

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SUNDAY 6 | JUNE 2021

WEATHER



Max: 32°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 4 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Vaikasi 23
Tithi: Ekadhasi
Star: Ashwani
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
Yamagandam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.23 am
Luhar: 12.12 pm
Asar: 3.30 pm
Maghrib: 6.32 pm
Isha: 7.50 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 3.01 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 4.18 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+1,05,444)	(+2,494)
2,87,99,401	3,46,597

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+21,410)	443
TN: 22,16,812	26,571

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

17,35,36,219

DEATHS

37,32,423

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES

219

worldometers.info

Abhishek Banerjee appointed national general secy of TMC

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Saturday elevated MP Abhishek Banerjee as the party's all India general secretary, a senior leader in Kolkata said. Addressing a press meet, TMC leader Partha Chatterjee also said that the working committee has decided that one person will be allowed to hold just one post in the party, and the core committee has duly given its approval.

Another Kerala candidate says BJP offered money

Thiruvananthapuram: The Bharatiya Janata Party's Kerala unit, under attack over allegations of using large amounts of black money in the April 6 assembly polls, found itself in a fresh row on Saturday, with a candidate claiming he was offered Rs 15 lakh for withdrawing his nomination against BJP state chief K Surendran. The BJP dismissed the allegations as baseless and said it was a conspiracy against the party. K Sundara, a Bahujan Samaj Party candidate of Manjeswaram constituency and a namesake of Surendran, had on March 22 withdrawn his nomination papers.

COUNTER

POINT



Do you have black money to treat black fungus? Your bank account has nil balance after Covid treatment!



CITY | 2

OPS, EPS meet in a hotel



WORLD | 5

India, China can solve their own issues: Putin

SPORT | 8

Leclerc takes pole in Baku



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SAYS 'NO' TO NEET

State cancels Plus 2 exams

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced that there would be no Plus Two examinations for the State Board this academic year but made it clear that the policy for admissions to colleges and universities would remain the same. The Chief Minister reiterated the state's demand that all national level entrance examinations, including National Eligibility-cum- Entrance Test (NEET) be cancelled.

Admissions for higher studies in the state would be based on marks alone, the Chief Minister said, adding that a committee would be formed to decide on the modus operandi to be followed to award marks for the students.

The committee, which would be headed by the school education secretary and have the vice-chancellor of Madras University and school heads as members, would present its report to the government, he said in a statement.

Mr Stalin said he had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cancel NEET and all other entrance examinations this year in view of the prevailing Coronavirus threat that forced the cancellation of the board examinations.

The decision taken on the basis of the report submitted by minister for school education Anbil Mahesh Poyamozhi on

● Admissions for higher studies in the state would be based on marks alone, the Chief Minister said

Saturday, took various issues relating to the conduct of examinations into account.

The Chief Minister said many other states had also cancelled the examinations for their respective boards, besides the CBSE and ICSE and that opinion had been divided on the issue during the three-day discussions Mr Poyamozhi had with stakeholders at various levels.

The views of students, parents, teachers, teachers associations, educationalists, politicians, media persons, public health professionals and psychologists were sought starting from the school level, the district level and state level, he said.

Medical experts had apprehended a third wave of Coronavirus and felt that it was not possible to ensure the safety of students in view of the policy to vaccinate only those above 18 years as of now, he said.

Earlier, many politicians had openly demanded the holding of the examinations by taking Covid-19 precautions and urging the State government to not fall into the trap set by the Centre, whose New Education Policy envisaged less importance to board examinations.

TN lockdown till June 14; curbs tightened in 11 badly-hit dists

Government allows more shops to be opened as virus spread declines

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

The Tamil Nadu government on Saturday decided to extend the total lockdown till June 14 while announcing some relaxations in districts other than Coimbatore, The Nilgiris, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Karur, Namakkal, Thanjavur, Tiruvavur, Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai.

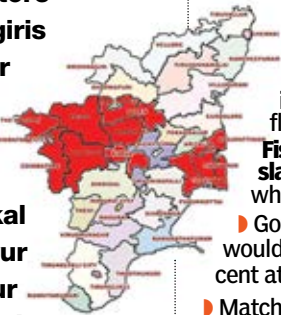
More restrictions have been imposed in the 11 districts where the rate of Covid-19 infection has been high while and Chennai and the other districts that have shown remarkable decline in the number of new cases will witness more activities from Monday, a release issued by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said.

However, shopping complexes, malls, tourist spots, cinemas and salons will remain shut, while standalone provision shops, groceries, fish and meat shops will be allowed to be opened between 6 am and 5 p.m all over the state.

Pavement shops selling vegetables, fruits and flowers are allowed to function

NO-RELAXATION DISTRICTS

- Coimbatore
- The Nilgiris
- Tiruppur
- Erode
- Salem
- Karur
- Namakkal
- Thanjavur
- Tiruvavur
- Nagapattinam
- Mayiladuthurai



TO REMAIN SHUT

Shopping complexes, malls, tourist spots, cinemas, salons

TO OPEN IN ALL DIST

Standalone provision shops, groceries, fish and meat shops, pavement shops selling vegetables, fruits, flowers (6 am-5 pm)
Fish markets, slaughterhouses: Only wholesale trade.

Government offices would work with 30 per cent attendance.

Match box industries can function with 50 per cent workers.

IN LOW INFECTION DISTRICTS

TO OPEN

Sub-registrar offices
Plumbers, electricians, computer technicians, motor mechanics and carpenters.

Electrical, hardware, motor spare parts, stationery, vehicle repair shops, travel operators, bicycle and two-wheeler workshops.

Cabs and auto rickshaws.

Vegetables and fruits sale through vehicles and carts to continue

between 6 am and 5 pm. Fish markets and slaughterhouses will be allowed to conduct only wholesale trade.

The district administrations would make arrangements to open more wholesale markets to maintain physical distancing. Government offices would work with 30 per cent attendance.

Match box industries can function with 50 per cent workers but should follow the standard operating

procedure. In the districts with low infection rates, sub-registrar offices will function reducing the number of registrations by 50 per cent and individual plumbers, electricians, computer technicians, motor mechanics and carpenters will be allowed to operate between 6 am and 5 pm with e-registration.

Among the shops that will be allowed to open from 6 am to 5 pm in the districts with more relax-

ations are those selling electrical goods, bulbs, cables, switches and wires, besides bicycle and two-wheeler workshops, hardware shops, motor spare parts sellers, stationery shops, vehicle repair shops of travel operators.

Cabs and auto rickshaws can run with e-registration but taxis can carry only three passengers including the driver. Auto rickshaws can carry two passengers. ■ P2

Speed up work on AIIMS in Madurai, CM writes to PM

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to personally intervene and ensure that work on the establishment of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), for which the foundation stone was laid on January 27, 2019, at Thoppur in Madurai, was started immediately.

"I request that a dedicated team of officers with adequate financial and administrative powers may be appointed immediately and measures may be taken by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of



India, to finalize and commence the construction works immediately. The State Government is willing to extend all cooperation needed for the immediate commencement and early completion of the project," the Chief Minister said in a letter to the Prime Minister on

I request that a team with adequate financial and administrative powers may be appointed immediately. —M.K. STALIN, Chief Minister

Saturday.

Mr Stalin said though the land for the prestigious institution has already been transferred to the Centre by the state government, there has been no physical progress in its establishment except for the putting up of a compound wall. ■ P2

J&K leaders may get bullet-proof vehicles

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Intelligence agencies in Jammu and Kashmir have started a fresh security audit of leaders of all political parties, particularly local elected representatives like municipal councillors, sarpanch and heads of block and district development committees.

The move comes in the wake of the killing of a BJP municipal councillor Rakesh Pandita who was shot dead by militants in the Tral region of Pulwama district. Local intelligence and security agencies have also asked political representatives to strictly follow allow Standard Operating Procedures related to their personal security.

Fresh intelligence inputs have revealed that militants could target more elected representatives in the coming days hence it has been decided to further increase security cover of such local political leaders.

Sources claimed it has now been decided to provide bullet-proof vehicles to local elected representatives who have a high threat perception.

As of now such vehicles were being given largely to state-level leaders. "We have a number of bullet-proof vehicles which are not being utilised and are parked in our in our Police Lines. Now we will give them to these local leaders," a senior central police officer posted in the Valley said.

COPIES OF FARM LAWS BURNT ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY

Chandigarh, June 5: Farmers burnt copies of the Centre's three farm laws near residences of BJP leaders and at other places in Punjab and Haryana on Saturday, observing the day of the promulgation of the farm ordinances last year as 'Sampoorna Kranti Diwas'. Farmers carrying black flags raised slogans against the BJP-led central government for not scrapping the pieces of legislation. —PTI

Centre sends ultimatum to Twitter

New Delhi, June 5: The government on Saturday issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to "unintended consequences" including the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act. The notice, however, did not mention a specific date to comply with the rules.

The ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) said Twitter's refusal to comply with



rules demonstrated the microblogging site's "lack of commitment and efforts towards providing a safe experience for the people of India on its platform".

"Despite being operational in India for more than a decade, it is beyond

belief that Twitter Inc has doggedly refused to create mechanism that will enable the people of India to resolve their issues on the platform in a timely and transparent manner and through fair processes, by India based, clearly identified resources," the IT ministry said.

The new IT rules for social media companies mandate large platforms enable identification of the "first originator" of any information that undermines the sovereignty of India, the security of the state, or public order. —PTI

TWITTER RESTORES BLUE TICK OF VICE PRESIDENT, RSS BRASS

New Delhi, June 5: Twitter on Saturday removed and later restored the verified blue tick on the personal accounts of Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and five senior RSS functionaries, including its chief Mohan Bhagwat. The Vice-President's secretary said Mr Naidu's personal Twitter handle @MVenkaiahNaidu was

inactive for a long time and the Twitter algorithm removed the blue badge. The last tweet posted from the personal handle was on July 23 last year.

The blue tick was removed from the accounts belonging of Mr Bhagawat, Suresh Soni, Arun Kumar, Suresh Joshi and Krishna Gopal and was restored later in the day. —PTI

G7 nations reach historic deal to tax big multinationals

London, June 5: The world's richest countries signed a landmark agreement on Saturday committing them to confronting corporate tax avoidance and making sure that giant tech companies pay their fair share, Britain's treasury chief said.

Rishi Sunak, chancellor of the exchequer, said finance ministers from the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations signed the

pact on the second and final day of meetings in London. "I'm delighted to announce that G-7 finance ministers today, after years of discussions, have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age and crucially to make sure that it's fair, so that the right companies pay the right tax in the right places," Mr Sunak said in a video message posted on

Twitter. The G-7 ministers agreed in principle to a global minimum tax rate of 15 per cent for multinational companies in each country they operate in.

US treasury secretary Janet Yellen, who attended the London meetings, said the agreement "provides tremendous momentum" towards reaching a global 15 per cent rate that "would end the race-to-the-bottom

in corporate taxation, and ensure fairness for the middle class and working people in the US and around the world."

The meeting of finance ministers came ahead of an annual summit of G-7 leaders scheduled for June 11-13 in Carbis Bay, Cornwall. The UK is hosting both sets of meetings because it holds the group's rotating presidency. —AP



Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak (L) and Germany's Finance Minister Olaf Scholz pose for a photograph on the second day of the G7 Finance Ministers Meeting, at Lancaster House in London on Saturday. —AFP

The collection figure crossed ₹1 lakh crore despite the fact that most states have been under strict lockdown due to the pandemic, the ministry said.

Taxpayers with turnover less than Rs 5 crore still have time till first week of July to file the returns without any late fee. —PTI

IN BRIEF

People going to tourist spots for emergency can obtain e-pass

From P1

Those intending to visit tourist spots such as Nilgiris, Kodaikanal, Yercaud, Yelagiri and Courtallam for emergency reasons can travel there after obtaining an e-pass from the district collectors concerned.

Exporters and others who supply inputs to companies in Coimbatore, Tiruppur, Salem, Karur, Erode, Namakkal, Tiruchi and Madurai will be allowed to work with 10 per cent workforce. But the permission is being granted only for export-related works and to send samples.

The present arrangement to sell vegetables and fruits through vehicles and carts will continue since there has been a good reception for it from the people, the release said.

The Chief Minister urged the people to buy goods from the shops near their homes and not to venture out in their vehicles for shopping.

Rest of the lockdown norms will be in force with frontline workers, the media and other permitted industries to function without any hindrance and no other prohibited activity allowed till June 14.

Stalin wants quick work on AIIMS Madurai

From P1

“The expeditious setting up of the institution is necessary for providing quality tertiary care to the people belonging to the southern districts of Tamil Nadu as well as neighbouring states,” Mr Stalin said.

Though the Centre had appointed a president, an executive director and some committees for the institute, it was learnt that the committees did not have clear authority to execute a project of this size, he said.

“Meanwhile, due to this avoidable delay, there are also reports that the option of starting the institution temporarily at some other location is also being considered. It is felt that this may further delay the project,” Mr Stalin added.

Rotary project to help TN

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Rotary Club's ambitious Covid Relief Projects in India have provided 1,600 oxygen concentrators and 1,600 cylinders to various hospitals in the State as the first instalment of a proposed total of 3,000 concentrators and a few thousand cylinders along with a few oxygen plants.

Rotary Club, which has embarked on this huge project after Polio eradication and Literacy Programmes, proposes to provide 45,000 oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders and construction of oxygen plants at Government hospitals and trust run hospitals across the country in the first phase.

G Olivannan is the Chairman for the project in the State, where the project is being commissioned first along with West Bengal. Shekhar Metha is heading the project, implemented in association with ACT Grants, Swasth, Sattva Consulting, United Way and Zomato, from the Rotary side.

TPR on a steady decline, cases down by half in 10 days

Lockdown helps Chennai bring active cases down

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Active cases came down by half in the last 10 days thus giving a boost to the City's ongoing efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 spread. Chennai had reported 47,553 active cases on May 25 but that number came down to 26,722 on June 4, according to data provided by the health department. The number indicates that the Test Positivity Rate (TPR) will further come down in coming days.

On Friday Chennai had reported 2,810 fresh cases, which is also a sharp decline from the figure 10 days ago when it was 4,446. According to data provided by Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), all 15 zones have shown a declining trend in active cases in the last 10 days. Zones like Ambattur, Anna Nagar, Kodambakkam, and Adyar, which were contributing 4,000 plus cases 10 days ago are reporting below 3,000 now. As per Friday's data, the active cases in these zones were - Ambattur 2,011, Anna Nagar 2,572, Kodambakkam 2,520 and Adyar -2,180.

