

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 30 MAY 2021



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Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan critical, on oxygen support: Hospital



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Rhea becomes more active on social media as 1st death anniv of Sushant Singh nears



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A child dressed in a Spiderman costume strikes a pose during an anti-government protest in Bogota, Colombia, late on Friday.

Probe ordered against Maha mantri for graft

Mumbai: Maharashtra transport minister and Shiv Sena leader Anil Parab has found himself in trouble as Nashik police commissioner Deepak Pandey ordered an inquiry into allegations of corruption in transfers and postings against him and six officers. The inquiry has been ordered on the complaint of a suspended motor vehicle inspector of the Nashik Regional Transport Office. However, the minister has dismissed the charges.

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Kalra gets bail in O2 concentrators case

New Delhi: A Delhi court Saturday granted bail to businessman Navneet Kalra, accused of black marketing and selling oxygen concentrators at an exorbitant rate, and said the accused not joining the probe pending a decision on his anticipatory bail pleas.

■ More on Page 2

Petrol, diesel price rises to record high

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices were hiked across the four metros on Saturday. In the national capital, petrol prices were raised by 26 paise from ₹93.68 per litre to ₹93.94 per litre, while diesel prices were increased by 28 paise from ₹84.61 per litre to ₹84.89 per litre. In Mumbai, the petrol prices went beyond ₹100 mark.



Package includes vaccine, lunch, medicine for fever and massage for body pain

WEATHER

Max: 40°C
Min: 29°C
RH: 36%
Rain: 10%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula Panchami till 2.15 am (Monday)
Star: Uttarashada till 4.46 pm
Variyam: 8.39 pm to 10.13 pm
Durmuhurtam: 4.58 pm to 5.50 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.24 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 7.13 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 11.27 PM
MOONSET TODAY 9.03 AM

Vendetta politics, says Mamata on recall of chief secy

Ready to touch Mr Modi's feet for the sake of West Bengal: Didi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

The confrontation between the Centre and West Bengal after the state's Chief Secretary, Alapan Bandhopadhyay, worsened on Saturday with chief minister Mamata Banerjee saying that the BJP-led government in Delhi is pursuing "vendetta politics". She claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah are trying to create problems for her government at every step as they are yet to come to terms with the BJP's defeat in the Assembly elections.

A row broke out between the BJP and TMC over a meeting between the Prime Minister and Ms Banerjee. The BJP has alleged that Ms Banerjee made the PM and governor Jagdeep Dhankhar wait for 30 minutes and then skipped a meeting with him to assess the impact of Cyclone Yaas, choosing instead a quick 15-minute interaction with him at an airbase

I had other meetings to attend, and I took PM's permission before leaving. PMO humiliated me, tweets were posted to tarnish my image... We got a landslide victory, is that why you are behaving like this? Why are you quarrelling with us every day?

— Mamata Banerjee
Bengal CM

where his flight landed. She was to attend a cyclone damage review with PM Modi but left after handing him a report.

Hours later the Centre issued an order recalling West Bengal's Chief Secretary. Mr Bandhopadhyay's tenure was extended for three months just four days before Friday's order to recall him to the Centre came. His extension was sought by the West Bengal chief minister due

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Centre's move for citizenship in 5 states stirs anger

In Assam, Aasu opposes 'backdoor entry of foreigners', threatens protest

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, MAY 29

A day after the Centre issued a gazette notification inviting citizenship applications in 13 districts of five states — Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab — from members of minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, the All Assam Students Union (Aasu) and several others on Saturday threatened to re-intensify their agitation if government resorts to any such move in Assam to grant citizenship to non-Muslim foreign nationals.

Warning that any attempt to extend notification to Assam may prove counter-productive, Aasu president Dipankar Nath said, "The Central government has started the process of granting citizenship to non-Muslim foreigners through the backdoor

▶ **THE NOTIFICATION** issued by the ministry of home affairs for five states on Friday lists Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan as the communities that will be covered

instead of framing the rules under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019. The matter is pending before the Supreme Court as the Centre was not submitting its reply on framing of CAA rules on the pretext of ongoing Covid crisis, but through a separate gazette notification in five states it has violated and ignored the apex court, too."

Fearing that the Centre may resort to a similar move in Assam also, Mr Nath said, "People of Assam will not tolerate the CAA. We are not prepared

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Children were students at Kamloops Indian Residential School that closed in 1978

Mass grave of 215 kids unearthed in Canada school

British Columbia, Canada, May 29: The remains of 215 children, some as young as three years old, were found at the site of a former residential school for indigenous children, a discovery Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described as heartbreaking on Friday.

The children were students at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia that closed in 1978, according to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation, which said the remains were found with the help



The former Kamloops Indian Residential School is seen on Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, on Saturday.

—AP
of a ground penetrating radar specialist. "We had a knowing in our community that we were able to verify," Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc

Children orphaned by Covid to get ₹10L fund, free education

Centre announces measures to help kin, kids hit by Covid

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced a slew of welfare measures for children who lost their parents to Covid-19, including free education and a corpus of Rs 10 lakh when they turn 18. To assist those families who lost their earning members to the pandemic, the government announced pension for dependents and enhanced insurance benefits under the Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme. Mr Modi said these steps will help mitigate financial difficulties faced by these families.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a statement that fixed deposits will be opened in the name of children who lost their parents to Covid and the PM-Cares fund will contribute to it through a specially designed scheme — PM Cares-For Children



Body of a Covid-19 victim is prepared for burial at a Christian cemetery in New Delhi on Saturday.

— PTI
to create a corpus of ₹10 lakh for each of them when he or she reaches 18 years of age. The corpus will be used to give a monthly stipend to the children from 18-23 years of age to take care of their personal requirements during the period of higher education. On reaching the age of 23, they will get the corpus amount as a lump sum. The government will also ensure free education for these children.

Highlighting measures for their education, the PMO said children under 10 years will be given admission to the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar. Those between 11-18 years of age will be given admission to any Central government residential

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■ More on Page 2

Europe's largest volcano erupts



Lava gushes from a crater of Mt. Etna, Europe's largest active volcano, in Pedara near Catania, southern Italy Sicily, early on Saturday.

— AP

Jaishankar, Blinken discuss Indo-China border situation

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

External affairs minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar discussed the current situation on the Sino-Indian border in the Ladakh sector with his US counterpart, secretary of state Antony J. Blinken, in Washington on late Friday night (early Saturday morning IST), with the US saying it was watching the situation closely and was concerned about "some of China's problematic activities in the region". The situation in Myanmar and Afghanistan was also discussed. Covid cooperation also figured prominently at the meeting, with the US



US secretary of state Antony Blinken (right) and Indian external affairs minister S. Jaishankar speak to the media prior to a meeting at the state department in Washington on Friday.

— AP

saying it had redirected one of its own orders of critical vaccine manufacturing supplies, which will allow India to make over

20 million additional doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine. India is also eyeing a substantial chunk of

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2 yrs after he died, Pulwama martyr's wife joins military

Dhoundiyal was killed on Feb. 17, 2019

PAWAN BALI and YUSUF JAMEEL
NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, MAY 29

Two years after Major Vibhuti Shankar Dhoundiyal was killed fighting terrorists in Pulwama, Kashmir, his wife Nitika Kaul was commissioned into the Indian Army as lieutenant. Northern Army commander Lt. Gen. Y.K. Joshi piped stars on her shoulders at a ceremony held at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai on Saturday.

"The day I stepped in (the academy) I felt that the same journey that he has traversed... I am traveling through the same journey," said Lt. Kaul after the ceremony. She said that Major Dhoundiyal is always going to be part of her life. "Even today he is somewhere around looking at me. I can feel that he is just holding me and saying 'we did it'. I just love you Vibhu. I really love you." She said that one needs to keep faith in oneself. "Last 11 months have made me learn so many things in life," she added. They got married in 2018 and within a year she lost him.

Major Dhoundiyal, 33, lost his life during an anti-



Lt. Nikita Kaul (above) being inducted into the Army. (Inset) Major Vibhuti Shankar Dhoundiyal

terror operation on February 17, 2019, in a village in Pulwama in which a top terrorist of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad, Kamran was killed. Kamran was believed to be one of the conspirators of the suicide bombing in Pulwama on February 14 in which over 40 CRPF soldiers were killed.

Major Dhoundiyal was decorated with Shaurya Chakra (Posthumous) for his bravery.

During his funeral at their hometown in Dehradun, an emotional Nitika looked inside the coffin of her husband, blew him a kiss, and bent

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SHORT TAKES

Woman constable
mowed down by
unidentified vehicle

New Delhi: A 27-year-old woman constable of Delhi Police died after she was allegedly hit by an unidentified vehicle in northwest Delhi's Maurya Enclave area on Saturday, police said. The deceased, Manisha, a resident of Burari, was posted as a constable at Raj Park police station that falls under the jurisdiction of outer district of Delhi Police, they said. The offending vehicle has not been identified yet and efforts are being taken to nab the absconding driver, police said. According to police, the incident took place on Outer Ring Road at around 9 am when the woman was returning home on a two-wheeler after her night duty. On reaching the spot, the woman and her two-wheeler were found in an accidental condition. She was rushed to a nearby hospital where she succumbed to her injuries during the course of treatment, a senior police officer said. A case under section 279 (Rash driving or riding on a public way) and 304 A (Causing death by negligence) of Indian Penal Code was registered at Maurya Enclave police station and an investigation is underway to identify the offending vehicle, the officer said. The police are looking for CCTV cameras in and around the scene of crime to ascertain and establish the sequence of events.

Man involved in
130 robbery
cases arrested

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested a 40-year-old man who is allegedly involved in 130 cases of robbery and snatching. According to the police, the accused, Rajesh, was absconding since his release from jail in February this year and started committing the crimes again. The accused is habitual snatcher and has been involved in many cases of robbery and snatching, the police alleged. One country-made firearm along with two live cartridges, a motorcycle and one snatched phone has been recovered from the accused. The police said that the accused's crime was caught in CCTV footage and hence keeping in view of his previous cases, he was on hit list. The accused was arrested on a tip-off and a case was registered against him under section 25 of Arms Act at the Mangolpuri police station. During interrogation, it was revealed that the accused got involved in crime due to his family background.

Man arrested for
cheating 200
shopkeepers

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested a person for allegedly cheating over 200 shopkeepers using PayTM spoof app. During interrogation, it was revealed that the accused used to cheat shopkeepers by offering them to pay the amount of goods through their PayTM mobile numbers instead of QR code scan. Later, he used to generate fake payment transactions using PayTM spoof app and used to send a pre-drafted message regarding the payment made, but in actuality no payment was made. By using the same modus operandi, he had cheated several shopkeepers, the police alleged. A case was registered against the accused under section 420 of IPC. The phone used in the commission of crime was recovered from the accused.



Delhi police commissioner S. N. Shrivastava reviews Covid-19 situation on Saturday. Shrivastava directed field officers to study the infection positivity rates area and locality wise, identify the spreader areas and likely vulnerable spots to enforce Covid measures like social distancing etc.

■ '48,000 Covaxin doses received for 45+ group, to be mostly used as 2nd jabs'

Delhi to receive 5.5L vaccine doses
for 18-44 group next month: Sisodia

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Delhi will receive 5.5 lakh Covid-19 vaccine doses for the 18-44 age group from the Centre next month, but not before June 10, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said, on Saturday, as he accused the Central government of being stubborn on the issue of vaccine distribution.

Mr Sisodia also accused the Centre of "negligence and gross mismanagement" and sought to know how private hospitals were getting vaccines while states were being told that there was no stock.

"The Delhi government wants to vaccinate all its youth free of cost. If there are no vaccines for this purpose, how are vaccines available at private hospitals?" the deputy chief minister asked, underlining that such facilities were charging around ₹1,000 per jab.

All states are awaiting stocks of Covid-19 vac-

cines to inoculate the youth and save them from this pandemic, he added, addressing a press conference here.

In a statement issued later, the deputy chief minister was quoted as saying that the "BJP-led government was not distributing vaccines earmarked for the states and instead playing vaccine politics."

According to data shared with the Centre, 52.84 lakh doses have been administered in Delhi since the inoculation exercise began on January 16. Of this, 36.79 lakh were of Covishield and 16.04 lakh of Covaxin.

With the vaccination for the 18-44 age group remaining suspended for the sixth day on Saturday, Mr Sisodia said, "The Central government has told us that more stocks for the youth segment will be made available in June, but not before June 15."

Sharing some data, the deputy chief minister said that against a requirement of 1.84 crore doses to vac-



Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia addresses the media on Saturday. — PTI

cinates 92 lakh people in the 18-44 age group in Delhi, the Centre had provided 4.5 lakh doses in April and 3.67 lakh doses in May.

The city government is prepared to vaccinate all its 92 lakh people in this age group within three months to "break the chain of the coronavirus," but there aren't enough vaccines, he said.

Delhi received over 48,000 doses of Covaxin for the 45-plus age group on Saturday and it will mostly be used for adminis-

6,523 red zones in Central Delhi
out of 22,701 containment zones

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

The central Delhi has the maximum number red zone in national capital. Of the total 22,701 containment zones, central Delhi accounts for the maximum 6,523 red zones.

Delhi had 31,570 containment zones on April 27. The number, due to a significant drop in Covid-19 cases, has now come down to 22,701 — a decrease of over 28 per cent — by

Thursday. This is the fourth consecutive day when the daily cases count have stood below the 1500-mark.

According to data from the Delhi government's revenue department, central Delhi has the maximum number of 6,523 containment zones — accounting for nearly 29 per cent of the total zones — followed by New Delhi (4,229), southwest Delhi (2,313), south Delhi (2,308) and north Delhi (1,848).

Issuing the vaccination bulletin, she said, "We received over 48,000 doses of Covaxin on Friday from the Centre for the 45-plus people and healthcare and frontline workers.

Sushil Kumar's
police custody
extended
by 4 days

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

A Delhi court on Saturday extended by four days the police custody of Olympic medalist wrestler Sushil Kumar, arrested in connection with the murder of a 23-year-old wrestler at the Chhatrasal Stadium here.

The court had earlier sent the accused to six days' police custody for interrogation.

Sushil Kumar was produced before the court on Saturday at the end of the remand period.

"In the interest of justice, I deem it appropriate to allow the application of the police for four days only," Metropolitan Magistrate Mayank Goel said.

The police had sought Sushil Kumar's custody for seven days. Sushil Kumar and his associates allegedly assaulted wrestler Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends Sonu and Amit Kumar on the intervening night of May 4 and 5. Sagar succumbed to the injuries later.



Wrestler Sushil Kumar being taken to the Rohini court in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI



Heavy traffic jam near a drive-through Covid-19 vaccination centre at M.G. Road in Gurgaon on Saturday. — PTI

Kalra granted bail in oxygen
concentrators hoarding case

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

A Delhi court has granted bail to businessman Navneet Kalra, who is accused of black marketing and selling oxygen concentrators at an exorbitant rate.

