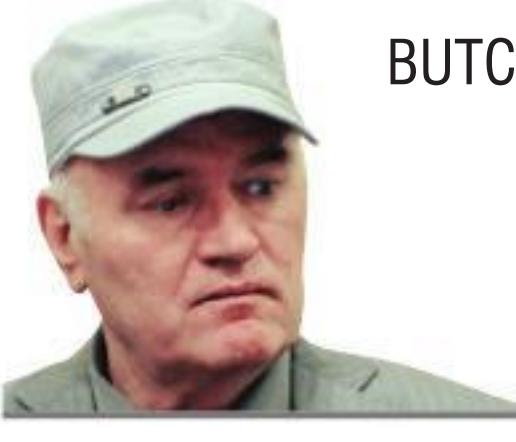


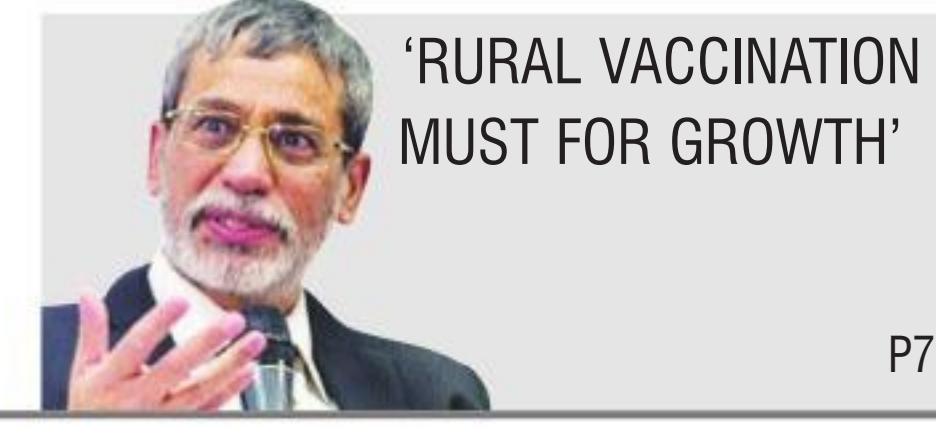


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KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR



BUTCHER OF BOSNIA



P6

'RURAL VACCINATION
MUST FOR GROWTH'

P7



FILMMAKER FACES
SEDITION FIR FOR
'BIOWEAPON' REMARK

P4



IF DAVID MAKES
A PROMISE, HE
LIVES UP TO IT

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light to moderate rain/thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 37 and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

| Max: 91% | Min: 47% |
|------------------|------------------|
| TEMPERATURE | |
| Max: 39.0°C (-1) | Min: 20.4°C (-8) |
| SUN RISES | SUN SETS |
| 05:23 hrs | 19:20 hrs |
| MOON RISES | MOON SETS |
| 07:32 hrs | 21:08 hrs |

THUMBNAILS



Sea waves crash ashore near the Gateway of India during high tide in Mumbai. AGENCIES

ED notice to cryptocurrency exchange: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday said it has issued a show cause notice to the country's largest cryptocurrency exchange for undertaking transactions worth over Rs 2,790 crore in alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Mumbai headquartered WazirX is like a domestic crypto currency and bitcoin exchange start-up registered under the company name Zammal Labs Pvt Ltd that was incorporated in December, 2017.

Govt holds back release of IIP data for April: The government has held back the release of complete data of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for April, as was done for the same month last year due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Last year in June, the National Statistical Office (NSO) had held back the release of complete IIP data due to the effect of the nationwide lockdown on factory output. This year too industrial production was hit due to lockdown restrictions. According to the partial data released on Friday by the NSO, the IIP (general index) stood at 126.6 points in April this year.

Pak Assembly passes Bill to give Jadhav right of appeal

ISLAMABAD, 11 JUNE

The Pakistan government has rushed through the National Assembly a Bill to provide the right of appeal to Indian death-row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav amidst ruckus and boycott by the Opposition.

The lower house of Parliament passed the ICJ (Review and Re-consideration) Bill, 2020 on Thursday. The Bill is aimed at allowing Jadhav to have consular access in line with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict.

Jadhav, the 51-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. India approached the International Court of Justice against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence.

The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay.

The ICJ, in its 2019 verdict, had asked Pakistan to provide a proper forum for appeal against the sentence given to Jadhav.

The Bill was among 21 laws passed by the National Assembly on Thursday evening, ignoring protests by the Opposition lawmakers who wanted the proper reading of Bills.

But the government suspended rules of business regarding legislation to bulldoze 21 laws in a single sitting. PTI

The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

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Prodigal Mukul Roy returns to TMC fold

Mamata welcomes ex-aide; says defectors who left before polls won't be welcome



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 11 JUNE

Mukul Roy, a BJP national vice president, on Friday rejoined the Trinamul Congress, with TMC chief Mamata Banerjee welcoming him back to the party fold.

Miss Banerjee, announcing Mr Roy's return to the Trinamul Congress at Trinamul Bhavan here, said: "Mukul Roy is like one of our family members. He was feeling claustrophobic in the BJP. Any person with self-respect cannot work with BJP. The BJP leaders are like landed zamindars and they did not treat their party workers with dignity."

She also said that Roy was suffering from mental pressure and gradually he was becoming sick but he could not say it in public.

Mr Roy told the Press: "I've left the BJP as I can't work there. I'm feeling satisfied to be back in my old party." Reporters

reminded Mr Roy that when he joined the BJP, he criticised both Mamata Banerjee and her nephew, who is at present party's all India general secretary and asked him what he has to say about that. Before Mr Roy could reply, Mamata Banerjee quipped: "Mukul never said anything against the party. Even during election he never abused Trinamul Congress. So we have decided to take back Mukul into the party."

She said there are two categories of defectors. One category is of those who are subdued like Mukul Roy. "But our party had decided not to take back those defectors who had changed sides for money, power, just before election and openly abused the party."

Asked whether the party was strengthened at Mukul Roy's return to the party fold, the Trinamul supremo said,

"Our party was strong enough as we won the Assembly poll with a landslide victory." Mamata

Banerjee also hinted that Mukul Roy would be asked to look after the party's organisation.

Asked about Sonali Guha and Rajib Banerjee, other TMC leaders who defected to the BJP, Miss Banerjee said that the party has taken no decision yet.

Asked whether Mukul Roy is worried about ED and CBI coming after him over the Sarada and Narada cases, Miss Banerjee said angrily: "Why is this case going on for seven years? Trinamul Congress has no connection with these cases."

MAMATA BANERJEE

of vaccines in the country?"

Mukul Roy along with his son Subhrangshu Roy came to Trinamul Bhavan at 3 p.m. Mr Roy had left TMC in 2017 September and joined the BJP.

Mr Roy was made BJP's all India vice president but sources said that he was more or less sidelined in the party after Suendu Adhikari joined the BJP.

Speculation had been rife for some time on a possible homecoming by Mr Roy who had crossed over to the BJP in 2017 after being charged in the Narada tape sting case.

With the fresh cases, the total tally of cases has climbed to 2,92,74,823 with 11,21,671 active cases and 3,63,079 deaths so far.

ICMR to conduct sero survey in June to track Covid spread: MoHFW



'FDA snub to Covaxin will have no impact'

After the US FDA rejected emergency use authorisation to Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, the Indian government on Friday said it respects the decision but asserted it will have no impact whatsoever on India's vaccination programme.

In what could potentially delay the launch of Covaxin in the USA, the Food and Drug Administration there has "recommended" Ocugen Inc, the US partner of the Indian vaccine maker, to go for Biologics Licence Application (BLA) route with additional data, nixing hopes of emergency use authorisation. PTI

Details on Page 5

ed between 30 April to 6 May at 21.6 per cent.

Delhi's positivity rate dips to 0.31 pc: The national capital today recorded 238 new coronavirus cases — the lowest in over three months — and 24 Covid-linked deaths while the positivity rate dropped to 0.31 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The fresh cases were detected out of 77,112 tests, the health bulletin said. This was the lowest count of coronavirus infections in the city in over three months as 217 cases were reported on 2 March with the figure rising to 240 on 3 March.

(SEE P2)

PM Modi meets Shah, Nadda amid Cabinet reshuffle buzz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held deliberations with Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J P Nadda amid speculation about a reshuffle in the Union Cabinet, an exercise Modi has not undertaken since forming the government for a second time in May 2019.

There is also a growing buzz about a Cabinet expansion in Uttar Pradesh after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met the PM and the BJP top brass in the national capital.

Sources, however, added that Modi has been meeting Union ministers in different batches of late, and Nadda has

also been present there.

The deliberations among the top BJP leaders at the prime minister's residence came a day after Shah also met party allies from Uttar Pradesh, including Apna Dal's Anupriya Patel who was a minister in the first Modi government but was not inducted in the next.

There has been no official word from the party on these deliberations.

The BJP has often engaged in the review of its organisation and government works in different states.

Nadda had also held a meeting with the party general secretaries where, besides the relief work carried out by the saffron organisation during the Covid-19 pandemic,

its performance in the recent assembly polls were reviewed.

With the party now gearing up for the next round of assembly polls in five states early next year, including in all important Uttar Pradesh, it is expected to take various measures to bolster its social equation.

Of these five states, the BJP is in power in Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur besides Uttar Pradesh, while the Congress is at the helm in Punjab.

Sources said the party leadership may move to take a series of measures to reinvigorate its state organisations and governments, and a reshuffle of the Union cabinet can be a part of the larger exercise.

Implement 1 nation 1 ration card: SC to WB

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the West Bengal government to immediately implement the one nation one ration card scheme.

A Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and M.R. Shah said no excuse will be considered and the state must implement the scheme, as the state government counsel submitted that there are Aadhaar seeding issues. The bench said: "You cannot cite one or the other problem. This is for migrant workers."

Hearing the suo moto case, the top court addressed the problems and miseries of migrant workers amid the Covid pandemic.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioners, submitted that there were nearly 2.8 crore migrants without ration cards, and they are under serious difficulty as they would not be covered under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Yojana.

The Bench noted that the scheme has been extended till November, but Dave said the scheme will benefit only those who have ration cards.

He, however, urged people to continue following the Covid appropriate behaviour and social distancing norms. India's overall tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,92,74,823 with 11,21,671 active cases and 3,63,079 deaths so far.

'THIS IS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS'

» Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioners, submitted that there were nearly 2.8 crore migrants without ration cards, and they are under serious difficulty as they would not be covered under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Yojana.

» West Bengal government counsel submitted that the state has not yet implemented the scheme

have been identified under the Garib Kalyan scheme.

As the Bench queried what scheme will cover the people who don't have ration cards, Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati replied that the latitude has been left to the states and it is for the states to have schemes for those who do not have ration cards.

The Bench noted that the scheme has been extended till November, but Dave said the scheme will benefit only those who have ration cards.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta pointed out that 80 crore

what mechanism can be adopted. The Bench said that there are states that don't have such schemes, and can the Garib Kalyan scheme be temporarily extended to also those who don't have the ration cards.

To this, Mehta said that the Centre's officials can have talks with the secretaries concerned in the states and revert after a week. "Nobody is leaving them to die. There are schemes to help them," he said.

During the hearing, counsel for the Maharashtra and Punjab governments informed the court they follow the one nation one ration card scheme.

At this stage, the Bengal government counsel submitted that the state has not implemented the scheme yet and the Bench said that it has to implement it when the others have.

PTI

Top court to order closure of case against Italian marines in India

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Friday said it would pass orders on 15 June on closure of proceedings in India against two Italian marines, accused of killing two fishermen off the Kerala coast in February 2012, and the disbursal of Rs 10 crore compensation to the heirs of the victims.

Referring to the international arbitral award and the terms of the agreement among India, Italy and the Kerala government, a bench comprising justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah said the case against marines would be now pursued by Italy there. PTI

Details on Page 4

G-7 pledges 1 billion Covid-19 vaccine shots for world

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CARIBIS BAY, 11 JUNE

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson greeted world leaders on a wooden boardwalk on the freshly raked sand of Carbis Bay to open the Group of Seven summit on Friday, offering elbow bumps to dignitaries gathering for the first time since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The leaders hope the meeting in the resort of Carbis Bay will also energise the global economy. On Friday, they



Too much importance has been accorded to one or two leaders while ignoring and humiliating the rest. That has led to the present sad situation.

WEST BENGAL BJP LEADER ANUPAM HAZRA
ASSERTING THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO BE A PART OF THE SAFFRON CAMP

HP lifts 'Corona curfew', okays transport services

Jai Ram Cabinet approves a slew of relaxations, night curfew will however remain in force

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 11 JUNE

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet on Friday lifted Corona curfew and gave nod for operation of transport services with 50 per cent capacity, along with waiving off the norms of RTPCR negative report for entering the state.

Informing about this, state parliamentary affairs minister Suresh Bhardwaj said the Cabinet meeting, which was convened in Shimla under the chairmanship of chief minister Jai Ram Thakur, decided to lift Section 144 that was imposed in the state after the second Covid wave. However, the night curfew will remain in force from 5 pm to 5 am, he stated. Bhardwaj said the Cabinet decided to increase the timing of opening of shops from 9 am to 5 pm from 14 June for 5 days while remaining closed on Saturday and Sunday.

It was decided that offices would function with 50 per cent of staff with staff strength of 75 and above from 14 June.

"All the medical colleges,



ayurvedic colleges and dental colleges would remain open from 23 June while pharmacy and nursing schools will open from 28 June.

Intrastate public transport will be allowed with 50 percent occupancy and section 144 has been lifted with waiving off requirement of RTPCR tests for entering the state," he said.

The Cabinet provided a relief of about Rs 40 crore to the transport sector, one of the worst hit sectors by the pandemic including Interest Sub-

vention Scheme on working capital for stage carriage operators. Under this, a loan amount of Rs 2 lakh per bus and maximum amount up to Rs 20 lakh will be provided to the bus operators as working capital," he said.

He further stated that the duration of the loan will be 5 years in which one year will be off moratorium period and there will be 75 percent interest subvention which will be paid by the state government. In the second year, there would

be an interest subvention of 50 per cent which would be borne by the state government and Rs 11 crore relief will be provided by the government under this scheme.

"The Cabinet also provided much needed relief to stage carriage, taxi, maxi, autorickshaws and institution buses by giving the relief of 50 per cent on payment of Special Road Tax and Token from 1 August to 31 March.

The transport sector would get relief of about Rs 20 crore

due to this decision and the Cabinet also decided to provide 50 per cent relief on Special Road Tax and Token Tax during the period of three months from 1 April to 30 June.

A revised interest subvention on working capital loan for hospitality industry has also been approved to ensure that tourism units operators can get easier access to working capital at interest rates lower than the prevailing market rates," the minister said. He added the graduate and shashtri final year will be conducted during the month of July as per the SoPs issued by UGC while 1st and 2nd year students exams will be conducted after the final examinations.

And academic session for the year 2021-22 for graduation classes will start from the 1st week of August this year.

He further added that the Cabinet directed the Jal Shakti department to go ahead for filling up 2,322 posts of different categories under departmental para workers policy to effectively manage 486 drinking water and 31 irrigation schemes in the state.

Lockdown broke chain of Covid transmission in Haryana: Vij

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 11 JUNE

Haryana health minister Anil Vij on Friday said the lockdown imposed in the state since 3 May in view of the prevailing Covid situation has broken the chain of corona infection.

Speaking to reporters, Vij said the lockdown, termed as "Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana (Epidemic Alert-Safe Haryana)" by the state government, has been able to protect the people of the state from coronavirus.

Everyone is cooperating and adhering to the restrictions in place due to the lockdown, so the graph of corona is depicting a downward trend, the minister said adding that within the coming days the state will be able to break the chain of Corona in a better way.

Vij said that "Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana", is not just a quote but it is a strong shield of protection. He said however the people of the state need to be careful and alert from Corona.

He said that of course the graph of corona infection is declining but still we need to be careful and alert.



Doctors, Para-medical staff, Nurses, Police Staff, Safai Karamcharis, and all other concerned departments have put in full force to contain the spread of Corona.

He appealed to the people to ensure their participation in preventing the spread of corona infection by following the instructions issued by the government. He also said that the state government is reviewing continuously in this regard.

Meanwhile, Vij said that the state government is going to conduct Sero-Survey in the state from 15 June and children above six years of age will also be included in it to determine the prevalence of SAR-CoV-2 antibodies in them.

He said that through this survey, the prevalence of Covid antibodies in the people of the state will be gathered. The survey will also reveal whether the antibodies were made due to vaccination or due to corona infection, the minister said.

"Our main objective is to keep the people of the state alert and to protect them from corona infection," Vij said, adding the lockdown has yielded fruitful results.

"It is our common responsibility to protect the lives of the people, hence wearing of masks, maintaining social distancing and frequent hand hygiene are also included in the basic mantras to prevent corona infection," he added.

Appreciating the actions of the Corona warriors, he said that the Corona warriors are standing on every front to contain its spread.

Virbhadr Singh tests Covid positive again

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 11 JUNE

Former HP chief minister and senior Congress leader Virbhadr Singh on Friday tested positive for Coronavirus second time while undergoing treatment for post-Covid complications at IGMC Shimla in Himachal Pradesh.

IGMC Shimla medical superintendent Dr Janak Raj informed that Singh, a six-time chief minister, had tested positive again for Covid while undergoing treatment at the hospital. "Now Singh has been admitted in a dedicated Covid facility and his condition is stable," Dr Raj said while urging all to not fall for rumours being spread on social media platforms. Earlier, he was tested positive for Covid on 12 April after which he was admitted to a hospital in Chandigarh.

Pb Police arrest weapons smuggler, seize cache of foreign-made pistols

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 11 JUNE



Punjab Police on Thursday night seized a huge cache of foreign-made pistols, and arrested a weapons smuggler allegedly linked with Pakistan-based terrorist outfits and anti-India pro-Khalistani elements based in USA, Canada and UK.

The weapons were meant for carrying out terrorist activities in various parts of India. Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta disclosed on Friday, giving details of the seizure. Jagjit Singh, alias Jaggu (25), a resident of Batala, was arrested from near Kathumangal, Amritsar on Thursday night by a team of Punjab Internal Security Wing, Amritsar.