While Teynampet recorded 3,997 cases 10 days ago,



Tamparam fire and rescue department officers feed food to stray dogs around Tamparam area on Saturday. —DC

the figure has come down to 2,226 by Friday. Likewise, Thiru.Vi.Ka. Nagar, which reported 3,222 cases on May 24 registered 1,901 cases. The number in Valasaravakkam which was 3,759 dropped to 2,256. This is the first time since lockdown that all zones have shown a steady decline in active cases. It shows the lockdown has helped the authorities to check the spread of virus to a great extent.

Apart from the lockdown, the Greater Chennai

Corporation had intensified the Advanced Tour Programme (ATP) by introducing at least two fever camps in each ward in the affected zones for early detection of Covid-19. The GCC had also conducted a door-to-door survey to identify residents with fever and symptoms. According to GCC, they were able to identify over 7,000 households with fever through the door-to-door survey across the 15 zones.

Covid-19 claimed the lives of an average of 816

Chennaiites in the last 10 days, which represents a dip from an average of 843 in the previous 10 days. Anna Nagar topped the death toll among zones with 862 cases followed by Teynampet with 857 cases. The zone wise death toll goes as follows: Kodambakkam (850), Tondiarpet (503), Royapuram (552), Thiru. Vi. Ka. Nagar (761), Ambattur (573), Adyar (577), Madhavaram (222), Valasaravakkam (384), Alandur (316) and Perungudi (282).

GCC urges Kasimedu fish vendors to keep Covid protocol

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

With the lockdown norms having been relaxed to allow wholesale fish markets to function, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) is urging the fish vendors and fishermen at Kasimedu harbour fish market to maintain strict Covid-19 protocol.

In a press release, GCC commissioner Gagandeep Singh Bedi said that Covid-19 appropriate behaviour will be strictly enforced with the support of police at the biggest fish markets including Kasimedu and Chintadripet.

As part of the vaccination drive, at least 12,052 doses were administered to households in Kasimedu. On Saturday until about 3 pm, at least 410 fishermen in the area had received jabs. Those who engage in the fishing business should take a job at the earliest,” Bedi said.

Earlier on Saturday, a team of GCC officials led by the Commissioner took stock of the situation at the market meeting representatives of fishermen and vendors.

● According to a press release, appropriate behaviour will be enforced with the support of police at big fish markets including Kasimedu and Chintadripet.

Woman SI gets reprieve after 10 years to get promotion

J.STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

A woman Sub-Inspector of Police, who was denied promotion to Inspector of Police on the grounds that she suffered punishment of censure in disciplinary proceedings, got a reprieve after nearly 10 years with the Madras high court directing the authorities to confer promotion to her as on February 7, 2011 notional.

Justice R.Suresh Kumar gave the directive while disposing of a petition filed by S.Meena. According to the petitioner, she entered into service as a directly recruited SI and she was appointed on April 16, 1999. She had sufficient seniority and merit for her claim for promotion as Inspector by including her name in the “C” list in 2010-2011.

The Promotional Board took into account June 1, 2010 as a crucial date for consideration of the panel. However, her name was not included in the list for promotion for the year 2010-2011 for the reason that there had been disciplinary proceedings where the petitioner ultimately was inflicted with the punishment of censure, she added.

Advocate M.Ravi, appearing for the petitioner submitted that by

virtue of a government letter dated October 7, 2005 consisting of a set of instructions regarding preparation of the panel for promotions, the theory of a check period was brought in. And those who suffered the punishment of censure will have a check period of one year and for other penalties and punishments the check period was for five years. Subsequently a Full Bench which tested the validity of the Government letter had held that the government letter can never be treated as Statutory Rules at all. In view of the order passed by the Full Bench and the same being upheld by the Apex Court, the Government letter has lost its validity and therefore, the embargo put against the petitioner on the crucial date cannot be made against the petitioner, Ravi added.

Justice Suresh Kumar said the Government letter of October 7, 2005 had in unequivocal terms been declared by the Full Bench as unenforceable, it does not have any statutory force as it was not issued with the authority of the Governor of the State also and the authorities’ stand that till such a declaration was made by the Full Bench, the effect of the letter would be

enforceable, was absolutely against the spirit of the judgment of the Full Bench. Therefore, as on June 1, 2010, it shall be presumed that there was no instruction, the judge added.

The judge said in the case on hand, the crucial date was June 1, 2010, the actual promotion date was on February 7, 2011 and during this period no other disciplinary proceedings were pending against the petitioner and no other punishment was suffered by her. The court felt that the petitioner was entitled to get inclusion in the “C” list with the crucial date as June 1, 2010 and she will also be entitled to get promotion along with the other eligible persons who got promotion on February 7, 2011, the judge added.

Directing the authorities to consider the candidature of the petitioner for promotion to the post of Inspector of Police for the panel year 2010-2011 and confer promotion to her as on February 7, 2011 the judge said the petitioner shall be entitled to get all other service and attendant benefits without the difference of pay as Inspector during the notional promotion period and such benefits shall be calculated and be conferred on her by giving promotion also.



Following the death of a lioness at the zoo, S. Yuvaraj, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and (HoD), Tamil Nadu Forest Department reviewed the health condition of the lions and other animals at Arignar Anna Zoological Park on Saturday. Debasis Jana, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Director, Deputy Director, in house veterinarians and other field staff were present. —DC

OPS, EPS meet in a hotel

G BABU JAYAKUMAR & D SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

AIADMK top honchos O Panneerselvam and Edappadi K Palaniswami had a surprise meeting at the hotel in Chennai on Saturday, triggering speculations on the two deciding to bury the hatchet and put up a united show to thwart V K Sasikala's bid to mobilise party cadre to rally around her.

The meeting gained significance in the backdrop of a new audio clipping released on Friday evening by Sasikala's associates on Jaya TV and also through social media in which a 'party cadre' is heard evincing interest in her taking over the party in the telephone conversation.

The call is made from Sasikala's end to the faceless cadre, who had seemingly written a letter to her exhorting her to take over the AIADMK leadership. The cadre and his wife speak endearingly to Sasikala, who makes it clear that she wanted to carry forward the aspira-

tions of J Jayalalithaa.

Though a handful of similar audio clips had been leaked in the past too, Friday's release came close on the heels of Palaniswami's meeting with some top party leaders and district secretaries of the party at the headquarters in Lloyd's Road with Panneerselvam remaining conspicuous by his absence.

Sasikala's reported attempt to storm into the party by winning over cadre at the lower levels was also discussed at Friday's meeting, to which Panneerselvam did not go citing house shifting as a reason. Perhaps wanting to brief Panneerselvam as to what transpired at the meeting, Palaniswami had asked to meet him on the pretext of wanting to personally pay his condolences over the passing away of Panneerselvam's brother recently.

Since Panneerselvam has not settled down in his new house, to which moved after vacating the official residence on Greenways Road, it is said, he agreed to meet Palaniswami at Hotel

Ashoka in Egmore.

The two leaders had also reportedly dwelled on the subject of functioning as an aggressive opposition to the ruling DMK without letting the BJP usurp that role. They have agreed to start doing it once the Coronavirus crisis blew over.

The issues pertaining to structural revamp in the party was also discussed by the two leaders, who now want to strengthen the infrastructure with a view to not giving any way for Sasikala to come in.

Though Palaniswami and his acolytes in the party have been vehemently opposing Sasikala right from the beginning and have been making it clear through open statements that she or anyone from her family will have no place in the party, Panneerselvam has been seen dithering on the issue.

So the meeting was also aimed at driving home the dangers of letting Sasikala into the party and convince Panneerselvam on the need to take a clear stand on it.

HOW DO WE CARE FOR CORONA ORPHANS, WIDOWS?



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

The manner in which the Grim Reaper goes about swinging his scythe left, right and centre, slaying people of all ages, is too frightening to watch not just because we are losing too many people in their productive years but also because of the high rate of collateral damage the fatalities have caused, throwing up newer challenges to all those who have survived the feral onslaught of Covid-19.

Most of the sudden deaths have devastated families. Children orphaned with parents succumbing to Coronavirus, young jobless and clueless widows with small children, looming threat of EMIs to be paid and total loss of family

income are just some of the real problems that most people face apart from the emotional trauma. In fact, it is a bit early to assess the real damage the pandemic has wreaked in society as everyone is now in the grip of fear, wanting to protect themselves.

But once we come out of the pandemic, every survivor and the community as a whole would have to shoulder an extra burden of taking care of those devastated families. The State government has indeed come up with a scheme to support the children who have lost parents. Even the Centre has announced something. But the real care may have to be provided by

the local communities with the media and NGOs playing a vital role in helping them rebuild their lives and ensuring that the children are being brought up well and given the education they deserve.

Going by the tragic tales emerging from the funeral grounds that we do not visit nowadays, there has never been a time in recent history when so many people have felt so totally helpless at the same time. Men left alone with babies or small children, women holding on to children and watching the husband being carried to his grave, old couple losing their sons and daughters on whom they had pinned their hopes for their autumn years and above all infants not knowing that both their parents and at times even grandparents have passed away are some of the tragic vignettes.

So, the question arises as to how we, as a society, are going to stand by the people, who have been suddenly

rendered completely helpless. As of now, in the thick of the raging pandemic, we have our own Good Samaritans reaching out to the needy. Like providing free food for those in isolation and cannot cook and many others volunteering to find hospital beds, organise oxygen supply and so on. Our present concern for those facing a crisis and need immediate succour should guide us to ascend to a higher level of charitable disposition to help those who have lost their loved ones to Covid-19. For what will be required is a sustained empathy and a robust support system.

We may have to think about mobilising institutional support for most of the people and also advocating governmental understanding to enable those people tackle the problems that have just started for them and are only likely to increase as time goes on. For we have come a long way from the traditional community life and joint



Volunteers distribute food to homeless people at Mount Road on Saturday. —DC

family systems, evolving into a modern society that encourages individualism and independent living, besides celebrating aspirational pursuits on the personal and professional fronts. Since we have lost most of the inherent security systems that ancient communities had, we now

have to find newer methods to offset the tragic losses most people feel now.

True, we have not accosted a collective tragedy of this proportion for a long time, which in fact impelled us to transition from a close-knit community to individual seekers of success. The earlier times not



OTHER STORY

Hotel launches 'Vocal for Local' menu

Chennai, June 5: Paying tribute to nature's bounty on World Environment Day, ITC Hotels has launched an innovative, curated "Feel-Good Menu" focussed on responsible sourcing and rich in goodness. Highlighting the "Vocal for Local" initiative, it offers recipes that have been carefully selected and prepared and promotes local produce and "Made In India" artisanal products. Feel Good supports local farmers, and producers, reduces environmental impact and helps minimise carbon footprint.

The new Feel-Good Menu is available on Gourmet Couch. From healthy grains and flaxseeds, amaranth and chia muffins and croissants, to integrating the ancient goodness much deeper, the Feel Good menu lays emphasis on ancient practice of slow cooking using local and seasonal ingredients.

Some ingredients used are fresh press mustard oil - rich in mono unsaturated and omega 3 fatty acids, jackfruit - known for its antibacterial, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant qualities, raw turmeric, cardamom, leaves of the drumstick tree, sorghum, basil, barley, gooseberry, and mangoes, to name a few.

These are rich in a variety of vitamins, magnesium, iron, act as antioxidants and help improve metabolism. Guests can place their orders on Zomato, Swiggy and EazyDiner between 11.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. daily and via Gourmet Couch on the ITC Hotels F&B App.

— DC

IUML founder's 120th birthday celebrated

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, JUNE 5

The 120th birth anniversary of the founder of Indian Union Muslim League, Quaide Milleth, was celebrated by the party members here on Saturday.

Floral tributes were paid to the portrait of Quaide Milleth. Biryani packets were distributed to 120 poor persons. Jainulabdeen, district secretary of IUML, presided over the celebrations held in the party office.

The speakers recalled the departed leader's association with Mahatma Gandhi and his contribution to Hindu-Muslim amity. His participation in the freedom struggle along with Gandhiji was lauded by the speakers.

10 desilting works on in Karur district

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARUR, JUNE 5

As many as 10 desilting works in eight water bodies and two irrigation canals in Karur district are going on in full swing for 60.60 km costing Rs 1.60 crores, said monitoring officer for Karur district C. Vijayarajkumar IAS.

Vijayarajkumar, after inspecting the desilting works, said 30 percent work is over. The crop loss in around 4,000 acres in 12 villages across Karur district due to flood can be prevented once the ongoing work is over, he added.

The desilting work will also help in the water released from the Mettur dam from June 12 reach the tailend areas of Cauvery delta region.

Reviewing the desilting work in the water bodies of Mayiladuthurai district along with district collector R. Lalitha at Mayiladuthurai on Saturday, labour secretary and monitoring officer for Mayiladuthurai district R. Kriloshkumar told the media that under the special desilting scheme for the year 2021-22, 23 works for a distance of 431.05 km at an estimated cost of ₹543.30 lakh are going on in the district.

OP ARULN | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

The DMK MP P Wilson said the Union Government should introduce effective legislation to prevent social engineering frauds, which have been on the rise in the country for the past two years.

Addressing a webinar organized by Cyber Society of India on "Social Engineering, the Art of

The hackers have adopted the new strategy of "Social Engineering" to exploit the psychological vulnerability in individuals and potential technical vulnerabilities of varied technologies

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dependent on online business through online apps. India has been pushed into becoming Digital India due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in the past two years and even the courts are functioning online these days, he said.

The hackers have adopted the new strategy of "Social Engineering" to exploit the psychological vulnerability in individuals and potential technical vulnerabilities of

Protests across Tamil Nadu against 3 new farm laws

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
CHENNAI, PUDUKKOTTAI,
THANJAVUR, JUNE 5

Members of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, a farmers' body affiliated to the CPI(M), on Saturday burned copies of the three farm laws, introduced by the Centre a year ago, across Tamil Nadu demanding their repeal.

Sangam general secretary P Shanmugam urged Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to take steps to pass a resolution against the farm laws in the Assembly. The protests were held in various parts

of the state with the farmers assembling in small groups wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing owing to the pandemic.

Sangam members burnt copies of the farm laws at Gandarvakottai, Kundrandaarkovil, Karambakkudi, Arimalam, Alangudi and Annavalal in Pudukkottai district.