Chief metropolitan magistrate Arun Kumar Garg granted bail to Kalra subject to furnishing two surety bonds and a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh each.

The court in its order stated that this case is primarily based upon the documentary evidence and since "all relevant documents have already been seized by the IO from the possession of the accused, there is no substance in the plea of State that accused may temper with the evidence."

Even otherwise, the said apprehension of the prosecution, regarding tempering of evidence by



Navneet Kalra

the accused, may be allayed by imposing appropriate condition upon the accused at the time of grant of bail that he shall not temper with the evidence," the order read.

The court said that "similarly, there is no material supporting the bald averment of the prosecution that accused may influence the witnesses being influential."

Opposing Kalra's bail Delhi Police claimed, he committed a white-collar crime and earned profits by selling medical

devices at exorbitant prices to those on death beds.

"His intention was to cheat people and make profit. This is a white-collar crime. He sold oxygen concentrators to needy people lying on death beds," additional public prosecutor Atul Shrivastava, representing the Delhi Police, told the court and sought rejection of Kalra's bail plea.

The remarks by the Delhi Police come a day after Kalra, through senior advocate Vikas Pahwa, told the court that he had no criminal intent to cheat people and cannot be kept in pre-trial detention.

During the course of the proceedings on Saturday, the prosecutor showed Kalra's oxygen concentrator brochures to the court, and said they were not premium or from Germany as claimed by the accused.

Kind Attention Rail Passengers

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of Rail Passengers that due to operational requirements Railways have decided to change Time-Table of following trains with effect from 05.06.2021 onwards:

Change of Time with effect from 5th June, 2021 & Onward on Day of Run when falls

Train No. & Name	Regular Train No.	Station	Existing Timings		Revised Timings	
			ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
04854 Jodhpur Jn. - Varanasi Jn. Festival Spl.	14854	Bandikui Jn.	15:33	15:38	15:28	15:33
04864 Jodhpur Jn. - Varanasi Jn. Festival Spl.	14864	Bandikui Jn.	15:33	15:38	15:28	15:33
04866 Jodhpur Jn. - Varanasi Jn. Festival Spl.	14866	Bandikui Jn.	15:33	15:38	15:28	15:33
09709 Udaipur City - Kamakhya Special	19709	Bandikui Jn.	00:53	00:55	00:48	00:50
04646 Jammu Tawi - Jaisalmer Express Spl.	14646	Phulera Jn.	19:09	19:11	19:04	19:06
04662 Jammu Tawi - Barmer Express Special	14661	Phulera Jn.	19:09	19:11	19:04	19:06
04853 Varanasi Jn. - Jodhpur Jn. Festival Spl.	14853	Phulera Jn.	13:28	13:30	13:23	13:25
04863 Varanasi Jn. - Jodhpur Jn. Festival Spl.	14863	Phulera Jn.	13:28	13:30	13:23	13:25
04865 Varanasi Jn. - Jodhpur Jn. Festival Spl.	14865	Phulera Jn.	13:28	13:30	13:23	13:25
02065 Ajmer Jn. - Delhi Sarai Rohilla Jan Shatabdi Special	12065	Rewari	10:08	10:10	10:03	10:05
02324 Barmer - Howrah Jn. Festival Special	12324	Rewari	05:59	06:01	05:54	05:56
02443 Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Jodhpur Jn. SF Exp.	22421	Rewari	08:36	08:40	08:31	08:35
02444 Jodhpur Jn.-Delhi Sarai Rohilla SF Exp.	22422	Rewari	20:30	20:35	20:25	20:30
02457 Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Bikaner Jn. Festival Special	12457	Rewari	01:00	01:03	00:55	00:58
02458 Bikaner Jn. - Delhi Sarai Rohilla Festival Special	12458	Rewari	04:27	04:30	04:22	04:25
02481* Jodhpur Jn.-Delhi Sarai Rohilla SF Spl.	22481	Rewari	03:45	03:52	03:42	03:47
02482* Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Jodhpur Jn. SF Spl.	22482	Rewari	00:40	00:43	00:35	00:38
04645 Jaisalmer - Jammu Tawi Special	14645	Rewari	14:45	14:50	14:40	14:45
04661 Barmer - Jammu Tawi Express Special	14662	Rewari	14:45	14:50	14:40	14:45
04727 Shri Ganganagar - Delhi Jn. Express Special	54767/14727	Rewari	05:35	06:12	06:02	06:07
04728 Delhi Jn. - Shri Ganganagar Express Special	54768/14728	Rewari	20:45	21:00	20:45	20:55
04811* Sikar Jn. - Delhi Sarai Rohilla Exp. Spl.	14811	Rewari	18:58	19:00	18:53	18:55
04812* Delhi Sarai Rohilla - Sikar Jn. Exp. Spl.	14812	Rewari	08:08	08:10	08:03	08:05
05013 Jaisalmer - Kathgodam Ranikhet Spl.	15013	Rewari	19:17	19:20	19:12	19:15
09457 Jodhpur Jn. - Delhi Jn. Superfast Spl.	12462	Rewari	04:43	04:45	04:38	04:40
09601 Udaipur City-New Jalpaiguri Festival Spl.	19601	Rewari	12:48	12:53	12:43	12:48
09609 Udaipur City - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Spl.	19609	Rewari	01:34	01:36	01:29	01:31
09611 Ajmer Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Festival Special	19611	Rewari	23:59	00:05	23:54	00:01
09613 Ajmer Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Festival Special	19613	Rewari	23:59	00:05	23:54	00:01
09717 Jaipur - Daulatpur Chowk Festival Spl.	19717	Rewari	00:15	00:20	00:10	00:15
02372 Bikaner Jn. - Howrah Jn. Superfast Spl.	12372	Rewari	12:45	12:53	12:40	12:48
09409 Ahmedabad Jn. - Gorakhpur Special	19409	Bandikui Jn.	22:33	22:35	22:28	22:30
09411 Ahmedabad Jn. - Lucknow Exp. Special	19401	Bandikui Jn.	22:33	22:35	22:28	22:30
02216 Bandra (T)-Delhi Sarai Rohilla Garibrath	12216	Rewari	09:33	09:35	09:28	09:30
02323 Howrah Jn. - Barmer Special	12323	Rewari	17:20	17:22	17:15	17:17
02915 Ahmedabad Jn. - Delhi Jn. Special	12915	Rewari	08:10	08:12	08:05	08:07
02949 Bandra (T) - Delhi Sarai Rohilla SF Spl.	22949	Rewari	10:08	10:10	10:03	10:05
04312 Bhuj - Bareilly Special	14312	Rewari	12:30	12:35	12:25	12:30
04322 Bhuj - Bareilly Special	14322	Rewari	12:30	12:35	12:25	12:30
09031 Ahmedabad - Yog Nagari Rishikesh Spl.	19031	Rewari	02:55	03:05	02:50	03:00
09269 Porbandar - Muzaffarpur Jn. Special	19269	Rewari	18:00	18:02	17:55	17:57
09403 Ahmedabad Jn. - Sultanpur Jn. Special	19403	Rewari	22:00	22:06	21:55	22:01
09407 Ahmedabad Jn. - Varanasi Jn. Exp. Spl.	19407	Rewari	12:48	12:53	12:43	12:48
09565 Okha - Dehradun Special	19565	Rewari	08:43	08:45	08:38	08:40
02371 Howrah Jn. - Bikaner Jn. Special	12371	Rewari	11:43	11:46	11:38	11:41

* Trains are cancelled till further advice

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations en route etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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

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"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

83-year-old man dies in
fire, 4 of family rescued

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MAY 29

A 83-year-old man died while four of his family members who were trapped inside the house after a fire broke out in a residential complex of Saket Court in south Delhi were safely rescued on Saturday, officials said.

According to fire department, a call was received around 5.23 pm that a fire broke out at a house on the fourth floor of block -C inside the residential complex of Saket Court.



Metro trains parked at Timarpur Metro Yard during Covid-induced lockdown in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to change the timings of Train No. 02025 Nagpur - Amritsar Special AC Express at following stations w.e.f. 05.06.2021 as per the details given below:-

Revised Timings of 02025 Nagpur - Amritsar Special AC Express				
STATIONS	Existing Timings	Train No. 02025		
		ARR.	DEP.	ARR.
Gwalior	06:08	06:10	06:33	06:35
Agra Cantt	08:10	08:15	08:30	08:35
New Delhi	11:40	11:55	11:55	12:10
Ambala Cantt Jn.	16:25	16:35	15:05	15:10
Ludhiana Jn.	18:25	18:35	16:45	16:55
Jalandhar City	19:35	19:40	17:52	17:57
Beas	20:07	20:09	18:28	18:30
Amritsar Jn.	21:00	--	19:20	--

Note :- There are no change of timings between Nagpur and Jhansi Station.

For any kind information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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

RailMadad Helpline No. 139 Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in & Download RailMadad app.

Please join us on

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SHORT TAKES

Covid: Odisha places order for DRDO's drug

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government on Saturday placed an order for 5,000 sachets of 2-DG (2-deoxy-D-glucose) anti-covid drugs for the treatment of hospitalised Covid-19 patients, informed state health secretary Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra. The anti-Covid medicine developed by Defence Research Organisation (DRDO) in collaboration with the Hyderabad-based Dr Reddy's Pharma Laboratory is claimed to help faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduce oxygen dependence. Dr Reddy's Pharms has fixed the price of the drug at ₹990 per sachet. The pharma company, however, has declared to supply the medicine to the states, Centres and various hospitals at discounted prices. The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has given the nod for emergency use of the drug. The drug could be a game-changer in the battle against pandemic.

Another Assam MLA dies due to Covid-19

Guwahati: United People's Party Liberal MLA Leho Ram Boro died of Covid at a hospital here on Saturday, the second sitting legislator from Assam to succumb to the infection in less than a week, a doctor at the medical facility said. Boro, 63, was admitted to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital on Thursday after he tested positive for novel coronavirus. "His condition deteriorated since Friday night. He suffered a cardiac arrest and died of Covid today," the doctor of the state-run hospital said. The first-time UPPL legislator is survived by two sons. Four-time Gossaigaon MLA Majendra Narzary died due to post-Covid complications on Wednesday. Boro defeated his nearest rival of Bodoland Peoples' Front candidate Rangja Khungur Basumatary by a margin of over 32,000 votes in Tamulpur constituency in the recently concluded assembly elections. Boro and Narzary were elected to the assembly from constituencies in the Bodoland Territorial Region. — PTI

₹5L aid to orphaned kids in TN

₹3,500 per month to guardian of child who lost parents to Covid: Himanta

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs CHENNAI, MAY 29

Chief minister M. K. Stalin unveiled a special government scheme to take care of the children, who have lost both or one of their parents to Covid, by providing them relief till they turned 18 and giving them priority in all other government welfare programmes.

Apart from paying an immediate relief of ₹5 lakh, which would be deposited in the name of the child and would be handed over with interest when the child turned 18, the government would take care of the educational expenses of such children. The decision on the scheme was taken at a high-level meeting, presided by the CM, at the secretariat with a view to providing succor to the large number of children orphaned by the second wave of the Covid, in which many young people have died. The task forces formed at the district level would identify the beneficiaries who would be eligible for the relief under the scheme and ensure that the benefits reach them.

Among the other benefits that the government would extend to the children are priority in admission at government homes and hostels. Those children under the care of guardians would also be paid ₹3,000 per month for the upbringing.

Even single parents who have been left with children to take care of with the spouses succumbing to Covid would be eligible to receive an immediate relief of ₹3 lakh and priority in government welfare schemes, the release said. Meanwhile, Assam chief Himanta Biswa Sarma also said his government will be providing ₹3,500 per month to the guardian of every child orphaned due to Covid in the state, for their education and skill development.



Health workers and volunteers from Tamilnadu Muslim Munnetra Kazhagam (TMMK) perform burial of a Covid victim in Chennai on Saturday. — PTI

Amid deaths, all roads lead to Allahabad for villagers in MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, MAY 29

For ordinary folks in remote rural pockets of Madhya Pradesh, their last rites in the 'Sangam Kshetra,' considered a holy cremation site for Hindus, in the pilgrim city of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, is a dream only for the sake of dreaming.

The cost of their final journey to the place is too prohibitive to bear by their families who find it hard even to make ends meet.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has scripted an unlikely final journey to Sangam Kshetra for some suspected Covid victims in MP as they were denied cremation in their village facility. The body of an 80-year-old man, a suspected Covid victim in the village of Patna

▶ **THE COST** of deceased person's final journey to the place is too prohibitive to bear by their families who find it hard even to make ends meet.

▶ **THE BODY** of an 80-year-old man, a suspected Covid victim in the village of Patna Tamoli in Panna district in MP, was carried in a private hearse to Sangam Kshetra for cremation

Tamoli in Panna district in Madhya Pradesh, was carried in a private hearse to Sangam Kshetra for cremation on Friday.

"The deceased, a retired teacher, had been suffering from fever and cold for some days. He passed away late on Thursday night. His family members had no option but to

carry the body to Sangam Kshetra for cremation due to unwritten restrictions imposed on the cremation of suspected Covid victims in the village facility," Ramdin Singh, a social activist of Patna Tamoli, told this newspaper on Saturday.

A fortnight ago, another retired teacher in the village died of suspected Covid and was carried in a private hearse to Sangam Kshetra for cremation, he said.

Similar incidents have been reported in the villages of Chijora, Seemara, Mohai, and Kangali in the district in the last eight months.

Hanuman Panda, a priest in Allahabad who performs the last rites of the deceased, told this newspaper that there is a separate crematorium for Covid victims at Phapamau in Allahabad.

HCs must balance concerns of agency: SC

'Denial of anticipatory bail cannot go with protection from arrest'

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, MAY 29

The Supreme Court has held that the denial of anticipatory bail in exercise of powers under Section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) can't be accompanied with protection from arrest of the accused for long duration without assigning reasons for the same.

While rejecting the plea for anticipatory bail and yet protecting an accused from arrest for a certain period of time, the top court said that high courts must balance the concerns of the investigating agency, the complainant in the criminal case, and the society at large with the concerns of the accused.

Holding that such an "exceptional discretionary protection" from arrest should be for the shortest duration that is reasonably required, the top court said that the protection order must indicate reasons which would be assailable before the apex court.

The question of law is rooted in two identical orders of Allahabad high court wherein the high

▶ **WHILE REJECTING** the plea for anticipatory bail and yet protecting an accused from arrest for a certain period of time, the Supreme Court said that high courts must balance the concerns of the investigating agency, the complainant in the criminal case, and the society at large with the concerns of the accused

court while rejecting plea for anticipatory bail granted protection from arrest to the accused for 90 days.