In an intelligence-led operation, a police team in Amritsar intercepted an I-20 car bearing

rounds, nine Pistols of .30 bore (Made in China) and 22 Magazines; 19 Pistols of .30 bore (Star mark), 38 Magazines and 148 rounds; and one Pistol of 9mm (Baretta-Italian) and two Magazines.

Giving details of the weapons smuggling nexus, the DGP said preliminary investigations had revealed that Jagjit had been directed by Darmanjot Singh alias Darman Kahlon, a former gangster criminal, to collect this weapon consignment.

The team recovered from the two nylon bags containing 48 foreign-made Pistols of different foreign makes and bores, along with magazines and ammunition. The cache included 19 Pistols 9mm (Zigana-Made in Turkey), 37 Magazines and 45 registration no. PB-06-AN-7016 at specially laid police naka on Amritsar-Batala road, Kathungal village.

The team recovered from the two nylon bags containing 48 foreign-made Pistols of different foreign makes and bores, along with magazines and ammunition. The cache included 19 Pistols 9mm (Zigana-Made in Turkey), 37 Magazines and 45

had reportedly tasked Jagjit to collect and conceal the weapon consignment and wait for further instructions for the delivery of the pistols, said the DGP, adding that open-ended warrants of Darmanjot Singh, a proclaimed offender in Punjab, have been obtained.

The DGP said the Punjab Police, which has launched a relentless drive against the nefarious designs of Pak-sponsored terrorist elements who are trying to disturb the peace, communal harmony and destabilise the state, has busted 44 terror modules over the last four years. Besides, 283 terrorists/criminals have been arrested, and 21 Rifles, 163 revolvers, 38 hand grenades, 10 drones, five satellite phone, two Walkie-Talkie sets and RDX have been seized in this period.

The mastermind of this smuggling racket, Darman

100% pass percentage in Haryana Board secondary exam

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 11 JUNE

The Board of School Education, Haryana, on Friday declared the result of secondary March-2021 examination with pass percentage of 100 per cent.

Candidates can check their result on the official website of the board i.e. www.bseh.org.in.

Giving information about the examination result, Board chairman, Prof Jagbir Singh said that this examination was to be conducted in the month of April, but could not be conducted due to Covid-19 pandemic and the examination was cancelled as per the instructions of the education department.

He further informed that the result of secondary examination (regular) candidates

was sent by the concerned schools.

The result of compartment candidates has been declared on the basis of taking the proportionately of marks scored in internal assessment and practical examination of 100 per cent.

Candidates can check their result on the official website of the board i.e. www.bseh.org.in.

Singh informed that the result of about 3,13,345 candidates of the secondary (regular) examination has been declared including 1,72,059 boys and 1,41,286 girls appeared.

The results of 11,278 candidates for compartment examination have been declared including 5,884 boys and 5,394 girls candidates.

He further said that the pass percentage of government schools and private

schools has been 100 per cent in this examination result. Similarly, the pass percentage of students from rural areas and students of urban areas has also been 100 per cent.

He said that for secondary examination March-2021, the candidates who had applied for partial subject marks improvement / full subject marks improvement and additional Subjects would get the same marks in upcoming examination of Board.

Admission will be granted without fee on the basis of submitted application. He further said that if any candidate is not satisfied with the declared result may appear in the class improvement examination in the upcoming examination of the Board.

HP govt not ready for Covid 3rd wave: Cong

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 11 JUNE

Himachal Pradesh Congress secretary in charge Sanjay Dutt on Friday accused the chief minister Jai Ram Thakur government of mismanagement and that the government is not prepared for third Covid wave as no arrangements are in place for pediatric care.

Addressing media after leading a cycle rally in Shimla as part of statewide protests against price rise, Dutt said Congress was staging protests across state and country against the rising inflation across the country.

"The poor and common people are sick and tired of the anti-people policies of the Modi government as rising inflation has broken the backbone of common man in Covid pandemic," he said, adding the BJP government came to power with the promise to end inflation but instead it was fueling it.

SAD to prepare manifesto for 2022 polls by Oct 2021: Badal



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 11 JUNE

hand parties like Congress believe in making "tall and false promises" with employees and other sections of society to "mislead" them with the sole motive of achieving power.

Badal said that the party is in process of preparing the election manifesto for 2022 elections and most likely it will be completed by the end of October 2021.

In a meeting with Mulazam (government employees) Front of the party in which front leaders submitted a memorandum to him, Badal said the SAD will include those demands only which can be fulfilled by the party once it forms government in state.

He said that SAD believes in keeping its words as it had done during previous governments led by it. He said that on the other

dead or missing, was the result of an avalanche that dropped about 27 million cubic metres of rock and glacier ice from the nearby Ronti Peak, according to a study by an international team of researchers.

The region experienced a humanitarian tragedy on February 7 this year, when a wall of debris flow that transported boulders 20 metres in diameter, and scoured the valley walls up to 220 metres above the valley floor, the researchers said.

To investigate the cause, scope, and impacts of the disaster, a global team of 53 scientists came together in the days following the tragedy.

The researchers, including those from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and Indian Institute of Technology Indore, determined that the flood was caused by falling rock and glacier ice that melted on its descent, and not by a lake or diverted river.

The study, published in the journal Science on Thursday, suggests that climate change is contributing to such events happening more frequently, and highlights risks of increasing development projects in fragile environments.

The rock and ice avalanche rapidly transformed into an extraordinarily large and mobile debris flow that transported boulders 20 metres in diameter, and scoured the valley walls up to 220 metres above the valley floor, the researchers said.

The finding will help researchers and policymakers better identify emerging hazards in the region.

The study used satellite imagery, seismic records, and eyewitness videos to produce computer models of the flow.

Initial hypotheses for the cause of the event suggested a glacial lake outburst flood.

However, there are no glacial lakes large enough to produce

a flood anywhere near the site, the researchers noted.

"Our access to high-resolution satellite imagery and research software, and our expertise in satellite remote sensing were crucial to get a bird's-eye view of how the event unfolded," said study co-author Shashank Bhushan, a doctoral student at the University of Washington in the US. "We worked with our French collaborators to coordinate satellite collections within days of the event and rapidly process the images to derive detailed topographic maps of the site," Bhushan said.

The team compared the images and topographic maps from before and after the event to document all of the changes and reconstruct the sequence of events.

"We tracked a plume of dust and water to a conspicuous dark patch high on a steep slope," said study lead author Dan Shugar, associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder.

The team also quantified how the pulverised rock and ice were redistributed over the downstream areas.

"As the block fell, most of the glacier ice melted within minutes. This resulted in a huge volume of water associated with the flooding," Bhushan said.

"This is highly unusual -- a normal rockslide or snow/ice

avalanche could not have produced such huge volumes of water," he explained.

The team also used satellite image archives to show that previous large ice masses had been dislodged from the same ridge and struck the same valley in recent years.

The researchers suggest that climate change is likely increasing the frequency of such events, and that the greater magnitude of the latest disaster should be considered before further infrastructure development in the area.

These high-mountain rivers are appealing for hydropower projects, and we need a better understanding of the full spectrum of potential high-mountain hazards," said David Shean, a University of Washington assistant professor.

"We hope that lessons learned from this effort will improve our ability to respond to future disasters and guide policy decisions that will save lives," he added.

Grievances on Delhi Covaxin shortage for 18-44 group 2nd dose addressed: HC

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Delhi High Court Friday noted that grievances of people here in the age group of 18-44 years who had received first dose of COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin and were finding it difficult to get its second dose have been addressed to a large extent and no further orders are required.

Justice Rekha Palli disposed of the three pendency filed by persons who were finding it difficult to get the second dose of Covaxin after getting the first jab as they have been fully vaccinated now.

The court was informed by the Delhi government that after 40,000 doses, now an additional quantity of 20,000

and as per the CoWin app, between the period June 7-10, 49,206 beneficiaries have been vaccinated with second dose of Covaxin in government vaccination centers.

The court was informed that the Delhi Chief Secretary has issued an order on June 6 that the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has directed that all private hospitals and nursing homes functioning as COVID

THUMBNAILS



Beneficiaries wait in a queue to receive vaccine dose in Hyderabad on Friday. IANS

YSR meets Pradhan: Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday met Union minister of steel Dharmendra Pradhan and urged him again privatizing Vizag Steel Plant and start work for the petro chemical complex at Kakinada SEZ. SNS

Vandalur zoo welcomes baby Chimpanzee: A new attraction at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, popularly known as the Vandalur zoo in Chennai. It was born to Gowri (Susie), a chimpanzee received from the Singapore zoo, on 9 June, a AZAP release said on Friday. PTI

Filmmaker faces sedition FIR for 'bioweapon' remark



SNS
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 11 JUNE

Malayalam filmmaker and activist Aisha Sultana (in pic) has been booked on charges of sedition for allegedly accusing the Centre government of using 'COVID-19' as a bioweapon against the people of Lakshadweep.

As per reports, the Lakshadweep police have on Thursday registered a case against Sultana, a native of Chetlat island, under Sections 124A (sedition) and 153B (hate speech) based on a complaint filed by BJP's Lakshadweep unit president Abdul Khader.

In his complaint, Abdul Khader alleged that Sultana had stated that the Centre was using COVID-19 as a 'bioweapon' on the people of Lakshadweep, in a Malayalam TV channel debate. He said her words were in 'bad

taste and intended to create hatred and aversion in the minds of people.'

The remarks had sparked severe protests from the BJP unit in Lakshadweep. BJP workers had filed several complaints against Sultana in Kerala as well.

In the debate on the Malayalam channel Media One, Aisha Sultana had stated, 'Before the Centre took care, Lakshadweep had zero cases of Covid. Now, it is reporting a daily spike of 100 cases.

SET TO SAIL



A boatman repairs his boat after authorities approved the start of boat operations in River Ganga with Covid guidelines, in Varanasi on Friday. IANS

Mamata Banerjee to wed Socialism in presence of Communism, Leninism, Marxism in Salem



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, 11 JUNE

Mamata Banerjee to marry Socialism!

Though the West Bengal chief minister is originally from the Congress family which propagates socialism, she is a spinster. But in a remote village Amanikondalampatti Kattur near Salem in Tamil Nadu, Mamata Banerjee will wed Socialism on 13 June. The marriage will be solemnised in the presence of Communism, Leninism and Marxism! A viral wedding invitation confirms it.

This Mamata Banerjee is the daughter of a local Congress leader K Palaniswami and his wife Neelambal and Socialism is the son of A Mohan, a Communist Party of India (CPI) leader.

Communism and Leninism are the brothers of Socialism.

Marxism is the grandson of the family. Mohan, who named his three sons as Socialism, Communism and Leninism, has a story to tell.

'I was deeply disturbed when people said Communism is dead after the Soviet Union's disintegration. Although at that time, I was unmarried, I decided to name my children reflecting my admiration for these ideolo-

gies,' said Mohan.

Mohan told the media that he had been active in politics since he was 18 years old. He had worked in the CPI alongside his father and grandfather and organised protests, and eventually opted to become a full-timer with the party.

Mohan (52) is currently the Salem district secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and has previously con-

TRIGGER MEN



» **Latorre, who had suffered a brain stroke on 31 August, 2014, was first granted bail and allowed by the apex court on 12 Sept, 2014 to go to Italy for four months and after that, extensions have been granted to him.**

» **On 26 May, 2016, Girone was also granted bail with certain conditions and allowed by the top court to go to his country till the jurisdictional issue was decided.**

does not fritter away.

In February 2012, India had accused the two marines on board the MV Enrica Lexie – an Italian flagged oil tanker – of killing two Indian fishermen who were on a fishing vessel in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that Republic of Italy has deposited Rs 10 crore with it over and above the ex-gratia paid earlier

and the same has been deposited by the Union Ministry of External Affairs with the apex court's registry as directed.

There was an award by International Tribunal, which we as a Nation have accepted. The agreement is among Republic of Italy, India and the Kerala government, the law officer said, adding, Now, the question of apportionment of the compensation amount remains and it can be left to the Kerala Government. The dispute before the international tribunal was as to which country, Italy or India, has the jurisdiction to prosecute the marines and it was decided that both the nations have the concurrent jurisdiction, Mehta said.

But based on facts it was decided that India would not pursue the criminal case and proceedings would be started in Italy, he added.

Senior Advocate Sohail Dutta, appearing for Italy, urged the bench to pass an order to quash the criminal proceedings pending against the marines as per the award of the International Tribunal.

Earlier, the Centre had told the court that Italy had initiated the transfer of Rs 10 crore and as soon as the money is received, the government will deposit it with the apex court as per the April 9 direction.

The Centre had earlier told

Sacked T'gana minister Rajender to join BJP

HYDERABAD, 11 JUNE

What the Centre has deployed is a bioweapon. I can say this clearly that the Centre has deployed bioweapon against the people of Lakshadweep.' As her statement courted controversy, Sultana said she used the word, but did not attack the country or the Centre. 'I was referring to some of the decisions of Praful Patel (the administrator) which infuriated local people. Despite popular sentiment, he continues to antagonise people. As a local resident I have right to criticise him,' she wrote in a Facebook post.

As a film professional, Sultana has been in the forefront of the campaign against the reforms introduced by the Lakshadweep administration headed by Praful Patel.

Rajender was once comrade in arms of the chief minister during the struggle for statehood but fell out of favour recently and the wily chief minister used several complaints of land grabbing against him to force him out of the Cabinet.

While the former health minister has been steadily meeting senior BJP leaders including the central leadership during a recent visit to New Delhi TRS is also looking for a viable alternative to the popular leader in his seat which is in Karimnagar district but close to Warangal.

Since Rajender is a backward classes (BC) leader, the community which has recently favoured BJP TRS is actively looking for a BC leader of similar stature.

There were reports that TRS was approaching TDP's Telangana president L Ramana, a BC leader to fill up the vacuum left by Rajender's departure.

tested on a People's Welfare Alliance ticket from the Veerapandi constituency in the 2016 Assembly elections.

Communism is a lawyer, while the second and third sons, Leninism and Socialism, are running a silver anklet manufacturing unit. Despite their professions, they continue to be strong hands in party work, which gives immense happiness to Mohan.

The bride's family, meanwhile, were Congress loyalists and hence on having a girl child about 20 years back, they named their daughter after the up and coming leader from West Bengal.

Although the families expected the wedding to be a small one, the viral invite has prompted many netizens to shower their blessings on the couple. The family now receives hundreds of calls after the wedding card went viral.

the top court that Italy has assured the Indian government that it would prosecute the marines there as per law and that maximum compensation will be ensured to the victims' family members.

The Centre had referred to the last year's ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague which held that India was entitled to get compensation in the case but can't prosecute the marines due to offi-

cial immunity enjoyed by them. It had said the arbitration under United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS), which was instituted on a request from Italy, has delivered its award on May 21, 2020.

Latorre, who had suffered a brain stroke on August 31, 2014, was first granted bail and allowed by the apex court on September 12, 2014 to go to Italy for four months and after that, extensions have been granted to him.

TENDER

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division HPPWD, Hamirpur in form No. 6 & 8 on behalf of Governor of H.P. for the following works from the contractors of appropriate class enlisted with HP.PWD. The tender shall be opened in the presence of the contractors / firms or their representative who wish to be present.

TIME SCHEDULE OF TENDER:-

- 1 Date and time of receipt of application for tender form:- 23.06.2021 up to 4.00 P.M.
- 2 Date and time of issue of tender form :- 26.06.2021 up to 3.00 P.M.
- 3 Date and time of receipt of tenders:- 28.06.2021 up to 10.30 A.M.
- 4 Date and time of opening of tenders:- 28.06.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

The request for issue of tenders should be on the PRESCRIBED APPLICATION FORM which can be obtained from the office of undersigned and tenders will be issued to only those contractors who qualify the criteria after the scrutiny of application forms by the Committee constituted for this purpose.

| Sr. No. | Name of Work | Estimated cost | EMD | Time Limit | Cost of tender | Eligible class of contractor |
|---------|---|----------------|---------|------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | A/R & M/O Chief Office Hamirpur. (SH:- Construction pedestal for machine and RCC Shelf at Parking floor). | 78976.00 | 1600.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 2 | A/R & M/O various roads under HPPWD Lambloo Sub Division. (SH:- Supply and stacking of grit, sand and aggregate in Kale Amb Section & Kehdroo Section). | 48683.00 | 1000.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 3 | Restoration of rain damages on Masyana Bhatwara road km 0/0 to 5/200. (C/o Roller Compacted Concrete (RCCP) at RD 3/620 to 3/720). | 360303.00 | 7300.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 4 | C/o Transport Nagar at Kohla. (SH:- Conducting Topography Survey and contour maps with cross section (Digital Survey with total station). | 100000.00 | 2000.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 5 | Repair and maintenance of Sub Division Store Building at Lambloo. (SH:- Addition and alteration of store building 1st floor and C/o boundary wall). | 171594.00 | 3500.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 6 | Restoration of rain damages on Taun Bharat Nandan Plast road. (SH:- C/o Retaining wall at RD 1/366 to 48985.00 dry wall shed etc.) | 48985.00 | 1000.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 7 | Construction of road from the House of Late Sh. Daroga Ram Sharma to the House of Sh. Pawan Thakur village Bhola Mohan on link road from Balokheri to village Bhola km 0/0 to 1/500. (SH:- Providing and laying M/T at RD 1/075 to 1/087 & 1/097 to 1/197). | 96177.00 | 2000.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 8 | C/O Balance work for C/O Govt. Project building in sheep Breeding Farm at Tal in Tehsil Bhorjan Distt. Hamirpur. (SH:- C/O Ramps, Cement concrete flooring, painting, distemping of male shed and fixing rain water pipe in female shed etc.). | 468247.00 | 9400.00 | Two Months | 350/- | Class - D |
| 9 | A/R & M/O Circle office at Hamirpur (SH:- Repair & Maintenance of toilet (Attached of AE Design office)). | 95208 | 2000.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |
| 10 | Repair of link road to I.T.O office Sham Nagar & Distt. Hamirpur. (HP). (SH:- C/O Interlocking Pavement at RD. 0/0 to 0/075) | 98143.00 | 2000.00 | One Month | 350/- | Class - D |

1. The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate, Time deposit account in any of the post office in HP / FDR of any Bank duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division HPPWD. Hamirpur must be accompanied with the application for receipt of tender form along with cost of form. Tender application received without earnest money will be rejected.
2. The contractors / firms should possess the following documents (photo copy to be attached with application for obtaining the tenders documents):
 - (i) Latest enlistment / renewal orders with application for obtaining the tenders documents.
 - (ii) GST Number issued by the Sale Tax Department.
 - (iii) PAN (Permanent Account Number) issued by the Income Tax Department.
 Shall contain scanned copies of EPF issued from competent authority.
3. The Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division HPPWD, Hamirpur reserves the right to reject any tender without assigning any reason(s).
4. The Cess Charges @ 1% will be deducted from the gross amount of work done by the Contractor.
5. The work will be completed by the contractor with the stipulated period.
6. The contractor firms are required to insert the rate of each item in words as well as in figures failing which Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/rejects any over all tender.
7. The tender shall be issued to only those contractor / firms who are eligible, suitable and competent.
8. The tender forms shall be issued to eligible contractors depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.
10. The Contractor/firm having necessary documents and past adequate experience shall be preferred.
11. The Contractor who have failed to start/Complete the work in hand with in reasonable time shall not be issued tender Forms.
12. A contractor enlisted in a particular class shall be eligible to tender for his own class and one step below.
13. Only one No. tender form will be issued to the eligible contractor.
14. If 28.06.2021 happens to be holiday the tender shall be opened on next working day at 11.00.
15. GST will be deducted as per rates fixed by the Govt.