At Gandarvakottai, the demonstration was presided over by A. Ramaiyan, president of the sangam's Pudukkottai unit. Gandarvakottai CPI(M) MLA M. Chinnadurai and others spoke.

Similar demonstrations

were also held in different parts of Tiruchy, Karur, Perambalur, Ariyalur, Tiruvavur and Nagapattinam districts.

Members of the Desiya Then Indiya Nathigal Inai-ppu Vivasayegal Sangam led by state president P. Ayyakannu staged a demonstration at Tiruchy on the Tiruchy-Karur bypass road and tore copies of the farm laws.

At Tambaram, near Chennai, 15 people led by P. Shanmugam raised slogans denouncing the Centre and burned copies of the laws.

Meanwhile, members of the All-India Kisan Sabha

staged demonstrations and burnt copies of the farm laws at various places in Thanjavur district.

N.V. Kannan, Thanjavur district secretary of action committee to protest against farm laws, led the agitation at Thanjavur. Copies of the farm laws were burnt at Kumbakonam, Peravurani, Budalur etc.

The agitators said the laws were against the interest of farmers and favour some corporate companies. They should be withdrawn by the central government, the protesters said.

BHEL Tiruchy staff celebrate environment day

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, JUNE 5

"We can grow more trees, make our cities and gardens greener, change our diets and clean up rivers and coasts as we are the generation that needs to make peace with nature", said T.S. Murali, general manager and head, BHEL Tiruchirappalli, in his World Environment Day message to all employees of his unit on Saturday.

Administering the Environment Day pledge to the heads of product and functional groups and to all other employees through video conferencing, Murali called upon all staff to rededicate themselves to the creation of a greener environment.

He added that the theme for this year's Environment Day being 'Ecosystem restoration', all of us need to contribute towards preventing, halting and reversing the damage caused by human activities to the ecosystems that support all life on Earth.

He said the BHEL township had once again been certified as a single-use-plastic-free township by an external inspection agency, and rain-water harvesting and use of treated waste-water for horticulture have become regular features of the factories and townships of BHEL here.

Some volunteers of Thanneer organisation led by its founder K.C. Neelamedgam planted hundreds of saplings in Ponnalai in the city on Saturday, to mark the World Environment Day.



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin along with ministers paying floral tributes to Ganniya Thendral Quaid-E-Milleth on his 126th birth anniversary at Triplicane.

— DC

Look into viability of resuming vaccine production at Chengalpet, says HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 5

The Madras high court has expressed the hope that the authorities concerned would look into all aspects, including the viability and feasibility of resuming vaccine production at Chengalpet. The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy made the observation while dismissing a petition filed by A. Veronica Mary.

The bench said it is utterly unnecessary at this point of time to interfere in the process initiated by the State to request the Centre to make the vaccination facility at Chengalpet functional. Judicial notice has to be taken of letters addressed



by the CM to PM. There is no doubt that the feasibility of opening the Chengalpet vaccination facility is under consideration and is being studied. "It is hoped that the authorities concerned look into all aspects, including the viability and feasibility of resuming vaccine production at Chengalpet", the bench added.

The bench said no direction can be issued or sought without all the

information being available, particularly as to the state of the facilities, the expenses necessary to make it viable and the feasibility of obtaining quick production at such a facility. These were matters where the executive authorities have to apply their minds, the bench added and dismissed the petition.

The bench also dismissed another petition filed by A. Veronica Mary, which sought a direction to the authorities to strictly implement the G.O dated June 5, 2020 issued by the Department of Health and Family Welfare and fix fair cost for the treatment of Covid-19 in all the private hospitals and consequently, take action on the hospitals which were not following the said G.O.

Train with 80 tonnes of oxygen arrives at Tiruchy

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, JUNE 5

Urban development minister K.N. Nehru said a special goods train carrying 80 tonnes of oxygen from Bhilai in Odisha arrived at Tiruchirappalli goods yard on Saturday. From there it will be dispatched to 13 government medical college hospitals and government hospitals in and around Tiruchy.

Nehru told the media that 12 tonnes of oxygen each will be sent to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital Tiruchy and government medical college hospital, Thanjavur, 6 tonnes to the Government Raja Mirasdar Hospital, Thanjavur, 10 tonnes to Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) Tiruvavur, 8 tonnes to

GMCH, Pudukkottai, 7 tonnes to GMCH, Karur, 5 tonnes each to government hospitals at Namakkal, and Dindigul, 4 tonnes each to the government hospitals at Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai and Kumbakonam, 2 tonnes to GMCH at Ariyalur, and one tonne to the government hospital, Perambalur.

He said the Tiruchy district had adequate stock of oxygen and other medical accessories including beds for providing proper treatment to the Covid patients.

Nehru and Tiruchy collector S. Sivarasu inspected the CCC at the Bharathidasan University's Khajamalai complex and inquired about the health conditions and treatment details of the in-patients there.

TN records 21,410 new Covid-19 cases; 443 deaths

Chennai, June 5: Tamil Nadu logged 21,410 new Covid-19 cases and 443 fatalities on Saturday, pushing the tally to 22.16 lakh and the toll to 26,571.

Recoveries continued to outnumber fresh cases with 32,472 people getting discharged, taking the total number to 19,32,788, leaving 2,57,463 active cases, a health department bulletin said.

The number of cases has seen a declining trend since May 21 when the state recorded an all time high of 36,184 infections. On May 30, the state saw its daily cases dropping below the 30,000 mark.

Coimbatore district recorded the maximum number of 2,663 cases, followed by Chennai with 1,789, Erode 1,569, Salem 1,171 and Tiruppur 1,104.



Hyundai Motor initiative

At Hyundai Motor India Ltd, a series of initiatives have been undertaken to help and support its employees across the country during the ongoing second wave.

A Vaccine drive and insurance cover for all eligible employees and families; emergency paid special leave benefit; timely execution of compensation benefits and support to employees' physical, emotional, financial & social well-being.

With employees' health and safety as top priority, all functions including sales & marketing workforce are now operating on hybrid work modes.

To ensure interpersonal interaction, all meetings,

lore offices are being vaccinated.

The company has also launched an exclusive employee digital connect dashboard TVS-ICE 2.0 (In Case of The Emergency) App, an emergency response mechanism for employees and their families in need of health, vaccination details, hospitalisation, home care, general medical support, insurance, pregnancy, and miscellaneous support, including mental wellbeing programmes, webinars with experts, transcendental meditation, and counselling sessions with psychologists.

Taking care of employees during pandemic

Chennai, June 5: Human Resources practices during the trying times of the Covid-19 are in focus now with employers going the extra mile to help employees who are affected by the pandemic. Priority for the welfare of employees during Covid-19 by at least three Chennai based companies makes for a revealing study on what employers can do to alleviate the rigours of the pandemic.

At TVS Motor and Sundaram Clayton, they offer help to any employee who is suffering from the sheer financial impact of medical expenses from possi-

ble hospitalisation. The company covers the entire cost of hospital expenses and in any unfortunate eventuality, the bereaved family is provided with a complete support system to help cope with the loss and grief, besides compensation as ex-gratia to the legal heir of the deceased employee. The compensation will be commensurate with the numbers of years of service and will be up to three times the gross annual salary. The ex-gratia is in addition to the standard Family Welfare Fund and other statutory benefits applicable to

deceased employees and their families. The medical insurance benefits will be extended to the bereaved family for the next three years. To ensure a stable future for the children and to ease the burden on the dependent family, educational assistance for up to two children will be provided till they finish under-graduation.

Among measures taken against Covid-19 at the workplace are - double masking mandatory across all facilities; to boost immunity, multivitamins, vitamin C supplements and Kabasura Kudinneer giv-

en to all employees; meals delivered to all employees and their family members affected by Covid and employees living alone are provided with food packets after the shift to avoid going out for meals, besides meals over weekends.

To help best possible recovery for employees who are in quarantine, company maintains a "Revive Camp" with medical and food facilities and hospital tie-ups to provide homecare. All employees above 45 years have been vaccinated and in the second phase all employees above 18 at the Hosur, Mysore, and Banga-

Stop online social engineering frauds: MP

OP ARULN | DC
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dependent on online business through online apps. India has been pushed into becoming Digital India due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in the past two years and even the courts are functioning online these days, he said.

The hackers have adopted the new strategy of "Social Engineering" to exploit the psychological vulnerability in individuals and potential technical vulnerabilities of

varied technologies. It is now seen as the greatest security threat for people and organisations. Wilson said. He noted that a large number of corporates and individuals have suffered huge losses as a result of these attacks. Even Judges, doctors, engineers, and persons from various walks of life, especially senior citizens, have fallen prey for these frauds and have lost huge amounts of money.

Hacking attacks have been made against Twitter accounts of major companies and high profile users such as Barack Obama, U.S. President Joe Biden, Elon Musk, Bill Gates, Kanye West, Michael Bloomberg, and Apple in 2020.

India is witnessing a change in the nature of cyber-crimes, which is now extremely organised and collaborative with rising incidents of phishing

attacks, social engineering attacks, etc. Out of the total breach, malicious attacks accounted for 53 per cent as per the findings while system glitches accounted for 26 per cent and the remaining 21 per cent of breaches due to human error. He said "Social Engineering" remains a neglected field in the country and that the Central government should enact laws to address menace.

IN BRIEF

KEY PARTY ROLE
FOR DIDI NEPHEW
ABHISHEKRAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 5

A month after coming to power for the third consecutive time in West Bengal, Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Saturday promoted her nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee in party ranks - from youth wing president to general secretary - under a major organisational revamp effected with an eye on the upcoming municipal elections and under the policy of "One Man, One Post".

To improve her party's image and prepare for the municipal elections, which were deferred over the last one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the chief minister also cautioned the TMC rank and file not to get involved in coal and cattle smuggling scams, which the CBI has been probing, and not to use the beacon in their vehicles, according to sources.

Ms Banerjee, who took the key decisions at two party meetings with senior leaders, ministers, MLAs and MPs on Saturday, has however adopted a "wait and watch" mode to the sudden wish among her party's "betrayers" to return to the TMC for their survival from the BJP following its poll-debacle.

TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee said, "The most important decision of our organisational meeting was Mr Banerjee's nomination by the CM for his appointment to the general secretary post."

HIMACHAL GOVT
CANCELS CLASS
12 BOARD EXAMS

Shimla, Jun 5: The Himachal Pradesh government on Saturday cancelled the class 12 board examinations for 2020-21 and also extended the 'Corona curfew' till June 14, Education Minister Govind Singh Thakur said.

He said that the ongoing coronavirus curfew, which was to end on June 7, has now been extended till 6 am on June 14 with all the existing restrictions.

The decisions were taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur here.

The Cabinet decided to cancel 10+2 examinations for the year 2020-21 in line with the decision of Central government in this regard, he said.

He said that for calculating the awards for class 12 students, the HP Board of School Education would devise a formula taking a cue from the one being prepared by the CBSE, which had recently announced to cancel its class 12 exams due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In case some students are not satisfied with the results arrived at so, they would be allowed to appear in a special examination to be conducted once the situation is conducive for holding the exams, he added.

MP LINKS BLDG
PLAN APPROVAL
TO PLANTATION
OF TREESDC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, JUNE 5

Madhya Pradesh government on Saturday made plantation of trees mandatory for getting building plan clearance by the official agencies.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the new rule on the occasion of World Environment Day on Saturday.

Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to have introduced the rule. "No house building plan even those sanctioned under the Central project such as Prime Minister Awas Yojana will be approved without tree plantation by concerned individual or government bodies. The trees can be planted anywhere according to the convenience of the parties concerned", Mr Chouhan said.

He said his government was constrained to take the initiative owing to massive loss of green cover suffered by the state over the years.

"We need to protect the environment by increasing green cover. The shortage in supply of oxygen witnessed during the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated how important the role trees play for the survival of the human race," he added.



Women queue up to collect fruits and ration distributed by Delhi BJP under its 'Sewa Hi Sangathan' programme in New Delhi on Saturday. - PTI

Worst-hit Mumbai and
Delhi start to unlock

Delhi shops in markets, malls to open on an odd-even basis

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

With the Covid-19 situation gradually coming under control and daily positivity rate falling below five per cent, Delhi and Mumbai are all set to open gradually from Monday.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Saturday that markets will re-open and Metro services will resume from Monday, June 7, with conditions.

"Lockdown will continue with more relaxation in other activities. Shops in markets and malls to be opened on an odd-even basis from Monday. The standalone shops, however, will be allowed to open daily from 10 am to 8 pm. Home delivery through e-commerce platforms has also been okayed. Private offices will be allowed to function with 50 per cent staff," Mr Kejriwal said.

"In government offices, Group A staff will be allowed to function with 100 per cent capacity while Group B with 50 per cent staff," Mr Kejriwal said.

Essential items shops and chemists will remain open on all days. But restaurants, theatres, gymnasiums, swimming pools, water parks, salons, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, weekly markets will remain shut.

Domestic traders body CAIT on Saturday welcomed the Delhi government's decision to allow markets to open from



A health worker inoculates a dose of the Covid vaccine to a woman at a vaccination centre in Jammu on Saturday. - PTI

Monday but opposed the odd-even formula, claiming that it does not suit the business character of the city.

"The odd-even formula is never suited for the business character of Delhi because being the largest distribution centre of the country, Delhi has a totally different business format where one trader is dependent upon the other for procurement of goods and in many cases, both these format of trade will adopt different day for opening the shops due to the odd-even formula," said Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general, Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).

"It would have been better if the Delhi government would have adopted staggered timings between different markets of Delhi," he suggested. In its earlier letter to Lieutenant

Governor Anil Bajjal and Kejriwal, the CAIT had suggested staggered timings for the wholesale markets - 10 am to 4 pm - and 12 pm to 7 pm for retail markets.

Maharashtra too announced a five-phased unlock plan under which cities and districts having positivity rate less than 5 per cent and oxygen beds occupancy less than 25 per cent - categorised as Level 1 - will see lifting of restrictions. Here all restaurants, malls, salons, movie theatres, shops can open.

Under Level 2, districts having less than 5 per cent positivity and oxygen beds occupancy of 25-40 per cent, can reopen shops but malls, restaurants, gymnasiums, salons etc will get partial relaxations.

Level 3 are districts with 5-10 per cent positivity rate and 40-60 per cent oxygen bed occupancy.

In Mumbai, which falls under Level 3, film shoots have been allowed and buses can operate at full capacity but with only sitting passengers.