Having referred to the constitutional provision and the statutory backing for the high court to exercise its inherent power to give relief even where the investigating agency has made a case for custodial interrogation, the court said, "Even when the court is not inclined to grant anticipatory bail to an accused, there may be circumstances where the high court is of the opinion that it is necessary to protect the person apprehending arrest for some time, due to exceptional circumstances, until they surrender before the trial court."



Covid: Justice Chandrachud recovers, to hear suo motu case

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, MAY 29

With Justice D.Y. Chandrachud back after recovering from Covid, the Supreme court will take up for hearing on May 31, after a gap of 18 days, the suo motu matter relating to the management of the distribution of essential supplies and services during the pandemic.

The matter was listed on May 10 but due to technical glitches disrupting the hearing through video conferencing, the matter was adjourned for May 13, 2021. However, it could not be taken up on May 13 as Justice Chandrachud had tested positive of Covid.

The matter is being heard by a bench comprising Justice Chandrachud, Justice L.Nageswara Rao and Justice S. Ravindra Bhat. Now the matter is listed for hearing on May 31.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that due to operational reasons, following trains will remain cancelled as per details given below:-

CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Date from Cancellation
05483 Alipur Duar Jn.-Delhi Jn. Express Special	01.06.2021 to till further advice
05484 Delhi Jn.-Alipur Duar Jn. Express Special	03.06.2021 to till further advice

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

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Citizenship move exposes Centre's fascist nature: Left

New Delhi, May 29: The Centre's move to verify and approve citizenship applications from members of minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh living in five Indian states reveals the government's "fascist character" and is a way to give a "back door entry" to the CAA-2019, the Left parties alleged Saturday.

The Centre on Friday issued a gazette notification granting powers under existing rules to authorities in 13 districts of Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab to accept, verify and approve citizenship applications from members of minority communities hailing from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

With the Centre yet to frame rules under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019, which was fiercely protested against by various sections, the order has been issued under the Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship Rules, 2009.

The Friday notification lists Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians as the communities that will be allowed. The applications will have to be submitted online.

Petitions challenging Constitutional validity of CAA continue to remain unheard. Hope SC takes this up promptly & stops back door implementation

— **Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary**

"Subterfuge. Rules under CAA 2019 not framed, yet the Central govt issues gazette notification to implement it. Petitions challenging Constitutional validity of CAA continue to remain unheard. Hope SC takes this up promptly & stops back door implementation," CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said in a Tweet.

CPI general secretary D. Raja alleged the move "completely exposes the fascist character" of the present government.

He said there were huge protests against the CAA 2019 before the agitators relented because of the coronavirus pandemic, while some protests earlier were "ruthlessly crushed". — PTI

FCI bribery case: CBI recovers ₹3cr, jewellery & cash counting machine

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI MAY 29

The CBI on Saturday recovered ₹3 crore in cash, jewellery and a note counting machine during searches following the arrest of four Food Corporation of India (FCI) officials in a bribery case in Bhopal.

The arrested officials included Harish Hinoina (Divisional Manager), Arun Shrivastava, (Manager, accounts), Mohan Parate (manager, security) and

Kishore Meena. The case pertains to the alleged demand of ₹1.50 lakh in bribe to release pending bills of a company.

CBI spokesperson R.C. Joshi said during the searches in Bhopal, over ₹3 crore in cash, one kg of gold and silver jewellery and a note counting machine were recovered. The money was stashed in a vault inside a wooden almirah, he said adding a diary containing details of people paying the bribe was also recovered.

TEMPORARY CANCELLATION / DIVERSION / PARTIAL CANCELLATION / RE-SCHEDULING / REGULATION / SKIPPING OF STOPPAGE OF TRAINS DUE TO TRAFFIC BLOCK

It is notified for the information of passengers that Ambala Division of Northern Railway will undertake the Non-Interlocking work of Sirhind Station for commissioning of Electronic Interlocking in connection with Pilkhani - Sanehwal Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFCCIL) work. To execute this work Ambala Division will take suitable traffic blocks of different durations from 31.05.2021 to 30.06.2021. During this period following trains will be cancelled/diverted/partially cancelled/re-scheduled/regulated & stoppage of some trains at Sirhind station will be skipped on dates shown against each:-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No.	Train Name	Date of Cancellation (from originating station)
05252	Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Jn Special Express	on 27.06.2021
05251	Darbhanga Jn - Jalandhar City Special Express	on 26.06.2021
02238	Jammu Tawi - Varanasi Jn Special Express	on 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
02237	Varanasi Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26, 27, 28 & 29.06.2021
04132	Udhampur - Prayagraj Jn Special Express	on 27 & 30.06.2021
04131	Prayagraj Jn - Udhampur Special Express	on 26 & 29.06.2021
02054/53	Amritsar Jn - Haridwar Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
05212	Amritsar Jn - Darbhanga Jn Special Express	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021
05211	Darbhanga Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 24, 26 & 28.06.2021
02920	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Dr Ambedkar Nagar Special Exp.	on 27 & 30.06.2021
02919	Dr Ambedkar Nagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Exp.	on 25 & 28.06.2021
04650	Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Saryu Yamuna Special Express	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021
04649	Jaynagar Jn - Amritsar Jn Saryu Yamuna Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021
04674	Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Shaheed Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021
04673	Jaynagar Jn - Amritsar Jn Shaheed Special Express	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021
02380	Amritsar Jn - Sealdah Jaliaiwala Bagh Special Express	on 27.06.2021
02379	Sealdah - Amritsar Jn Jaliaiwala Bagh Special Express	on 25.06.2021
02026	Amritsar Jn - Nagpur Special Express	on 28.06.2021
02025	Nagpur - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 26.06.2021
04672	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Bandra Terminus Swaraj Special Exp.	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021
04671	Bandra Terminus - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Swaraj Special Exp.	on 25, 27 & 28.06.2021
04675	Gandhidham Jn - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express	on 26.06.2021
04676	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Gandhidham Jn Special Express	on 24.06.2021
04678	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Hapa Special Express	on 28.06.2021
04677	Hapa - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express	on 29.06.2021
04679	Jamnagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express	on 30.06.2021
04680	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Jamnagar Special Express	on 27.06.2021
02356	Jammu Tawi - Patna Jn Special Express	on 27 & 30.06.2021
02355	Patna Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26 & 29.06.2021
02422/21	Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
04652	Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Special Express	on 25, 27 & 30.06.2021
04651	Jaynagar Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021
04654	Amritsar Jn - New Jalpaiguri Superfast Special Express	on 30.06.2021
04653	New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar Jn Superfast Special Express	on 25.06.2021
02318	Amritsar Jn - Kolkata Special Express	on 29.06.2021
02317	Kolkata - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 27.06.2021
02358	Amritsar Jn - Kolkata Special Express	on 28.06.2021 & 01.07.2021
02357	Kolkata - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 26 & 29.06.2021
05098	Jammu Tawi - Bhagalpur Special Express	on 29.06.2021
05097	Bhagalpur - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 24.06.2021
04145	Kanpur Central - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 28.06.2021
04146	Amritsar Jn - Kanpur Central Special Express	on 29.06.2021
04646	Jammu Tawi - Jaisalmer Special Express	on 24, 26, 28 & 29.06.2021
04645	Jaisalmer - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26, 28, 30.06.21 & 01.07.21
04662	Jammu Tawi - Barmer Special Express	on 23, 25 & 27.06.2021
04661	Barmer - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021
01078	Jammu Tawi - Pune Jn Special Express	on 26, 27, 28 & 29.06.2021
01077	Pune Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 25, 26, 27 & 28.06.2021
03006	Amritsar Jn - Howrah Jn Special Express	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
03005	Howrah Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 25, 26, 27, 28 & 29.06.2021
02332	Jammu Tawi - Howrah Jn Special Express	on 27 & 28.06.2021
02331	Howrah Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 25 & 26.06.2021

DIVERSION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Train Name	Diversion Route	Date of passing (from originating station)
02426/02425 Jammu Tawi - New Delhi - Jammu Tawi Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Jakhai Jn	on 26, 27, 28 & 29 30.06.2021
02408 Amritsar Jn - New Jalpaiguri Special Express	Diverted via Sanahwal - Chandigarh	on 25.06.2021
02407 New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar Jn Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Sanahwal	on 16.06.2021
04652 Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Rajpura Jn	on 11, 13 & 25.06.21
02920 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Dr Ambedkar Nagar Special Express	Diverted via Sanahwal - Chandigarh	on 11 & 25.06.2021
04064 Amritsar Jn - Howrah Jn Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Rajpura Jn	on 25.06.2021
02278 Jammu Tawi - Tirupati Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Rajpura Jn	on 25.06.2021
02277 Tirupati - Jammu Tawi Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Sanahwal	on 15.06.2021
02325 Kolkata - Nangal Dam Special Express	Diverted via Morinda - Morinda	on 24.06.2021
02326 Nangal Dam - Kolkata Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Chandigarh	on 26.06.2021
05252 Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Jn Spl Exp.	Diverted via Sanahwal - Chandigarh	on 13.06.2021
02317 Kolkata - Amritsar Jn Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Sanahwal	on 16.06.2021

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short Originate from	Partially Cancelled between Station	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
03308 Firozpur Cantt Jn - Dhanbad Jn Special Express	from Saharanpur	Firozpur Cantt Jn - Saharanpur	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
03307 Dhanbad Jn - Firozpur Cantt Jn Special Express	at Saharanpur	Saharanpur - Firozpur Cantt Jn	on 24, 25, 26, 27 & 28.06.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn - Korba Special Express	from Hazrat Nizamuddin	Amritsar Jn - Hazrat Nizamuddin	on 27.06.2021
08237 Korba - Amritsar Jn Special Express	at Hazrat Nizamuddin	Hazrat Nizamuddin - Amritsar Jn	on 25.06.2021
04502/04501 Una Himachal - Saharanpur - Una Himachal Special Express	from / at Ambala Cant	Una Himachal - Ambala Cant - Una Himachal	on 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
02904 Amritsar Jn - Mumbai Central Special Express	from Ambala Cant	Amritsar Jn - Ambala Cant	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
02903 Mumbai Central - Amritsar Jn Special Express	at Ambala Cant	Ambala Cant - Amritsar Jn	on 24, 25, 26, 27 & 28.06.2021

RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Rescheduled of Trains
04502 Una Himachal - Saharanpur Special Express	Train will be Rescheduled to depart from Una Himachal at 15:00 hrs. instead of 13:30 hrs. (90 minutes late) on 25.06.2021
04674 Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Special Express	Train will be Rescheduled to depart from Amritsar Jn at 15:05 hrs. instead of 13:05 hrs. (120 minutes late) on 25.06.2021

REGULATION OF TRAIN

Train No. & Name	Regulation of Trains at Station
04672 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Bandra Terminus Swaraj Special Express	Train will be Regulated for 45 minutes at Khanna Station on 25.06.2021

SKIPPING OF STOPPAGE AT SIRHIND STATION

Train No. & Name	Date(s)
04674 Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Special Express	on 25.06.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn - Korba Special Express	on 25.06.2021
03308 Firozpur Cantt Jn - Dhanbad Jn Special Express	on 31.05.2021 & 25.06.2021
04662 Jammu Tawi - Barmer Special Express	on 25.06.2021
01078 Jammu Tawi - Pune Jn Special Express	on 31.05.2021 & 25.06.2021
02054 Amritsar Jn - Haridwar Jn Special Express	on 31.05.2021
04650 Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Saryu Yamuna Special Express	on 31.05.2021
05212 Amritsar Jn - Darbhanga Jn Special Express	on 31.05.2021
04646 Jammu Tawi - Jaisalmer Special Express	on 31.05.2021

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SHORT TAKES

Azam Khan's health condition serious

Lucknow: Senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan's condition is serious but under control, the private hospital where he is undergoing treatment for Covid-19 said on Wednesday. The condition of his son, Mohammad Abdullah Khan, is stable, and he is being monitored by doctors, it added. "Treatment of Azam Khan (72) was started, after cavity and fibrosis was found in his lungs. He needed 3-5 litres of oxygen. He is kept under the observation of a critical care team. His condition is serious, but under control. He is under observation of critical care team," a statement issued by the Medanta Hospital, Lucknow, said. An expert team of the critical care unit is making continuous efforts for his better treatment, it added. — PTI

C'garh: Man lynched by mob over 'theft'

Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh: A 45-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death and five others suffered injuries after a mob of villagers attacked them on the suspicion of cattle theft in Chhattisgarh's Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi (GPM) district, the police said on Saturday. At least six persons have been arrested in connection with the incident that took place in Salheghori village under Gaurela police station area on Thursday, an official said. The victims hailed from Medhakhar village located in Amarkantak police station limits of Madhya Pradesh. Two men from Medhakhar had come to transport four buffaloes procured by someone, from Salheghori to their village on Wednesday night, he said. — PTI

Weapon smuggling bid at LoC thwarted

Srinagar: The J&K police on Saturday claimed that they together with the Army foiled an attempt of smuggling illegal weapons into the Valley from across the LoC and have seized three AK assault rifles and four pistols with ammunition before these could land in the hands of militants. The police in a tweet said that its men along with those of the Army conducted an operation in a forward area in Jabdi region in Kupwara district during which the consignment was seized. "Kupwara Police & Army in an operation at the forward Jabdi Tangdhar sector Kupwara today thwarted an attempt by #terrorists to #smuggle weapons. 03 AK-47 rifles & 06 magazines and 04 pistols & 9 magazines have been recovered from the spot," the tweet reads.

Sympathisers of militants pose a key challenge to forces in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, MAY 29

The number of Kashmiri separatists' over ground workers (OGWs) and sympathisers is swelling day after day, causing a serious concern among the security forces who are combating a 31-year-old insurgency in J&K. "It is one of the major challenges we are facing today. Otherwise, we have had a lot of successes over terror groups in recent months," said a senior Army officer who spoke to this correspondent on condition of anonymity. During the past six months, the J&K police has independently or with the assistance of various security forces, including the Army's counter-insurgency Rashtriya Rifles, arrested several hundred OGWs of various militant

DURING THE past six months, the police has independently or with the assistance of various security forces arrested several hundred OGWs of various militant outfits.