Executive Engineer,
Hamirpur Division,
HPPWD, Hamirpur. Pin Code 177001
Telephone No. 01972-222510
e-mail: ee-ham-hp@nic.in
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

PRESS NOTICE

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Bharmour invites tenders on behalf of Government of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through e-tendering process.

| Sr. No | Name of work | Estimated cost | Earnest money | Time Limit | Cost of tender form |
|--------|--|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 | A/R & M/O to various WSS under Jal Shakti Division Bharmour Tehsil Bharmour Distt. Chamba (SH:- Unloading and stacking of cement, bleaching powder, steel an CI GI DI pipes in Jal Shakti Store at Bharmour) | 232019 | 4640/- | Three Month | 250/- |
| 2 | C/o FIS from Purhi Nallah to Khentoo Purhi (SH:- C/o CC chamber in 1:3:6 RD 0/550 to 1/025 | 772766 | 15455/- | Three Month | 250/- |
| 3 | C/o FIS from Kanwas surai Nallah to Luj via Dharwas Horticulture farm Dharwas (SH:- T. No. intake, E/wall, Excavation, LU HDPE pipe 160mm , 180mm dia for joining dia at RD 0/0 to 4/200 dry rubble in different RDs | 1497129/- | 31409 | Three Month | 250/- |
| 4 | C/o FIS From Kanwas surai Nallah to Luj via Dharwas Horticulture and agriculture farm Dharwas (SH:- E/wall, excavation & HDPE pipe 32 mm OD = 2400 Rmt | 1478064 | 29561/- | Three Month | 250/- |
| 5 | Restoration of rain damages to WSS Badgam Tehsil Bharmour Distt. Chamba (SH:- Laying jointing and testing of HDPE pipe 25mm dia O/D 2800 Rmt | 265276 | 5308/- | Three Month | 250/- |



Could have procured vaccines for all with money collected in taxes on fuel

CONGRESS LEADER PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA
SLAMMING THE CENTRE OVER FUEL PRICE HIKE

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 12 JUNE 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



A physically challenged person is taken to a safe place amid rains, at Dadar in Mumbai on Friday. ■ IANS

Padma Shri recipient Dr Ashok Panagariya dies: Prominent neurologist and Padma Shri recipient Dr Ashok Panagariya (71) died of post-Covid complications in Jaipur on Friday. Expressing grief, chief minister Ashok Gehlot said the passing away of the nationally renowned neurologist was a personal loss for him and his family. ■ PTI

300 bedded Covid hospital in Assam: Coinciding with the State government's one month in action, State chief minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma dedicated a 300 bedded corona care hospital at Sarusajai stadium terming the initiative as a fine example of Centre-State collaboration. Built in association with DRDO with a project cost of rupees 21.46 crore. ■ SNS

Assam CM meets RSS chief: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh supremo Mohan Bhagwat at the organization's headquarters here on Friday. This was Sarma's first visit to the RSS headquarters after becoming chief minister of Assam a month ago. ■ PTI

Dilip Kumar discharged: Legendary actor Dilip Kumar was discharged from a hospital in Mumbai on Friday, five days after he was hospitalised due to episodes of breathlessness. The 98-year-old screen icon was admitted to suburban Khar-based Hinduja Hospital, a non-Covid facility, on Sunday. ■ PTI

Delhi court extends judicial custody of Sushil Kumar

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

A Delhi court on Friday extended the judicial custody of Olympic medalist wrestler Sushil Kumar till June 25 in connection with the alleged brawl at Chhatrasal Stadium in which a young wrestler died.

Sushil Kumar was produced before Metropolitan Magistrate Reetika Jain at the end of the nine-days judicial custody. The international wrestler is facing charges of murder, culpable homicide and kidnapping.

He, along with his associates, allegedly assaulted Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends at the stadium on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over an alleged property dispute.

Dhankar, 23, succumbed to the injuries later.

Police has alleged Sushil Kumar the main culprit and mastermind of the murder and said that there is electronic evidence wherein he and his associates could be seen beating Dhankar. The two-time Olympic medalist faces charges of murder, culpable homicide and kidnapping.

One more arrested in Chhatrasal brawl case: The Delhi Police Crime Branch has arrested a close aide of Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl in which a wrestler died and his two friends were injured, officials said on Friday. A senior police officer said the accused, identified as Anirudh, was involved in the alleged assault. He was arrested in the national capital on Thursday. ■ PTI

FDA rejects EUA for Covaxin in USA

US partner of the Indian vaccine maker told to go for Biologics Licence Application route with additional data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD, 11 JUNE

In a setback that could potentially delay the launch of Bharat Biotech's Covid vaccine Covaxin in USA, the Food and Drug Administration there has "recommended" Ocugen Inc, the US partner of the Indian vaccine maker, to go for Biologics Licence Application (BLA) route with additional data, nixing hopes of Emergency Use Authorisation.

Ocugen in a statement on Thursday announced that as recommended by the FDA, it will pursue submission of a biologics licence application (BLA) for Covaxin.

BLA is a "full approval" mechanism by the FDA for drugs and vaccines.

The development may delay the Covaxin launch in the US, Ocugen said.

"The company will no longer pursue an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Covaxin. The FDA provided feedback to Ocugen regarding



the Master File. The company had previously submitted and recommended that Ocugen pursue a BLA submission instead of an EUA application for its vaccine candidate and requested additional information and data," Ocugen said.

Ocugen is in discussions with the FDA to understand the additional information required to support a BLA submission.

The company anticipates that data from an additional clinical trial will be required to support the submission.

"Although we were close to

Govt: Working closely with states to address vax hesitancy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Amid media reports alleging 'vaccine hesitancy' among health workers in rural areas, the Union Health Ministry on Friday said it is working closely with states and union territories to address the issue.

The government of India has been supporting the efforts of states and UTs for an effective vaccination drive under the 'Whole of Government' approach since January 16 this year, it said.

There have been certain media reports alleging 'vaccine hesitancy' in rural areas among health workers, the ministry stated. "It is

finalising our EUA application for submission, we received a recommendation from the

FDA to pursue a BLA path. While this will extend our timelines, we are committed

to bringing Covaxin to the US," Dr. Shankar Musunuri, Chairman of the Board, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Ocugen said.

"This differentiated vaccine is a critical tool to include in our national arsenal given its potential to address the SARS-CoV-2 variants, including the delta variant, and given the unknowns about what will be needed to protect US population in the long term," he added.

Reacting to the FDA's "recommendation", Bharat Biotech said with good herd immunity and significant percentage of the population vaccinated, the pandemic is reducing in the United States, the US regulator had earlier communicated that no new EUAs will be approved for COVID-19 vaccines.

"All applications have to follow the biological license application process, which is the standard process for vaccines. Data from an additional clinical trial will be required to support the marketing application

submission for Covaxin," the vaccine maker said.

No vaccine manufactured or developed from India has ever received EUA or full licensure from USFDA.

"When approved, it will be a 'great leap forward' for vaccines' innovation and manufacturing from India, Bharat Biotech added.

Ocugen recently announced

that it secured exclusive rights to commercialise Covaxin in Canada and has initiated discussions with Health Canada for regulatory approval.

The company will pursue expedited authorisation for the vaccine under the Interim Order Respecting the Importation, Sale and Advertising of Drugs for Use in Relation to COVID-19 in Canada.

Tej-Manjhi meet ~ new political turn in Bihar?

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 11 JUNE

HAM(S) president Jitan Ram Manjhi talks to media after a meeting with RJD MLA Tej Pratap Yadav, in Patna.

the BJP for some time. Only yesterday, Manjhi had expressed anguish over the way the Dalits and Muslims are being dubbed as "Naxalites and Terrorists" without naming any political party. "When the poor Dalits move forward, they are called Naxalites and when poor Muslims study in madrasas, they are dubbed as terrorists. Brother, please get out of such a mentality, it is not good for the unity and integrity of the nation," Manjhi tweeted.

The BJP was quick to make fun of Manjhi's remark. "So far, we knew a terrorist has no religion and a naxalite has no caste but some experts have now managed to find out their religion and caste," state BJP vice-president Rajiv Ranjan said.

In another twist, the HAM has asked the BJP to tender an apology for terming the bomb explosion in a Bihar madrasa as "terrorist act". "We will oppose the BJP during election time if they don't

cussed politics. Manjhi said their talks remained primarily focused around the family's well-being, adding that such courtesy meetings should continue. He denied he was quitting the NDA. Similar clarifications came from Tej Pratap who said he had come to see 'Uncle' since they had not met for a long time due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Although they denied any "politics" behind it, the meeting assumes much political significance since it comes in the state's political circles.

Coming out of the meeting, both denied they dis-

apologise for this statement." HAM spokesperson Danish Rizwan warned. Manjhi is also anguished over the rejection of his demand for forming a coordination panel in the NDA where his party is a partner. It was over the same issue that Manjhi had walked out of the opposition Grand Alliance ahead of polls.

Not only Manjhi, even the JD-U finds itself in an awkward position over various issues. The fresh cause of tension between the BJP and the JD-U is the way Bihar was adjudged the "worst-performing" state in the NITI Ayog's Sustainable Development Goals index 2020-21 with the JD-U questioning the Ayog's ranking system. At least two senior ministers in the NDA government, education minister Vijay Chaudhary and water resources department minister Sanjay Jha have publicly questioned the NITI Ayog's ranking system.

Avacation bench of justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah disposed of a plea filed by doctors seeking admission to PG medical and challenging the notification of fixing of June 16 as date of INI CET 2021. Having regard to the circumstances pleaded, the fixing of the INI CET on June 16, 2021 is arbitrary and discriminatory, more so since other important examinations including Joint Entrance Examinations, Board Examinations have been postponed.

"The impugned notice is, therefore, set aside. The INI CET is directed to be postponed by at least a month from June 16, 2021, the bench said. It said that the AIIMS shall fix a convenient date for the INI CET at least one month after June 16, 2021.

Senior advocate Arvind Datar and advocate Tanvi Dubey, appearing for the doctors, Indian Medical Association and Medical Student Network (Chhattisgarh Chapter), said the decision to hold examination is unfair and arbitrary as it was conveyed to the candidates merely 19 days in advance.

Datar said that notice dated May 27, 2021 fixing date of examination as June 16 suffers from the vice of irregularity and arbitrariness as it is even against the spirit of the statement issued by Prime Minister Narendra Modi wherein NEET-PG exam was postponed for 4 months in a bid to provide adequate human resources for responding to the pandemic.

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Md. Zahid @ Guddu, S/o Abdul Aziz, R/o: H.N. 369 Kalyan Bhawan, Mata Wali Gali, Ghonda Chowk, Brahmputra Road, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 109/21 U.S. 328/379/411/34 IPC dated: 10.03.2021, P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Md. Zahid @ Guddu cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Md. Zahid @ Guddu has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Md. Zahid @ Guddu accused of FIR No. 109/21 U.S. 328/379/411/34 IPC dated: 10.03.2021, P.S. Krishna Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 28.08.2021

By Order

Aakanksha Vyas
Metropolitan Magistrate (East)

DP/459/SHD/2021

Court No. 3, Karkardoma Court, Delhi

READY TO GO



Defence minister Rajnath Singh flags-off first ever Solo Woman Motorcycle Expedition by Ms Kanchan Ugursandi to Umling La Pass, Ladakh and back, at New Delhi on Friday. ■ IANS

Will continue as CM: BSY

BENGALURU, 11 JUNE

BJP national general secretary Arun Singh's statement ruling out his replacement has given him "more strength", Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said on Friday and asserted that he will work for the development of the state during the remaining two years of the term.

The 78-year-old Lingayat strongman also said his responsibility has increased because of the trust shown in him by the BJP high command.

"Arun Singh who is Karnataka in-charge has said that there is no question (of leadership change)... it doesn't arise and that Yediyurappa will remain (CM) for the next two years and complete the term - where does that question arise," Yediyurappa said in response to a question. ■ SNS

KARTIK

General Public is hereby informed that this boy namely Kartik S/o Vijender R/o H.No. 27/7, Ground Floor, Gali No. 10, Siddhartha Gali, Vishwas Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110032 Age : 17 years, Height : 5'7", Complexion : Shallow, Build : Lean & Thin, Face : Round, wearing Black colour T-shirt, blue colour jeans and blue colour shoes in feet, has been missing since 26.05.2021 from his house. In this regard a DD No. 59-A, FIR No. 306/2021 Dated 26.05.2021 u/s 363 IPC P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi has been registered

Any person having information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO - P.S. Farsh Bazar
New Delhi,

Tel. No. 011-21210828,
21210833, 7065036028

More Pilot loyalists come out in open, spell trouble for Congress in Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, 11 JUNE

Recently, met Pilot at his Jaipur home. Like Meena, he is considered a part of the Pilot faction in the state Congress.

Pilot, who was sacked as the deputy chief minister and the state's Congress chief after his rebellion, dismissed suggestions that he is headed for the Bharatiya Janata Party. He rejected a claim made on a television show by BJP leader Rita Bahuguna Joshi that she had spoken to him about the possibility.

Rita Bahuguna Joshi said she spoke to Sachin. She might have spoken to Sachin Tendulkar (the cricketer). She doesn't have the courage to speak to me, the

Congress leader told reporters in Jaipur during his party's protest over fuel prices.

Earlier in the day, he visited Bhandara village in Dausa where he offered flowers at the memorial to his father and former Union minister Rajesh Pilot on his death anniversary.

Pilot loyalist Meena called for an expansion of the Gehlot ministry. The party high command should take a decision at the earliest because everyone is waiting, he said.

Meena had recently issued a statement praising Gehlot for fulfilling the demands from his constituency and on the government's management of the Covid crisis. He said it was his duty to appreciate the work done by the CM but he stands with the younger leader. I am with Pilot and will remain with him, the MLA told reporters.

Fuel price hike: Cong protests across India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The Congress Friday demonstrated in several parts of the country against the rising fuel prices, during which over 150 members were detained in Gujarat, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh for allegedly violating Covid protocol and protesting without permission.

The protests, in response to a call given by the Congress leadership, came on a day when another hike -- the 22nd since May 4 -- pushed the fuel prices across the country to historic heights.

The protesters pulled bullock carts, rode horse carts, staged a street play, pulled a car using a rope and set another on fire to highlight their concerns. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi asked as to how much will the BJP "loot". GDP crashing, Unemployment soaring, Fuel prices skyrocketing. In how many more ways is

the protesters pulled bullock carts, rode horse carts, staged a street play, pulled a car using a rope and set another on fire to highlight their concerns. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi asked as to how much will the BJP "loot". GDP crashing, Unemployment soaring, Fuel prices skyrocketing. In how many more ways is

INC activists during a nationwide protest against fuel price hike in New Delhi, India on Friday. ■ SNS

#BJPLootingIndia," he asked on Twitter.

The protesting leaders said the rising fuel prices and inflation have compounded the problem people were already facing due to the pandemic. An official party statement later claimed the protests were held across the country. It said that barring a few incidents of "police highhandedness" in UP and Gujarat where Congress workers were stopped and detained these protests were peaceful.

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely Muskan Kumari D/o Shambhu Singh R/o Jhuggi Chilla Khadar, Mayur Vihar-I, Delhi has been missing since 05.06.2021 at 6:00 PM from the area of P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 6A dated 05.06.2021 has been lodged at PS, Mayur Vihar, Delhi. The description of missing girl is as under:

SHO - P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi

Ph. : 011-22710335, 8750870627

DP/544/ED/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely Muskan Kumari D/o Shambhu Singh R/o Jhuggi

Imperfect competition

Geopolitics has assumed an economic edge with Tuesday's passage by the US Senate of the decidedly anti-China bill, the vote-count being a convincing 68 to 32. The economic and military war between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China has sharpened with the Senate approving what it calls a "sprawling" \$250 billion bill to curtail China's economic and military ambitions. The legislation, adopted on a bipartisan vote, invests heavily in US science and technology while threatening a bevy of punishments ~ is 'reprisal' the right expression? ~ against Beijing. The bill is intended to counter China's growing economic and military prowess, hoping that major investments in science ~ and fresh reprisals targeting Beijing ~ might give the United States an enduring edge. In a chamber whose functioning has often been impeded by partisan division, Democrats and Republicans found rare accord over the sweeping measure, known as the United States Innovation and Competition Act. Nonetheless, lawmakers have warned that Washington risked ceding the country's technological leadership to one of its foremost geopolitical adversaries. The legislation is quite the most important achievement in US history in recent times. At another remove, the Communist Party of China has been straining every nerve to ensure global economic dominance. China has spent billions propping up state-owned enterprises and subsidising research and development. According to a section of the Senators, the government in Beijing often uses US ideas to compete ~ "and sometimes cheat" ~ American employees and business enterprises. Small wonder the National People's Congress has been remarkably prompt in expressing its robust dissatisfaction. "This bill seeks to exaggerate and spread the so-called China threat to maintain global American hegemony. The United States uses human rights and religion as excuses to interfere in China's domestic politics, and deprive China of its legitimate development rights". The foreign ministry in Beijing has denounced the legislation as an example of "zero-sum thinking which distorts the facts and smears China's development path and domestic and foreign policies". As regards the nitty-gritty of the legislation ~ beyond polemics ~ the US Innovation and Competition Act invests more than \$100 billion of taxpayers' funds to reinforce the US leadership in scientific and technological innovations that are critical to national security and economic competitiveness. Additionally, it will also strengthen the security of essential supply chains, and the US' ability to address supply-chain disruptions during an economic crisis. This bill, in a word, could be the turning point for American leadership in the 21st century, not to ignore the signal development in President Biden's narrative. The terms of trade are at least theoretically weighted in favour of America ~ an eventuality that is unlikely to be readily digested by China. It is a new chapter in bilateral economic history.