Mumbai local trains, that remain overcrowded during peak hours, will be out of bounds for local passengers and only essential workers are permitted to use these trains.

In Maharashtra, districts having 10-20 per cent positivity rate more than 60 per cent occupancy rate will be under Level 4 and here no movement of people will be allowed on weekends and after 5 pm on weekdays. Level 5 will consist of districts with a positivity rate over 20 per cent and oxygen bed occupancy over 75 per cent. Here no movement of people will be allowed.

India on Saturday recorded lowest daily cases in nearly two months with 1.21 lakh cases in the last 24 hours.

The deaths - 3,380 - however, still remain high. Country's weekly positivity rate is currently at 6.89 per cent while the daily positivity rate was 5.78 per cent on Saturday. It has remained less than 10 per cent for 12 consecutive days now.

Delhi on Saturday had a positivity rate of 0.53 per cent with 414 fresh cases, and 60 deaths. Its hospital beds and patients dependent on oxygen have reduced drastically. However, Mr Kejriwal has set up a task force to prepare for a possible third wave.

JAIPUR BOASTS
OF 'TREE
AMBULANCE'

Jaipur, June 5: Unnoticed by the public, a tree ambulance in Jaipur has been working relentlessly for the last seven years to serve the needs of plants and trees.

As the world celebrates Environment Day on Saturday, the efforts taken by two people years ago are an inspiration for many and prove once again that even small steps count to bring a change in the climate.

Now, a group of over 100 volunteers, known as "Team 10" in Vidhyadhar Nagar area here, has planted about one lakh saplings and is taking care of about three lakh trees, without any financial assistance from the government.

"Though we are a registered society, we have not taken any funding from the government for the cause. My friend Gopal Verma and I started the initiative seven years ago, which has grown into a network of people ready to work to save the environment," said Sushil Agarwal, a timber-merchant.

"As more volunteers joined the group, I used my car as a tree ambulance to carry spades, a water tank, termite killer, manure, etc," he said. Agarwal, 53, said he is working on his dream to make Vidhyadhar Nagar as one of the greenest and cleanest areas of the country.

"I have travelled to 34 countries and have noticed that India is far ahead of other countries, but people here lack civic sense. It is we who have to decide what we want to give to our future generations - a lot of money or a healthy environment to live in," he said.

The group registered as Arpan Lok Vikas Samiti bears about ₹2 lakh monthly expense for taking care of trees spread in 10-11 square km area with the help of donors.

Lockdown in
Odisha leaves
over 7L joblessAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 5

Over 7 lakh people in Odisha have lost their jobs since the lockdown was re-imposed on May 5 to cut the rapid transmission of coronavirus.

As per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) latest data, the unemployment rate in Odisha was merely around 2 per cent (1.9 per cent) in April. However, by May-end, following the enforcement of the lockdown, it shot up to 7 per cent.

Among the list of 28 states, Odisha has been among the top-5 states where the rate of unemployment has posted a sharp rise vis-a-vis the previous month.

Due to this sharp rise in the rate of unemployment in May, an estimate reveals that in the last month (May) a whopping over 10.09 lakh had no jobs at hand as against mere 2.76 lakh in April.

Significantly, such a blow to job creation has come at a time when during the first quarter of the year that ended in April, the number of unemployed in the state had increased by nearly 1.24 lakh vis-a-vis the previous quarter of September-December 2020.

Historically seen, Odisha always recorded a double-digit unemployment rate in the age group of 15 to 24 years. The rates in the beginning of 2020 stood at 12.62 per cent in the age group of 15 to 19 years and 18.09 per cent in the age group

of 20-24 years. However, when cut to January to April 2021, the unemployment rate had shot up sharply to 35.46 per cent and 14.91 per cent, respectively, in the same age groups.

An analysis of the district-wise data nails the prime cause. It has been observed that the districts that had a higher share in Odisha's employment chart had been the worst hit by the second Covid-19 wave.

An analysis of the district-wise data nails the prime cause. It has been observed that the districts that had a higher share in Odisha's employment chart had been the worst hit by the second Covid-19 wave. Cities like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and industrial districts like Sundergarh and Jharsuguda that provide employment in the range of 2.5-4.9 lakh were the worst hit in the second wave surge in the state, leading to the loss of jobs.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 single-day cases continue to log above 7,000 cases a month now and the daily death toll has remained above 30 for over two weeks.

On Saturday, the state recorded 7,395 new cases and 40 deaths.

With this, the positive tally in the state surged to 8,06,094 while the total number of deaths in the pandemic shot up to 2,952.

Of the fresh cases detected across 30 districts in the state on Sunday, a total of 4,169 cases were reported from quarantine centers, while the rest 3,226 were local transmission cases.

Not many takers
for tests, jabs
in rural India

Kalwa, June 5: When health worker Neelam Kumari knocks on doors in villages the occupants sometimes run out the back, terrified that she wants to vaccinate them against Covid-19.

With India's devastating recent virus surge easing in cities, the deadly pandemic is ravaging the vast poverty-stricken rural hinterland. But here, ignorance and fear rule.

"A lot of people in my village don't want to take the vaccine. They fear that they will die if they take it," Kumari told AFP in Dhathra, a collection of two-storey buildings in Haryana with buffaloes wandering the streets.

"One of the villagers was so angry that he beat up a (health) worker who was trying to convince him to take the vaccine."

Just 15 percent of people in rural areas, compared with 30 percent in towns and cities, have received at least one vaccine dose so far - even though two-thirds of cases are being reported in the countryside, according to an analysis in a newspaper. Rumours are shared

online or spread through messaging apps like WhatsApp. Fears that 5G causes Covid-19 led to mobile towers being attacked in Haryana.

"People do not even step forward for testing as they think the government will declare them Covid-positive even if they are not," Shobh Ali, a doctor in Miyaganj village in Uttar Pradesh, told AFP.

This fear pervades despite the sight of bodies dumped in rivers and hundreds of shallow graves suggesting that Covid is raging in hinterland where 70 percent of the population lives.

In Nuran Khara village in Haryana, residents are reluctant to get inoculated even though they said many households reported having fever - and dozens of people dying.

"Even after opening up a vaccine centre here, nobody is ready to take it," villager Rajesh Kumar, 45, told AFP.

"I won't take the vaccine because it has many side effects. People get sick after getting vaccines."

- AFP

HEALTH | SCARE

A lioness in Tamil Nadu died of coronavirus while nine others in the pride tested positive at Vandalar

All felines in Ranchi Zoo put to mandatory Covid test

Ranchi, Jun 5: All 21 felines in Jharkhand's Ranchi Zoo - right from 1.3 years tiger cubs to 14-year-old Mallik - are undergoing Covid-19 test to rule out chances of infection in the wake of death of tiger Shiva down with fever for three days, an official said Saturday.

The decision for mandatory Covid test of felines was taken amid coronavirus scare though 10-year old tiger Shiva, who died Thursday night tested negative in RAT but results of RT-PCR are awaited.

Shiva, suffering from high fever since Tuesday, had left eating and had barely touched the chicken soup offered during the sickness before it succumbed to death.

"We have 21 lions, tigers

and leopards left at Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park, Ormanjhi, Ranchi after Shiva died on Thursday night. To rule out even the remote possibility of Covid-19 virus among felines, we have decided that all will undergo mandatory coronavirus tests.

"So far swabs could be taken of 11 animals as it is a bit difficult to obtain their swabs given their ferocious nature," Zoo Director YK Das told PTI.

Zoo at present houses nine tigers between the age of 1.3 years to 14 years. There are three tiger cub siblings of 1.3 years age.

In addition, the animals going for RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) test include four lions - two asi-

atic and two hybrid, Zoo officials said.

Also, there are eight leopards including one black panther that are undergoing Covid-19 tests.

The Zoo director said that initially 21 felines of Schedule I category protected animals under Wildlife Act are undergoing Covid-19 tests and if need be more animals will be included in the list.

He said that so far coronavirus cases have been detected only in categories like lions and tigers but as a precautionary measure, leopards have also been included.

The death of tiger Shiva in state capital Ranchi's Zoo has created fear.

On June 4 a lioness 'Neela' in Tamil Nadu died of coronavirus while nine others in the pride tested

positive for the infection at Arignar Anna Zoological Park at Vandalar.

In May, eight Asiatic lions at a zoo in Hyderabad tested positive for Covid-19 making it the first such case in the country.

Days after reports of the first such case emerged in Hyderabad, a lion at the Etawah Safari Park in Uttar Pradesh had tested positive while another was suspected to have contracted the contagion.

At Ranchi, Shiva's swab

for RT-PCR has been dispatched to IVRI (Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly) to assess if it was infected with coronavirus, officials said.

The big cat's blood test and examination by veterinary experts suggested liver and kidney infection while a four-member veterinary team conducted its post-mortem.

The feline was brought to Ranchi from Bengaluru's Bannerghatta Biological Park in November 2014, officials said.

The Director said that the zoo has been closed but as a precautionary measure all the staff including keepers have undergone Covid-19 tests in addition to all precautions for sanitisation etc.

A high alert was sounded

here after eight Asiatic lions at Hyderabad Park were found infected for the virus.

Officials said after Covid-19 outbreak sanitisation of the park and enclosures are carried out on a daily basis while staff and animal keepers use protective gears in addition to fogging, sanitisation and lime spraying.

Special precautions are being taken for big cats, the officials said, adding footwash with a solution of potassium permanganate is required for the keepers before entering the cages.

Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park, Ranchi, popularly known as Bhagwan Birsa Zoo, Ranchi claims to be one of the most beautiful and progressive zoos in India, having 104 hectare of area of

mildly undulating topography with natural dry deciduous Sal forests & water bodies in and around it.

The park is situated on both the sides of National Highway 33, at about 20 kms from the Ranchi.

The zoo houses about 1,500 wild animals and birds representing 83 different species.

The major breeding species are Himalayan black bear, sloth bear, leopard cat, Royal Bengal tiger, jungle cat, jackal, fox, striped hyena, spotted deer, barking deer, sambar, nilgai, black buck, Indian gaur, hippopotamus, Gangetic gharial, emu, ostrich, Indian peafowl and different species of pheasants.

It has an annual footfall of about 8 lakh. - PTI

SHORT TAKES

FLOODS AND MUDSLIDES KILL 6 IN SRI LANKA

Colombo, June 5: Flash floods and mudslides triggered by heavy rains in Sri Lanka have killed at least six people and left five missing, while more than 5,000 are displaced, officials said Saturday.

Rains have been pounding six districts of the Indian Ocean island nation since Thursday night, and many houses, paddy fields and roads have been inundated, blocking traffic.

Four people died in floods while another two lost their lives in mudslides, according to the government's Disaster Management Center. Another five people are missing in floods and mudslides.

A mound of earth crashed onto a house and buried four members of the same family.

FLIGHT DIVERTED DUE TO UNRULY PASSENGER

Albuquerque, June 5: A flight from Los Angeles to Nashville was diverted to New Mexico on Friday afternoon after a passenger tried to break into the cockpit, Delta Air Lines said.

The unruly man made the unsuccessful attempt on the locked cockpit aboard Delta Air Lines Flight 386 but other passengers and crew managed to detain him, the airline said.

Video taken aboard the plane shows the zip-tied and shoeless man surrounded by passengers and crew members as he repeats over and over again: "Stop this plane!" He finally was picked up and hauled to the back of the plane, which was diverted to Albuquerque International Support.

BIDEN AIMS TO RESTORE SPECIES PROTECTIONS

Washington, June 5: The Biden administration said Friday it is cancelling or reviewing a host of actions by the Trump administration to roll back protections for endangered or threatened species, with a goal of strengthening a landmark law while addressing climate change.

The reviews by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are aimed at five Endangered Species Act regulations finalised by the Trump administration, including critical habitat designations and rules defining the scope of federal actions on endangered species.

The Fish and Wildlife Service also said it will reinstate the so-called blanket rule, which mandates additional protections for species that are newly classified as threatened.

BOMB-SNIFFING RAT RETIRES IN CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh, June 5: A giant African pouched rat called Magawa who spent years sniffing out landmines in the Cambodian countryside has stopped working and will enjoy a well-earned retirement eating bananas and peanuts, his employers said. Magawa, originally from Tanzania, was trained by the Belgian charity APOPO which says the rodent helped clear mines from 225,000 square metres of land in his five-year career, the equivalent of 42 football pitches.

But after detecting 71 landmines and 38 items of unexploded ordnance "he is getting a bit tired", Michael Heiman, the charity's programme manager in Cambodia, said on Saturday. "The best thing to do is to retire him."

MEXICO MINE COLLAPSE LEAVES SEVEN TRAPPED

Mzquiz, Mexico, June 5: Rescuers were trying Friday to free seven mine workers trapped after an accident in a coal-producing region in northern Mexico, authorities said.

Initial investigations suggest the collapse was due to a flood at the mine in the municipality of Mzquiz, the state of Coahuila's labor department said.

"Some people who were working were trapped inside the mine," it said in a statement.

Police and civil protection authorities were at the scene for the rescue effort, it added.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said he had sent personnel from the security, labour and civil protection ministries to the area.

"We are watching and in coordination with municipal and state authorities," he tweeted.

"We hope that the rescue is favorable for the families and for everyone."

UK's highest daily cases in 60 days

The govt says it is considering options around a planned end to the lockdown on June 21

London, June 5: The United Kingdom government on Saturday said it is considering "options" around a planned end to lockdown on June 21 after the country recorded the highest number of daily Covid-19 cases in just over two months.

The UK recorded a further 6,238 Coronavirus cases on Friday as England's R number, or the rate of infection, continues to rise and the latest government numbers also show another 11 Covid-19 related deaths. "Of course officials are drawing up other options but we are still expecting to be in a place to go ahead on June 21," a UK government figure told *Sky News*.

Options under discussion are said to include retaining the wearing of masks in certain settings and continuing the work from home advice, even as the hospitality sector opens up. However, the government maintains that there is "nothing in the data" to suggest ending lockdown should be delayed.

The number of Covid-19 cases in the country is now at its highest since March 25, when 6,397 were recorded, and the spike is largely down to the Delta variant — or the highly transmissible B.1.617.2 variant of concern (VOC) first detected in India. UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said that a rise of cases was to be expected as the country came out of lockdown.

"We always expected cases to rise as the country was opened up, the critical thing is the impact on the number of people who end up in hospital for any given number of cases," said Hancock. "That link has been broken by the vaccine, but it hasn't been completely severed yet. That's one of the things that we're watching very carefully, and it's too early to say what the decision will be ahead of June 21, but we'll make sure people know in good time," he said.