A couple of dozen more are at present under surveillance, sources said. Some time ago, American officials too had cautioned India of the looming dangers but, at the same time, suggested it to take certain "soft" measures towards tackling the problem amid the reports renaissance by the over-ground supporters and sympathisers of Kashmiri separatist militants, the idee fixe of *Aazadi* and the swelling of its ideologies. In April this year, Lt. Gen. Devendra Pratap Pandey, Commander of Srinagar-based 15 Army

Corps, had said that the recruitment of OGWs for the militant outfits was going on also through social media and other online mediums. He had said, "The cycle of violence in the south and parts of central Kashmir is still on and there is a need to control it and for that the security forces and citizens need to connect better". He had also said that the security forces had taken two steps to put an end to militancy in Kashmir — "one to stop recruitment by OGWs and second, to reduce recruitment by OGW's through social media and other online mediums". However, some local analysts are of the view that the drift could well drag the ground situation in J&K particularly the Valley back to square one. "It doesn't matter how peo-

ple establish contacts with various militant groups. The important thing is why do they do that and offer or agree to become their OGWs. I think this is share sympathy for these groups and their agenda and this is something which should be the cause of worry for the government, especially the forces," said one of them. According to the police authorities, infiltration attempts from across the LoC have shown a sharp decrease recently. After India's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) Lt. Gen. Paramjit Singh Sangha and his Pakistani counterpart Maj. Gen. Nauman Zakaria in February this year pledged to abide by the November 2003 ceasefire understanding, no major infiltration bid has been made.

Karambir: Need to engage adversaries in all domains

Navy Chief stresses on importance of 'jointness' among 3 services

Pune, May 29: Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh on Saturday said the nature of war is changing where there is a need to engage adversaries in all domains like land, sea, air, space and cyber, and stressed on the increased importance of "jointness" among the country's three services. Adm. Singh was speaking at the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Khadakwasla after reviewing the Passing Out Parade of the 140th course of the academy. "The nature of war is changing and it is important to engage adversaries in all domains, like land, sea, air, space and cyber. It is for this reason that the jointness among the three services is far more important than in the



past," he said. The armed forces are seeing landmark reforms with the establishment of the Department of Military Affairs, institution of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and soon to be formed theatre commands, the Navy Chief said. "Traditions, identity, uniforms and customs of each service matter as do the requirements generated by the distinctive role of the three services. But jointness in the armed forces is paramount for more synergised and effective application of force in today's complex battlefield." The NDA has been a symbol of jointness for 72

years and its existence enforces the core values of jointmanship, which are the founding principles of the academy, Adm. Singh said. "All of you must remember that no matter how future warfare evolves, few personal abilities and attributes remain the key for effective leadership. Leadership, as you know is the essence of an officer," he said in his address to the cadets. Adm. Singh, an alumnus of the NDA's 56th course, arrived at his alma mater on Friday, after which he visited his parent squadron "H" (Hunter Squadron) and interacted with the cadets. He presented a memento for the squadron to the cadets, an official statement said. — PTI

Probe ordered against Maha minister in corruption case

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, MAY 29

Maharashtra transport minister and Shiv Sena leader Anil Parab has found himself in trouble as Nashik police commissioner Deepak Pandey ordered an inquiry into allegations of corruption in transfers and postings against him and six officers. The inquiry has been ordered on the complaint of a suspended motor vehicle inspector of the Nashik regional transport office (RTO). However, the minister has dismissed the charges against him as baseless. The complaint was filed by suspended officer Gajendra Patil, who is posted at the Nashik RTO, via an email on May 16. In his complaint, he has named state transport minister Anil Parab, the state transport commissioner and five senior officers of the RTO for their alleged role in transfers and postings of RTO officials. He has also alleged corruption at border checkpoints; settlement of cases against some private operators and illegal registration of BS-4 vehicles.



Anil Parab

Hooch tragedy toll in Aligarh rises to 22

Aligarh, May 29: The death toll in the Aligarh hooch tragedy went up to 22 on Saturday, and 28 more people are still in critical condition, an official said. Seven people have died since Friday night, he said and added that the condition of 28 people undergoing treatment at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College Hospital, AMU, and the Malkhan Singh District Hospital is critical. Local BJP MP Satish Gautam, however, told reporters in the afternoon that the death toll has "crossed 30", citing information he has received from the ground. Locals fear the death toll may rise further as reports from several villages are still trickling in.

On Friday, additional district magistrate (finance) Vidhan Jaiswal said 15 people had died in villages falling under three separate police stations — Lodha, Khair and Jawan — after consuming spurious liquor. District magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh while confirming the death toll of 22, said, "Exact figures would be available after the post-mortem examination of the bodies lined up at the mortuary is conducted." Mr Singh hinted at the possibility that some of those bodies at the post-mortem house "could belong to those who have died of other causes, but are being linked to the deaths caused by spurious liquor". — PTI

2 civilians gunned down by militants in Anantnag

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, MAY 29

A 19-year-old youth and a 35-year-old dental technician were gunned down by unidentified assailants in Bijbehara area of J&K's southern Anantnag district on Saturday night. The police authorities blamed the shooting incident on separatist militants and said that a manhunt has been launched for the killers. They said that the duo were targeted by the mili-

itants in Jablipura area of Bijbehara, about 50-km south of summer capital Srinagar. "Both of them received critical bullet wounds in the attack. They were evacuated to a nearby hospital where teenager Sanjeed Ahmad Parrey was declared dead. The other civilian, 35-year-old dental technician Shah Nawaz Ahmed Bhat, too succumbed to his injuries soon thereafter," a police officer told this newspaper over the phone from Bijbehara.



Cadets celebrate during their graduation ceremony at the Officers Training Academy in Chennai on Saturday. — PTI

7 killed as slab of building collapses in Thane district

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, MAY 29

Seven people were killed after a slab of a five-storey residential building collapsed in Ulhasnagar town near Mumbai. The Maharashtra government has announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the kin of each deceased. According to fire officials of the Ulhasnagar Municipal Corporation (UMC), a slab of the upper floor of five-story Sai Shakti building crashed on late Friday night. The fire brigade reached the spot and started rescue operations. While many residents managed to

rush out of the building in time, others were pulled out of the rubble with the help of locals. The casualties included four from the same family. The deceased were identified as Punit Panjwani (17), Dinesh Panjwani (40), Deepak Panjwani (42), Mohini Panjwani (65), Krishna Bajaj (24), Amruta Bajaj (54) and Lovely Bajaj (20). UMC public relations officer Yuvraj Badhane said, "The building was not on this year's dangerous buildings list. It was built in 1994-95." State Minister Ekanth Shinde rushed to the spot to take stock of the situa-

tion. He said, "The state government would give ₹5 lakh to the kin of each deceased." This is the second building collapse incident in Ulhasnagar town in the last fortnight. On May 15, five people were killed, while 10 others suffered minor injuries after the slab of a ground-plus-five-storey residential building Mohini Palace at Ulhasnagar's Charandas Chowk collapsed. A sizable population of Sindhi refugees, who migrated after partition of India, reside in Ulhasnagar. Many constructions in the town are unauthorised.

Sena criticises beef ban in Lakshadweep, BJP hits back

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, MAY 29

The Shiv Sena on Saturday criticised beef ban in Lakshadweep. The Sena said that Lakshadweep has an overwhelming majority of Muslims and beef is part of their everyday diet. Hitting back at the Shiv Sena, the BJP said the Thackeray-led party must stop claiming to be a Hindutva party. The Shiv Sena, in an editorial in *Saamana* on Saturday, said that Lakshadweep has been witnessing the resentment because of the decision passed by the Laks-hadweep administrator Praful Khoda Patel. The Shiv Sena alleged that Mr Patel had harassed and misbehaved with Mohan Delkar, former MP from Silvassa, who committed suicide. "Mr Patel has now focused on Lakshadweep. His decision is irrational. 93 per cent population of Lakshadweep is Muslim. Mr Patel has issued fatwa to ban beef. Selling and eating of beef would now be an offence," the editorial said. "The atmosphere has been disturbed in Lakshadweep," it added. Shiv Sena's latest posturing on beef ban is completely different from its earlier stands on the issue.

Govt's citizenship move in 5 states triggers anger

Continued from Page 1

to take the load of foreigners anymore. We would like to make it very clear that any attempt to provide citizenship to foreigners will have very dangerous implications and fall outs." Mr Nath had backed the formation of an anti-CAA political party, Assam Jatiya Parishad, which contested the just concluded Assembly polls but failed to make its presence felt on all the seats. Lurinjyoti Gogoi, a former Aasu leader and president of the Assam Jatiya Parishad, told reporters that the Centre has started inviting applications without framing the CAA rules. "This reflects the mentality of the BJP government which may soon try to impose the same gazette notification on Assam too. Five youths have already sacrificed their lives in the anti-CAA stir. We would like to warn the Central government to refrain from any such move to provide citizenship to foreigners in the name of giving settlement to Hindus. We will not be silent spectators to such an act of the government," he said while threatening to relaunch anti-CAA agitation in the state. Mr Gogoi contested the Assembly polls from two seats and lost both. Another political party which came into existence after the anti-CAA movement in Assam — Rijor Dal led by noted jailed peasant

leader Akhil Gogoi, who got elected in the just concluded Assembly polls too — has also threatened to relaunch their anti-CAA movement in the state if the gazette notification is extended to Assam and Northeast. The notification issued by the ministry of home affairs for five states on Friday lists Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians as the communities that will be covered, and states that applications have to be submitted online. The order has been issued under the Citizenship Act, 1955, and the Citizenship Rules, 2009, and not under the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, since its rules have not yet been framed, sources in the ministry of home affairs said. A similar notification had been issued in 2018 as well for other districts in several states. "In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 16 of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955), the Central government hereby directs that powers exercisable by it, for registration as a citizen of India under Section 5, or for grant of certificate of naturalisation under Section 6 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, in respect of any person belonging to minority community in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, namely, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists,

Jains, Parsis and Christians... shall also be exercisable by the Collector, within whose jurisdiction the applicant is ordinarily resident," the notification said. The districts listed in the notification are: Morbi, Rajkot, Patan and Vadodara (Gujarat); Durg and Balodabazar (Chhattisgarh); Jalore, Udaipur, Pali, Barmer and Sirohi (Rajasthan); Faridabad (Haryana); and, Jalandhar (Punjab). It also granted similar powers to the home secretaries of Haryana and Punjab, except for Faridabad and Jalandhar. "The verification of the application is done simultaneously by the Collector or the Secretary, as the case may be, at the district level and the state level and the application and the reports thereon shall be made accessible simultaneously to the Central Government on online portal," the order said. "The Collector or the Secretary, as the case may be, on being satisfied with the suitability of the applicant, grants him the citizenship of India by registration or naturalisation and issues a certificate of registration or naturalisation, as the case may be, duly printed from online portal and signed by the Collector or the Secretary, as the case may be, in the Form as prescribed in the said rules," the notification said.

Spouse of Major killed in Pulwama fight joins Army

Continued from Page 1

over to say, "I love you." Some six months after the death of her husband, she cleared the Short Service Commission (SSC) exam and the Services Selection Board (SSB) interview. The citation for Major Dhoundiyal said that he had shown exceptional leadership qualities in various operations which had resulted in the elimination of five terrorists and recovery of 200 kilograms of explosive material. The Pinglana village of Pulwama had witnessed a fierce gun battle between the JeM militants and security forces on February 17 and 18, 2019, leaving three of its members including top commanders Kamran Bhai alias Fahad and Ghazi Rasheed alias Luqman and Major Vibhuti Shankar Dhoundiyal, Havildar Sheo Ram, Sepoy Hari Singh and Sepoy Ajay Kuma, a J&K head-constable Abdur Rashid and a civilian Mushtaq Ahmed Butt dead. The Army and the J&K police had claimed that Kamran Bhai alias Fahad was a "trusted aide" of the JeM chief Moulana Masood Azhar whereas Ghazi Rasheed alias Luqman was known to be an IED specialist. Both of them were Pakistani nationals. The third militant killed with them was local resident Hilal Ahmed. The 18-hour-long gunfight had also left a trail of smouldering homes. The locals had alleged that after killing two holed up militants the security forces torched a couple of residential houses in their final assault on their third accomplice as he was changing his position between the cluster of houses, making it difficult for the former to neutralise him. But the Army has maintained that the private houses caught fire in exchange of fire and that all the three militants were holed up in one of these houses initially. Major Dhoundiyal, a resident of Dangwal village of Dehradun, had joined the Army in 2011.

Vendetta politics: Didi on chief secy recall

Continued from Page 1

to his experience in handling the coronavirus pandemic. "Because you (Modi and Shah) cannot digest BJP's defeat (Bengal), you have started creating problems for us from day one. What is the fault of the Chief Secretary? Recalling the Chief Secretary amid the Covid-19 crisis goes on to show that the Centre is indulging in political vendetta," Ms Banerjee said and added that she was ready to touch Mr Modi's feet if told to do so for the sake of West Bengal's growth and development. Talking about the criticism she faced for skipping the review meeting with Mr Modi on cyclone devastation, Ms Banerjee said, "It was supposed to be held between

the PM and the CM. Why were BJP leaders called to the meeting?" Accusing the office of the Prime Minister of feeding "fake, one-sided, partisan news" to the media, Ms Banerjee on Saturday called a news conference "to set things straight" where she told the Centre: "I had other meetings to attend, and I took PM's permission before leaving. PMO humiliated me by running one-sided information circulated by the PMO. Don't insult me like this. We have got a landslide victory, is that why you are behaving like this? You tried everything and lost. Why are you quarrelling with us every day?" TMC MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy described recall orders served to

Mr Bandhopadhyay as "forced Central deputation" of the chief secretary and asked, "Has this ever happened since Independence? Forced Central deputation of a chief secretary of a state? How much lower will Modi-Shah's BJP stoop?" Terming the transfer as "malicious", Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said, "The abrupt, malicious and unilateral recall of West Bengal's chief secretary by the Modi government has shocked the conscience of the entire nation. This is double whammy when viewed in light of the fact that the Chief Secretary was granted an extension for three months by the Modi government itself, as recently as four days ago."

Centre announces measures to help kin, kids hit by Covid

Continued from Page 1

school such as Sainik School and Navodaya Vidyalaya. In case the child remains under the care of a guardian or extended family, then he or she will be given admission to the nearest Kendriya Vidyalaya or in a private school as a day scholar. If the child is admitted to a private school, fees as prescribed under the Right to Education Act norms will be given from the PM-Cares fund, along with the expenditure on uniform, textbooks and notebooks, the PMO added. "Children represent the future of the country and we will do everything to support and protect the children. It is our duty, as a society, to care for our children and instill hope for a bright future," PM Modi said while announcing the relief measures which marks the eve of his government's second anniversary in its second term. For children who are not eligible under the existing scholarship schemes, PM Cares fund will provide an equivalent scholarship. All children will also be enrolled as a beneficiary under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), with a health insurance cover of ₹5 lakh. The premium amount for these children till the age of 18 years will be paid by PM-Cares, the statement said.