Butcher of Bosnia

Tuesday's comeuppance for the former Bosnian Serb commander, Ratko Mladic, signifies that the law has eventually caught up with him after 26 years. The bare facts are horrendous enough. Mladic had lost his appeal against a 2017 conviction for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The judgment by the UN court is in a sense a victory for humanity. The court upheld the life sentence for his role in the killing of about 8,000 Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak) men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995. That massacre, in an enclave supposedly under UN protection, was the worst atrocity in Europe since World War II. Having lost his genocide appeal, it was not clear till Thursday morning as to where Mladic ~ who has incurred the epithet of 'Butcher of Bosnia' ~ will serve the rest of his sentence. Mladic was fighting a losing battle. The five-person appeals panel in The Hague found that he had failed to provide evidence to invalidate the previous convictions against him, although the presiding judge dissented on almost all counts. However, the appeals chamber also dismissed the appeal brought by the prosecution, which had sought a second conviction against Mladic for crimes committed against Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats in some other areas during the war. Such technicalities, which continued throughout the session, had delayed the verdict. Mladic had denounced the tribunal during his appeal hearing in August, calling it a "child of Western powers". His lawyers had argued he was far away from Srebrenica when the massacre happened. Mladic was one of the last suspects to face trial at the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. He was arrested in 2011 after 16 years on the run. In 2017 he was found guilty of genocide over Srebrenica, but acquitted of genocide over his army's 1992 campaign, in which Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats were expelled from their homes or detained in appalling conditions. However prolonged the trial, the tangled skein of details has been taken care of. In 2016, the same court had convicted the former Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, of planning the Srebrenica massacre, among other crimes. His initial 40-year sentence for genocide and war crimes was later increased to life in prison in 2019 ~ the remainder of which he will serve in the UK. The judgment against Mladic, after a quarter century's suspense, has been greeted as much by unconcealed glee and dissent. Survivor Semso Osmanovic, who lost 23 of his family members in the massacre, said that the verdict meant he would finally be able to return to his home town. Some of the survivors who travelled to The Hague hoped that Mladic would use his last public appearance to offer an apology that could help reconciliation in the still divided region. When the final judgment was pronounced, the man guilty of severing so many lives offered only silence.

Focus on Sundarbans ~ II

Apart from nature's fury, the land degrading anthropogenic activity is one of the prime factors for destruction of mangroves. In the forest-society interface, unplanned overexploitation of natural resources is very common. In case of Sundarbans also, as a result of continuously increasing population pressure almost half of the mangrove forests have been cut to supply fuel wood, while land has been reclaimed for settlement, aquaculture and various other purposes



Mangrove plants live in hostile environmental conditions such as high salinity, high waterlogged soil strata, tidal pressures, strong winds and sea waves. Now a question needs to be asked. Do mangroves need salt? The answer is in the negative. Generally, mangroves are facultative halophytes, meaning that they do not require salt water to live but are able to tolerate it. They do so, thereby out-competing freshwater plants by the processes of microfiltration and salt excretion. Their intricate root systems are covered with tiny pores that filter out salt from the water that surrounds them. At the same time, any of the salt that finds its way into the plants is excreted through salt glands located on the base of mangroves leaves. These processes work so well that a thirsty traveller could cut the root of a mangrove and obtain fresh drinkable water.

Mangroves reduce the height and energy of wind and swell waves passing through them, reducing their ability to erode sediments and to cause damage to structures such as dikes and sea walls. Loss of energy varies from 13 to 66 per cent over 100 meters of mangroves. Moreover, waves lose their ability to scour the sea bed and carry away sediments. Winds across the surface of water get reduced and propagation or reformation of waves is also prevented. Many mangroves have stilt roots, which are aerial and act as anchoring structures to withstand wave action.

Since most of the islands of Sundarbans are below sea level, the 3500-km long stretch is the only protection against incursion

of saline water. Watching brick embankments crumble to the hungry tide, villagers have now realised that mangroves provide the only protection to dykes that are critical to the Sundarbans' survival. Truly, during Aila villagers noticed that embankments that had mangrove plantations had weathered the storm while others had been breached.

Mangroves are considered 'land builders'. All coastline waves and currents create change, sometimes bringing sediments to the coast, but sometimes causing erosion and the loss of lands. The mangrove vegetation reduces wave energy and slows the flow of water over the soil surface, reducing the water's capacity to dislodge the sediments and carry them out of the mangrove's area. At the same time, the slower water flows can allow already suspended particles to settle out from water resulting in increased deposition of sediments. The tangles of slit roots also help the sedimentation of the particulate matter. Networks of mangrove roots provide firm anchorage to the banks of tidal rivers, creeks and also to the coastline. Moreover, it is believed that the roots of the mangroves secrete a substance which modifies the coarse particles into fine ones and helps in soil formation.

Mangroves are important to many local coastal species, both terrestrial and aquatic. For many

organisms, mangrove forests serve as the starting place for their food web. Its detritus (fallen leaves and organic material) serves as a nutrient source for planktonic and epiphytic algal food web. These microorganisms and macroinvertebrates then supply the remaining members of the food web with tremendous amounts of nutrients and energy. Mangroves are the breeding and nursery grounds for several marine organisms including commercially important shrimps, crabs and fish species. Mangroves stop contaminants like excess amounts of nitrogen and phosphorous, petroleum products and halogenated compounds from polluting the ocean waters through a process called rhizofiltration.

Apart from nature's fury, the land degrading anthropogenic activity is one of the prime factors for destruction of mangroves. In the forest-society interface, unplanned overexploitation of natural resources is very common. In case of Sundarbans also, as a result of continuously increasing population pressure almost half of the mangrove forests have been cut down to supply fuel wood, land reclamation for settlement and aquaculture and various other purposes. There remains the striking imbalance between exploitation and replacement, thereby making the ecosystem fragile. Indiscriminate prawn

seed collection, refuse and sewerage discharge discharged from urban areas, spillage of toxic pollutants as well as trash in the tourists spots and other anthropogenic factors are responsible for environmental degradation.

Sundarbans is famed for its biological diversity. It is not just an environmental asset or ecological treasure. Its mangrove forests act as a bio shield between the ocean and land. It is also a unique part of this country because this region has immense geo-political importance.

Sundarbans should be saved. To save the Sundarbans we need to leave it alone. Only thing we can do is to minimise human intervention. The development dilemma around the Sundarbans is a dilemma about preserving nature and preserving man in an environment that is extremely fragile. The Sundarbans is not a just a matter of development. It is the matter of conservation of man and the beast; of vegetation and the unique world in which each component contributes to the overall ecological balance, and to natural regeneration.

Nature in the Sundarbans commands and demands far more respect so that there is neither a ruthless dispossession of the rights of the indigenous people of the region, nor a blatant violation of its environment. One of the best-known aphorisms of Mahatma Gandhi ~ "Earth (Nature) provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not for every man's greed" ~ is in effect an exquisitely phrased one-line environmental ethic. Everybody should properly be made aware of the ethic.

(Concluded)

it should share the case reports of the Wuhan lab employees who fell ill long before China publicly reported the first Covid-19 case. Beijing will do well to cooperate with the international community's investigation and come clean on the whole affair. If the lab-leak theory is found to be correct without China's cooperation, Beijing is liable to face serious consequences.

Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 10 June.

BOLD ADVICE

SIR, This refers to "Reforming Bureaucracy" by Devendra Saksena



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

China must cooperate with probe

SIR, With a growing number of scientific studies indicating that SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus responsible for the pandemic that has ravaged the world, emerged from a Wuhan laboratory, the need for an independent and compressive probe into the origin of the virus has become imperative.

The claim that the virus may have leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), whether intentionally or not, has gained traction in recent weeks. The US president has ordered American intelligence agencies to "redouble" their efforts to find out the origin of Covid-19.

Various scientists have stated

that the virus "does not have a credible natural ancestor", as samples reveal "unique fingerprints" that could have only arisen from manipulation in a laboratory.

Their study claims that the Wuhan scientists tried to cover their tracks by retro-engineering versions of the virus to make it appear that it had evolved naturally from bats.

Millions have lost their lives to Covid-19 and millions more will perish, economies and the future of the entire nations will continue to be threatened if we do not get a grip on the virus' origin and nature. China likes to project itself as a responsible power. For a start,

it should share the case reports of the Wuhan lab employees who fell ill long before China publicly reported the first Covid-19 case. Beijing will do well to cooperate with the international community's investigation and come clean on the whole affair. If the lab-leak theory is found to be correct without China's cooperation, Beijing is liable to face serious consequences.

Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 10 June.

BOLD ADVICE

SIR, This refers to "Reforming Bureaucracy" by Devendra Saksena



EIGHT WEEKS PLEASE

SIR, The Indian government should review its earlier decision of increasing gap between two Covishield doses to 12-16 weeks and once again reduce it to eight weeks immediately in the interests of public health and safety.

The recent UK study, whose findings were published on May 22, found that those vaccinated with the first dose of Covishield in India were only 33 per cent protected against the symptomatic infection caused by Delta variant as against 60 per cent protection after administering the second dose.

A lot of debate has been held surrounding the time gap between two doses of the Covishield vaccine after the government increased it from 6-8 weeks to 12-16 weeks.

However, a new study has suggested that the gap between the doses should be reduced again to eight weeks, citing that immunity against the Delta variant (also known as B.1.617.2) is developed only after the second vaccine dose.

Evidence collected from the National Centre for Disease Control and the Institute for Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, underlined that the Delta variant is "over-represented" (appearing more frequently) in post-vaccination breakthrough infections.

If our government had increased the gap between two doses on the lines of UK government guidelines, it should reduce the same also immediately as UK has already reduced the gap to 8 weeks. Health safety of citizens is most important and no compromise should be made.

Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra, Mohali, 11 June.

(9 June). The author should not have connected "reforming bureaucracy" to the recent face-off between India's Prime Minister and West Bengal's Chief Minister in which unfortunately the Chief Secretary was dragged.

It is apparent that there was an avoidable element of complacency on the part of persons involved, and bold advice to the CM was necessary even if it may not have been sought.

Hence, there is no force in the

assertion of that "The C.S. had no safe option to choose." There was also no question of succumbing to the pressure of moneyed people, corrupt colleagues or superiors" as insinuated by the author.

That said, this is a politically sensitive matter and the Government of India should close it in national interest, particularly, after the explanation rendered by the Chief Secretary.

Yours, etc., R C Jain, Kolkata, 10 June.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Last straw

South Korea's 52-hour workweek system is set to be applied to small businesses hiring between five and 49 workers starting July 1, adding to the growing difficulties they face. The country's Labor Standards Act was revised in February 2018 to cut the maximum weekly working hours from 68 to 52.

The reduced workweek came into force for companies with 300 or more employees in July 2019. At the outset of 2020, it was applied to small and medium-sized enterprises with 50 to 299 workers. Violators of the revised workweek rules are subject to up to two years in prison or a fine of up to 20 million won (\$18,000).

Large companies have managed to adapt to the new scheme. But smaller businesses could find it hard or simply impossible to implement the reduced workweek.

A recent survey by the Korea Enterprises Federation showed more than a quarter of local firms with fewer than 50 employees were unprepared for the shortened workweek rules. The application of the revised regulations will exacerbate conditions of smaller manufacturers in particular, which have already been struggling to cope with rising labor costs stemming from steep minimum wage hikes and a manpower shortage.

The coronavirus pandemic has made it harder for them to fill vacant positions with expatriate workers. According to data from the Justice Ministry, the number of people here on visas for low-skilled employment decreased from 536,000 in April 2018 to around 380,000 this year.

Increased labor costs are combined with other negative factors to

H The Korea Herald

cause many small businesses to suffer from growing operating losses. Spikes in the prices of raw materials and freight charges are exacerbating the profitability of small manufacturing firms saddled with increasing debts. Figures from the Bank of Korea showed outstanding bank loans to small and midsized firms reached 836.3 trillion won in April, up 11.2 percent from a year earlier. Possible interest rate hikes to curb mounting inflationary pressure would further increase their debt-servicing burdens.

The implementation of the reduced workweek also hinders startup ventures from doing intensive research and development work needed to put them on the path to growth.

Naturally, concerns are rising that the rigid imposition of the 52-hour workweek without considering specific workplace conditions would risk undermining the industrial foundations of the country.

The government needs to defer the punishment of smaller businesses with five to 49 employees for violating the revised workweek rules and give them more time to prepare for the new scheme.

There are 802,000 such small firms around the country, and many of their owners might be forced to choose between risking legal punishment to run their factories or shops and closing them down.

Rural vaccination must for growth'

Former Union agriculture secretary **SIRAJ HUSSAIN** devoted more than two decades of career in the Indian Administrative Service to agriculture and allied sectors. Besides heading the Food Corporation of India, he had been secretary in the union Food Processing as well as the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare ministries. He was among the officers in the Narendra Modi government to have worked on a roadmap for the agriculture sector. A 1979 batch UP cadre IAS officer, Hussain had held various key positions in the UP government. Since his superannuation in January 2016, he has been working with ICRER (Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations) as a visiting senior fellow. He has also been engaged in research on various aspects of Indian agriculture and food processing and has authored several research papers on agriculture and the rural economy. In an interview with **VIJAY THAKUR**, he shared his thoughts on the impact of the second coronavirus wave on the country's agriculture sector. Excerpts:

Q. The first Covid wave had little impact on the rural areas. In fact, the agriculture sector had helped the Indian economy. But the second wave of the pandemic adversely impacted villages and a large number of cases are being reported in villages. How do you see its impact on the Rabi and Kharif crops this year?

A. So far, most farmers have completed the harvesting of Rabi crops in most parts of the country. That's why it might not have been affected by the second wave. As far as procurement is concerned, wheat has been marketed well at MSP. Rather it is more than last year. But now what has happened, since the anaj mandis were closed from the middle of April in most of the states including MP, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, farmers were compelled to sell high quality wheat at MSP. For example,



higher quality wheat like HI1544, which is better quality wheat than what is sold at MSP, is sold at MSP in MP. This causes concern.

Q. So you mean that farmers are losing money because they are selling superior quality wheat at a price lower than they could have got? Is this the only impact of the Covid second wave on the Rabi season?

A. It had little impact on the wheat crop, but a major portion of other Rabi crops like channa (grams) have not reached mandis yet. According to a rough estimate, 30-40 per cent of channa crops are still with farmers, and they are not able to sell them. So is the case with pulses crop. As a result, stock in the NCDEX godown is lower than last year. Unfortunately the procurement data

of these crops are not made available on the NAFED website.

Q. As we see, this time Covid has penetrated into rural areas and we are hearing bad news from villages. What impact do you think it would have on the Kharif crops?

A. As far as Kharif crops are concerned, farmers are preparing nurseries for the Kharif crops. Since we are seeing a decline in the Covid-19 cases, we do not think sowing of Kharif would be impacted. However, farmers would need labour in the month of July for transplantation. We hope the situation will improve by then. Further, the kind of reverse migration (from urban areas to villages) we had witnessed during the first wave is much less than last year. So in a nutshell, sowing would not be impacted and hopefully farmers with

large land holdings might not face much loss in their cultivation income. However, the second wave would impact small and marginal farmers, though indirectly. A survey conducted by NABARD - Rural Financial Inclusion Survey - in 2016-17 had revealed that cultivation income of small and marginal farmers is much less than what they earn through wage-labour. Another survey suggested that migratory labourers send one third to half of their income back to villages. The loss of wage labour, and loss of remittances from migratory workforce to villages will certainly hit the rural economy. It seems people in rural areas will have little money to spend this year and we might see a decline in demand in rural areas mainly from the industries engaged in the fast moving capital goods (FMCG) sector. Even the

construction sector in rural areas has been affected.

Q. But the same thing had happened last year. Migratory labourers lost their jobs, and there was a decline in remittances to villages by the migratory workforce. How is it different from last year?

A. Yes, this had happened last year as well. But that time they had a little reserves, this time the second wave came well before they could recover from the first wave. Moreover, last time their medical expenditure was almost negligible, now they do not know how much they will have to spend on medical expenses since Covid-19 has penetrated rural India. First, the health infrastructure in rural India is inadequate. Secondly, poor villagers will lose what they have when they go to hospitals in urban areas.

Q. Which sector in rural areas is most affected?

A. The most affected is the horticulture sector. Fruits and vegetables are highly perishable items and its producers are the worst hit. Unlike wheat or pulses, it has little shelf life. Farmers are not getting price for their crop due to April and May lockdowns. Either it is going to waste in the fields or they are not getting the price it deserves.

Q. What should the Government of India or state governments do to help farmers? It is already helping small and marginal farmers by offering Kisan Samman Nidhi, subsidised fertiliser, and guaranteed labour through MGNREGA.

A. If the government really wants to help farmers, it should ensure people in rural India are vaccinated in time. In urban areas we have private hospitals and better health infrastructure where vaccines are available and those who can afford can get themselves vaccinated. But in rural India there is no private network of health infrastructure. So the priority of the state and Central governments should be to vaccinate rural India. Save villages to save India from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Home office and global mobility

RAFIA ZAKARIA

As more and more of the Western world gets vaccinated, the predictions about the post-Covid-19 world are being tested against reality. In the early days of the pandemic, when a lot of the Western world was hit hard by the virus and when there was practically no way in sight to fight off the virus, most employers sent their white-collar workers home from office. Working from home was the only way to be safe and also work. Office towers across the United States and, in fact, much of the Western world emptied out and a creepy silence permeated the once busy hallways and conference rooms.