The National Health Service (NHS) said it has seen a huge jump in the number of people coming forward for a Covid jab since launching its plan to tackle vaccine hesitancy. There has been an increase of more than a fifth among adults under 45 who would definitely get their vaccine according to



Afghan doctors check a Covid-19 patient's files at the Afghan-Japan Communicable Disease Hospital in Kabul, on Sunday. Afghanistan is battling a third wave of infections, while health officials plead for vaccines, expressing deep frustration at the inequities of the global vaccine distribution. — AP

US, India, China account for 60% of vax distributed globally: WHO

United Nations, June 5: Of the two billion Covid-19 vaccine doses distributed globally till now, about 60 per cent have gone to just three countries — the US, India and China, a senior adviser at the World Health Organisation said.

Senior Advisor to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Bruce Aylward made the comments at a press briefing on Friday.

"This week, we will see over two billion doses we will probably pass the two billion doses landmark in terms of the number of doses of the vaccines and new Covid vaccines that have actually been developed. These have been distributed now in over 212 countries, Aylward said.

If we look at that two billion doses, over 75 per cent of it has gone to just 10 countries. And in fact three countries — China, the US and India — account for about 60 per cent of those doses, he said.

He said while COVAX has played an important role in distributing the Covid-19 doses to 127 countries and getting several countries to start their vaccination drives, the challenge is in the access to the vaccines.

He said the 60 per cent of the two billion doses that have gone to China, India and the US are all domestically procured and used.

Aylward noted that at the other end of the spectrum, only about 0.5 per cent of doses globally have gone to the lowest income countries that account for about 10 per cent of the world's population.

And even if we look at the lower middle income countries, it's only fractionally higher than that in terms of the coverage that we're getting. So we're increasingly seeing a two-track recovery and rollout of the vaccines, he said.

While there is high vaccine coverage deep into the high risk populations and younger populations in high income countries, we are still struggling to get sufficient product just

to be able to vaccinate the health care workers, older populations in low income countries who are really the key to getting out of the health, societal and economic crisis that we are in the midst of.

Aylward said about 80 million doses have been distributed through COVAX so far and the global alliance for equitable vaccine distribution is about 200 million doses behind where it should be due to the disruption in COVAX supplies as a result of the devastating second wave in India.

The problem now is the supplies are being interrupted.

— PTI

Germany removes Italy, Czech from risk area list

Berlin, June 5: Germany is removing Italy, the Czech Republic and much of Austria from its list of "risk areas", meaning most remaining travel restrictions will ease.

The change of status announced by Germany's disease control centre, the Robert Koch Institute, takes effect on Sunday.

Austria is being removed with the exception of its two westernmost provinces, Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

Some parts of Croatia and of Switzerland, including Zurich and Basel, are also dropped.

Countries classified as "virus variant areas" — Germany's highest risk category — must quarantine for 14 days.

Travel is restricted to German citizens and residents.

Britain remained the only European country in that category on the list published Friday.

It also includes India, Nepal, Brazil and the addition of Uruguay

— AP

Cruise ships back in Venice

Venice, June 5: The first cruise ship leaving Venice since the pandemic is set to depart Saturday amid protests by activists demanding that the ship be rerouted out the fragile lagoon, especially Giudecca Canal through the city's historic centre.

They say the enormous vessels — weighing over 90,000 tons and carrying thousands of passengers at a time — pose environmental and safety risks to the canal and the city. Another protest is also planned Saturday by pro-cruise activists whose jobs depend on having thousands of visitors flowing through one of Italy's top tourist destinations. Italian Premier Mario Draghi's government pledged this winter to get cruise ships out of the Venice lagoon, but it

will likely take years to reach that goal. The government says it is organizing bids for a viable alternative outside the lagoon, which should be posted any day now. Still, even an interim alternative route to the Giudecca Canal won't be ready until next year, Italy's Ministry for Infrastructure and Sustainable Mobility told The Associated Press in an email. "Meanwhile, in 2022, as a temporary solution, a certain number of ships can dock in Marghera, relieving the traffic through Venice," the ministry said.

Marghera, an industrial port west of Venice that is still within the lagoon, will require lengthening existing piers to accommodate larger vessels as well as dredging a canal on the approach, cruise

the next four years — a mammoth task in the Southeast Asian nation of nearly 270 million people. The pair got their start two years ago visiting food stalls across the capital Jakarta on the hunt for discarded instant coffee sachets, dried noodle packs and shopping bags.

Thanks to a viral social media campaign, the pair now receive reams of plastic waste packaging from donors across the country.

That rubbish flows in daily and is piled high at

the little firm's Jakarta-area factory.

"It shows how Indonesians have a strong awareness of recycling plastic waste, but they don't know where to do it," 34-year-old Sabrina said.

Rebricks staff munch the packaging into tiny flakes that are then mixed with cement and sand and moulded into building blocks.

They make look like conventional bricks, but break one open and it is dotted with flecks of plastic.

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— AP

2L vax from India in use: UN

United Nations, June 5: The 200,000 Covid-19 vaccines gifted by India for all UN peacekeepers are "already being put to use" and a number of these Blue Helmets have already been vaccinated, spokesperson for UN chief Antonio Guterres has said.

"The Indian Government...had offered us...200,000 doses...And a number of peacekeepers are already, as far as I know, being vaccinated," Stephanie Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, told reporters at the daily press briefing Friday in response to a question on vaccination of UN peacekeepers. "So, on the Indian vaccines, those,

which I think were... AstraZeneca, those were 200,000. They're already being put to use," he said.

India, one of the largest troop-contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions, gifted 200,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccines for UN peacekeepers across all UN missions. As of March 31 this year, there are 87,889 personnel serving in 12 peacekeeping operations around the world.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had announced in February that India will gift vaccine doses for UN peacekeepers. "Keeping in mind the UN Peacekeepers who operate in such difficult circumstances, we would like

to announce today a gift of 200,000 doses for them," Jaishankar had said while addressing the UN Security Council open debate on the implementation of resolution 2532 (2020) on the cessation of hostilities in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Quoting the *Bhagavad Gita*, Jaishankar had said "Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind."

The 200,000 doses essentially meant that it would be possible to administer the required double doses of Covid vaccines to all UN peacekeepers across missions.

The AstraZeneca vaccines had left Mumbai via

Qatar Airways on March 27.

The shipment went to Copenhagen, where it was safely stored in a facility, re-packaged and quickly distributed to all peacekeeping missions for the peacekeepers. On a question on the offer of vaccines to the UN from China, Dujarric said "we continue to be in touch with the Chinese authorities, as we are with the Russian authorities. Some of that had to do with which vaccines were already approved by the WHO (World Health Organisation) because we do not use vaccines that are not approved by the WHO."

The late Friday announcement

— PTI

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— AP

INDIA, CHINA CAN SOLVE THEIR OWN ISSUES: PUTIN

GOP: OPENING TO REVIVE FAUCI ATTACKS IN EMAIL TROVE

Washington, June 5: Dr Anthony Fauci has been a political lightning rod since the early days of the pandemic, lionised by the left as a beacon of truth in an administration that badly mismanaged the pandemic and villainised by the right as a misguided, spotlight-seeking bureaucrat seeking to undermine former President Donald Trump.

But with the release of a trove of Fauci's emails this week, Republicans' attacks on the nation's top government infectious-diseases expert have gone into overdrive.

On conservative news channels, Fauci — who now serves as President Joe Biden's pandemic adviser — has been pilloried as a liar who misled the American people about the origins of the deadly Covid-19 to protect the Chinese government.

— AP

U.S.' \$57MN AID TO TREAT TB IN SEVEN NATIONS

Washington, June 5: The United States on Friday announced a \$57 million aid for efforts against tuberculosis in seven high-burden countries, including India. Other countries for which the aid is being given are Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Africa, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

Designed in collaboration with partner governments, the initiative will provide a foundation to the high-burden countries to recover the ground lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic, a media release said. In the 23 countries where the US Agency for International Development (USAID) focuses, one million fewer people had access to tuberculosis (TB) diagnosis and treatment in 2020 than in 2019 due to Covid-19 and measures to control it.

The USAID said alongside Covid-19, TB is the leading infectious disease killer, particularly in low and middle-income countries, sickening 10 million people and taking 1.4 million lives every year.

Paris, June 5: A major figure in France's paparazzi world has been charged with witness tampering in a case involving former President Nicolas Sarkozy, her lawyer said Saturday.

Mimi Marchand, who runs the BestImage agency, had also been charged with criminal association, said lawyer Caroline Tobey.

"She firmly denies the charges against her," she added.

Marchand was arrested on Thursday along with several other suspects on the orders of magistrates investigating alleged corruption by Sarkozy, who has been accused of taking money from former Libyan dictator Moamer Kadhafi. Sarkozy denies the charges.

Francois de Labarre, a journalist from Paris Match who was also arrested Thursday, was released without charge later the same day.

Marchand and de Labarre were instrumental in organising an interview in November with one of the main witnesses against Sarkozy, Ziad Takieddine, in which he withdrew his allegations against the former head of state.

— AFP

Crunch vote for Israel coalition

Jerusalem, June 5: The speaker of the Israeli parliament will formally notify lawmakers Monday of the opposition's announcement of a coalition to unseat veteran premier Benjamin Netanyahu, his office said.

The notification will set in motion preparations for a confidence vote in the new government, which will now likely be held on Wednesday or the following Monday, Israeli media said.

The late Friday announcement

— AFP

St. Petersburg, June 5: Asserting that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are "very responsible" leaders, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said they both are capable of solving Sino-India issues, and cautioned against any interference from "extra-regional power" in the process. With Russia publicly critical of the Quad, the four-nation grouping of India, the US, Japan and Australia, Putin also said that though it was not up to Moscow to assess how any nation should participate in an initiative and to what extent they should build their relations with other countries but no partnership should be aimed at making friends against anyone.

The Russian President's remarks, in response to a question on Moscow's view on Quad as well as India's participation in the grouping, were a veiled reference to the Chinese claim that the grouping is to contain Beijing's influence in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.

He also asserted that there were no "contradictions" in Russia's partnership with India and the ties between Moscow and Beijing.

"Yes, I do know that there are some issues related to India China relations but there are always a lot of issues between neighbouring countries but I know the attitude of both the Prime Minister of India and also the President of China. These are very responsible people and they earnestly treat one another with utmost respect and I believe that they will always arrive at a solution to any issue that they might face."

— PTI

SARKOZY PROBE: 'PAPARAZZI QUEEN' IN FRANCE CHARGED

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— AFP

MARINE | MENACE

Some of the cities have banned single-use plastics

Indonesian women battle plastic waste

Jakarta, June 5: Alarmed by the mountains of plastic waste leaching into Indonesia's waters, two best friends are taking on the environmental menace by turning crisp bags and shampoo packets into paving bricks.

Ovy Sabrina and Novita Tan launched Rebricks after their country drew headlines as the second-biggest producer of marine waste in the world, behind China. Indonesia has pledged to reduce plastic waste by some 75 percent over

the next four years — a mammoth task in the Southeast Asian nation of nearly 270 million people.

The pair got their start two years ago visiting food stalls across the capital Jakarta on the hunt for discarded instant coffee sachets, dried noodle packs and shopping bags.

Thanks to a viral social media campaign, the pair now receive reams of plastic waste packaging from donors across the country.

That rubbish flows in daily and is piled high at

the little firm's Jakarta-area factory.

"It shows how Indonesians have a strong awareness of recycling plastic waste, but they don't know where to do it," 34-year-old Sabrina said.

Rebricks staff munch the packaging into tiny flakes that are then mixed with cement and sand and moulded into building blocks.

They make look like conventional bricks, but break one open and it is dotted with flecks of plastic.

The two entrepreneurs

say their method diverts waste that would have otherwise ended up in a landfill or the ocean — about four tonnes so far and counting.

"Every day, we can stop about 88,000 pieces of plastic sachets from littering the environment," Tan said, adding that the company has produced more than 100,000 bricks.

Some Indonesian cities have banned single-use plastics, but waste recycling is still rare.

The problem was under-

scored in 2018 by the discovery of a dead sperm whale that washed ashore in a national park with nearly six kilograms (13 pounds) of plastic waste in its stomach.

The Rebricks pair spent two years trying to perfect their method, and picked up hints from a building materials business run by Sabrina's family.

Some Indonesian entrepreneurs are molding plastic waste into flower vases, umbrellas or purses.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

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Shashi Warriar
Off the beaten track

The joys, perils and disasters of cooking

Some years ago, my wife and I shifted to our present house near the beach. It's some distance from Mangalore city, and we had trouble finding domestic help from the day we moved in here: we had to fend for ourselves, and we began to share household chores. As a result, I started learning to cook, something I'd put off for a quarter-century. I have since learned to fend for myself, and even enjoy cooking sometimes, to the extent that my wife can take a month-long holiday, leaving me to take care of the house and our pets.

But this is the story of why I put off learning to cook.

The year was 1989, the place Melbourne. I was unmarried, and had a small flat a few hundred metres from the beach, and, being a programmer, worked from home. That meant, unfortunately, that I also ate at home. Given a kitchen, I could produce only tea (bags please), coffee (instant), boiled eggs, and, after I learned to use a knife without cutting off a finger or two, rudimentary salads.

I struck up an acquaintanceship with a neighbour, a Greek called George. Over the weeks, he became my friend, guide, and confidant. And so, when I confessed to him a month after we met that I often missed spicy Indian food, he told me of the only Indian restaurant he knew: one in Flinders Street run by ISKCON. I had lunch there next afternoon, and discovered that its food was Indian but bland, being intended for Australian palates.

George then took me to a suburb called Dingley, and a warehouse full of foods from all over the subcontinent. So I stocked up on rice and spices from Punjab and coconut oil from Sri Lanka and papad — pappadam, actually — from Kerala. and, one day shortly after, decided to try my hand at cooking lunch. Being a lover of pappadam in all forms, I thought I'd start with deep-frying some.

I'd never done it before, but I'd seen my mother at it often. She used to heat oil in a wok, drop a pappadam into the oil, wait for it to cook, and fish it out with what was called in Malayalam a pappadam-stick, a stiff wire with a point at one end and a bulb-shaped wooden handle at the other.

I didn't have a pappadam-stick, but a barbecue skewer instead, a stiff wire with a point at one end and a ring at the other. The first pappadam came out fine, and as I ate it I dropped the next in the oil, and then the next. Just when I was done with the third, though, the phone rang, and I went to answer it, leaving the skewer in the oil.