Jaishankar & Blinken discuss Indo-China border situation

Continued from Page 1

a separate 80 million doses of vaccines which the US plans to donate to other countries. Mr Blinken termed US-India ties as "vital, strong, and increasingly productive" and also reiterated the American commitment to deepening the US-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and "discussed a broad range of issues, including Covid-19 relief, efforts to strengthen Indo-Pacific cooperation through the Quad". He added, "We remember in the earlier days of Covid, India was there for the US, something we'll never forget, and now we want to make sure that we're there for and with India." EAM Jaishankar, who

wrapped up his five-day official visit to the US, thanked the US for the Covid relief material worth about \$100 million provided to India. US state department's acting assistant secretary Dean Thompson said, "On China, we've shared concerns about some of China's problematic activities in the region, and have become increasingly likeminded on these issues... There were some just discussions of developments on the India-China border. I'm not going to characterise the discussions beyond that other than to say we continue to watch the situation very closely and hope that everything can be resolved peaceably as things go forward."

THE ASIAN AGE

30 MAY 2021



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

Back to ‘the future’, with a ticket to ride

How often have we said to each other these past pandemic months that we can’t wait to ‘go back’ to how it was? Back to socially-undistanced work and schools. Back to favourite haunts. Back to ‘normal’!

But back to the future?

In this film series which celebrated its 35th anniversary last year at the start of the coronavirus crisis, Marty McFly goes back in time, stopping off in different eras, to fix the future. ‘Roads?’ Doc reminds him, ‘Where we’re going, we don’t need roads’. This is scarily true today because a) we don’t get out of the house anymore, b) if we don’t survive this, what use are roads, c) but if we do outlive this devastating pandemic, we need to think about a future where we use them less, especially in gas-guzzling vehicles. Dispensing at the same time with a lot else besides.

An uncomfortable thought, but consider that not just Back to the Future, many sci-fi stories with their visions of dystopian futures are coming true right now. If we survive this horror and don’t want it repeated, we would need to commit to the kind of lifestyle changes climate activists have been shouting themselves hoarse about for decades.

So, we’re not wrong when, in talking about the future these excruciating months, we’ve obsessed about ‘going back’. But this oxymoronic future we’re dreaming of, simultaneously advancement and return, can never be the ‘normal’ of our recent past.

An article in the *New York Times* this month, about a gaping hole in the middle of an English city, Nottingham, revealed that people have already cottoned on. A big, ugly 1970s mall at its heart was demolished a couple of years ago to make room for a shiny, new one. Then the pandemic came along and the plan was first parked and later, abandoned. Because a consultation with its citizens in the meantime had led to the surprising verdict that instead of malls, they desired parks and heritage preservation. Fitting, as Nottingham of Robin Hood fame was once mostly Sherwood Forest, but a turnup for the books nevertheless when after a hundred years of avid consumerism, a modern urban hub wants to step off the conveyor belt of fast-paced city living, and lead a quieter life.

Can we hope for this in India where there’s a burgeoning young population constantly bombarded with ads, the lure of malls, and ‘status’ conferring products? In not agreeing to carbon-cutting measures that are sorely needed for environmental regeneration at the recent climate summit, the Indian government appears to have answered that. But that’s the government, not the people. The Indian people, more than any other, have tragically felt the wrath of an injured planet in the last months, and will surely disagree with their government’s reactionary stance, which, in the short-term growth interests of a few, neglects the long-term needs of all its citizens, who require a healthy earth to live on.

The lives we led globally before the pandemic might have felt ‘normal’, but evidence of ever-accelerating environmental degradation proves it wasn’t ‘natural’ at all. And the consequences are hitting home, with this killer virus only the start. Like most 21st century people, I like my modern comforts, but it’s becoming uncomfortably clear that we must realign with nature; making a significant, yet sensible, leap into the past.

How about we try the KonMari method of decluttering; discarding habits that no longer “spark joy”? This pandemic has opened my eyes to what’s essential in my life; that which provides long-term joy over short-lived superficial pleasure. Unexpectedly diagnosed with diabetes last month, choosing a leaner, closer-to-nature lifestyle has been a no-brainer. Yet, in the mess we’re in, with urgent action required to reverse it, isn’t it the way forward for everyone? But if the way forward is a going back, is it the early 20th century we must return to? The pre-industrialised 18th, or the Dark Ages perhaps?!

I fancy we could get away with a pick-and-mix approach. What could be better than picking the healthiest habits from every epoch? We’ve never been better-placed to do that than now, with so much hindsight at our disposal, and so much time! Nor do we have to adopt an alien culture or travel far to see how life can be lived in tune with nature. Just visit your nearest gram (but not Gurugram!)

To pick and mix would mean we won’t have to fully subscribe to any one philosophy, era, or lifestyle. We don’t have to go full-on Amish; doing without electricity, or wearing potato sacks. We just need to choose the smartest, greenest ways of life that history has had to offer. We can, as we did so comfortably in the past, opt for sustainable fashion (aka upcycling and hand-me-downs) and grow some of our own food. Or ally the best of pre-automotive living with a solution from more recent times — the electric car. On solo commutes, we should cycle everywhere we can, switching to green public transport where cycling might be hazardous, with the occasional use of an electric car when transporting the whole clan. Good for the planet and healthy for peeps, cycling is also the height of romance! We may once again ride through a quiet lane blossoming with bird-song, with unpolluted wind in our hair like Gregory Peck or Madhubala!

This going back to move forward, advancing to backtrack, may be confusing, even unnerving, but just the ticket for our return to calm. To paraphrase Marty McFly, “You guys may not feel ready for that yet, but your kids are gonna love it!”

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenh.

Subhani



On vax policy, govt doth indeed protest too much



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Gunahgar sam-jhe ki duniya ruihe, bas inti bhi zyada safai na de. The world will conclude that you are guilty, if you give so many explanations to show your innocence.” This simple couplet came to my mind while reading the press release issued by PIB on May 27, titled, “Myths and Facts on India’s Vaccination Process”. The government’s adamancy in winning the publicity war even when the case is indefensible leads responsible technocrats, like Dr Vinod Paul, member (health) and chair of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid 19 (NEGVAC), to author such press releases.

Dr Paul lists out seven “myths” regarding the critique of the government’s vaccination policy, and bravely sets out to give the correct “facts”. In doing so he ends up only further revealing how highly incompetent the government has been on this front.

Let us take up the seven points raised by Dr Paul. The first is “that the Centre is not doing enough to buy vaccines from abroad”. His defence is that “buying vaccines internationally is not similar to buying ‘off the shelf’ items”, and that “vaccines are in limited supply globally”. Thank you very much Dr Paul for educating us on these simplicities, but the question is, given these obvious constraints, could not have the government done better?

The answer is an emphatic yes. With the same constraints, the United States has purchased enough vaccines to

inoculate its population three times over, the EU countries have done much the same, Canada has bought five times of what it needs, and Japan four times. These countries had foresight. They were proactive in anticipating the needs of their population. The US even went to the extent of booking orders with pharmaceutical companies even when the trials were still on. Even now, the extra stocks with these countries are available for bulk purchase. Contrast our record. We gave away from what precious little we had, and did not aggressively buy in time for our own needs.

“Myth” two is that the government has not approved vaccines available globally. Dr Paul’s defence is that “no application of any foreign manufacturer for approval is pending with the drugs controller”. This, in fact, is the real lament. Why did the government not move fast enough with foreign vaccine manufacturers well in time so that by now applications would have been cleared or were “pending”, and production was on the anvil? To say, in a bureaucratic way, that nothing is pending with us, is no defence for the absence of proactively seeking out such collaborations before the second wave was upon us.

“Myth” three is that “the Centre is not doing enough to ramp up domestic production of vaccines”. This “myth” is so much a fact that it barely needs rebuttal. It is now in the public domain how Serum Institute of India (SII) sought financial assistance from the government to ramp up pro-

duction, but that this vital input was not provided till as late as April 2021, when we were in the throes of the second wave. Nor was Bharat Biotech, the producers of Covaxin, encouraged to expand production through adequate funding, and nor was the IPR of their vaccine shared with other indigenous pharma companies to boost total output. All such efforts are being made only now, after the mayhem and suffering we have witnessed during the second wave. Competent governments work in advance, not in hindsight.

“Myth” four is that “the Centre should invoke compulsory licensing”. Dr Paul says that “this is not a very attractive option since it is not a ‘formula’ that matters, but active partnership, training of human resources, sourcing of raw materials and highest levels of bio-safety labs which is required”. True, but everybody knows that. The real challenge was to use diplomacy at the right time to persuade foreign pharma companies to part with their technology and know-how, and obtain, either indigenously or otherwise, the material required to make the vaccines. Our foreign minister, Dr Jaishankar, has only now gone to the US for this purpose. What was the government doing for all the months before? Compulsory licensing, and the waiving of patents is permissible under the TRIPS agreement during emergencies, so it is not a question of whether it is

‘Myth’ two is that the government has not approved vaccines available globally. Dr Paul’s defence, that ‘no application of any foreign manufacturer is pending with the drugs controller’, is, in fact, is the real lament.

an “attractive” option or not.

“Myths” number five and six deal with the policy being adopted towards the states. The argument is so laboured that it begs disbelief. It is absolutely clear to anyone that a system where the Centre and each state separately bid for global vaccines in short supply, is a prescription for anarchy. The lame argument that health is a state subject does not dilute the express assumption of powers by the Centre when a national emergency has been declared since March 2020 under the National Disaster Management Act. The second argument that states themselves wanted powers to procure vaccines does not hold water either. Firstly, many states are clear that they never asked for such powers. Secondly, even if some states did, surely the Centre is duty bound to override their requests in the larger interest of central procurement, which is the only rational policy to follow. Passing the buck to the states is a cynical cover up for a total abdication of responsibility, and clearly against the provisions of the National Disaster Management Act. “Myth” seven is that the “Centre is not taking any steps to vaccinate children”. Dr Paul’s defence that “no country in the world is giving vaccines to children” may be literally correct, but it ignores the fact that many countries have announced dates when they plan to do so. The basic truth is that when adults are running from pillar to post to get vaccinated, there are just not enough doses for children.

The government has, quite simply, been found starkly wanting on the issue of vaccines. That is the fact. The myth is that there can be a defence of the indefensible.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

LETTERS

SABOTAGE BY BJP

West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee’s press conference denouncing the PM’s power politics against her by armtwisting her to give up trusty chief secretary at a time when the people of the state are suffering the devastation wrought by Cyclone Yaas is timely and pertinent. Calling out the Centre on its poor opinion of West Bengal will win the perception game. The PM recently broke protocol in meeting with district magistrates in UP as well. Ms Banerjee must tone her legal muscle to effectively counter this new tendency of the government.

Bidyut K. Chatterjee
Faridabad

BSY IS BEST

THE RIPPLES IN Karnataka caused by disgruntled elements demanding a change of guard appear to have faded away. BJP state president Nalin Kumar Kateel asserted that B.S. Yediyurappa would remain the chief minister. Even the central leadership has thrown its weight behind BSY and asked its party cadres to stand united and support the chief minister during the pandemic. Meanwhile, Opposition leader Siddaramaiah’s statement that the saffron party has no alternative to BSY in the state is significant.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

FALSE PROMISE

UNION MINISTER Prakash Javadekar has said that every Indian will be vaccinated by December 2021. Is this humanly feasible, given the acute vaccine shortage and uncertainties surrounding its procurement and the need to vaccinate the balance 87 per cent of our 136 crore population? Why make false promises? Does he think it will help the optics of his government? As forest and I&B minister, is he not stepping outside his brief in issuing these promises?

Bhaskar Roy
New Delhi

EXCISE LAPSE

THIS REFERS TO the news, “11 die after drinking spurious liquor in UP” (May 29). Within a year, half-a-dozen incidents of liquor deaths have tarnished the image of the Yogi Adityanath government in UP. The latest occurring in Aligarh district is the handiwork of the district liquor syndicate. The excise and taxation department failed to check the supply of spurious liquor at local vendors. For this, block officials, too, are to blame. The Yogi government shouldn’t hesitate in initiating stern action against those looking the other way.

Yugal Kishore Sharma
Faridabad

MANY MORE DEAD

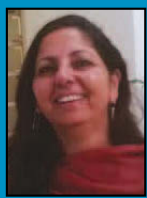
IF DATA on certified deaths in Kolkata in 2021 so far are any indication, the number of excess deaths compared to previous years was as high as 4.5 times the official recorded figure of 1,371 Covid-related deaths, indicating a much higher toll. Excess deaths were estimated from data on death certification from the Kolkata Municipal Corporation.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Anita Katyal

Political Gup-Shup



Bengal BJP split on Roy, Adhikari; why Uma mum on Ganga bodies?

The West Bengal unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party is witnessing a fierce battle between the party’s old timers and newcomers who were inducted into its ranks shortly before the Assembly polls. Though the tension between them was palpable even before the election, it has become far worse after the BJP failed to defeat the Trinamul Congress. Those having a long association with the saffron party are particularly upset that their rightful claims have been overlooked while Suwendu Adhikari, who joined the BJP on election-eve, was appointed leader of Opposition. The old timers are also convinced that it is Mr Adhikari who is pushing the BJP to adopt an aggressive approach to the Trinamul Congress which, they believe, is suicidal coming so soon after Mamata Banerjee notched up an emphatic electoral victory. With the Narada bribery scandal back in the news following the arrest of four Trinamul leaders, the BJP’s old timers in Kolkata are hoping Mr Adhikari will also be nailed as his name figures in this case.

Meanwhile, they have been making discreet enquiries in Delhi about the CBI’s pending request to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for his permission to investigate Mr Adhikari and BJP leader Mukul Roy in connection with this case.

The delay in the reshuffle of the Union Cabinet is testing the patience of many ministerial hopefuls, who have been eagerly awaiting the all-important call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Jyotiraditya Scindia, who left the Congress last year, has been waiting the longest, for it is no secret that he was promised a Rajya Sabha seat and a ministerial berth when he joined the BJP. Then there are others who were assured they would be suitably accommodated in the government. Sushil Modi, former Bihar deputy chief minister, was expected to move to the Centre when he was denied his old post after the last Assembly election. Similarly, former chief ministers Sarbananda Sonowal and Trivendra Singh Rawat, who had to step aside in favour of their party colleagues, are

also hoping to be rewarded for their “sacrifice”. But there is no clarity about the next Cabinet rejig. Mr Modi was earlier expected to reshuffle his ministerial team last year but the exercise was put off because of the coronavirus pandemic. It is the same story again this year as the Modi government is currently preoccupied handling the second wave of the pandemic.

Senior BJP leader Uma Bharti was appointed minister for water resources, river development and Ganga rejuvenation during the Modi government’s first term primarily because of her passion for saving and cleaning the holy river. During her tenure she even took on her Cabinet colleagues when she disagreed with the decision to proceed with the construction of new dams on the Ganga. Despite the public outcry to the spate of media stories and photographs about the unseemly sight of dead bodies of coronavirus patients being dumped in the Ganga, there has been no word from the champion of the holy river. Ms Bharti did, however, post over 30

tweets on a single day earlier this month in which she expressed full faith in the Prime Minister’s leadership, was confident that he would do everything possible to save the Himalayas and Ganga and let it be known that conveyed that she is keen to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. But she was silent on the issue of the floating dead bodies. Ms Bharti’s tweets are being viewed as a “calling attention motion” since she has been living in virtual oblivion after she was marginalised by the party.