Now that there is a vaccine, and people are getting vaccinated, employers are trying to bring their employees back to work. However, it seems that workers in America are not really interested in coming back. Research shows that a large percentage of employees would prefer to quit their jobs altogether than return to the office as full-time workers.

Working from home for over a year, it appeared, led to some rethinking among many people who had otherwise been trapped in the daily grind. They no longer had to make arduous commutes, which in places like New York City would sometimes take two hours each way. They no longer had to spend and invest in a work wardrobe, they did not have to buy lunch or snacks and, perhaps most importantly, they did not have to put up with annoying co-



workers or micro-managing bosses in offices.

The connectivity revolution and the technological advancements meant that they could communicate often and easily with work-team members and hand-held devices meant that they were always available during the workday. Going back to the way things were was simply not on the agenda; they would rather get another job than revert to their previous way of working. The emerging labour shortage in the United States meant that they really could quit and go to another employer who permitted them to either work from home full-time or have a hybrid work model that allowed

them to work from home one or two days a week.

As Harvard researcher Raj Choudhury has written about in his research paper Our Work From Anywhere Future, this is great news for highly skilled workers in the non-Western world. The reason is simple: as work from anywhere becomes increasingly dominant in the West and people work from their office headquarters, it follows that a worker can also be found anywhere.

Simply put, instead of global labour mobility being the basis for workers to go where jobs are, the jobs could easily go where the workers are. If a company is looking for software engineers and remote work is

the norm for them, they can just as well hire that engineer from Karachi. As Choudhury points out, this will do away with the need for "employment visas". No one will have to stand in line for the scant number of H-1B highly skilled-worker visas; they could start immediately from just about anywhere.

Like with anything, there is a downside. Already some companies that are permitting their employees to work from home are considering pay cuts. Facebook, for instance, had told its workers that they can work from anywhere but those moving out of the extremely expensive Silicon Valley area would see a pay cut based on where they were actually choosing

to live. Translated globally, this would mean that companies hiring talent from Pakistan would pay a salary based on the Pakistani white-collar labour market. Western governments are already preparing for this work-from-anywhere scenario.

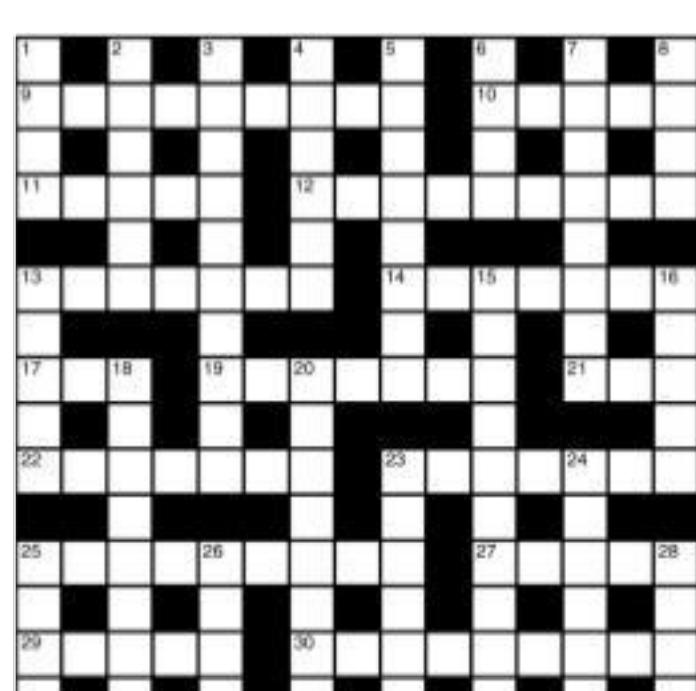
For instance, a huge agenda item that was agreed on by the G-7 countries recently has been a minimum tax that corporations would have to pay regardless of where they choose to operate. The move is very pointedly targeting a future where non-Western governments try to attract corporations to hire from their workforce by waiving taxes on the corporation concerned. The country where the corporation is headquartered (which would be a Western government most of the time) will levy the tax and collect it from the multinational. Competition for filling jobs is now likely to become global, and Western governments want to make sure that they come out ahead.

The work-from-anywhere culture is growing; the transition may take some time as debates about worker productivity are resolved, but remote work is the undeniable future. As it changes Western societies, it may also change non-Western countries that enter the highly skilled labour market. There could be a section of the population that keeps New York or London hours working all night and sleeping all day. Strict visa rules make travel to the Western world increasingly difficult. But cultural competency requirements would mean a virtual familiarity with places where one 'works' but has never been.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28933

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



SOLUTION FOR 05 JUNE

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ACROSS

- 9 See 17
- 10 See 17
- 11 See 17
- 12 Be sure Ireland will shelter no undesirable (4,5)
- 13 Starchy item returned to bar staff employed in Spring (7)
- 14 Message from turbulent Split received in central Greece (7)
- 17/9/10/11 Ensure tight fit when hoof becomes loose in scheduled monument (3,9,5)
- 19 Irish cardinal hoarding silver for a time (4,3)
- 21 Grass over pretty Cambridge Backs (3)
- 22 American investigator on mobile for one doing wet work? (7)
- 23 Metal lung Desert Fox left out in sports car (7)

DOWN

- 1 British quiet losing leader in wild Australian parts (4)
- 2 Alpha Force cook embracing a public brawl
- 3 This was Tennyson's main memoir rewritten (2,8)
- 4 Valuable marten invests time in place of 11 (6)
- 5 Curse stories associated with The Graduate (8)
- 6 War writer's love novel rejected (4)
- 7 Nun holding in evil (8)
- 8 Herculean wife in seven-
- 25 John's hit: endless shock to follow reprimand (6,3)
- 27 Posh school that fails to open causing quarrel? (5)
- 29 Sounding hoarse, work for me can really be a drag (5)
- 30 No waistcoat is worn by large independent writers (9)
- 25 John's hit: endless shock to follow reprimand (6,3)
- 27 Posh school that fails to open causing quarrel? (5)
- 29 Sounding hoarse, work for me can really be a drag (5)
- 30 No waistcoat is worn by large independent writers (9)
- 13 Design test on famous poem (5)
- 15 Relentless old men with capacity to support home (10)
- 16 Shrouded in atmosphere, Cthulhu's standing (5)
- 18 One sent to relieve another of possessions? (8)
- 20 One breaks leg: people between times offering balm (8)
- 23 Spirit ultimately haunting wide Russian river (6)
- 24 Miserable deer seen outside Ram's Head (6)
- 25 Sandwiched between two rivers, what was that valley? (4)
- 26 Rampant Rand perhaps initially excited singer (4)
- 28 Launder women's money after copyright waived (4)

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

OCCASIONAL NOTE

A Madras contemporary puts forward the theory that the strikes which have become so rife all over India are the outcome of a system of "industrial espionage" parallel to that which has worked so much mischief in America. The main difference between what is going on in this country and what has gone on in the United States, it is suggested, is that whereas the "industrial espionage" in America was organised in the supposed interests of the employers, its Indian analogue has been organised solely in the interests of anarchy. According to Mr. Sydney Howard, the author of a recent survey of "industrial espionage" in America, the system there works by means of black lists of employees supposed to be dangerous, these lists being drawn up by spies acting in the interests of the employer, and who are sometimes used to bring troubles to a head at the time which will best suit the employer. It was probably introduced in the first place by "hyphenated" employers, for the idea has a Teutonic sound about it; but in any case the results have been most detrimental to production, engendering hatred and suspicion between employers and employed, as well as between workmen and workmen. In India, it is suggested, the business is being engineered ostensibly from the workmen's side, but the results bear a startling similarity to those recorded in America by Mr. Howard.

NEWS ITEMS

EUROPEAN SERGEANT & CONSTABLE STABBED

How a prisoner stabbed a European police sergeant and a constable in turn, while attempting to get free was related yesterday before the Chief Presidency Magistrate. Abdul Satter, who had previously escaped from custody, was arrested on Friday night in Wellesley Square by an Indian constable. While the man was being marched to the thana it was alleged that he suddenly whipped out a knife, stabbed the policeman, and ran away. Sergeant Grey, of the C.I.D., who was passing gave chase and arrested the man, who again used his knife. The prisoner then made a desperate attempt to escape, but with the help of passers-by he was overpowered and taken to the thana. He was yesterday charged with causing injury to public servants, and remanded in custody.

AWARDS TO BRITISH AND INDIAN SOLDIERS

Allahabad, Je 11 General Matheson has made an immediate award of the military Medal to Sergeant John Hayto, Machine Gun Corps, for gallant conduct and devotion to duty while on service in Waziristan. On April 6 near Michin Baba, Sergeant Hayto, being in charge of two Vickers guns, came under enemy fire and for a space of over five hours in order to cover a retirement he kept his two guns in action, bringing a very heavy fire to bear upon the enemy, despite continual sniping. His coolness and bravery in addition to his skill in handling his guns, which fired over 4,000 rounds all contributed to win for him the award now announced. The same medal has also been given to Lance Corporal Frederick Charles Caines, Somerset Light Infantry, was out at Sirak as signal linesman.

EASTERN BENGAL RAILWAY

Attention is drawn to the notification issued by the Traffic Manager, Eastern Bengal Railway regarding breaches that have occurred on the section of the railway between Lalmanirhat and Amingaon. Goods and parcels traffic has been suspended while passengers have to undergo transhipment at the site of the breach. Repair trains are working and it is hoped to resume through running very shortly. Heavy rain on the Bhutan hills is the cause of the trouble, and from telegraphic advice received yesterday it is understood that heavy rain continues, hampering repair work. Intending passengers to and from Shillong and Upper Assam should postpone their journey for the present.

BRITISH FEDERATION AND CONFEDERATION

Professor J. Strahan, delivering the Rhodes lecture at University College, Gower Street, on "Federation and Confederation in the British Empire," said that as the British Constitution had become a model for all free peoples, so Britain's mode of dealing with her Colonies and Dependencies might become a model for all countries dealing with one another. Lord Justice Scrutton, who presided over the lecture, wittily described the functions of the Judicial Committee of Privy Council. He said that an obscure door in a slumy street off Whitehall led to a not very clean looking room where four or five sleepy old gentlemen sat round a horseshoe table, listening to Counsel, but the pageant passing in that room was most amazing.



Automobile industry stands committed to support the government in its battle against Covid-19 pandemic.

RAJESH MENON
DIRECTOR GENERAL, SOCIETY OF INDIAN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS

THUMBNAILS

RBI move: The Reserve Bank of India on Friday extended the risk-based internal audit (RBA) system to select housing finance companies to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their internal audit system. In February this year, the RBI had issued a circular mandating the RBA framework for select non-banking financial companies and urban co-operative banks by 31 March 2022. On Friday, the RBI, through a circular, extended the provisions issued for NBFCs to housing finance companies also. The provisions will apply to all deposit-taking HFCs, irrespective of their size, as well as non-deposit-taking HFCs with asset size of Rs 5,000 crore and above, the central bank said. PTI

Ipc Labs purchase: Drug firm Ipc Laboratories on Friday said it has acquired additional 13.09 per cent stake in Tropic Wellness Pvt Ltd for a cash consideration of Rs 21.20 crore, making it a subsidiary of the company. The company has acquired further 13.09 per cent of the equity share capital of Tropic Wellness Pvt Ltd. The company now holds 52.35 per cent of the paid-up equity share capital of Tropic Wellness Pvt Ltd (TWPL), Ipc Labs said. PTI

ABB India MD: ABB India on Friday announced the reappointment of Sanjeev Sharma as managing director for a period of 5 years commencing from 1 January 2022. The current term of Sharma expires on 31 December 2021, a BSE filing said. "On the recommendation of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, the board of directors of the company at its meeting held today, i.e., 11 June 2021, has approved the re-appointment of Sanjeev Sharma as managing director of the company for a period of five years commencing from 1 January 2022, to 31 December 2026," it added. PTI

Oppo achievement: Oppo India's F19 Pro+ 5G was recently declared as the No 1 selling 5G smartphone in the 25k-30k category for two consecutive months in March and April. Markets including Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Mumbai have been the top-performing states recording the highest sales volume of the product, according to a Press release issued by the company. SNS

Startup Sprint: 91springboard has partnered with Google for Startups (Gfs) to launch "Startup Sprint" - a virtual programme that provides an opportunity to various start-ups and entrepreneurs across India to scale up and expand their businesses online by helping them learn modern digital business tools. The goal of this initiative is to help start-ups adapt to a transformed world, with more people spending time online and the growth of the digital economy, said Press release. SNS

Sensex, Nifty scale new peaks; log weekly gains

IT, pharma, energy counters see brisk buying in line with bullish trend overseas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

Equity benchmarks rose to fresh lifetime highs today as IT, pharma and energy counters saw brisk buying in tandem with a bullish trend overseas.

After touching a record intra-day peak of 52,641.53 points, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 174.29 points or 0.33 per cent up at its new closing high of 52,474.76 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 61.60 points or 0.39 per cent to its lifetime peak of 15,799.35 points.

0.82 per cent.

"Tracking cues from positive global markets, Indian equities remained in the green zone in today's session. US CPI data, released on Thursday, eased inflation worries as the current surge is temporary and insufficient for the Fed to taper its bond-buying policy."

"Global sentiments were further boosted with European Central Bank raising its growth estimates and pledging its liquidity support," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

Paras Bothra, president of equity research at Ashika Group, said domestic markets remained firm on expectations of improving consumer and business confidence amid phased easing of lockdowns and declining new Covid-19 cases.

"The government also does not expect the economic impact of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic to be as severe as the first," he added.



During the week, the Sensex jumped 374.71 points or 0.71 per cent, while the Nifty advanced 129.10 points or 0.82 per cent.

On the other hand, L&T, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and ITC were among the laggards, dropping up to 1.07 per cent.

During the week, the Sensex jumped 374.71 points or 0.71 per cent, while the Nifty advanced 129.10 points or

Sector-wise, BSE metal, IT, energy, teck, basic materials and healthcare indices rallied up to 3.21 percent, while realty, capital goods, bankex, telecom, consumer durables and FMCG nursed losses.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rose up to 0.40 per cent.

World markets remained on a firm footing after the S&P 500 surged to a record high despite a spike in consumer prices in the US. Dovish comments from ECB also buoyed investor sentiment.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Tokyo were in the red, while Hong Kong and Seoul ended on a positive note.

Equities in Europe were largely trading with gains in mid-session deals.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.22 per cent higher at \$72.68 per barrel.

The rupee slipped 1 paisa to end at 73.07 against the US dollar amid strengthening of the American currency against key rivals and rising crude oil prices.

Move to boost solar modules production

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The last date for submitting applications is 30 June. And the selection process for the successful bidders is to be completed within a month, the officer said.

IREDA had floated the invitation for application document on 25 May on its website and the electronic application process went live on 31 May.

The applicants are required to set up either a brownfield or greenfield manufacturing facility for the entire capacity allotted under the scheme. Applicants are not allowed to set up a mix of brownfield and facilities.

Manufacturing capacity/unit, for which required capital goods have been imported before the last date of bid submission, would not be eligible for participation under the PLI scheme, said a senior officer of the ministry.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The government has held back the release of complete data of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for April, as was done for the same month last year due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Last year in June, the National Statistical Office (NSO) had held back the release of complete IIP data due to the effect of the nationwide lockdown on factory output.

This year too industrial production was hit due to lockdown restrictions imposed by states to curb the second wave of the pandemic.

According to the partial data released today by the NSO, the IIP (general index) stood at 126.6 points in April this year. The IIP was at 54

points in April 2020 and 126.5 points in April 2019. Industrial output had shrunk by 57.3 per cent in April 2020.

As per the partial data, IIP growth works out to be 134 per cent in April 2021 over the same month last year, mainly due to the low base effect.

However, industrial growth was flat in April if we compare the IIP to that in the same month of 2019. This indicates that the nascent economic recovery has been impacted by the second wave of the pandemic.

In a statement, NSO said:

"It may be noted that the nationwide lockdown and other measures implemented to restrict the spread of Covid-19 pandemic from the end of March 2020, had led to a majority of the establishments not operating in

CIL allows exports of coal procured through auctions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

State-owned Coal India Limited today said that it has removed the restriction on exporting coal procured through two spot auctions.

The development assumes significance as the current inventory of coal behemoth is little over 70 million tons (MT).

"In a major policy shift, Coal India Ltd (CIL), effective from 8 June, paved the way for domestic coal purchasers including traders in allowing them to export coal procured under two categories of e-auction schemes," the maharashtra firm said in a statement.

To this effect the company has tweaked its e-auction coal sale policy this week after its board gave the go-

ahead. "The country's largest coal producer and supplier has lifted the embargo on exporting coal procured through spot e-auction and special spot e-auction outlets. This is a first of its kind development since the introduction of spot e-auction in 2007," it said.

The existing clause "coal procured under e-auction is for use within the country and not for export" has now been amended, opening the door for export of the dry fuel in two auction categories.

Allocation under spot e-auction and special spot e-auction together accounted for 46 million tons of coal in FY'21 which was 37 per cent of the total allocated quantity of 124 MT during the year.

Spot e-auction at 42.5 MT was the highest allocated quantity under all the five

auction windows, in FY'21, fetching 25 per cent add-on over the notified price, again the highest.

Whereas, special spot e-auction netted a premium of 13 per cent over the notified price.

"Though Coal India would not be directly exporting coal, allowing those who procure coal under the two auction windows to export may prove to be catalytic to our sales. If there is favourable response outside the country, then we may witness more active participation as spot e-auctions book high volumes," the company said.

In case of export, the requirement of complying with the government rules all statutory guidelines, regulations and legal obligations shall lie solely with the coal buyer and exporter.

After petrol, diesel is now at almost Rs 100 per litre mark in Rajasthan as oil firms raised fuel prices yet again today.

Petrol price was hiked by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 28 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The hike ~ the 22nd since

4 May ~ took fuel prices across the country to historic highs.

Petrol is retailing above the Rs 100 per litre mark in six states and union territories ~ Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Ladakh.

In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 95.85 a litre, while diesel is now priced at Rs 86.75 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges.

Sri Gangaraj district of

SAIL posts 31% jump in Q4 profit at ₹3,470 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

The production performance of SAIL improved hand-in-hand during the year. The second half (of the 2020-21 fiscal) saw buoyancy in steel demand on the back of recovering economic activities.