I came back to the kitchen after a twenty-minute chat with a client, thinking I'd continue with the pappadams, and picked up the skewer, burning my finger and thumb. With a loud yell of pain, I dropped the skewer on my foot, and, naturally, let out another, louder yell. So when George, who heard the second yell, came running to investigate, he found me nursing small burns on my finger and thumb, and a three-inch-long one on my right foot. The burns on the hand were minor, but the one on the foot looked nasty; nasty enough for George to insist that I went to a doctor.

The doctor, who, like all doctors, had no qualms about prying into the private lives of his patients, asked how I got the burn. When I told him, he managed to disguise his laughter as a cough. But when I was leaving, he grinned, telling me that I'd made his day.

A few weeks later, I felt a strong urge to eat meat, cooked Indian-style. I called up a Malayali friend, got a recipe and some recommendations on what kind of meat to buy at the supermarket: go for the best, and since it lasts in the freezer, buy a large cut. That evening, I bought a two-kilo chunk of meat along with my regular groceries. George popped in to invite me home as I was putting away my purchases, so I put the meat in the freezer and went over to his place.

Next morning I took the meat out, thinking I'd cut off a bit to cook for lunch: my Malayali friend had instructed not to thaw meat out and put it back in the freezer without cooking it, and I didn't have a cooking pot big enough to hold all the meat I'd bought. That was when I discovered how hard frozen meat gets. None of the knives in the kitchen made the slightest impression on it. By now it had become a matter of honour (how could a frozen lump of meat get the better of *me*?) so I cleaned a chisel and tried to hammer a little lump off the big lump. The handle broke at the third blow. I considered borrowing George's chainsaw to cut it but gave up the idea because George was out.

That left me no choice. I thawed out the whole lump of meat and cooked it in two rounds. Both rounds tasted terrible. I ate all of it because, like I said, it had become a matter of honour. And, honour intact, I decided to give up cooking, a decision I reversed only a quarter-century afterwards. Now that I'm old and my honour is in tatters anyway, here's some advice for bachelors: learn to cook. It's a useful skill, and if you're willing to forgive yourself a few mistakes, it can be a lot of fun.

And when you buy a large lump of meat, cut it up before you put it in the freezer!

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



Acche Din: No one ever said it would be this hard



Manish Tewari
State of the Union

The NDA/BJP government's seven years tenure has been underpinned by a hodgepodge of grandiloquent pronouncements. If one were to obtusely believe the NDA/BJP then India has eradicated the scourge of a parallel economy post demonetisation. Is now "Atmanirbhar" courtesy a new wave of production by the domestic industries that has put an end to excessive foreign dependence. All the "wolf warriors" of the Chinese have been exterminated and the war against the Covid-19 pandemic was won in January 2021 itself in Davos.

ECONOMY

The Indian economy has tanked to its worst performing levels. Even pre-pandemic growth had halved to four per cent in 2019-20. In 2013-14, the size of the Indian economy was 1.86 trillion dollars. In 2020-21 it stands at 1.85 trillion dollars. By way of comparison China is a 16.64 trillion economy. All the fundamentals namely savings, consumption investment and employment are severely stressed. The unemployment rate is at a 45-year high. Per capita income is expected to dip by an unprecedented 5.4 per cent, from 1.34 lakh in the previous year to 1.27 lakh in the current year. The Cumulative Fiscal Deficit of the Union government for 2019-20/20-21 is 35.55 lakh crores. With seven of the largest PSUs being valued below par and put on the chopping block, the government now plans to sell the family silver to bridge an unparalleled deficit budget.

It has now become clear how completely hollow all the tall claims of Atmanirbharta were. India now ignominiously depends on foreign assistance to surmount health emergencies. We have even accepted food aid from Kenya. One can but help recall that even in the wake of a cataclysmic tsunami in 2004 Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh refused to accept any

foreign relief.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Erosion of institutional integrity has been the hallmark of the NDA/BJP government. From the CBI and the Election Commission to the Reserve Bank of India and even the higher judiciary, all face a crisis of credibility further widening the state-citizen trust deficit. The worst sufferer of this has been the temple of Indian democracy — India's Parliament. No Indian Prime Minister has ignored Parliament so contemptuously as Prime Minister Modi has.

In order to circumvent Parliament, the NDA/BJP government has often followed the ordinance route. In its seven years the current government has pushed more ordinances than any other government in a five-year term since 1952. Even the number of bills that have been referred to parliamentary committees have shrunk dramatically with zero bills being recommended in 2020. If that was not enough, government found egregious ways of further undermining the remit of Parliament by "classifying" key pieces of legislation as money bills.

All this while the government wallows in quantifying parliament productivity by passing several bills in a single day. What value do these quantifications hold when the essence of democracy, i.e. serious deliberations discussions and questioning of the government on key issues has been severely proscribed.

SOCIAL COHESION

During the seven years in power the NDA/BJP government has turned the idea of India on its head. This government does not believe in the founding values of the Indian state and has used all means necessary to create a majoritarian ethos.

It started with an assault on the freedom to eat, to dress as you like, to think, to express and most importantly the freedom to live

your life without fear or intimidation. With extortionate amount of money being funnelled into building false storylines fundamental freedoms have been systematically subverted.

The anti-CAA protests showed that a small but determined group can speak truth to power. The Prime Minister's silence on the subsequent Delhi Riots was deafening. When the three farm laws pushed agriculture into the free market without even an iota of concern for the small and marginal farmer the world is witness to the largest and longest peaceful agitation by the farmers.

Throughout the past seven years the government has used all means necessary to rupture the federal structure of the country. A total of nine state governments have been brought down by the BJP using unethical means. By destabilising states ruled by Opposition parties the BJP has time and again demonstrated contempt for the people's mandate. States have been left to fend for themselves in times of national crises. The recent vaccination fiasco being a striking example.

For the Modi government it is cooperative federalism on paper and a non-operative federalism in reality.

INTERNAL SECURITY

This government had projected itself to be a strong decision-making government, which would accord national security number one priority. But in terms of action the nation has not seen anything substantive. The Naga Accord, is in the doldrums and one knows if it exists or has vanished. Left-wing extremism has grown by leaps and bounds. Maoism and militancy, besides claiming lives of our jawans is also eating into the finances of the country. Mob lynchings and anti-religious conversion laws have attacked the very fundamental of the rights of citizens. Even the abrogation of Article 370 has had little positive impact on Jammu

The worst sufferer of this has been India's Parliament. No Indian Prime Minister has ignored Parliament so contemptuously as Prime Minister Modi has.

& Kashmir whilst institutionalising a sense of alienation and fear. Overall the government struggled to come to terms with domestic insurgencies, modernising the military and deterring potential threats from Pakistan and China.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The NDA/BJP government's cynical use of foreign policy as an exercise in personal brand building has had catastrophic consequences for the nation. At the time of writing this article the Chinese haven't vacated illegally occupied Indian territory in Eastern Ladakh. Any hope of return to status quo ante seems beyond the capacity of the current dispensation now that India has given up its tactical advantage on the Kailash heights. The spirits of Wuhan and Mamallapuram are long dead — a consequence of foreign policy becoming individual centric and being run in an ad hoc manner rather than based on any strategic coherence.

The government's dealing with Pakistan in the last seven years has been characterised by U-turns, flip-flops and somersaults. This has precluded any possibility of a nuanced engagement with Islamabad. With India's rankings across several global indices falling severely, the MEA has gone over the top with the narrative of "interference in the internal democratic processes", conveniently overlooking that our head of the government had once canvassed for Donald Trump "abki baar Trump sarkar".

It is evident that the NDA government has failed in maintaining a balance between the United States, Russia, China and the European Union with foreign policy focussing on Modi first and India later.

The last seven years has unfortunately been a cacophony of mendacities. The NDA/BJP government has failed the people of India. The fantasy of "Acche Din" stands eviscerated. Today this country is humming an old Hindi melody albeit under its breath — *Koi Lauta De Mera Beeta Hua Din*.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Our planet earth is a unique planet as it is thought to be the only planet to support life. A balanced environment on earth is what makes the survival of species possible. Modern man has made great developments in the fields of science and technology. Today, he is all ready to settle a community on Mars. So when even the planets of our solar system have not been able to escape the grasp of man's advancing technology, can the environment on our own planet remain untouched? All the scientific advancement made by man has come at the cost of the degradation of our environment. The main cause for degradation of the environment is pollution. It is said that trees are the pillars of life on earth to purify the air and help to maintain the ecological balance on earth. Pollution of any kind causes serious damage to man, animals, birds, aquatic life, crops and vegetation. Let us save the earth from dying.

C.K. Jayanthi Maniam,
Chennai

SAVE RARE SPECIES

The reported death of a lioness at Vandalur zoo from suspected coronavirus infection is a matter of grave concern. Although the authorities have reportedly stated all protocols had been followed including vaccination of animal keepers, helpers with PPE kits provided, these lions could in all probability have been infected, directly or indirectly, mainly through human contacts. There is now certainly a need for all the animal keepers and helpers to undergo regular tests for Covid-19, considering the seriousness of the situation. Besides, all other animals in the zoo need to be closely watched for any unusual physical symptoms or behaviour. The larger question arises too as to whether wild animals like lions, tigers, rhinos, leopards etc and birds too need to be kept in zoological parks where they face the risk of getting infected and dying either through humans and other animals within their limited enclosures. These wild animals should be living in their natural habitats like in the Gir forests for lions and Mudumalai sanctuary for tigers and other animals, which could go a long way in preserving these rare wild animals.

A. Mohan, Chennai

ADVANTAGE INDIA

This refers to the comments of New Zealand pace spearhead, Trent Boult that their team is capable of creating history by winning the inaugural WTC Finals against India. Of course, there have been many instances, the latest being the ODI World Cup Tournament Semi-finals in 2019, when the NZ team had upset the appellation of Kohli & Co. However, the present bunch of players, under the leadership of Kohli, are a totally different team. The recent comeback series win in Australia and the home series against England, are proof of our team's potential to win matches. Hence it may not be as easy as Boult thinks, though they do have an upper hand due to their playing two Test matches, prior to the WTC finals, against the England team.

N.V. Krishnan, Chennai



Arieh Kovler

Naftali Bennett: The millionaire who might be Israel's next PM

In April 2019, Naftali Bennett received an unpleasant surprise. As the votes were counted in Israel's general election, it became clear that his New Right party had not passed the 3.25 per cent electoral threshold needed to stay in the Knesset, Israel's parliament. Mr Bennett lost his seat, his new party failed and his political career seemed over.

Two years, three more elections and a global pandemic later, Mr Bennett is on the verge of ending Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year rule. Barring a spectacular reversal, he may become Israel's Prime Minister. He has found himself in the right place at the right time, heading (though not leading) an eclectic coalition of parties from the left, right and centre. He will be forming a national unity government with Yair Lapid, leader of the centrist Yesh Atid party. Mr Netanyahu was once Mr Bennett's mentor and patron; now he's about to be replaced by him. Born in Haifa to American immi-

grant parents, Mr Bennett, 49, grew up in an observant Jewish household. He wears a kippah, a Jewish skullcap, which stays on his bald head as if by magic. In its 73-year history, Israel has never had an observant Jew as PM.

Mr Bennett was a member of an elite IDF Special Forces unit. In his time in the Maglan Reconnaissance Unit 212, he served behind enemy lines in the 1996 escalation between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon known as "Operation Grapes of Wrath", hunting Hezbollah teams firing rockets into Israel. After military service, Mr Bennett went into tech and became a multimillionaire when his venture was acquired by a security company.

In a sense, Mr Bennett represents the modern Israeli dream: launch a startup after your military service, build it up and get a big "exit" when the company is bought. The usual next step would be to become a serial entrepreneur or venture capitalist. Mr Bennett chose a different path. He became chief of staff to

then Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

The two were once close. Mr Bennett's autobiography has a chapter praising Mr Netanyahu — but he departed suddenly in 2008. Persistent rumours claimed he had a dramatic falling-out with Mr Netanyahu's influential wife, Sara. The precise details, however, were always kept private.

During his time with Mr Netanyahu, Bennett made his most enduring political alliance with the young right-winger Ayelet Shaked, who served as Mr Netanyahu's office director from 2006 to 2008. They made an unlikely pair: a moderately religious man and secular woman. But they shared a vision of a younger, fresher right-wing politics that could bridge the secular-religious divide that permeates Israeli society.

They also both saw themselves as future PMs. Together, they quit Mr Netanyahu's Likud and took over Israel's moribund National Religious

party, rebranding it as "Jewish Home".

One of Mr Bennett's more eye-catching policies was the "Bennett Plan" for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It involved annexing the majority of the West Bank, including all Israeli settlements, leaving the Palestinian towns in permanent limbo. His plan was attacked by the Israeli left and was also controversial on the right as it wasn't full annexation. Donald Trump's 2020 peace plan was very similar to the Bennett Plan.

When the 2013 polling day came, he flopped. This was pattern for Mr Bennett: high expectations and a strong showing in opinion polls, followed by disappointing results.

In the years that followed, Mr Bennett and Mr Netanyahu clashed during various coalition governments. Eventually, when a new election was called in 2019, Mr Bennett and Ms Shaked quit Jewish Home to form a right-wing secular-religious party

called New Right, positioned right of Likud.

Mr Bennett insisted lead this rainbow coalition of nationalists, left-wingers and Arabs. Mr Lapid agreed to allow Mr Bennett to be PM for two years. After that, Mr Lapid in theory will replace Mr Bennett. But Mr Lapid is wise enough to know two years is a lifetime in politics, specially Israeli politics. Still, who knows for sure if this government will ever really take charge? The pressure placed on Mr Bennett and his colleagues by Mr Netanyahu and his supporters is immense. There are protests at his home chanting "traitor", even death threats. If it comes to power, the coalition will be Israel's broadest so far. It will have just a one-seat majority in the Knesset.

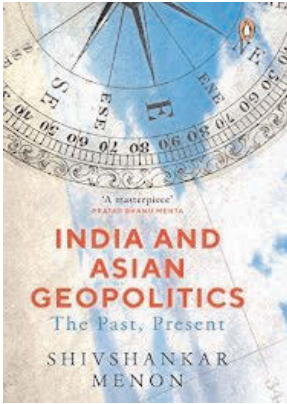
Mr Bennett could be in the Prime Minister's chair within days. The question is for how long.