The external affairs ministry finds itself in a diplomatic fix with its neighbours as the Modi government first gifted Covishield vaccines to them in an effort to win brownie points and then abruptly stopped the supplies as it had failed to plan for India’s domestic requirements. Predictably, the neighbouring countries, including Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives, are upset because they have not been able to get sufficient supplies of the vaccine for the second dose. The MEA insists there

is no ban on vaccine exports but the reality is that the neighbours are not getting their full quota of vaccines.

After Chhattisgarh’s first chief minister Ajit Jogi passed away last May, his politician wife and son Renu and Amit Jogi find themselves at a loose end. Renu Jogi, an MLA representing the Janata Congress Chhattisgarh, the party floated by Jogi, is said to be sending feelers to the Congress, expressing her desire to support the Bhupesh Baghel government. In exchange, she is seeking a ministerial post for herself. The Congress leadership in Delhi has instead asked Renu Jogi to merge her party with the Congress. However, P.L. Punia, Congress general secretary in charge of Chhattisgarh, and chief minister Bhupesh Baghel are going all out to make sure this compromise does not go through. Mr Baghel and Jogi were locked in a prolonged battle when the latter was in the Congress.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

WOMAN HELD AT U.S. BORDER WITH CROC SKULLS

Highgate Springs, May 29: A Montreal woman has been arrested on charges of trying to cross the US border into Canada with numerous undeclared wildlife items,” including a three-toed sloth, 18 crocodile skulls and heads and seven crocodile feet, according to documents filed in federal court in Vermont.

Both sloth and crocodile are protected under the US Endangered Species Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Bennington Banner reported Friday.

Vanessa Rondeau, the owner of The Old Cavern Boutique in Montreal, also was alleged to be in possession of two horse-shoe crabs, 30 sea stars, 23 racoon feet, eight African antelope horns, one human skull with mounted butterflies, four puffer fish and six shark jaws on Wednesday when she attempted to cross the border at Highgate Springs, Vermont, according to the criminal complaint.

11 KILLED IN PAK AS VAN PLUNGES INTO DITCH

Islamabad, May 29: At least 11 people, including three children, were killed and 13 others injured when a passenger van carrying them plunged into a ditch in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's (PoK) Muzaffarabad, a media report said on Saturday.

The accident happened on Saturday morning when the passenger van en route to Chakothi sector from Rawalpindi met with an accident and fell into the ditch, Pakistan's ARY News reported.

The passenger van fell in the ditch killing 11 people including three children. It is not exactly clear how the vehicle met with the accident, the media report said, quoting a senior police officer.

On getting information, rescue teams and ambulances reached the site and shifted the bodies and injured to a nearby hospital, the report said.

ROADSIDE BOMB KILLS FOUR IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, May 29: A roadside bomb exploded near a minivan full of university lecturers and students in Afghanistan's northern Kapisa province on Saturday, killing at least 4 and wounding 11 others, Afghan officials said.

Interior ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said the minivan was targeted while travelling to bring the group to Alberoni University. Provincial police spokesman Shayeq Shoresah said the bomb was set off by remote control. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. Previous deadly attacks on Kabul university in November last year were claimed by the Islamic State group. Large swaths of war-ravaged Afghanistan have been littered with bombs and land mines. Many have been planted by insurgents to target military convoys, but they often kill civilians instead. Kapisa provincial hospital chief Abdul Qasem Sangin said that doctors were among the casualties in Saturday's minivan attack.

PALESTINIAN KILLED IN WEST BANK PROTEST

Jerusalem, May 29: A Palestinian man was shot at and killed by Israeli troops on Saturday during a protest against settlement expansion in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, health officials said.

The protest erupted over a settlement outpost near the town of Beita — one of dozens dotting hilltops in the West Bank in what Palestinians see as an ongoing Israeli land grab. Several hundred Palestinians gathered on the hilltop.

Dozens burned tires and threw stones at soldiers who fired live rounds, rubber bullets and tear gas. The Palestinian Health Ministry said a 26-year-old Palestinian man was killed by army fire and that five protesters were injured, including two by live fire. The Israeli military did not immediately issue a statement on the shooting. The clash came at a time of heightened tensions following an 11-day war between Israel and the Islamic militant group Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip. More than 250 people, the vast majority Palestinians, were killed in the war which ended a week ago.

GOP blocks 6/1 riot investigation

Loyalty to ex-Prez Trump on full display

Lander is Biden science adviser

Washington, May 29: Senate Republicans on Friday blocked creation of a bipartisan panel to investigate the deadly January 6 attack on the Capitol, displaying continuing party loyalty to former President Donald Trump and firm determination to shift the political focus away from the violent insurrection by his GOP supporters.

The Senate vote was 54-35 six short of the 60 needed to take up a House-passed bill that would have formed an independent 10-member commission evenly split between the two parties. It came a day after emotional appeals for the commission from police who fought the mob, the family of an officer who died and lawmakers in both parties who fled Capitol chambers in the worst attack on the building in two centuries.

The Republicans were mostly but not totally united: Six voted with Democrats to move forward. Eleven senators — nine Republicans and two Democrats — missed the vote, an unusually high number of absentees for one of the highest-profile votes of the year. At least one of the missing Republicans would have voted in favour of considering the commission, according to his office.

The GOP opposition means that questions about who should bear responsibility for the attack could continue to be filtered through a partisan lens in congressional committees rather than addressed by an outside, independent panel modelled after the commission that investigated the September 11,

Washington, May 29: The Senate has confirmed geneticist Eric Lander to be President Joe Biden's chief science adviser, one of the last unfilled Cabinet posts in the Biden administration. Lander, founding director of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, was approved by a voice vote Friday to serve as director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, a position Biden has elevated to Cabinet rank.

Lander, who also is a mathematician and molecular biologist, was lead author of the first paper announcing the details of the human genome, the so-called “book of life”. His nomination was delayed for months as senators sought more information about meetings he had with the late Jeffrey Epstein, a disgraced financier who was charged with sex trafficking before his apparent suicide.

Lander also was criticised for downplaying the contributions of two Nobel Prize-winning female scientists. At his confirmation hearing last month, Lander apologised for a 2016 article he wrote that downplayed the work of the female scientists.

At the hearing, he also called Epstein “an abhorrent individual”. Lander said he “understated the importance of those key advances” by biochemists Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna. The two were later awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. “I felt terrible about it, I made a mistake. And when I make a mistake, I own it and try to do better,” Lander said. “I should have written those paragraphs differently to make my intention crystal clear. I have enormous respect for Doctors Doudna and Charpentier and the important work they’ve done throughout their careers.” — AP

2001, terror attacks.

The investigations will happen with or without Republicans,” declared Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, one of the Republicans who voted to move forward. “To ensure the investigations are fair, impartial and focused on the facts, Republicans need to be involved.”

The vote was in part a GOP attempt to placate Trump, or avoid his reprisals, as he has kept a firm hold on the party since his defeat by Democrat Joe Biden. The former president told his supporters to fight like hell to overturn his defeat before the siege and continues to falsely say he won the election claims shouted by his supporters as they stormed the building. Trump called the commission legislation a Democrat trap. — AP

FAA questions stoppage in Boeing plane deliveries

Chicago, May 29: Boeing has again halted deliveries of its 787 jetliner after federal regulators asked for more information about production flaws, including small gaps where panels of the fuselage are joined.

A Boeing spokesman said Friday that the company is working with the Federal Aviation Administration to provide more information about the company's analysis and documentation of work on new 787s. He said the delay affects near-term deliveries.

The spokesman said the delay does not affect 787s, which Boeing calls the Dreamliner, that have

● A Boeing spokesman said Friday that the company is working with the Federal Aviation Administration to provide more information about the company's analysis and documentation of work on new 787s. He said the delay affects near-term deliveries.

already been delivered to airline customers.

It is not clear how long deliveries will be held up the spokesman called it a near-term issue.

Chicago-based Boeing gets a large chunk of the

price for a new plane upon delivery, so a prolonged delay could affect the company's cash flow.

CFRA Research analyst Colin Scarola called it obviously disappointing news for Boeing and its investors.

But the issue appears related to inspection procedures, not a new design or manufacturing problem, and seems likely to be resolved quickly, he said.

Deliveries of 787s were halted for five months, until late March, by the fuselage flaw and other issues.

Boeing shares fell \$3.68, or 1.5 per cent, to close Friday at \$247.02. — AP

Protest over language in France



Demonstrators hold a banner reading “were right to revolt ourselves” as they protest in favour of Breton language learning after French court rejected regional language immersion programmes in public schools, in Guingamp on Saturday.

— AFP

Quad fills crucial gap: Jaishankar EAM: India is imp part of Afghan talks

Washington, May 29: The informal grouping of four countries in the Indo-Pacific region comprising Australia, India, Japan and the United States fills a very important gap that has emerged in contemporary times, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Saturday. “Quad today fills a very important gap that has emerged in contemporary times, where there are global or regional requirements, which cannot be filled by a single country. It cannot even be filled by one bilateral relationship, and which is not being addressed at the multilateral level,” he told a group of Indian reporters as he concluded most of his meetings here. Jaishankar, who is on an official trip to the US, is the first Indian Cabinet minister to visit the country since Joe Biden became US President on

January 20.

He asserted that India has clarity on its membership to Quad, adding that he had been personally involved with its progress over the past several years, including when he was India's foreign secretary. The Quad aims at strengthening a rules-based order in the strategically-important Indo-Pacific amidst China's aggressive actions in the region. “We are members of Quad. When we are members of anything, we are very keen about it, otherwise, we won't be its members. We have clarity on the Quad,” Jaishankar underlined.

Quad was one of the key issues of discussion between Jaishankar and US officials, including Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and National Security Advisor (NSA) Jake Sullivan. — PTI

the Secretary of State, the Afghanistan issue obviously came up because it is a very important concern,” he said.

“The possible scenarios, once the US military draws down is obviously something which matters to us, it matters very much to Afghanistan, it matters to the United States, and it has a larger regional resonance,” Jaishankar said.

US President Joe Biden in April announced that all American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11 this year, thus bringing to end the country's longest war, spanning across two decades.

“In my meeting with the Secretary of Defence, with

— PTI

Burning vessel may cause slight acid rains in Lanka

Colombo, May 29: There could be slight acid rains due to the emission of nitrogen dioxide from the Singapore-flagged cargo ship which caught fire near the Colombo beach last week, Sri Lanka's apex environment body has warned, asking people to be vigilant in case of inclement weather.

The cargo vessel — MV ‘X-PRESS PEARL’ — was carrying a consignment of chemicals and raw materials for cosmetics from

Hazira in Gujarat to Colombo Port. It caught fire 9.5 nautical miles from the coast here, where it was anchored outside the Port of Colombo on May 20. Apart from the 325 metric tonnes of fuel in its tanks, X-Press Pearl was loaded with 1,486 containers carrying about 25 tonnes of hazardous nitric acid.

“We observed that the emission of Nitrogen Dioxide from the MV X-PRESS PEARL was massive. With the emission of

Nitrogen Dioxide gas in the rainy season, there could be slight acid rains,” Dharshani Lahandapura, Chairperson of Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA), was quoted as saying by newsfirst.lk on Friday. “Especially, the people in the close proximity to the coastal belt, should remain vigilant and ensure that you do not expose yourself to rain these days,” the official said.

— PTI

US TARGETS BELARUS WITH SANCTIONS

Washington, May 29: The United States on Friday announced punitive measures against Belarus targeting the regime of strongman President Alexander Lukashenko, who met with Russian leader Vladimir Putin amid a global outcry over the forced diversion of a European plane. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki called for “a credible international investigation into the events of May 23,” which she called “a direct affront to international norms.”

Belarus scrambled a military jet to divert a Ryanair plane and arrested 26-year-old opposition journalist and activist Roman Protasevich who was onboard, triggering a global outcry.

The White House announced it was working with the European Union on a list of targeted sanctions against key members of Lukashenko's regime.

Economic sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned enterprises, reimposed by US in April following a crackdown on pro-democracy protests, will come into effect on June 3. — AFP

— AFP

Biden's budget: Social spending, taxes on biz

Washington, May 29: President Joe Biden on Friday unveiled a \$6 trillion budget for next year that's piled high with new safety net programmes for the poor and middle class, but his generosity depends on taxing corporations and the wealthy to keep the nation's spiking debt from spiralling totally out of control.

Biden inherited record pandemic-stoked spending and won a major victory on Covid-19 relief earlier this year. Friday's rollout

adds his recently announced infrastructure and social spending initiatives and fleshes out his earlier plans to sharply increase spending for annual Cabinet budgets.

This year's projected deficit would set a new record of \$3.7 trillion that would drop to \$1.8 trillion next year still almost double pre-pandemic levels. The national debt will soon breach \$30 trillion after more than \$5 trillion in already approved Covid-19 relief.

As a result, the government must borrow roughly 50 cents of every dollar it spends this year and next. With the deficit largely unchecked, Biden would use proposed tax hikes on businesses and high-earning people to power huge new social programmes like universal prekindergarten, large subsidies for child care and guaranteed paid leave.

The best way to grow our economy is not from the top down, but from the bottom up and the middle out, Biden said in his budget

message. Our prosperity comes from the people who get up every day, work hard, raise their family, pay their taxes, serve their Nation, and volunteer in their communities.

The budget incorporates the administration's eight-year, \$2.3 trillion infrastructure proposal and its \$1.8 trillion American Families Plan and adds details on his \$1.5 trillion request for annual operating expenditures for the Pentagon and domestic agencies. Acting White House

budget chief Shalanda Young said the Biden plan does exactly what the president told the country he would do. Grow the economy, create jobs and do so responsibly by requiring the wealthiest Americans and big corporations to pay their fair share.

Biden's budget is sure to give Republicans fresh ammunition for their criticisms of the new Democratic administration as bent on a tax and spend agenda that would damage the economy and impose a crushing debt burden on younger Americans. Republicans also say he's shorting the military.

“It is insanely expensive. It dramatically increases non-defence spending and taxes and would weaken the Pentagon,” said South Carolina Sen Lindsey Graham, top Republican on the Budget Committee and a generally pragmatic GOP voice on spending bills.

There will be serious discussions about government funding. — AP

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NEVER | DOCUMENTED

A 5-yr-old report detailed harsh mistreatment inflicted on the kids at the institution

Remains of 215 children found at shut Indigenous school

Kamloops, May 29: The remains of 215 children, some as young as three years old, have been found buried on the site of what was once Canada's largest Indigenous residential school — one of the institutions that held children taken from families across the nation.