SOMA MONDAL
SAIL CHAIRMAN



Steel giant SAIL today posted a 31 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit at Rs 3,469.88 crore for the quarter ended 31 March 2021, mainly on account of higher income.

The company had clocked Rs 2,647.52 crore net profit during the January-March period of fiscal year 2019-20. Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) said in a regulatory filing.

During the quarter under review, the company's total income rose to Rs 23,533.19 crore, from Rs 16,574.71 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses were at Rs 18,829.26 crore, as against Rs 11,682.12 crore a year ago.

On a standalone basis, SAIL's net profit grew to Rs 3,443.80 crore, from Rs 2,725.16 crore in the same period of fiscal 2019-20. In January-March 2021, standalone total income of the company rose to Rs 23,606.06 crore, from Rs 16,628.80 crore in the year-ago period.

The filing further noted that following the gradual normalisation of economic activities, the company is operating at normal capacity. "In view of the positive economic environment seen across sectors, the management is of the belief that the trend is likely to continue in subsequent periods as well as the impact of Covid-19, if any, is not likely to be material," it noted.

The board of directors has also declared a final dividend of 1.80 per equity share of Rs 10 each, SAIL said.

In a separate media statement, SAIL said it produced 4.56 million tons (MT) during the quarter, up 6 per cent over the year-ago period, while sales jumped by 11 per cent to 4.42 MT.

In the statement, SAIL chairman Soma Mondal said: "The production performance and financial performance of SAIL improved hand-in-hand during the year. The second half (of the 2020-21 fiscal) saw buoyancy in steel demand on the back of recovering economic activities."

Mondal further noted that "with the government also putting thrust on infrastructure spending, we focused on scaling up market-driven products along with improvement in operational efficiency, which helped the company deliver a noteworthy performance."

DLF reports ₹481 cr net profit in Q4

NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Realty major DLF today reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 480.94 crore for the quarter ended March. It also appointed Ashok Tyagi and Devinder Singh as the new chief executive officers of the company.

DLF had posted a net loss of Rs 1,857.76 crore in the year-ago period.

Total income rose to Rs 1,906.59 crore in the fourth quarter of 2020-21 from Rs 1,873.80 crore earlier, according to a regulatory filing.

For the entire 2020-21 financial year, DLF posted a net profit of Rs 1,093.61 crore as against a net loss of Rs 583.19 crore in FY20. Total income fell to Rs 5,944.89 crore last fiscal from Rs 6,888.14 in the 2019-20 financial year.

Diesel near ₹100-mark in Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE



April 2020 and consequently, there were many units which reported "nil" production, affecting comparison of the indices for the months of April 2020 and April 2021.

As per use-based classification, the indices were at 126.7 for primary goods, 82.4 for capital goods, 137.9 for intermediate goods and 134.8 for infrastructure/construction goods for April 2021.

The Centre had on 25 March 2020 enforced a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19. The government started easing lockdown restrictions for some economic activities from 20 April 2020. This year, the second wave of pandemic began

Fuel demand at nine-month low

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Rajasthan near the India-Pakistan border has the costliest fuel in the country - petrol is priced at Rs 106.94 a litre and diesel at Rs 99.80. This small town was the first in the country to see petrol price hit Rs 100 a litre mark in mid-February.

Rajasthan levies the highest VAT on petrol and diesel in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Mumbai on 29 May became the first metro in the country where petrol was being sold at over Rs 100 a litre. Petrol now costs Rs 102.04 a litre in the city.

India's fuel demand in May slumped to its lowest in nine months as restrictions to curb the second wave of Covid infections stalled mobility and muted economic activity. Fuel demand fell by 1.5 per cent to 15.1 million tons despite the low base of May 2020 and was down 11.3 per cent when compared to the previous month.

Diesel sales were up marginally to 5.53 million tons year-on-year but were down 17 per cent over April and 29 per cent over the pre-Covid period.

With travel restrictions curtailed airline operations, ATF sales fell by 36 per cent to 2,63,000 tons month-on-month but were more than double of 1,10,000 tons consumption in May 2020. Pre-Covid ATF demand was 6,80,000 tons.

The 'vaccine economy' and Covid-19 billionaires

RAJA MURTHY
MUMBAI, 11 JUNE

Pandemic profiteers have joined the malignant list of long-known war profiteers, according to pharmaceutical industry researchers and activists groups ahead of the G7 summit starting today in the Cornwall coast of England. The People's Vaccine, a coalition of more than 50 organisations working to make vaccines available free of cost to all, denounced the pharmaceutical industry for "skyrocketing" profits that have created nine new vaccine billionaires.

Chief executive officers of Moderna and BioNTech top the list of nine individuals who became billionaires sell-

Odisha records lowest daily Covid spike in 52 days

TPR drops to 7.51, death toll continues to rise

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

Odisha on Friday logged 5,235 new COVID-19 cases, lowest daily positive cases in the past 52 days. The fatalities however continue to rise with 43 more succumbing to the virus taking the overall count to 3210.

Today's daily positive cases (5,235) were the lowest since 21 April, when the state had reported 4,851 daily infections.

The overall COVID-19 situation in the state is showing signs of a downward trend in June after a steady rise in

May.

The Test Positivity Rate (TPR) which hovered around 15 to 23 percent earlier last month has dropped to below ten percent.

A total of 69,638 samples were tested in the last 24 hours at 7.51% TPR.

The number of active cases which crossed one lakh mark in May has climbed down to 66,226 as of now. Similarly the recovery rate has jumped to 91.75 percent with the daily recoveries surpassing the 24 hours' COVID infections.

The next fortnight is quite crucial, said Director Public Health, Niranjan Mishra while saying complacency will lead

to a jump in number of cases.

The fatality rate is yet to recede. However we are hopeful that it will considerably come down in a week or two. Unless the test positivity rate dips below five percent, it will be a difficult proposition to keep the virus infection at bay, he added.

As many as 36,367 COVID-19 positive cases were reported in the last 7 days at a daily average of 5,195 cases in the state while 258 have succumbed to the infections during the past one week with daily average death of 37.

Khordha and Cuttack districts continue to report the maximum number of cases.

Congress questions BJD's silence over rising fuel price



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

The state Congress staged protests in front of fuel filling stations across Odisha today against the spiralling price of petrol and diesel.

The four hour dharna in front of petrol filling stations led by Congress activists went off peacefully.

Raising banners against the central government, the state Congress president Niranjan Patnaik said rising prices of petrol, diesel, edible oil etc

is criminal given the fact that Covid has shattered livelihood of millions of people. The central government has miserably failed to control the prices, he charged.

Senior Congress leaders also took a swipe at the ruling BJD in the state for remaining silent. The understanding between the BJD and BJP is no longer tacit, they quipped. When the UPA was in power and crude price had hit the roof top at \$135 per barrel, the fuel price in India was less than what it is

today, but the BJD used to stage protests and condemn the UPA.

Today, the BJD is silent because it is league with the BJP, charged the Congress leaders.

The BJD however chided the Congress for indulging in political gamesmanship at a time when the nation is battling Covid 19. The BJD unit leaders here also stated that the state government has a role and it ought to reduce taxes to ease the burden on the consumer.

Vaccination hesitancy in Odisha's tribal pockets

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

The ground-level health workers in Odisha are contending with the vaccination hesitancy in remote tribal pockets of the state with disturbing reports of people fleeing the villages to dodge the COVID-19 vaccination trickling in from some parts.

Both the virus infection and misinformation are on ascendance. The healthcare workers are beginning to experience the pinch of obstinate villagers' hesitancy to get inoculated, said a physician of a government-run hospital in Chhattisgarh-bordering Nuapada district.

"We are having tough and

trying times. After trekking miles in hilly and inaccessible tracts, the health workers are returning failing to convince the people. The very sight of healthcare workers frightens them as misconception on vaccines has taken firm grip in some of the tribal villages", said Medical Officer of Koltara Community Health Centre (CHC) Dr G Sailaja.

We faced a piquant situation in Champakan village as the villagers fled from their homes after our arrival. The medical personnel waited for hours. But they did not turn up. We have decided to sensitise them and make them believe that "we want to save them, not kill them". We will

involve the panchayat members in the awareness campaign on vaccination, she added.

The inaccessible terrains in Sunabeda plateau in Nuapada district, inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) Chukta Bhunja settlers are also witnessing similar vaccine hesitancy predicament.

To break the chain of infection has become an uphill task as the tribal settlers are unyielding to adhere to COVID appropriate behavior. None of the 3,000 settlers could be administered COVID vaccine so far despite our best efforts, Chukta Bhunja Development Agency, Buddhababu Panda.

Naveen gives 50 cr to WODC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today sanctioned Rs 50 crore for Western Odisha Development Council for Covid interventions.

The fund will be utilized in western Odisha districts of Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Balangir, Bargarh, Nuapada, Jharsuguda, Angul, Deogarh, Sonepur and Sundargarh.

Advisor to chief minister and chairman of WODC, Mr Asit Tripathy has been monitoring the Covid management in the western parts of the state and helped in strengthening the health infrastructure.

Western Odisha districts bordering Chhattisgarh had been worst hit by the second wave in the initial months. At the same time, the Covid situation in these districts the first to show signs of decline in Covid cases as the virus caseload increased in coastal belt of the state.

Giving in principle approval to the projects Chief Secretary Mahapatra directed IPICOL to do a realistic assessment of the land and water requirement for the projects.

Industrial projects worth ₹ 1637 crore cleared

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

Odisha's State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) today cleared four industrial investment proposals worth Rs 1637.41 crore.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra chaired the SLSWCA meeting where in the project proposals were presented by principal secretary Industries department, Hemant Sharma and MD IPICOL Dr Nitin Bhanudas Jawale.

Sharma said, "the proposals are mainly from the sectors like downstream manufacturing, metal, and power sector."

Giving in principle approval to the projects Chief Secretary Mahapatra directed IPICOL to do a realistic assessment of the land and water requirement for the projects.



12 MMTPA to 17.6 MMTPA with an investment of Rs 946 crore at Joda in Keonjhar district, a 50 MW Solar PV Power generation plant by M/s Mahanadi Coalfields Limited entailing investment of Rs 254.71 crore in Boudh, a railway wagon manufacturing plant having capacity of 1,500 Wagon per annum along with 0.394 MMTPA Electric Arc Furnace (EAF), by M/s. Shyam Metalics and Energy Limited against an investment of Rs 381.60 crore to be set up in Hirakud and an oxygen cylinder manufacturing plant also by M/s. Shyam Metalics and Energy Limited against an investment of Rs 55.10 crore in Sambalpur.

Nitin Bhanudas Jawale, MD IPICOL claimed that the ease of doing business in Odisha has been a major attraction for investors.

Spurious COVID-19 drugs seized in Cuttack

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

The Odisha drugs control administration on Friday made a seizure of spurious antiviral Favipiravir drugs, following a raid in a chemist shop in Cuttack city.

About 1,700 anti-viral tablets have been seized. These doses were found to be fake and its Uttar Pradesh-based manufacturing firm was bereft of valid drug manufacturing license, said State Drugs Controller, Annada Sankar Das.

The chemist shop owner is being questioned. We have alerted our UP counterparts. The seized tablets were sent to the State drug testing laboratory at Bhubaneswar, he added, refusing to divulge further details.

Police rescue octogenarian woman after sons abandon her

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BERHAMPUR, 11 JUNE

Police have rescued an 85-year-old woman allegedly abandoned by her sons at a deserted spot in Bhanjanagar police station area in Ganjam district.

Two sons accused of abandoning their mother in distressed condition were rendered jobless and were reportedly finding it tough to take care of her due to acute financial stress, said a police official.

On being informed by local people, the elderly woman was rescued and rushed to hospital. She is suffering from both mental and physical stress.

The accused sons were detained at the police station. They were later released on after they furnished a written undertaking pledging not to ill treat and abandon old parents in future.

Maoist with ₹5 lakh reward on head gunned down in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

A Maoist carrying a reward of Rs five lakh on his head was gunned down by the security forces in a predawn operation in Odisha's Bargh district on Friday after a fierce exchange of fire.

The deceased Maoist identified as Rabindra was a zonal committee member of Bargh-Bolangir-Mahasamund division of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) outfit.

Red rebels opened fire on the security forces during a combing operation in the forest. The security men

opened retaliatory firing in self defence.

Search operations are still continuing in the area. The armed Maoists might have fled to Chhattisgarh forest, said the IG.

An AK-47 rifle and three magazines, country-made firearms, Maoist publicity material besides other incriminating materials were seized from the spot.

As many as 17 Maoists of outlawed outfits were killed in encounters with security

forces in 2020. While 16 armed naxal cadres were gunned down by security forces comprising Border Security Force (BSF) and State police force, one Left Wing Extremist cadre was killed by an irate mob comprising locals in Malkangiri district last year, said a senior police official.

In 2020, 34 Maoists were nabbed during the combing operations and were put behind the bar. A total of 21 Naxal cadre have surrendered before the state police.

Eminent environmentalist Radha Mohan passes away

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 11 JUNE

Radhamohan was widely acclaimed for his pioneering works on organic farming in Odisha.

Radha Mohan and his daughter Sabarmatee were conferred with country's fourth highest civilian honour - the Padma Shri - for their work in the spheres of agriculture last year.

Apart from organic farming, the father-daughter duo contributed immensely in Nayagarh district towards forest conservation, water and soil

harvesting and collection of varieties of indigenous seeds.

President Ram Nath Kovind condoled in a tweet.

"Prof Radha Mohan Ji was deeply passionate about agriculture, especially adopting sustainable and organic practices. He was also respected for his knowledge on subjects relating to the economy and ecology. Sadened by his demise. Condolences to his family and followers."

Radha Mohan was as inspiring an economist as an environmentalist. A profound scholar, he turned to organic farming to enrich nature and humanity. His demise will leave a void. My condolences

Jagatsinghpur, the tribals refuse to take the jab.

At least 200 tribals living in the adivasi sahi of Markandpur village under Jagatsinghpur Municipality have said 'no' to vaccines. Efforts of health workers fail to convince them.

Golapi Keshari, a woman of the locality said of Adivas Shai of Markandpur village who refuses to take the vaccine counter questions - is it not true that people have died despite being fully vaccinated? we work hard in the sun daily and are well protected, she adds.

Shyam Tudu has his own belief - "those who are hospitalized contract infections and die while those outside like us working every day are safe".

Golapi and Shyam are not the only two who have misconceptions, majority of the tribals hold the same view.

A school teacher of the community Ganesh Hansda said 'expect five government employees, majority tribal people of this Adivas Shai have refused to take vaccines. I have tried my best to convince them, but they just listen blankly and leave, he remarked.

Local ASHA worker Jayanti Das lamented "we went door to door, tried counseling the tribals, but to no avail".

The executive officer of Jagatsinghpur municipality, A K Karan said another round of awareness drive will be conducted to persuade the tribals.



However the silver lining amid pandemic surge in Niyamgiri lies in the Rayagada district administration has managed to vaccinate 834 of the 10,000 Dongria Kondh who live in 98 villages in Rayagada district.

The Bondas, another PVTG that lives in Bonda Hills, 3,500 ft above sea level, in Malkangiri district, have come under the grip of COVID-19 infection with 12 Bondas contracting the disease so far. The administration got the better of vaccine hesitancy and vaccinated around 1,000 Bondas after a month of long counseling and sensitization programme, said officials adding that 7,000 PVTGs excepting Chukta Bhunja in Nuapada have far been administered with first dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

While the primitive tribes in far flung areas are reluctant and afraid, the shocking aspect is that even in the 'more developed' coastal district like

Jagatsinghpur, the tribals refuse to take the jab.

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LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Beast of burden (3)
3 Group of secret agents (3,4)
8 Former (3-4)
9 Dead language (5)
10 Eventually (2,3,6)
12 Presages (5)
13 Gem (5)
16 Rude (3-8)
19 Weighing little (5)
20 Skating area (3,4)
21 Injection device (7)
22 Alcoholic drink (3)

DOWN
1 Nautical haul (4)
2 Apparent (7)
3 Israeli currency unit (6)
4 Tour de France leader's top (6,6)
5 Entomb (5)
6 In a cautious manner (8)
7 Nursery school (12)
11 Bacterium (8)
14 Marriage (7)
15 Whole (6)
17 Beer (5)
18 Related (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD
ACROSS
1 Gill, 2 Reptile, 3 Tea party, 4 Trice, 5 Replete, 6 Camel, 7 Saloon, 8 Chublis, 9 Sour.
DOWN
1 Acquire, 2 Lapel, 3 Eyebrow pencil, 4 Pecan, 5 Roman, 6 Yellow, 7 Henna, 8 Garish, 9 Baubles, 10 Lesser, 11 India, 12 Igloo, 13 Judas, 14 Require, 15 Not bad, 16 Paella, 17 Lesser, 18 Related (4)

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

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21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 3



This must be only the first step in a larger effort to expand and accelerate production and delivery of the billions of doses.

INDIAN-AMERICAN US CONGRESSMAN RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHI

STATING THAT THE USA DONATING 500 MILLION COVID VACCINE DOSES NOT ENOUGH

WEATHER

| CITY | MAX(°C) | MIN(°C) |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| SINGAPORE | 32 | 27 H |
| HONG KONG | 31 | 28 H |
| TOKYO | 28 | 21 H |
| LONDON | 24 | 13 H |
| DUBAI | 38 | 30 S |
| SAN FRANCISCO | 19 | 13 H |
| NEW YORK | 22 | 17 CL |
| MOSCOW | 18 | 14 H |

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

THUMBNAILS



French president Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron arrive at Cornwall Airport in Newquay, England, ahead of the G7 summit.
AGENCIES

Vatican movements: The Vatican has taken steps to better regulate lay religious movements by imposing term limits on their leaders and requiring internal elections to be representative of their memberships.
AP

Pulitzer Prizes: The Pulitzer Prizes in journalism and the arts will be announced Friday, recognising the best work in a year in which people isolated themselves because of a deadly pandemic and took to the streets over racial injustice. Winners will be announced during a livestream that begins at 1 p.m.
AP

Philippines reopens: Philippine officials have allowed the reopening of gyms, skating rinks, racket courts and museums in metropolitan Manila and adjacent provinces as a coronavirus surge continues to ease.
AP

US appoints first Pakistani American as federal judge
WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

The US Senate has approved the historic nomination of Pakistani-American Zahid Quraishi to the District Court in New Jersey, making him the first Muslim federal judge in the country's history. The Senate voted 81-16 to confirm Quraishi, 46.