By arrangement with the Spectator

INDIAN TOP 10
BESTSELLERS

NON-FICTION

- 1 **INDIA AND ASIAN GEOPOLITICS: THE PAST, PRESENT**
Shiv Shankar Menon
Penguin, ₹699
- 2 **THE POWER OF GEOGRAPHY**
Tim Marshall
Simon & Schuster, ₹699
- 3 **INDIA'S POWER ELITE**
Sanjaya Baru
Penguin, ₹699
- 4 **LANGUAGES OF TRUTH**
Salman Rushdie
Penguin, ₹799
- 5 **WANDERERS, KINGS, MERCHANTS**
Peggy Mohan
Penguin, ₹599
- 6 **THE PREMONITION: A PANDEMIC STORY**
Michael Lewis
Allen Lane, ₹999
- 7 **THE FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE**
A.C. Grayling
Penguin Viking, ₹799
- 8 **REMNANTS OF A SEPARATION**
Aanchal Malhotra
HarperCollins, ₹599
- 9 **REPUBLIC OF HINDUTVA**
Badri Narayan
Penguin, ₹499
- 10 **THE LIGHT OF ASIA**
Jairam Ramesh
Penguin Viking, ₹799



FICTION

- 1 **WHEREABOUTS**
Jhumpa Lahiri
Penguin, ₹499
- 2 **CLUB YOU TO DEATH**
Anuja Chauhan
Picador, ₹499
- 3 **KLARA AND THE SUN**
Kazuo Ishiguro
Faber & Faber, ₹699
- 4 **TURN A BLIND EYE**
Jeffrey Archer
Pan Macmillan, ₹450
- 5 **THE BEGUM AND THE DASTAN**
Tarana Husain Khan
Tranquebar, ₹499
- 6 **A GAMBLING MAN**
David Baldacci
Pan Macmillan, ₹699
- 7 **THE LAST QUEEN**
Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
HarperCollins, ₹599
- 8 **MURDER AT THE MUSHAIRA**
Raza Mir
Aleph, ₹799
- 9 **A TIME FOR MERCY**
John Grisham
Hodder & Stoughton, ₹699
- 10 **SHUGGIE BAIN**
Douglas Stuart
Picador, ₹499

Bahrsions, New Delhi

FAST FACT

Forty-four-year-old **Mieko Kawakami** is the author of the internationally best-selling novel, *Breasts and Eggs*. She debuted in 2006 with her poetry and published her novella, *My Ego, My Teeth*, and the World, in 2007.



She earlier worked as a bar hostess and singer. From 2015 to 2017, Kawakami conducted a series of interviews with Haruki Murakami. *Heaven* is her most noted work wherein she explores everyday dilemmas as a forum for examining fundamental questions of power and morality. She lives in Tokyo.

Hobsbawm's choice: When logic rejects nationalism..



Indranil Banerjee

review

Karl Marx, to put it mildly, disliked Capitalism. This of course did not prevent him from writing tones on the subject. And as is to be expected not much of what he wrote on the subject was complimentary.

Britain's best-known historian, Eric Hobsbawm, traverses a similar path in his writings on Nationalism. Despite professing a "dislike" for nationalism, the historian devoted dozens of essays on the subject. Donald Sassoon, Hobsbawm's historian friend decided to put together this new volume, "Eric Hobsbawm on Nationalism" nine years after Hobsbawm's death because of the relevance of this contentious subject. We stand, writes Sassoon, "on the doorstep of an age when the internet and the globalisation of capital threaten to blow away many national boundaries while, partly as a reaction, nationalism seems to re-emerge with renewed strength".

Hobsbawm's views on nationalism were strongly influenced by his personal experience and views on the destructive power of nationalism as it evolved in Europe since the early 19th century. "His anti-nationalism is not surprising," notes Sassoon.

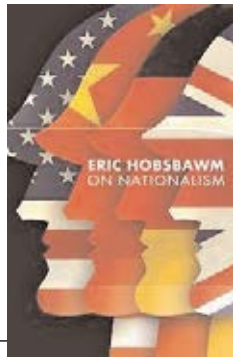
"He was a Jew opposed to Zionism. He was British but born in Egypt in the year of the Russian revolution. His grandfather was Polish. His mother was Viennese. His father was born in England. His parents married in Switzerland. His wife, Marlene, was born in Vienna and bought up in Manchester. He grew up in Vienna and Berlin, and was a boy in Germany when the Nazis took over - an experience that left an enduring impression. He wrote in his autobiography that Berlin had made him a lifelong Marxist and communist, a political project which, he acknowledged, had utterly failed."

As a young man he took part in the Second World War, after which he went on to complete his PhD in history at Cambridge. His insightful books on economic history quickly won him a place in the top bracket of world historians. His famous trilogy — *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* and *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* — is mandatory reading for most students of economics and history.

According to one reviewer of his works, Iker Itoiz Ciáuriz, "...Hobsbawm was a fierce critic of nationalism. A close

analysis of Hobsbawm's work, especially his 'Age' quartet, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* and *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, and *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*, reveals Hobsbawm's evolving scepticism and opposition to nationalism. He would come to argue that nationalism, driven by industrial capitalism, undermined the universalist goals proposed by revolutionary movements, particularly in Europe."

Hobsbawm argues that nationalism is a relatively recent construct and mainly a European phenomenon. The rise of nationalism coincided with the emergence of an educated class in various European regions and the rise of the bourgeoisie. He felt that nation-



ERIC HOBSBAWM ON NATIONALISM
Edited by DONALD SASSOON
Hachette, ₹799

alism outside Europe was largely a consequence of European imperial power.

However, he did not entirely disregard the positives of nationalism including, most importantly, the rise of democracy that eventually accompanied nationalism. At one point he conceded: "I remain in the curious position of disliking, distrusting, disapproving and fearing nationalism wherever it exists... but recognising its enormous force, which must be harnessed for progress if possible."

It would, therefore, be incorrect and unfair to dismiss or classify his writings on nationalism to be wholly critical. He was too great a historian not to recognise the nuances and many implications of the processes and constructs associated with nationalism.

For instance, Hobsbawm cautions against a new trend emerging around the world, based on the demand of self-determination and the rise of nationalistic feelings within existing nation states. He voices his concerns in the chapter on "Perils of the New Nationalism".

Referring to the relatively recent creation of small and tiny nation states, Hobsbawm writes: "Of course such states — even much larger ones — are not independent in any meaningful sense. Politically and militarily, they are helpless without outside protection, as Kuwait and Croatia show. Economically, they are even more dependent. Few separatist movements hope to go it alone."

"The usual reason given by would-be state builders is that

the people of the territory concerned have constituted a 'nation' from the beginning of time, a special ethnic group, usually with its own language, which cannot live under the rule of strangers. The right of self-determination, they argue, implies states that coincide. Almost everything about this argument is historically wrong, but as Ernest Renan noted more than a century ago, 'Forgetting history, and even historical error, are an essential factor in the formation of a nation.' However, we are concerned not with history or rationality but with politics.

"However, if we can understand the forces that led to a revival of the politics of national consciousness, and even sympathised with the feelings that inspire it, let us have no illusions. Adding another few dozen to the member states of the UN will not give any of them any more control over their affairs than they had before they became independent. It will not solve or diminish the problems of cultural or any other autonomy in the world, any more than it did in 1919."

This, therefore, is clearly a book that needs to be read over an extended period of time. There is much to ponder over. Perhaps it's not for everyone either. Large parts of it would be totally incomprehensible to readers who have little or no knowledge of European and world history. But those who can persevere will find much fodder for the intellect.

The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues

IT TAKES A TRAINED EAR TO FULLY ENJOY INDIAN MUSIC

Ian Thomson

review

At George Harrison's 1971 concert for Bangladesh, awkwardly, the audience applauded after Ravi Shankar and his musicians had paused to tune their sitars and tablas. "If you appreciated the tuning so much," Shankar said, half in jest, "I hope you'll enjoy the music even more." To the untrained ear, Indian music may sound unmelodious and directionless as it strays into apparent pre-concert tuning registers and monotony. Nonetheless, its transcendental Zen-like qualities impressed Richard Wagner, who was drawn to the spirituality and joss-stick mysticism (as he saw it) of the east. A devotional song performed by the Punjab Sufi vocalist Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan can soar as ecstatically as *Parsifal*. Indeed it's hard not to levitate out of your seat when Khan and his team send up a prayer to Allah amid rhythmic hand-clapping. (The Bristol trip-hop outfit Massive Attack went so far as to re-mix a Khan incantation.)

According to the Sanskrit scriptures, a single musical note can contain within itself the entire universe. In the hands of a master sitarist such as Hasu

Patel or Nikhil Banerjee, the sitar's drone becomes the sonic equivalent of a Hindu or Buddhist 'mindfulness' meditation; it may even help slough off thoughts of death and mortality. The long improvisation known as the *alap* which opens the classical north Indian (Hindustani) raga can riff meditatively on a single note for as long as an hour. Contemporary so-called "drone" music is indebted to the raga's hushed intensity of emotion. Karlheinz Stockhausen's mesmeric 1968 work for six voices, 'Stimmung', radiates an om-like inward contemplativeness, as do the raga-inspired jazz workouts of the African American harpist Alice Coltrane and the symphonic mantras of the (sadly neglected) Edwardian English composer John Foulds.

Amit Chaudhuri, the Bengal-born English-language novelist, literary critic, poet, essayist and university professor, is a trained classical raga singer in the north Indian tradition of improvisation and jazz-like scatting. He sees the raga as the closest music comes to human speech — a semi-improvisatory weave of microtones, modes and rhythmic cycles that is neither a

composition (most ragas have no known composer) nor a melody, but an atmospheric musical 'essence'.

Finding the Raga, a bracing amalgam of essay and memoir, considers classical north Indian music's ancient history and influence today. In his long introductory chapter, appropriately titled 'Alap', Chaudhuri suggests that the raga originated in the mystical Islamic traditions of Sufism and Qawwali song. Each raga was associated for the Mughals with a specific time of day and sometimes with a season. The Todi raga is a morning raga; the Kafi raga, a monsoon raga. No single raga should be performed in "contravention" of its rightful time, says Chaudhuri.

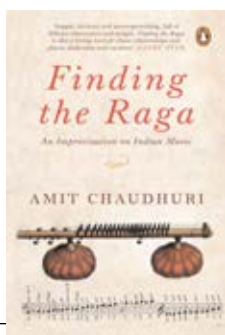
For the past 40 years Chaudhuri has sung the Todi raga on rising from his bed in Calcutta where he now lives; he often performs in public, moreover; both in classical concerts and in his own raga-rock fusion combos. Eric Clapton's "Layla" riff is, Chaudhuri says, spookily discernible in one raga he likes to sing, while a Jimi Hendrix blues number resonates in another. The enumeration of

these musical "mishearings" (as Chaudhuri terms them) enlivens the book.

Chaudhuri's teenage years were spent in 1970s Bombay, we learn, where his father worked as a biscuit company executive. Chaudhuri badly wanted to be a rock musician and, to prove it, bought himself a Yamaha acoustic guitar from Denmark Street on a trip to London. His near-religious "conversion" to Indian classical music was thanks to his mother's music teacher, Govind Prasad Jaipurwale, who was a master practitioner of the Persian-Urdu love lyric known as the ghazal. Chaudhuri was entranced by this venerable sung music. Pandit Prasad could trace his lineage back through the chain of *guru-sisya* (teacher-disciple) relationships common in Asia. Chaudhuri's own path from pop-rock "air guitarist" to "Indian classical vocalist" was cemented by the presence of this white-pyjamaed instructor.

An elegant and discursive writer, Chaudhuri is not afraid to show off. Along the way he alludes to Pier Paolo Pasolini, Jean Renoir, T.S. Eliot and others who have explored aspects of Indian culture. Finding the Raga, delightfully instructive throughout, will make you want to listen to Indian classical music anew and with ears beatifically attuned.

By arrangement with the Spectator



FINDING THE RAGA
By AMIT CHAUDHURI
Penguin, ₹499

Bookseller's love story in wartime Paris shows past is never behind us



Sridhar Balan

review

Everyone has a story and sometimes this story is made up of several stories culminating in one major narrative. This narrative is what we tell ourselves and so often that we believe it. Not only does it promote a perception of ourselves but more importantly, it's how we want others to perceive us. This narrative not only shapes our self-concept but also helps us in approaching relationships, situations and decision-making.

Charlotte Foret, the main protagonist in our story has such a narrative. It helps her and her young Vиви to survive not only the latter stages of the war but also lead a more fulfilling life after liberation.

Charlotte works in a bookstore in Paris in 1944 and virtually runs it as the owner is called up to the front, captured by the Germans and sent to a labour camp. The bookshop, Librairie de Bruyere, owned by her father's old friend Etienne de la Bruyere, has been her favourite haunt since childhood and it was only logical that she would begin to work there

after her master's degree in English literature from the Sorbonne. The shop like other bookshops in Paris before the war, had become a focal point for cultural interaction. But the war changed all this and the Nazi Occupation of Paris changed it even further. Her father a left-wing publisher with his own imprint, Editions Aumont, could not bear to compromise the integrity of his imprint under the Nazis. He preferred the option of closing down his imprint rather than make a "deal with the devil". He had managed to flee before being arrested. This was similar to the closure of the iconic "Shakespeare & Co" bookshop by its owner Sylvia Beach in protest against the Nazi Occupation of Paris.

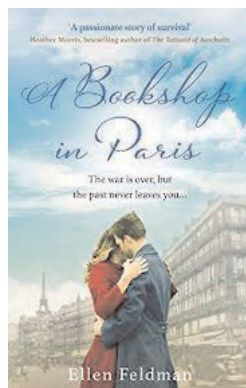
But Charlotte could not exercise that option. She was not the owner of the shop but even more importantly, the shop had to be kept open by her and her assistant Simone to earn whatever meagre income they could to eke out a bare living in difficult times. But running the bookshop under the

watchful eyes of the Nazis was fraught with danger. There is a 'Liste Otto' or Otto List, an official list of French books banned under the Nazi Occupation. Stocking of books on the list in the shop, would invite confiscation, arrest and closure of the shop. It could also mean transportation to a concentration camp. While Charlotte hoped she may be spared the last option as she was Catholic, Simone was a Jew, who had to have the yellow six pointed Star of David sewn prominently on her jacket and risked instant arrest and deportation. Yet, both Charlotte and Simone kept a few of the books in the Otto List scattered around the shop, their subtle gesture of defiance.