Chief Rosanne Casimir of the Tk'emlups to Secwépemc First Nation said in a news release that the remains were confirmed last weekend with the help of ground-penetrating

radar. More bodies may be found because there are more areas to search on the school grounds, Casimir said Friday.

In an earlier release, she called the discovery an “unthinkable loss that was spoken about but never documented at the Kamloops Indian Residential School.” A report more than five years ago by a Truth and Reconciliation Commission detailed harsh mistreatment inflicted on Indigenous children at the institutions.

It said at least 3,200 children had died amid abuse and neglect, and it said it had reports of at least 51 deaths at the Kamloops school alone between 1915 and 1963. “This really resurfaces the issue of residential schools and the wounds from this legacy of genocide towards Indigenous people,” Terry Teegee, Assembly of First Nations regional chief for British Columbia, said Friday.

British Columbia Premier John Horgan said he was “horrified and heart-

broken” to learn of the discovery, calling it a tragedy of “unimaginable proportions” that highlights the violence and consequences of the residential school system.

The Kamloops school operated between 1890 and 1969, when the federal government took over operations from the Catholic Church and operated it as a day school until it closed in 1978. Casimir said it's believed the deaths are undocumented, although a local museum archivist is

working with the Royal British Columbia Museum to see if any records of the deaths can be found.

“Given the size of the school, with up to 500 students registered and attending at any one time, we understand that this confirmed loss affects First Nations communities across British Columbia and beyond,” Casimir said in the initial release issued late Thursday.

The leadership of the Tk'emlups community “acknowledges their responsibility to caretake for these lost children,” Casimir said. Access to the latest technology allows for a true accounting of the missing children and will hopefully bring some peace and closure to those lives lost, she said in the release. Casimir said band officials are informing community members and surrounding communities that had children who attended the school.

The First Nations Health Authority called the discovery of the children's remains “extremely painful” and said in a website posting that it “will have a significant impact on the Tk'emlups community and in the communities served by this residential school.”

The authority's CEO, Richard Jock, said the discovery “illustrates the damaging and lasting impacts that the residential school system continues to have on First Nations people, their families and communities.” — AP

— AP

SHORT TAKES

CHINA CRAFT TO DOCK WITH SPACE STATION

Beijing, May 29: China on Saturday successfully launched an automated cargo spacecraft carrying supplies, equipment and propellant for the country's new space station Tianhe. The Long March-7 Y3 rocket, carrying Tianzhou-2, blasted off from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of the southern island province of Hainan, the China Manned Space Agency announced.

Spacecraft Tianzhou-2 is scheduled to dock with core the module of the space station Tianhe to deliver supplies, equipment and propellant.

It was launched after over a week's delay due to "technical reasons". Tianzhou-2 was launched for the first space station supply mission despite the initial delay, state-run *Global Times* reported.

The Tianhe module will act as the management and control hub of the space station Tiangong, meaning Heavenly Palace, with a node that could dock with up to three spacecraft at a time for short stays.

EXODUS AFTER 2ND VOLCANO ERUPTS IN CONGO

Goma, DR Congo, May 29: A second volcano erupted Saturday near the eastern DR Congo city of Goma, a week after Mount Nyiragongo roared back into life, causing devastation and sparking an exodus.

"Today the Murara volcano near an uninhabited area of Virunga erupted," government spokesman Patrick Muyaya said, referring to a wildlife reserve that is home to a quarter of the world's population of critically endangered mountain gorillas.

Murara is a small volcano considered a crater of Nyamuragira, which along with Nyiragongo is known for strong volcanic activity.

The strato-volcano spewed rivers of lava that claimed nearly three dozen lives and destroyed the homes of some 20,000 people before the eruption stopped.

TIMES SQUARE SHOOTING: MAN CHARGED

New York, May 29: The man accused of shooting and injuring three people in Times Square earlier this the month has been charged after arriving in New York from Florida where he was arrested.

Farrakhan Muhammad, 31, is charged with attempted murder and multiple counts of assault, reckless endangerment and criminal use of a firearm, the New York Police Department said on Friday.

Muhammad has denied that he is responsible for the shooting on May 8 that wounded two women and a 4-year-old girl. The victims did not know each other.

New York Police Department Chief of Detectives James Essig has said that Muhammad was identified as the gunman by his brother, who told officers he was the intended target of the shooting.

U.S. Marshals arrested Muhammad near Jacksonville, Florida, four days after the shooting, along with a woman who authorities said travelled with him from New York.

LEBANESE SINGER DEPORTED FROM SAUDI ARABIA

Beirut, May 28: A prominent Lebanese singer and composer known for his strong opinions said he has been deported from Saudi Arabia after a 50-day detention — mostly in solitary confinement — because of opinions expressed online in support of Lebanon's president and his ally, the Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Samir Sfeir arrived in Beirut Thursday from Saudi Arabia. He looked haggard and grizzled — having lost his trademark long black bob. He also said he was forgiving of the authorities in Saudi Arabia, telling The Associated Press in a telephone call that he held no grudge. Sfeir, who had residency in the kingdom for five years, said he is now banned from returning. "I was bothered by the manner I wish they just told me to leave and not come back. I would have done it," he said. Sfeir said he was "a political prisoner" in the Kingdom and his captors only questioned him on political issues, including his links to Hezbollah and President Michel Aoun. No charges were pressed, he said. "My investigator told me that I am making political statements," Sfeir said.

Europe sees dramatic fall in cases

Vaccination rates accelerate while hopes for rebirth of tourism industry being rekindled

Rome, May 29: When Italy won the Eurovision Song Contest with an over-the-top glam-rock performance, the victory signalled more than just a psychological boost for one of the countries hardest hit by Covid-19: Held before a live, indoor audience of 3,500, the annual kitsch fest confirmed that Europe was returning to a semblance of normalcy that was unthinkable even a few weeks ago.

Coronavirus infections, hospitalisations and deaths are plummeting across the continent, after Europe led the world in new cases last fall and winter in waves that cost hundreds of thousands of lives, forced more rolling lockdowns and overwhelmed intensive care units. Now, vaccination rates are accelerating across Europe, and with them, the promise of summer vacations on Ibiza, Crete or Corsica. There are hopes for a rebirth of a tourism industry that in Spain and Italy alone accounts for 13 per cent of gross domestic product but was wiped out by the pandemic. "We don't speak of 2020. We speak of from today onward," said Guglielmo Miani, president of Milan's Montapoleone luxury shopping district, where European and American tourists have started trickling back, wooed in part by in-person meetups with design teams and free breakfasts at iconic cafes.

The hope is that Asian tourists will follow next year. Europe saw the largest decline in new Covid-19 infections and deaths this week compared with any other region, while also reporting about 44 per cent of adults had received at least one dose of vaccine, according to the World Health Organisation and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Europe's seven-day rolling average for new cases per 100,000 people had been higher than any other region from mid-October through the beginning of December, ceding the unwanted top spot to the Americas over the new year before reclaiming it from early February through April, according to an *Associated Press* analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University. Now, no European country is among the top 10 for new cases per 100,000 people.

And only Georgia, Lithuania and Sweden are in the top 20. But the virus is spiking in Southeast Asia and much of Latin America and hitting the Maldives and Seychelles particularly hard this week. Dr. Michael Ryan, WHO's chief of emergencies, warned that with the global situation still "fragile and volatile," Europe is by no means out of the woods. "Relaxing measures pre-

maturely has contributed to the surge we have seen throughout 2020 and during the first quarter of 2021," he warned. "We must stay the course while striving to increase vaccination coverage." The biggest concern for Europe is the highly contagious variant first detected in India, which has brought that country to its knees and found a growing foothold in Britain. The British government warned Thursday that the variant from India accounts for 50 per cent to 75 per cent of all new infections and could delay its plans to lift remaining social restrictions on June 21.

"If we've learned anything about this virus, it's that once it starts to spread beyond a few cases, it becomes very difficult to contain," said Lawrence Young, a virologist. — AP

Island: China, Philippines swap protests

Manila, May 29: The Philippines has demanded that China withdraw its ships and fishing vessels from the vicinity of a Philippine-occupied island in the South China Sea, where the Chinese military has asserted its sovereignty and vowed to unswervingly safeguard the disputed territory.

The exchange of protests by the Asian neighbours over the island, internationally called Thitu, is the latest flareup in a long simmering territorial feud in the strategic waterway that has escalated in the last two months.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said Saturday it has filed a diplomatic protest against the incessant deployment, prolonged presence and illegal activities of Chinese maritime assets and fishing vessels in the vicinity of the Pag-asa islands. It used the Philippine name for Thitu, which China calls Zhongye Dao. The department demanded that China withdraw its vessels from near



Protesters attend an international mobilisation "International SOS for Health" in Brussels, on Saturday. More than 60 groups, associations and unions, in Europe and beyond, called to defend equal access to health. — AFP

Virus upsurge: Chinese city locks down neighbourhood

Beijing, May 29: The southern Chinese city of Guangzhou shut down a neighbourhood and ordered residents to stay home Saturday to be tested for the Coronavirus following an upsurge in infections that has rattled authorities.

Guangzhou, a business and industrial centre of 15 million people north of Hong Kong, has reported 20 new infections over the past week. The number is small compared with India's thousands of daily cases but alarmed Chinese authorities who believed they had the disease under control.

The spread of infections was fast and strong, the official *Global Times* newspaper cited health authori-

ties as saying.

Saturday's testing order applied to residents of five streets in Liwan District in the city centre.

Outdoor markets, child care centres and entertainment venues were closed. Indoor restaurant dining was prohibited. Grade schools were told to stop in-person classes. People in parts of four nearby districts were ordered to limit outdoor activity.

China reports a handful of new cases every day but says almost all are believed to be people who were infected abroad. The mainland's official death toll stands at 4,636 out of 91,061 confirmed cases.

On Saturday, the National Health Commission repo-

rted two new locally transmitted cases in Guangzhou and 14 in other parts of the country that it said came from abroad.

Most of the latest infections in Guangzhou are believed to be linked to a 75-year-old man who was found May 21 to have the variant first identified in India, state media say. Most of the others lived together or attended a dinner with the man.

That infection spread to the nearby city of Nanshan, where one new confirmed case and two asymptomatic ones were reported Saturday after people from Guangzhou were tested, according to *The Global Times*. — AP

CHINA REPORTS 16 CONFIRMED VIRUS CASES

Beijing, May 29: China on Saturday reported 16 new confirmed Coronavirus cases, including two authorities said were believed to have been acquired locally.

The two locally transmitted cases were in Guangdong province in the south, adjacent to Hong Kong, the National Health Commission reported. It said the other infections are believed to have been acquired abroad. — AP

FIRST CASE OF B.1.617 VARIANT FOUND IN PAK

Islamabad, May 29: The first-ever case of the highly infectious B.1.617 variant of Coronavirus, first identified in India, has been detected in Pakistan despite a ban on travellers from the neighbouring country since April. The National Institute of Health shared the results of whole-genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 samples collected during the first three weeks of May 2021.

The sequencing results confirmed the detection of seven cases of B.1.351 [South African variant] and one case of B.1.617.2 [first identified in India]. — PTI

Vietnam finds hybrid variant

Hanoi, May 29: Vietnam has discovered a new Covid-19 variant which spreads quickly by air and is a combination of the Indian and British strains, state media reported Saturday.

The country is struggling to deal with fresh outbreaks across more than half of its territory, including industrial zones and big cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

More than 6,700 cases including 47 deaths have been reported in Vietnam — the lion's share have occurred since April.

"We have discovered a new hybrid variant from the Indian and the UK

strains," Health Minister Nguyen Thanh Long was quoted telling a national meeting on the pandemic Saturday.

"The characteristic of this strain is that it spreads quickly in the air. The concentration of virus in the throat fluid increases rapidly and spreads very strongly to the surrounding environment." He did not specify the number of cases recorded with this new variant but said Vietnam will soon announce the discovery in the world's map of genetic strains. There were seven known Coronavirus variants in Vietnam. — AFP

Canadian MP caught naked second time

Ottawa, May 29: A Canadian MP has stepped down from some of his duties and said he is seeking "assistance" after being caught on camera urinating during a video conference in Parliament, a month after appearing naked in another virtual session.

"Last night, while attending House of Commons proceedings virtually, in a non-public setting, I urinated without realising I was on camera," MP William Amos wrote on

his Twitter account Thursday night.

"I am deeply embarrassed by my actions and the distress they may have caused anybody who witnessed them," he added.

"While accidental and not visible to the public, this was completely unacceptable, and I apologise unreservedly." In April, the MP was caught standing naked between the flags of Canada and Quebec, his private parts hidden by his phone, while connected by

● **IN APRIL**, the MP was caught standing naked between the flags of Canada and Quebec, his private parts hidden by his phone, while connected by video to a Question Time session in Parliament.

video to a Question Time session in Parliament.

Amos, a member of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party, also cla-

imed that was an accident. In the most recent episode, he was caught urinating into a coffee cup, the Conservative opposition said in a statement.

"This is the second time Mr. Amos has been caught exposing himself to his colleagues in the House, and the House of Commons, virtual or otherwise, must be free of this type of unacceptable behaviour," said Conservative MP Karen Vecchio. "This is a pattern of

behaviour from Mr. Amos and it's now clear that Trudeau's Liberals failed in their duty to ensure a safe work environment following the first incident," she hammered in a statement. Amos, 46, announced he was "temporarily" stepping down from some of his parliamentary duties while continuing to represent his constituency. He added that he would seek "assistance" but did not specify what that would be. — AFP

FINAL | PUSH A total of 41 teams continue scaling peak before season ends

Covid-19 fails to deter Everest climbers

Kathmandu, May 29: A year after Mount Everest was closed to climbers as the pandemic swept across the globe, hundreds are making the final push to the summit with only a few more days left in the season, saying they are undeterred by a Coronavirus outbreak in base camp.

Three expedition teams to Everest cancelled their climb this month following reports of people getting sick. But the remaining 41 teams decided to continue with hundreds of

climbers and their guides scaling the 8,849-metre top in the season that ends in May, before bad weather sets in.

"Even though the coronavirus has reached the Everest base camp, it has not made any huge effect like what is being believed outside of the mountain," said Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks, the biggest expedition operator on Everest.

"No one has really fallen seriously sick because of Covid or died like the rumors that have been

spreading." With 122 clients from 10 teams on Everest, the company led the biggest group but there were no serious illnesses among them, he said. Nepalese officials have downplayed reports of coronavirus cases on Mount Everest, apparently out of concern of creating chaos and confusion in the base camp.

After a gap year of no income from climbers, Nepal has been eager to cash in on this year's season. "Many people made it to the base camp and it is

possible that the people who went there from here could have been infected," Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli said.