As many as 34 Republicans joined the Democrats in confirming the first-ever Muslim-American as a federal judge. Currently, a magistrate judge for the District of New Jersey, Quraishi would now make history when he will be sworn in as the Judge of the US District Court of New Jersey. The Muslim Public Affairs Council applauded this historic moment as Quraishi is now the first American Muslim to serve as an Article III federal judge.
PTI

G7 Summit: UK PM pledges to donate 100 mn Covid vaccines

Eighty per cent of the 100 million doses will go to the COVAX initiative, rest to be shared bilaterally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 11 JUNE



The UK will donate 100 million surplus coronavirus vaccine doses to the world within the next year, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Friday at the start of the G7 Summit in Cornwall.

Ahead of the formal sessions of the summit bringing together leaders of the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan as well the European Union and guest nations India, South Africa, Australia and South Korea Johnson as the host vowed to "take a massive step towards beating this pandemic for good".

At the Summit, to be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually, world leaders are expected to announce they will provide at least 1 billion coronavirus vaccine doses to the world through dose sharing and financing and set out a plan to expand vaccine manufacturing in order to achieve

that goal.

Since the start of this pandemic the UK has led the way in efforts to protect humanity against this deadly disease. Over a year ago we funded the development of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine on the basis it would be distributed at cost to the world, Johnson said.

This unprecedented model, which puts people squarely above profit, means over half a billion doses have been administered in 160 countries so far. As a result of the success of the UK's vaccine programme we are now in a position to share some of our surplus doses with those who

need them. In doing so we will take a massive step towards beating this pandemic for good, he said.

At the G7 Summit I hope my fellow leaders will make similar pledges so that, together, we can vaccinate the world by the end of next year and build back better from coronavirus, Johnson added.

The UK will donate 5 million doses by the end of September, beginning in the coming weeks, primarily for use in the world's poorest countries.

Johnson has also committed to donating a further 95 million doses within the next year, including 25 million

more by the end of 2021. Eighty per cent of the 100 million doses will go to the United Nations-led COVAX initiative and the remainder will be shared bilaterally with countries in need.

The UK government said COVAX has so far provided 81 million doses to 129 of the world's poorest countries, with 96 per cent of these being the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, the development of which was funded by the UK.

The UK government, Oxford-AstraZeneca are distributing their vaccines on a not for profit basis the world over, including as a tie-up with the Serum Institute of India.

The cost of donating the UK's surpluses will be classified as overseas development assistance (ODA) and will be in addition to GBP 10 billion already committed in aid this year. The doses the UK has announced it will donate today will be drawn from Britain's expected excess supply. The 100 million figure

has been calculated based on the total needed to vaccinate the UK population, factoring in the possibility of future vaccine-resistant strains being detected and potential disruptions to supply.

At the G7 Summit this weekend, leaders will also discuss how to expand the supply of vaccines internationally, with Johnson asking the group to encourage pharmaceutical companies to adopt the Oxford-AstraZeneca model of providing vaccines at cost for the duration of the pandemic.

Fisher, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson have already pledged to share 1.3 billion doses on a non-profit basis with developing countries.

Leaders are expected to discuss additional ways to support countries experiencing acute coronavirus emergencies and put in place mechanisms to prevent future pandemics. This follows on from commitments made at the virtual meeting of G7 leaders earlier this year.

Donald Trump DOJ seized data from House Democrats in leaks probe



ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

The Times reported on Thursday that the DOJ subpoenaed Apple for data from at least two committee members, as well as aides and family members, in 2017 and 2018. The Times report anonymously cited committee officials and two other people briefed on the inquiry.

Among those whose records were seized was California Rep. Adam Schiff, then the top Democrat on the committee.

Schiff, now the panel's chair, said in a statement

Thursday night: "Though we were informed by the Department in May that this investigation is closed, I believe more answers are needed, which is why I believe the Inspector General should investigate this and other cases that suggest the weaponisation of law enforcement by a corrupt president."

The Times reported that the subpoenas came as the DOJ was trying to hunt down the sources of leaks that had led to news stories about contacts between Trump associates and Russia.

when additional evidence could potentially demonstrate eligibility for an immigration benefit, the immigration agency said in a statement on Wednesday.

As part of the updated RFE and NOID policy, the USCIS is rescinding a July 2018 memo that permitted agency officers to deny certain immigration benefit requests instead of first issuing an RFE or NOID, it said.

This updated policy will ensure those benefit requestors are given an opportunity to correct innocent mistakes and unintentional omissions. In general, a USCIS officer will issue an RFE or NOID when the officer determines additional information or explanation that may potentially establish eligibility for an immigration benefit.

USCIS alters Trump-era policy denying certain immigrant visa applications

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

The US immigration agency has said that it would rescind a 2018 Trump-era policy that allowed immigration officers to reject visa applications, including the H-1B, instead of first issuing a notice of intent to deny to the applicants a decision which will reduce barriers to "legal immigration".

The H-1B visa, popular among Indian IT companies and professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

and China.

There are other immigrant visas as well which were impacted by the Trump-era policy, like the L1, H-2B, J-1, J-2, I, F and O. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said in a statement on Wednesday that it was updating its policies around expedited processing of applications, changing the guidance

around Requests for Evidence (RFEs) and Notices of Intent to Deny (NOIDs), and increasing the validity period for certain Employment Authorization Documents (EADs).

The USCIS is returning to the adjudicative principles of a June 2013 memo that instructed agency officers to issue a request for evidence or notice of intent to deny

Finland elections test for young Social Democrat leader

HELSINKI, 11 JUNE

Finland holds local elections Sunday in a first litmus test for the popular young Social Democratic prime minister, Sanna Marin, who took office a mere 18 months ago shortly before the outbreak of COVID-19 and whose party is behind in polls across the Nordic country.

The 35-year-old Marin, who became Europe's youngest government leader in December 2019, enjoys high personal popularity and has won international praise for her handling of the coronavirus crisis in the nation of 5.5 million.

However, the result of Sunday's municipal elections, the first for Marin as leader of both the government and the Social Democratic Party may end up being a disappointment to her.

Swiss detail extra security for Biden-Putin summit

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA, 11 JUNE

Swiss authorities will temporarily restrict airspace over the city of Geneva and deploy up to 1,000 troops to the area to help reinforce security measures for the summit of Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Joe Biden next week.

Local authorities announced Thursday that the summit, part of Biden's first overseas trip as president, will take place in an 18th-century manor house in a public park that looks out onto the lake. The White House has played down expectations for the summit and said Biden plans to raise issues including Ukraine, arms control, human rights and cyber ransomware attacks.

"Switzerland is obliged to ensure the protection of persons who enjoy special protection under international law, such as the American and Russian heads of state, the Swiss federal defense department said in a statement. It said commercial flights

US Senators eye \$579 billion in new infrastructure spending, \$1 trillion plan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

A bipartisan group of senators is eyeing an infrastructure deal with \$579 billion in new spending as negotiators try to strike a nearly \$1 trillion deal on President Joe Biden's top priority, according to those briefed on the plan.

The 10 senators have been huddling behind closed doors, encouraged by Biden to keep working on the effort after he walked away from a Republican-only proposal this week unable to resolve differences.

The senators are briefing their colleagues privately and cautioned changes could still be made. Our group comprised of 10 senators, 5 from each party has worked in good faith and reached a bipartisan agreement on a realistic, compromise framework to modernize our nation's

infrastructure and energy technologies," the senators said in a joint statement.

This investment would be fully paid for and not include tax increases," they added. "We are discussing our approach with our respective colleagues, and the White House, and remain optimistic that this can lay the groundwork to garner broad support from both

parties and meet America's

president and Congress have been straining to reach an agreement on his ideas for an infrastructure investment, stuck over the scope of the package of road, highway and other projects and how to pay for it. Lawmakers say the group's tentative agreement represents important progress in fashioning a bill that can pass such an evenly divided Congress this year.

A person familiar with the negotiations but unauthorized to discuss them publicly said the cost would be \$974 billion over five years, as is standard for highway spending, or \$1.2 trillion if spread over eight as Biden proposes. At that size, the new package would be more than the previous Republican-only effort of \$330 billion in new spending in a \$928 billion package, but still short of the \$1.7 trillion over eight years Biden is seeking.



Sen. Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, is surrounded by reporters as he walks to the Senate chamber for votes.
AGENCIES

infrastructure needs. The White House said Democratic senators briefed the administration on the emerging plan but questions remain.

The President appreciates the Senator's work to advance critical investments we need to create good jobs, prepare for our clean energy future, and compete in the global economy, said deputy press secretary Andrew Bates. The

President and Congress have been straining to reach an agreement on his ideas for an infrastructure investment, stuck over the scope of the package of road, highway and other projects and how to pay for it. Lawmakers say the group's tentative agreement represents important progress in fashioning a bill that can pass such an evenly divided Congress this year.

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Under the government's plan for ending lockdown measures, social distancing restrictions are set to be lifted on June 21, which would be a particular boon to businesses such as pubs and cinemas. They are currently operating with capacity limits to meet the need to keep people apart.

Though most sectors of the economy have reopened, there are concerns that the next planned easing for England,

German's environmentalist Greens finalize election pitch amid sag in polls

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN, 11 JUNE

Germany's environmentalists are gathering to put the finishing touches on their election pitch and to formally endorse Annalena Baerbock as their candidate for chancellor, amid a slip in their party's poll ratings fueled in large part by its own mistakes.

The Greens led many polls after Baerbock, 40, was nominated in April to make the party's first run for Germany's top public office. But more recent surveys show outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right Union bloc overtaking the Greens, and a state election last weekend brought a big conservative win and a disappointing Green showing.

The party still has plenty

of reasons to fight ahead of Germany's Sept. 26 national election. The Greens are still polling 20% or more more than twice the 8.9% of the vote the party received in Germany's last election, in 2017. With Merkel stepping down after 16 years in power, no candidate has the advantage of incumbency.

Still, a prominent lawmaker and former party leader cautioned members against forcing radical changes to the Greens' draft election platform during a three-day online congress that opens Friday.

The platform foresees speeding up Germany's exit from coal-fired power, raising carbon prices and massively increasing infrastructure spending.

"I obviously made a mistake there", Baerbock told ARD television on Thursday.

Britain's economy edges to pre-pandemic levels

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON, 11 JUNE

The easing of lockdown restrictions in April helped the British economy grow at its fastest rate since July 2020 and recoup further ground lost during the coronavirus pandemic, official figures showed Friday.

The Office for National Statistics said the economy grew by 2.3% per cent during April, which saw the reopening of shops selling non-essential items and a number of other service providers, such as hairdressers, resuming work.

Students also went back to classrooms during April after months of remote learning, while pubs and restaurants could serve customers outdoors.

The four nations of the U.K. England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have

been lifting lockdown restrictions in stages after new coronavirus infections fell sharply and vaccines were rolled out rapidly.



Once the majority of the population is vaccinated, it becomes much easier for us to contemplate these openings up.

SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE HSIEH LOONG

CAUTIONING THAT ANY AIR-TRAVEL CORRIDOR IS STILL SOME TIME AWAY

THUMBNAILS



Visitors take masks off to take pictures as hydrangea flowers are fully blooming at Meigetsuin in Buddhist temple on Friday, 11 June, in Kamakura, south of Tokyo. AP

China successfully launches four satellites: China on Friday successfully sent four satellites into planned orbits that will be used for ecological environment monitoring, asteroid resource exploration, disaster prevention and mitigation among others. The satellites were launched by a Long March-2D rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in northern Shanxi Province AP

Movie plan draws criticism: Tentative plans for a movie that recounts the response of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to a gunman's slaughter of Muslim worshippers drew criticism in New Zealand on Friday for not focusing on the victims of the attacks. AP

S Korea to extend tight quarantine measures: South Korea on Friday decided to extend its tight quarantine measures for three more weeks. Under the five-tier social-distancing guidelines, the third-highest Level 2 will be kept in place until next month. IANS

Africa acquired nearly 55 million Covid vaccines: African countries have acquired nearly 55 million Covid vaccines, according to health authorities. The number of confirmed Covid cases in Africa has reached 4,969,847. IANS

China's children may be next in line for Covid-19 vaccines

Regulators took the first step last week by approving the use of Sinovac vaccine for children

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TAIPEI, 11 JUNE

If China is to meet its tentative goal of vaccinating 80 per cent of its population against the coronavirus by the end of the year, tens of millions of children may have to start rolling up their sleeves.

Regulators took the first step last week by approving the use of the country's Sinovac vaccine for children aged 3 to 17, though no announcement has been made about when the shots will start.

Children have been largely spared the worst of the pandemic, becoming infected less easily than adults and generally showing less severe symptoms when they do catch the virus.

But experts say children can still transmit the virus to others and some note that if countries are going to achieve herd immunity through their vaccination campaigns, inoculating children should be part of the plan.

Vaccinating children is an important step forward, said Jin Dong-yan, a virologist at the University of Hong Kong's



medical school.

Doing so, however, may be easier said than done for reasons ranging from vaccine hesitancy to vaccine availability.

Even in countries with enough vaccines to go around, some governments are having problems convincing adults that the shots are safe and necessary despite studies demonstrating they are. Such concerns can be amplified when dealing with society's youngest.

There's also the issue of approval. Few regulators around the world have evaluated the safety of COVID-19

shots in kids, with the majority of shots approved only for adults right now. But the approvals are starting. The United States, Canada, Singapore and Hong Kong are all allowing the use of the Pfizer vaccine in children as young as 12.

The Sinovac announcement could open the way for the vaccine, already in use in dozens of countries from Brazil to Indonesia, to be given to children across the world.

In Thailand, where Sinovac makes up the bulk of the country's vaccine supply, Health Minister Anutin Charn-

virakul welcomed the news that China had approved emergency use for children.

Once it gets approved, we are ready to provide the vaccine to cover all ages, Anutin said Monday.

Other vaccine makers are also working to expand access to younger people. Moderna is seeking permission to use its shot in children as young as 12, like Pfizer. Both companies have studies underway in even younger children, down to age 6 months.

Another obstacle to vaccinating children is that many countries are still struggling to get enough doses to inoculate their higher-risk adult populations. Thailand, for example, has vaccinated only 4 per cent of its population so far and adult demand for vaccines far outweighs supply.

Right now given the shortages of vaccines, any available vaccine should be placed in age-based prioritisation and risk-based prioritisation, said Jerome Kim, head of the International Vaccine Institute in Seoul. It's really important to get this vaccine out in the places it's needed now. In many places there are also con-

cerns among the public about the efficacy of the Sinovac vaccine versus Western rivals. While efficacy rates cannot be compared directly, owing to the trials being conducted under different conditions, the Western vaccines have shown to be very effective in preventing infection in real world tests. Sinovac's shot has been shown to be effective in preventing severe disease.

The World Health Organisation last week approved the Sinovac vaccine for emergency use in adults aged 18 and older, paving the way for its use in global programs aiming to distribute vaccines to low- and middle-income countries. The WHO has given no indication of when it might approve it for those younger.

Vaccines are often approved separately for adults and children because younger immune systems may react differently to the doses.

Experts say inactivated vaccines are generally considered safe for children, as the technology has been in use for a long time, such as in mandatory childhood immunisation programs, and have shown low risk.

China's 'aggressive behaviour' in Indo-Pacific can spark crisis: Austin



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 11 JUNE

Describing China as a "pacing challenge" to the US, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has told American lawmakers that Beijing's "aggressive behaviour" in the Indo-Pacific could spark a "crisis" in the strategically vital region.

"They desire to be the pre-eminent country on the planet. Their mid to long-term goal is to do that. They look to compete with us, not only militarily but across a spectrum of activity," he said.

"What you see us doing, the military and other sectors in our government, is making sure that we remain competitive, economically; making sure that we continue to develop the best scientists in the world and the most comprehensive research. So it is a competition across a broad spectrum of activity," Austin said.

"As we look at some of the aggressive behaviour that we have witnessed from China in the Indo-Pacific, I'm concerned about something that could happen that could spark a crisis," Austin told the

lawmakers on Thursday. "We need the ability to be able to talk with our allies and partners and also with our adversaries or potential adversaries. So, I think there needs to be a direct line of communication between the military and also between government officials as well," the defence secretary said.

Austin described the US' relationship with China currently as one of competition.

"They desire to be the pre-eminent country on the planet. Their mid to long-term goal is to do that. They look to compete with us, not only militarily but across a spectrum of activity," he said.

"What you see us doing, the military and other sectors in our government, is making sure that we remain competitive, economically; making sure that we continue to develop the best scientists in the world and the most comprehensive research. So it is a competition across a broad spectrum of activity," Austin said.

A senior Chinese foreign ministry official this week said in Beijing that China is committed to developing a relationship of non-conflict.

Former Mossad chief signals Israel behind Iran nuclear attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, 11 JUNE

The outgoing chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence service has offered the closest acknowledgement yet his country was behind recent attacks targeting Iran's nuclear programme and a military scientist.

The comments by Yossi Cohen, speaking to Israel's Channel 12 investigative program Uvdah in a segment aired on Thursday night, offered an extraordinary debriefing by the head of the typically secretive agency in what appears to be the final days of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule.

It also gave a clear warning to other scientists in Iran's

nuclear programme that they too could become targets for assassination even as diplomats in Vienna try to negotiate terms to try to salvage its atomic accord with world powers.

If the scientist is willing to change career and will not hurt us anymore, than yes, sometimes we offer them a way out, Cohen said. Among the major attacks to target Iran, none have struck deeper than two explosions over the last year at its Natanz nuclear facility.

The interviewer, journalist Ilan Dayan, also seemingly offered a detailed description of how Israel snuck the explosives into Natanz's underground halls that went unchallenged by Cohen. It doesn't look like it used to look, he added.

on Israel. Then in April of this year, another blast tore apart one of its underground enrichment halls.

Asked about Natanz, the interviewer asked Cohen where he'd take them if they could travel there, he said to the "cellar" where the centrifuges used to spin. Cohen did not directly claim the attacks, but his specificity offered the closest acknowledgement yet of an Israeli hand in the attacks.