"But that does not mean that it (Coronavirus) has reached the entire mountain, maybe a part of the base camp or the area below that."

In April, a Norwegian climber became the first to test positive at the Everest base camp. He was flown by helicopter to Kathmandu, where he was treated and later returned home. Prominent guide Lukas

Furtenbach of Austria decided to halt his expedition this month and pull out his clients because of an outbreak among team members.

After returning from the mountain, Furtenbach estimated more than 100 climbers and support staff have been infected. He said in an interview last week that it was obvious there were many cases at the base camp because he could see people were sick and could hear them coughing in their tents. — AP

SHORT TAKES

Jemimah to play for Superchargers

Mumbai: Young India batswoman Jemimah Rodrigues will play for Northern Superchargers in the inaugural edition of The Hundred in the UK starting on July 21. The 20-year-old joins her T20I skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana, opener Shafali Verma and all-rounder Deepti Sharma in the 100-ball tournament involving eight men's and women's teams. "I am really looking forward to it (The Hundred). Something new, something different," Rodrigues told the BBC's 'Stumped' podcast. "I have played for the Yorkshire Diamonds and my team is the Northern Superchargers. So, I have played a few of them before, Lauren Winfield is our captain," Rodrigues added. Rodrigues was named in India's squad for the tour of England to play a one-off Test in Bristol from June 16, followed by three ODIs and as many T20Is. — *PTI*

Gangjee moves to third in Mizuno

Okayama (Japan): Indian golfer Rahil Gangjee shot a sensational six-under 66, his best round of the year, to climb to the Tied-third after the second round at the Mizuno Open, here on Saturday. With two spots for the 149th Open at Royal St. Georges, on offer this week, Gangjee has a lot to play for. In case he makes it, it will be his maiden appearance at a Major. No Indian has booked a spot as yet. Meanwhile, India's Shubhankar Sharma closed strongly with three birdies in the last five holes for a card of 2-under 69 in the second round to make the cut at the Made at HimmerLand golf tournament. Sharma rose to 3-under for 36 holes and made the cut comfortably in tied 40th place. — *AFP*

Milkha remains stable: Doctors

Chandigarh: Doctors treating Milkha Singh on Saturday said the condition of the legendary Indian sprinter remained stable but the oxygen requirement of his wife Nirmal Kaur rose marginally days after being admitted to a city hospital with Covid-19 infection. Milkha and his wife, who led the Indian women's volleyball team, continued to be closely monitored by the doctors at Fortis hospital in Mohali, where they are undergoing treatment after contracting the highly contagious virus. In its latest update about the condition of the couple, the hospital said, "Mr Milkha Singh continues to be stable, however Mrs Nirmal Milkha Singh's oxygen requirement has gone up marginally. Both continue to be monitored closely." The hospital had earlier said that they were being treated for Covid pneumonia. — *PTI*

Bajrang skips event in Poland

New Delhi: India's top wrestler Bajrang Punia will not compete in the upcoming Ranking Series event in Poland, saying more than the ranking points he desperately needs mat-training with strong sparring partners ahead of the Tokyo Olympics since the 65kg category is loaded with top performers. The 27-year-old said the pandemic has adversely impacted his training schedule because neither he could travel abroad nor anyone could be invited to India for practice. While India's other Olympic-bound wrestlers will travel to Poland, Bajrang will go to Russia with his coach Georgian Shako Bentineidis. — *PTI*

Tatum scores 50, Celtics claw back

Los Angeles: Jayson Tatum busted out of a mini-slump, exploding for 50 points on Friday as the Boston Celtics clawed their way back into their Eastern Conference first-round series with a 125-119 win over the Brooklyn Nets. Tatum, who had just 31 points on nine-of-32 shooting in the first two games of the series, shot a blistering 16-of-30 from the floor and drained five threes as the Celtics cut the Nets series lead to 2-1. — *AFP*

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Desert to finish

The final course of IPL feast to be served in UAE from September

New Delhi, May 29: The general body of the BCCI on Saturday approved the IPL's resumption in September in the UAE. The Special General Meeting (SGM), held virtually, lasted for about 50 minutes as the members were unanimous in their approval of the two agendas on the day.

"The SGM approved the decision to hold the remaining matches of IPL between September and October. The dates will be intimated later," a senior state association member, who was present in the meeting said.

"In September, it's the time for retreating monsoon in India. Also the fact that three grounds in the UAE makes it easier as we had seen in 2020."

The likely dates will be between September 18 and October 10.

While IPL's UAE shift was a foregone conclusion, the office bearers intimated the general body about the issue of availability of players.

"The BCCI is pretty clear that even if there is a case of unavailability of English players due to their series against Pakistan, we are not going to plead to any of the boards about releasing their players."

"The first and foremost thing is to complete the 31 remaining games of IPL. We believe other aspects will be taken care of," he added.

The IPL, the world's richest cricket tournament, was half finished when it was halted on May 4 after a number of players and team officials caught coronavirus despite being in bio-secure bubbles.

The board has since been in tough negotiations with other countries and the ICC on when to squeeze the remaining matches. — *Agencies*



A file photo of BCCI bigwigs with Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE's minister of culture, youth and social development.

— *IPL*

BCCI defers decision on T20 Cup

New Delhi, May 29: The BCCI on Saturday decided to seek one month's time from the ICC to assess the Covid-19 situation in India before taking a final call on the ICC T20 World Cup.

A BCCI official said all the members want the T20 World Cup to be held in India in last week of October but no decision can be taken right now.

"The BCCI representatives — president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah — will be seeking time till July 1 after which another SGM will be held to decide on whether we would go ahead with hosting of World T20."

"Right now, the health

situation in the country doesn't allow us to take any final decision."

GANGULY, SHAH TO TRAVEL TO DUBAI

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah will join vice president Rajiv Shukla in Dubai for the ICC Board Meeting on June 1 where there will be discussions on the fate of the T20 World Cup in India in October.

"As they will ask for one month's time, the best option for BCCI is to hold it in Maharashtra — three grounds in Mumbai and one in Pune. However, the issue of Pakistan travelling to Mumbai could be

more of a political decision where the security will also need to be factored in," the official said. The senior state association member said there is also a tax rebate issue which is still an ongoing process.

"ICC wants tax waivers but we have to abide by government guidelines. But a World T20 in India means that all the stakeholders happen to gain. But sitting in May, you can't predict the health emergency in October. So we need some time," he said.

One member from a state association had informally raised the issue of domestic players'

compensation but he was told in no uncertain terms that this is not the appropriate forum as SGM needs to be held as per agenda.

"The compensation thing has already been passed at the AGM last January. Yes, they haven't worked out a formula and trust me it's not the easiest thing. Sourav has got approval for compensation but what's the formula? Today, if a state gives contract to 20 players, which is a standard upper limit, there will be five who may just move court and say that this year they were supposed to be selected?," an official said. — *PTI*

Rafa, Djoker eye Grand Slam history

Paris, May 29: Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic will set their sights on more Grand Slam history at the French Open as Roland Garros embraces a new but eerily empty era of night time tennis.

A 14th title in Paris for Nadal would take him to a record-setting 21st major, surpassing the mark he shares with Roger Federer who has already written off his hopes of adding to his lone success in the French capital back in 2009. Djokovic, the champion in 2016, can move to 19 Grand Slam titles with victory.

That would make the world number one the first man in over half a century to win all four majors on multiple occasions.

Only one of the sport's 'Big Three' will make the June 13 final after the draw placed top seed Djokovic, third seed Nadal and eighth-seeded Federer in the same half of the draw.

That means Djokovic is scheduled to face Federer in the quarter-finals before a potential semi-final blockbuster with Nadal.

"I see it as completely normal. I'm not worried about it. I have a lot of work in front of me to play a potential match versus Djokovic," said Nadal, who has already won clay court titles this season in Barcelona and Rome.

At last year's delayed Roland Garros, Nadal swept past Djokovic in straight sets in the final.

It was Nadal's 100th win at the tournament against just two losses since his 2005 title-winning debut.

Nadal, who defeated Djokovic in the Rome final, starts his campaign against Alexei Popyrin of Australia, the world number 62.

Giving Djokovic hope, however, is the knowledge that he was responsible for one of Nadal's losses in Paris, in the 2015 quarter-finals. Federer, with his 40th birthday fast approaching, remains the sentimental favourite. — *AFP*



Rafael Nadal poses in front of his statue made by Spanish artist Jordi Diaz at the Roland Garros.

— *Twitter*

NOVAK WARMS UP WITH BELGRADE TITLE

Belgrade, May 29: Novak Djokovic completed a successful warm-up for the French Open when he beat Slovakian Alex Molcan 6-4, 6-3, on Saturday in the final of the ATP clay tournament in Belgrade.

Molcan, ranked 255 in the world, broke Djokovic's serve three times from three break points in the first set, but struggled to hold his own. Djokovic struggled with his first serve in the opening set, only managing to

get 44 per cent in and winning just six points from them. He still took the set with his fourth break in the tenth game.

The Serbian was steadier in the second set, landing 66 per cent of first serves. He broke in the sixth game. Molcan immediately broke back, but Djokovic immediately regained the initiative by winning the next game.

He then comfortably served out the match in 1h 28 min.

It was the second title

this season for the 34-year-old world number one, the winner of the Australian Open in February, and the 83rd of his career.

Roland Garros starts on Sunday. Djokovic has been drawn in the same half of the draw as his old rivals Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer for the French Open, which starts at Roland Garros on Sunday.

Djokovic is two behind Nadal and Federer's joint men's record of 20 Grand Slam singles titles. — *AFP*

WRESTLER | MURDER CASE

Police custody of Sushil extended

New Delhi, May 29: A Delhi court on Saturday extended by four days the police custody of Olympic wrestling medallist Sushil Kumar and Ajay Kumar Sehrawat, arrested in connection with the murder of a 23-year-old grappler, saying that no one is above the law.

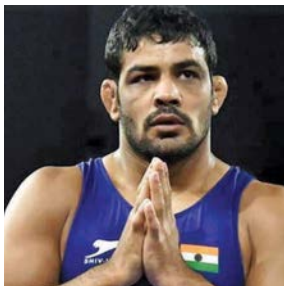
Sushil and his associates allegedly assaulted Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends at Delhi's Chhatrasal Stadium. Sagar succumbed to injuries later. Following Sushil and Ajay Kumar's arrest, the court had remanded them in six days police custody on May 23.

On being produced before the court at the end of the remand period on Saturday, the Delhi Police moved an application seeking extension of custody by seven more days, stating that Sushil was the mastermind and several recoveries are yet to be made for which his interrogation is required.

Allowing their interrogation for only four days, Metropolitan Magistrate Mayank Goel said, "No one is above law and law treats everyone equally. Though the Constitution guarantees the right to life and liberty to all persons whether they are accused or not, but that right is also subject to certain exceptions."

The allegations against the accused persons are very grave and serious in nature, the court said, emphasising on the importance of the initial days of investigation to unearth the truth. The judge said the involvement of a large number of persons, some of whom belong to some notorious gangs stationed in and outside Delhi, is also suspected and they are yet to be arrested.

"Moreover, certain recoveries i.e. mobile phone and clothes of accused persons are yet to be made. As such in the interest of justice I



Sushil Kumar

Allowing their interrogation for only four days, Metropolitan Magistrate Mayank Goel said "no one is above law and law treats everyone equally."

deem it appropriate to allow the application of 10 to the extent of four days only," the judge stated in the order.

During the course of the proceedings, Additional Public Prosecutor Ashish Kajal sought Sushil and Ajay's custody to confront them with other arrested co-accused, and recover mobile phones, clothes the Olympian was wearing during the brawl, and DVR of the CCTV cameras installed at his house.

Further, the prosecutor, representing the Delhi Police, said that the investigating agency seized seven vehicles from the spot which were used in the commission of the crime but only four vehicles have been linked due to evasive and non-cooperation of Sushil and Ajay Kumar.

He said their custody is required to link the remaining three vehicles with their users, apprehend other accused, identify their hideouts at Haridwar, Rishikesh and Ghaziabad and apprehend the persons who provided them help to evade arrest. — *PTI*

KOHLI & CO. TO ARRIVE IN ENGLAND ON JUNE 3

Dubai, May 29: The Indian team will stay in "managed isolation" before the World Test Championship final against New Zealand, the ICC announced on Saturday but did not mention the exact period of hard quarantine upon reaching UK. World's top two Test teams will fight it out at the Hampshire Bowl in Southampton from June 18-22.

While New Zealand are already in England for a bilateral series against the hosts, the Virat Kohli-led Indian team will arrive in the UK on June 3 after competing a 14-day quarantine period in India.

"The event has now been granted an exemption by the UK government as outlined in The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021, released on 17 May 2021," the ICC said in a release.

"Upon landing, they will proceed directly to the on-site hotel at the Hampshire Bowl where they will be tested again before commencing a period of managed isolation."

However the ICC release doesn't specify the duration of hard (room) quarantine in Southampton. — *PTI*

Mary seeks her sixth gold medal

Dubai, May 29: Six-time world champion MC Mary Kom (51kg) will seek her sixth gold when she squares off against Kazakhstan's Nazym Kyzaibay in the women's 51kg final of the Asian Boxing Championships here on Sunday.

The 38-year-old Olympic-bound Mary Kom had prevailed 4-1 over Mongolia's Lutsaikhana Altantsetseg in the semifinals on Thursday. She will face a stiff challenge from the two-time world champion Kyzaibay in the summit clash.

Another Olympic-bound boxer Pooja Rani, who received a walk-over in the semi-finals, will fight against an in-form Mavluda Movlonova of Uzbekistan, who ended the challenge of London Olympics medallist Marina Volnova in the last-4 stage.

Anupama (+81kg) and Lalbuatsahi (64kg) will also face strong Kazakh boxers in their respective finals.

On Monday, defending champion Amit Panghal (52kg), Shiva Thapa (64kg)

and Sanjeet (91kg) will be seen in action in the men's gold-medal bouts on Monday.

Panghal will be up against 2016 Rio Olympics and world champion Zoirov Shakhobidin of Uzbekistan while Thapa will face Asian Games silver medallist Baatarsukh Chinzorig of Mongolia.

Second seeded Sanjeet will fight against 2016 Rio Olympics silver medallist Vassiliy Levit, who is chasing his fourth gold medal of the Asian Championships.

The Indian boxers have already ensured their best-ever show by securing an unprecedented 15 medals, bettering their previous highest of 13 (2 gold, 4 silver and 7 bronze) achieved during the 2019 edition.

The International Boxing Association (AIBA) has allocated \$4,00,000 prize money for this championships. The gold medalists of men's and women's categories will be receive \$10,000 each while the silver and bronze winners will take home \$5,000 and \$2,500 respectively. — *PTI*