The interviewer, journalist Ilan Dayan, also seemingly offered a detailed description of how Israel snuck the explosives into Natanz's underground halls that went unchallenged by Cohen. It doesn't look like it used to look, he added.

China adopts law banning slander of armed forces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, 11 JUNE

China has passed a new legislation that bans "defamation" of military personnel, adding an array of legal tools to its 2018 law under which a Chinese popular blogger was punished recently for "defaming" PLA soldiers killed in last year's clash with the Indian Army at the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh.

The legislation, which was adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) on Thursday, states that no organisation or individual may in any way slander or derogate the honour of servicemen, nor may they insult or slander the reputation of members of the armed forces, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The new legislation also bans the desecration of plaques in honour of military personnel.

Prosecutors can file public interest litigation in cases of defamation of military personnel and the infringement on their legitimate rights and interests that have seriously affected their performance of duties and missions and damaged the public interests of society, according to the new law.



The new law adds to an array of legal tools that already ban defamation of revolutionary martyrs, including revisions to the country's criminal code and a 2018 Law on the Protection of Heroes and Martyrs, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Commenting on the new law, Song Zhongping, a former PLA instructor and Hong Kong-based military affairs

commentator said the legislation which also covers families of service personnel was meant to bolster the People's Liberation Army's sense of mission.

Previously, our legal instruments were not complete and this new law will provide more comprehensive protection for the rights and honours of our soldiers, Song told the Post.

[We must recognise] that military conflicts in the future could be very intensive, and ensuring that the military is well-respected in society is very important, he said. On 31 May, an internet celebrity in China was sentenced for "defaming" Chinese soldiers killed in a clash with Indian troops at the Galwan Valley last year.

Qiu Ziming, who had over 2.5 million followers, received an eight-month jail term.

'Pak govt should preserve ancestral homes of legendary Indian actors'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR, 11 JUNE

All ancestral homes of famous Indian actors who left Pakistan at the time of Partition should be preserved and converted into tourist spots, according to a prominent heritage expert here in northwestern Pakistan.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government last week approved the purchase of the ancestral homes of legendary Bollywood actors Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor here in the provincial capital.

Commenting on the development, Secretary of the Cultural Heritage Council, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shakil Waheedullah said activists struggled for 13 years to ensure that the homes of these silver screen legends were preserved.

Waheedullah said nationality does not matter and that such homes could be turned into buzzing tourist attractions in Pakistan.

Raj Kapoor's ancestral home, called Kapoor Haveli, is situated in the fabled Qissa Khwani Bazaar. It was built between 1918 and 1922 by the actor's grandfather Dewan Bahawal Nath Kapoor.

It has been declared a national heritage by the provincial government. Veteran actor Dilip Kumar's over a 100-year-old ancestral house is also located in the same locality.

The house is in shambles and was declared as a national heritage in 2014 by the then Nawaz Sharif government. The provincial government has released Rs 2.30 crore for purchasing the two buildings.

led to the accident," read the investigation report announced at a press conference held in Lanzhou, capital of Gansu province.

A total of 172 people participated in the mountain marathon. While eight sustained minor injuries, 151 were confirmed safe. Most competitors were wearing thin shorts and T-shirts, according to media reports.

Baiyin ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) secretary Su Jun and Baiyin mayor Zhang Xuchen are among those who have been given disciplinary punishment, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Zhang Wenling was sacked as the magistrate of the Jingtai County, while Jingtai party secretary Li Zuobi, who has died after the mishap, was exempted from punishment.

The tragedy was caused by a sudden change in weather and the province had set up an investigation team to look further into the cause of the incident, Baiyin City mayor Zhang Xuchen, who was among the punished, had said.

"As the organiser of the event, we feel a deep sense of guilt and remorse. We express our deep condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families and the victims," he said.

The new law adds to an array of legal tools that already ban defamation of revolutionary martyrs, including revisions to the country's criminal code and a 2018 Law on the Protection of Heroes and Martyrs.

If our political culture is based on lies and threats and hatred of Arabs, and hatred of left-wingers, and hatred of right-wingers who don't hate Arabs and left-wingers enough, then yes, we need change, Lapid said this week. We've brought about change and we're proud of it.

The United Arab List, a small party with Islamist roots led by Mansour Abbas, is the first Arab party to sit in a coalition. In return for helping to oust Netanyahu, he is expected to secure large budgets for housing, infrastructure and law enforcement in Arab communities.



that's only if the government survives that long.

Bennett is a religious ultra-nationalist who supports settlement expansion and is opposed to a Palestinian state. But he risks losing his job if he alienates his dovish coalition partners.

That will likely mean a continuation of Netanyahu's approach of managing the decades-old conflict without trying to end it. Annexing the occupied West Bank and invading Gaza are probably off the table, but so are any major con-

cessions to the Palestinians. Every Israeli government has expanded Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 war and which the Palestinians want for their future state. This government is expected to do so in a subdued way that avoids angering the Biden administration, which is pushing for restraint and an eventual revival of peace talks.

The new government is expected to maintain Netanyahu's hard-line stance on Iran and oppose President Joe Biden's efforts to revive its international nuclear deal. But senior officials have already vowed to do so behind closed doors rather than bringing the rift out into the open, as Netanyahu did during the Obama years.

The new government will also likely work with Biden to strengthen ties with Arab

What will change under Israel's new government?

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, 11 JUNE

If all goes according to plan, Israel will swear in a new government on Sunday, ending Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's record 12-year rule and a political crisis that inflicted four elections on the country in less than two years.

The next government, which will be led by the ultra-nationalist Naftali Bennett, has vowed to chart a new course aimed at healing the country's divisions and restoring a sense of normalcy.

Anything more ambitious would be courting disaster.

The coalition consists of eight parties from across Israel's political spectrum, including a small Arab party that has made history by joining a government for the first time. If even one party bolts, the government would be at serious risk of collapse, and

they'll be forced to turn to the United Arab List, a small party with Islamist roots led by Mansour Abbas, the first Arab party to sit in a coalition. In return for helping to oust Netanyahu, he is expected to secure large budgets for housing, infrastructure and law enforcement in Arab communities.

The situation with the Palestinians today is remarkably the same as when Netanyahu took office, Plesner said. "No major changes in either direction, no annexation and no diplomatic breakthroughs."

Netanyahu lashes out as end of his era draws near

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, 11 JUNE

The new Biden administration has been cool to the Israeli leader, while Netanyahu's close relationship with Trump has alienated large segments of the Democratic Party.

At home, Netanyahu's magic also has dissipated in large part due to his trial on corruption charges.

He has lashed out at an ever-growing list of perceived enemies, the media, the judiciary, police, centrists, leftists and even hard-line nationalists who were once close allies.

In four consecutive elections since 2019, the once-invincible Netanyahu was unable to secure a parliamentary majority.

Pakistan bus crash kills 18

KARACHI, 11 JUNE

An over-speeding passenger bus overturned in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province on



BIDING HIS TIME
England paceman Ollie Robinson (photo, left), suspended from international cricket following a resurfacing of his racist and sexist tweets, has taken a break.

He can still play for his county side Sussex but will not.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

West Indies 97 all out

GROS ISLET, 11 JUNE

Lungi Ngidi took 5-19 and Anrich Nortje 4-35 as South Africa bowled out the West Indies for 97 on the opening day of the first Test here yesterday.

Ngidi claimed his second five-wicket bag in Tests and his first since his debut against India in 2018 as South Africa ended the West Indies' first innings in just 40.5 overs after the home side had chosen to bat on winning the toss. At stumps, South Africa were 128-4, a lead of 31 runs, and were able to celebrate a strong start to their first tour of the Caribbean in 11 years.

Former captain Jason Holder top-scored with 20 for the West Indies, who had been 24-0 before wickets started to fall rapidly. AP

Bangladesh star Shakib courts controversy with boorish on-field behaviour, apologises later

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DHAKA, 11 JUNE



Suspension for the former Bangladesh skipper.

"I am extremely sorry for losing my temper and ruining the match for everyone and especially those who are watching from home. An experienced player like me should not have

suspension for this human error. Hopefully, I won't be repeating this again in the future. Thanks and love you all," he further wrote.

During the match held at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium, a Mushfiqur Rahim leg before appeal being turned down by the umpire led to the furious captain kicking the stumps.

On the second occasion, he ran from his mid-off position to uproot all the stumps at the non-striker's end when the two match officials called for a rain break with one ball left in the sixth over of the Abahani innings.

The footage of the incident since then has gone viral and it is believed that he was angry because one more delivery would have ensured that min-

imum six overs are completed for a match to yield a result.

The match did start eventually and his team won easily.

He was also caught on camera getting into an ugly altercation with former Bangladeshi international and current BCB director Khaled Mahmood Sujon.

The 34-year-old Shakib has scored over 10,000 international runs and picked nearly 600 wickets across formats and considered one of the finest spin bowling all-rounders in contemporary cricket.

Shakib had earlier hit the headlines for wrong reasons in 2019 when he was slapped with a two-year ban, one year suspended, for not reporting a corrupt approach.

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Each player will get a game, says Dravid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

Widely credited with creating India's talent pool at junior levels, former captain and National Cricket Academy director Rahul Dravid (in photo) says that during his stints as coach with these teams, he made sure that every cricketer who toured got a game unlike what happened in his playing days.

Dravid will be the head coach of a Shikhar Dhawan-led Indian team to tour Sri Lanka for a white-ball series next month. He does not travel with the A and U-19 squads any more but it was he who made sure all the squad members played on tours. "I tell them upfront, if you come on an A tour with me, you will not leave here without playing a game. I've had that personal experience myself as a kid: going on an A tour and not getting an opportunity to play is terrible," Dravid told website. "You've done well, you scored 700-800 runs, you go, and you don't get a chance to show what you're good at. And then you're back to square one from the selectors' point of view, because the next season you have to score those 800 runs again."

It is not easy to do that, so there is no guarantee you'll get a chance again. So you tell people upfront: this is the best 15 and we are playing them.



This is not about the supposed best XI. At U-19 level, we make five or six changes between games if we can," he said.

Indian cricketers are now among the fittest in the world but there was a time when they did not have the required knowledge of fitness and envied the more athletic Australians and South Africans, Dravid said. Now in charge of the National Cricket Academy, Dravid has played a key role in producing the next generation of cricketers and a reserve pool which is the envy of India's opponents.

In his playing days, Dravid said there was no awareness of the importance of it. "Playing on the beach and playing on the road doesn't make you a cricketer. It makes you someone who loves the game. That's what we had. We had a lot of people who loved the game," Dravid said, adding:

"Unless you give that guy a proper matting wicket or a turf wicket, unless you give him some half-decent coaching, some half-decent fitness assistance, the love yielded nothing. Where was all this in the 1990s and the 2000s? There was no access to it. We were starved of knowledge."

Even in terms of fitness, we used to look at the Australians and South Africans and we used to look at their fitness trainers, and what did we get? 'Don't do too much gym, your body will become stiff. Bowl, bowl and bowl. Run rounds and laps,'" he recalled.

At Pune, overwhelmed by emotion after getting his first India call-up, batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad today said that he would be banking on his ability to adapt quickly on the tour of Sri Lanka. The 24-year-old from Maharashtra is one of the six uncapped players named in the 20-member side.

squad for the series against Sri Lanka. The side will play three One-Day Internationals and three Twenty20 matches between 13 July and 25 July.

Singh prefers Thakur

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 JUNE

India should pick Shardul Thakur, and not Mohammad Siraj, as the fourth fast bowling option in the side for the World Test Championship final with an advantage and the Indian team will have to adapt and be ready for challenge, feels senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

The WTC final here from September 18-22 will be a culmination of two years of hard work,

filled with emotional moments and lots of learnings, said Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami, on their part, as the Indian bowling unit's senior pros spoke about the biggest match of their lives.

"I expect a well-planned and knit New Zealand team to come at us. Having played two

Adaptability will be key, feels Ashwin; Shami, Ishant want to give their all in one final push

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SOUTHAMPTON, 11 JUNE

A "well-planned and knit" New Zealand side with two Tests against England under their belt will come into the World Test Championship final with an advantage and the Indian team will have to adapt and be ready for challenge, feels senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin.

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"It's been a practical as well as emotional journey, and this is an ICC tournament which is as big as 50-over WC final," Ishant said, looking back at the start of the WTC journey in the West Indies back in 2019.

"Virat (Kohli) has said this is not our sweat and hard work of just one month but over a period of two years. We had to work harder because of COVID, then rule change happened and

Tests definitely come with an advantage so we have to adapt to that," Ashwin told bcci.tv, referring to the Black Caps' ongoing series against England where the first Test has been drawn.

For Ishant, the only man with 100 Tests under his belt in this current team, termed it as a great effort, considering the rule changes due to COVID-19 pandemic.

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"Virat (Kohli) has said this is not our sweat and hard work of just one month but over a period of two years. We had to work harder because of COVID, then rule change happened and

and the benchmark that has been set," Shami said.

Ishant too agreed with Shami's assertion.

"I think the belief that we can come back from anywhere was huge. It helped Indian cricket enter the next phase. Even though I wasn't a part of it, I feel that series gave a different kind of self belief," Ishant added.

Ashwin spoke about how WTC has provided a context to Test cricket and would love to see more traditional format games in neutral venues.

"In all these years, it has never happened and it's the most exciting part of playing Test cricket and we have never played a team in a neutral venue. Going forward, WTC can add context with two teams playing away from home, sort of bringing the ebb and flow of the game," said Ashwin.

Krejcikova, Siniakova advance to doubles final

PARIS, 11 JUNE

Barbara Krejcikova will try this weekend to become the first woman to sweep Roland Garros titles since Mary Pierce in 2000.

Krejcikova and fellow Czech Katerina Siniakova advanced to the doubles final with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Magda Linette of Poland and Bernarda Pera of the United States.

Krejcikova also made it to the singles final by beating Maria Sakkari 7-5, 4-6, 9-7 after saving a match point on Thursday. She will be up

against Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia in Saturday's title match.

The second doubles semi-final is pitting Bethanie Mattek-Sands of the United States and Iga Swiatek of Poland against Romanian Irina-Camelia Begu and Nadia Podoroska of Argentina. AP

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Euro opening marks return of mega-scale sport events

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME, 11 JUNE

Postponed by a year, the biggest sporting event since the coronavirus brought the world to a halt was to kick off on Friday at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome, a milestone both for European and world sports.

The opening match of soccer's European Championship will be played in the capital of Italy, the first country outside Asia to get struck by the pandemic and the first in the world to implement a nationwide lockdown. The tournament represents a major step forward on the path toward recovery after one of the darkest chapters in the continent's history since World War II.

More than 1 million Europeans have died in the pandemic, including almost 127,000 Italians.

"After everything that's happened, now the situation is improving, I think the time has come to start providing fans with something to be satisfied about," said Italy coach Roberto Mancini (in photo), who had tested positive for Covid-19 in November but was asymptomatic. The tournament was postponed last March when countries were scrambling to



contain virus outbreaks and major sporting events around the world were canceled or put on hold.

Many worry that it's still not safe to bring tens of thousands of fans together in stadiums across Europe, but organizers hope measures including crowd limitations, staggered arrival times for fans, social distancing rules and lots of hand sanitizer will help prevent a resurgence of virus infections, which have dropped sharply in Europe in recent months.

In Rome, fans entering the stadium are required to bring documentation showing they have been vaccinated against the virus, tested negative in the 48 hours before the match or already had the disease. The world of sport is watch-

ing. If everything goes smoothly, Euro 2020 can give a confidence boost for other major sporting events, like the Tokyo Olympics, scheduled to open on 23 July, also a year late. If it doesn't, it would be a serious setback that could have ramifications beyond soccer.

The virus already has had an impact on the tournament, which for the first time is not being hosted by one or two nations but is spread out across the continent with matches in 11 cities. Spain captain Sergio Busquets tested positive for COVID-19 and will miss the team's first match against Sweden in Seville on Monday.

Another Spain player tested positive, as did two of Sweden's players. The Spanish squad was getting vaccinated

loss to France.

Denmark vs Finland

Finland goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky didn't sugar coat things when summing up the difference between his team and Denmark at the European Championship.

They have better players than us in every position, Hradecky said bluntly ahead of Finland's major tournament debut at Euro 2020.

Then the Bayer Leverkusen goalkeeper touched on the one thing that could speak in his team's favor going into Saturday's Group B game in Copenhagen.

"But we have shown before that the sum of all the parts in our puzzle is greater than what people think," he said.

Hradecky would argue with either of Hradecky's assessments.

While the closest thing Finland has to a star is Norwich striker Teemu Pukki, Denmark has an impressive spine that runs from goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel up through the center-back pairing of Andreas Christensen and Simon Kjaer to Tottenham midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg and Inter Milan playmaker Christian Eriksen.

Brazil's top court allows Copa America despite virus worries

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SAO PAULO, 11 JUNE

Brazil's Supreme Court gave its go-ahead for the Copa America soccer tournament to kick off here despite the country's alarming Covid-19 figures.

The unanimous vote by the 11 justices provides relief for President Jair Bolsonaro (in photo) and tournament organisers in Brazil, which is hosting the event after the withdrawal of Colombia and Argentina.

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The court's ruling is a response to challenges made by the Brazilian Socialist Party and a metalworkers union



lodged against Brazil hosting the tournament.

"Intense circulation of visitors in national territory will obviously spread Covid-19 in several states, as well as potentially allow entry of new variants," the party said in its request. The union said that no international sport events should take place in the state where they would be played.

Brazil's international players were reluctant to play in the Copa America on home soil. Now that they're commit-

ted, they're favoured to win it. Argentina still loom as a threat to Brazil's title defence, but now as visitors.

Being away from home takes some pressure off Lionel Messi and his Argentina team. No spectators will be allowed to attend any Copa America matches because of restrictions in place for the pandemic, which has already delayed the tournament by a year.

Brazil players ended speculation about a potential boycott by issuing a unified statement on Wednesday saying they were unsatisfied with the decision to move the tournament to their country, but it wouldn't stop them representing their national team. And if South American World Cup qualifiers are anything to go by, the Copa America title is Brazil's to lose.

Brazil have won all six of their games and are six points clear of second-placed Argentina. With the likes of Neymar on board, coach Tite expects not only to defend the title lifted in 2019, but also use the next 30 days to prepare for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Title favourites

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