The moment of reckoning comes when a German officer of the Wehrmacht becomes a regular visitor to the shop. He is polite, quiet, speaks French and is always browsing. Charlotte is with her daughter VIVI, a badly malnourished VIVI for there is almost nothing to eat in the stricken city. While Charlotte is fearful of the German's presence, he seems to be fond of books and reading. One day the officer comes to the cash till with a book in his hands. Mechanically, she runs up the bill and gives him the change. It's then she notices the book. It's by Stefan Zweig with a section on Freud. Books by Jews and on Jews are forbidden and this is both! While Feldman does

not mention the title, we can safely conclude it's *The World of Yesterday*. Charlotte feels it's a test and is fearful of arrest. The German reassures her and they enter into a conspiracy of silence.

Now begins an intense relationship with the Nazi. She learns that he is Julian Bauer, a doctor more given to saving people than exterminating them. But it is his kindness towards VIVI that wins Charlotte's heart. Finding her sick and malnourished, he brings medicines and food for her. He tells Charlotte that Germans are a much better people than what is



A BOOKSHOP IN PARIS
By ELLEN FELDMAN
Simon & Schuster, ₹399

portrayed by the Nazis. Deprived of love ever since Laurent, Charlotte's husband and VIVI's father got killed in the car, Charlotte enters into a passionate affair and finds Julian is circumcised! He soon confesses that he is a Jew and is in the German army with false papers.

While powerless to prevent a Jew professor from arrest in the shop, Julian does come through with help for Simone when she is arrested for wearing the Star of David with press studs rather than it being sewn on. He manages to send a food packet for her but is unable to prevent her transportation to a camp.

As Germany begins to lose the war and the Nazis begin leaving Paris, Julian hatches up a desperate plan to save Charlotte and VIVI. He drives them to a deportation camp for Jews at Drancy, a nearby town. That's the last Charlotte sees of him. When the camp is liberated, Charlotte and VIVI are mistaken for Jews and Charlotte allows the deception to continue.

Along with VIVI, she is finally sponsored by Horace Field an American publisher in New York and a friend of her father's. He runs the publishing house Gibbon & Field where she is employed as a senior editor on the strength of knowing four languages.

In New York, Charlotte becomes a naturalised American but her past continues to haunt her. She is

An insider's view on elite publishing in Indian Right's shadow

Abdullah Khan

review

In a unique narrative style that blends the sophistication of the metro cities with the raw sensibilities of a small town, and that mixes slow and silent manifestation of feelings with sudden emotional outbursts, Siddharth Chowdhury, in his latest offering *The Time of the Peacock*, tells us the sociopolitically insightful stories of contemporary India, the India which has taken a sharp right turn after staying left-of-centre for almost seven decades of its post-Independence existence.

The book is a collection of three interconnected stories — you can call them novellas — and each is told through the point of view of a unique character with a distinctive socio-linguistic background.

Bhasha India, the opener, has a central character called John Nair, a Malayali editor heading the Indian branch of a multinational publishing company. With John, we travel from Delhi to Sidhrawali in Haryana where he has a small farmhouse and during this journey we get to know about John's backstory. We meet a cast of characters including cow vigilantes gone berserk. Cosmopolitan John Nair who is married to a Kashmiri Muslim girl finds these events disconcerting. He is also worried about his employee and caretaker of his farmhouse, Ramzan, a Muslim, and a Bengali at that. Ramzan has the double risk of being branded a foreigner, read Bangladeshi, and lynched.

The interestingly named narrator of the second story, *Wallace Water* is Angika Raag 'Nishad', a gifted Bihari writer and translator. Her surname indicates that she comes from the marginalised community of traditional boatmen. Though her mother is a high caste Bengali, she has to carry the burden of her father's surname. While narrating her stories, she not only tells about the caste matrix that exists in Bihar but also introduces us to the changing political landscape of the state during Lalu Prasad's rule as Mandal politics takes centrestage.

Ritwik Ray, the bard of Patna, who was a character in Chowdhury's debut story collection *Diksha at Saint Martin* and the protagonist of his novel, *Patna Roughcut*, is the central character of the third story titled *Freebooter*. Ritwik is an eccentric with a long list of idiosyncrasies but sensitive and caring. He is writing a novel called *Godse Chowk*. The title of Ritwik's novel is a metaphor for our times. Through Ritwik, we get introduced to a Bihari leftwing activist and writer, Ramanuj Sahi. Coming from the prosperous and dominant Bhumihar caste, Sahi chose the path of the revolution and fought for the downtrodden. He ended up in jail accused of being an "urban Naxal".

In addition to a thoughtful meditation on the present sociopolitical situation of India, the book also gives us an opportunity to have an insider's view of the Indian publishing world. As the author is an editor in a leading publishing house, he passes on important, interesting and authentic information about the workings of the publishing industry to his readers. The other fascinating aspect of Chowdhury's writing is his ability to evoke a sense of place and time. As always, he has created multilayered characters. His prose has the crispness of "silao khaja" and sweetness of "Sasaram's belgrami". For the uninitiated, *khaja* and *belgrami* are famous Bihari delicacies.

Abdullah Khan is a Mumbai-based novelist, screenwriter, literary critic and banker



THE TIME OF THE PEACOCK
By SIDDHARTH CHOWDHURY
Aleph, ₹499

The writer is a senior publishing industry professional who has worked with OUP and has been a senior consultant with Ratna Sagar Books

SHORT TAKES

Footballer Thapa tests +ve in Doha

New Delhi: India midfielder Anirudh Thapa has tested positive for Covid-19 and is under quarantine in a separate room in the team hotel in Doha. Thapa tested positive on Wednesday, a day before India lost 0-1 to Asian champions Qatar in their joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers in Doha. "Yes, Thapa tested positive and he is isolated (from other team members)," All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary Kushal Das said. The 23-year-old Chennaiyin FC player will be tested again for the virus in a few days. He has played more than 20 matches for India. India are already out of contention for a World Cup berth but remain in the reckoning for the 2023 Asian Cup. — PTI

Docs say Milkha stable and better

Chandigarh: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh, who is battling Covid-19 in the ICU of PGIMER here, is stable and his condition is "better than yesterday", the hospital said on Saturday. The 91-year-old, who is being closely monitored by a team of three doctors, is still on oxygen support. "On the basis of all the medical parameters today, that is June 5, his condition has been observed better than yesterday," Prof Ashok Kumar, official spokesperson of PGIMER, said in a statement. The top hospital had on Friday said that Milkha was "better and more stable". Milkha's family also issued a statement through a spokesperson that the iconic athlete "is stable and doing well, but still on oxygen." "Please ignore the rumours floating around. It's false news," the spokesperson said. — PTI

Indian-origin girl shines at US Open

San Francisco: Megha Ganne, an American teen amateur with Indian parentage, continued to hold the spotlight with an even par round on the second day to sail into the weekend rounds in tied-third place at the US Women's Open here. The 17-year-old Ganne, who came into the Major after battling through a 3-for-1 play-offs in the qualifiers last month, had three birdies and three pars. She also had three bogeys in the last seven holes on 12th, 15th and 18th at The Olympic Club. Yuka Saso of the Philippines took the 36-hole lead with rounds of 69-67 and if she wins on Sunday, she will be of the same exact age as the tournament's youngest all-time champion Inbee Park. Park was 19 years, 11 months and 17 days old when she captured this title 13 years ago. — PTI

Ex-umpire persists with racism claims

London: Former English umpire John Holder has hit out at England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) over the latter's statement that he and his colleague Ismail Dawood have withdrawn their claim of institutional racism. Holder accused the ECB of being "disingenuous" and "misleading" following their racial discrimination claim. The duo had announced their intention to sue the ECB in December after alleging that their careers as umpires had been affected by institutional racism. "Our case against the ECB has been beaten on a legal technicality. I haven't withdrawn any of the claims I made," Holder said. "The tone of the ECB's statement would give the uninvolved reader the impression that we have accepted their version of events and backed down. This is not the case at all." — PTI

LA Clippers force game 7 vs Dallas

Los Angeles: Kawhi Leonard tied his postseason career high with 45 points as the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Dallas Mavericks 104-97 on Friday to stave off elimination and force game seven in their Western Conference NBA series. The Clippers kept their season alive by winning in front of an almost full house at American Airlines Center.

CZECH POUNCE

Krejcikova of Czech Republic stuns 5th seed Svitolina

Paris, June 5: Novak Djokovic moved effortlessly into the French Open fourth round for the 12th successive year on Saturday, setting up an intriguing duel against Italian teenager Lorenzo Musetti. In women's, Elina Svitolina (fifth seed) went down to Barbora Krejcikova of Czech Republic. World number one Djokovic, the champion in Paris in 2016 and chasing a 19th Grand Slam title, brushed aside 93rd-ranked Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania 6-1, 6-4, 6-1. Djokovic is bidding to be the first man in more than half a century to win all four majors on multiple occasions.

DJOKOVIC TO MEET TEEN SENSATION

Next up for the Serb is 19-year-old Musetti after the 76th-ranked Italian fired 50 winners past compatriot Marco Cecchinato in a 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory. He becomes just the sixth man since 2000 to make the fourth round of a Slam on debut. "I have practised with Novak so I know a little bit about his game. There will be more tension, but it's what I have been working for since childhood," said Musetti. "I really like how he plays. He's got a lot of fire-power from both forehand and backhand," Djokovic said ahead of a first meeting with Musetti. Fellow Italian teen Jannik Sinner, a quarter-finalist in 2020, also made it to the second week, easing past Sweden's Mikael Ymer 6-1, 7-5, 6-3.

NADAL IN FOURTH ROUND FOR 16TH TIME

Defending champion Rafael Nadal reached the fourth round for the 16th time with his third win of 2021 over Britain's Cameron Norrie.



Czech Republic's Barbora Krejcikova serves the ball to Ukraine's Elina Svitolina during their third round match at the Roland Garros in Paris on Saturday. Krejcikova won 6-3, 6-2. — AFP

Nadal, chasing a 14th Roland Garros title and record-setting 21st Grand Slam, won 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 and goes on to face Italian teenager Jannik Sinner for a place in the last eight. "I am super happy, most of my shots were amazing," said the Czech who is on an eight-match winning streak after capturing a maiden singles title in Strasbourg last week. Stephens, the 2018 runner-up in Paris, defeated Czech 18th seed Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-5. Fourth seed Sofia Kenin, the runner-up in 2020 and the highest seed left, came back to beat fellow American Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-1, 6-4. The top three seeds, Ashleigh Barty, Naomi Osaka and Aryna Sabalenka all failed to get beyond the third round.

In all, only four of the top 10 made the third round, the fewest in 20 years. Serena Williams, seeded seventh, plays her last 16 match on Sunday. Eighth seed and defending champion Iga Swiatek has made the third round for the loss of just seven games. — AFP

RESULTS

Men (Third round): Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Ricardas Berankis (LTU) 6-1, 6-4, 6-1; Rafael Nadal (ESP x3) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR) 6-3, 6-3, 6-3; Lorenzo Musetti (ITA) bt Marco Cecchinato (ITA) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; Jannik Sinner (ITA x18) bt Mikael

Ymer (SWE) 6-1, 7-5, 6-3; Diego Schwartzman (ARG x10) bt Philipp Kohlschreiber (GER) 6-4, 6-2, 6-1; Jan-Lennard Struff (GER) bt Carlos Alcaraz (ESP) 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

Women (third round): Ons Jabeur (TUN x25) bt Magda Linette (POL) 3-6, 6-0, 6-1; Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Karolina Muchova (CZE x18) 6-3, 7-5; Barbora Krejcikova (CZE) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) 6-3, 6-2; Sofia Kenin (USA x4) bt Jessica Pegula (USA x28) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; Marta Kostyuk (UKR) bt Varvara Gracheva (RUS) 6-1, 6-2; Iga Swiatek (POL x8) bt Anett Kontaveit (EST x30) 7-6 (7/4), 6-0.

Samba boys on a roll

Porto Alegre (Brazil), June 5: Star forward Neymar scored a retaken penalty as Brazil maintained their perfect start to South American World Cup qualifying with a 2-0 win over Ecuador on Friday.

Richardlison had given Brazil the lead on 64 minutes and Neymar sealed the win deep into injury time, but only after another VAR farce.

Referee Alexis Herrera initially gave a free-kick against Gabriel Jesus after contact between him and Angelo Preciado in the Ecuador area five minutes from time.

But after an interminable four-minute VAR review, he changed his mind and awarded a penalty.

Neymar stuttered in his run-up but Ecuador goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez wasn't fooled and easily saved his weak shot.

Ecuador were then down the other end attacking when Herrera blew his whistle and brought the game back for encroachment by Dominguez.

Neymar retook the penalty and this time sent Dominguez the wrong way.

The slapstick ending could not mask a deserved victory for Brazil, who now top the qualification table by four points from unbeaten Argentina, with Ecuador third, two points further back.

Predictably, Brazil dominated the early possession with 75 percent of the ball in the first quarter of an hour.

But it wasn't until 20 minutes that they first threatened with Richardlison millimeters away from turning home a whipped inswinging Neymar freekick.

Moments later Richardlison played Gabriel in on goal but Dominguez was out quickly to smother his poked effort.

Ecuador were their usual physical selves but showed little of the



Brazil's Neymar (right) celebrates with Lucas Paqueta after scoring his team's second goal against Ecuador during a World Cup qualifying match at Beira-Rio stadium in Porto Alegre. — AP

attacking verve that had seen them score 13 goals in their previous three matches.

Neymar in particular felt the full force of Ecuador's muscular approach.

Brazil thought they'd gone in front three minutes before the break when Gabriel converted a right wing cross from Danilo but Ecuador were saved by a narrow offside call. A minute later Dominguez had to scoop behind a rasping long-range drive from Neymar.

Ecuadoran chances were few and far between, with fullback Preciado blazing over from 20 yards on 58 minutes.

Brazil coach Tite had seen enough and brought on forward Gabriel Jesus for defensive midfielder Fred, who was making his first appearance for the Selecao since 2018.

The switch paid instant dividends. After Dominguez saved low to his right from Neymar, he was poorly beaten on 64 minutes at his near post by a shot from

Richardlison.

It was one-way traffic and Marquinhos headed over the bar before Dominguez made partial amends for his earlier clanger, saving low to his right to deny Gabriel Jesus and then blocking a shot from Gabriel with his foot. Gabriel, whose nickname is Gabigol, then headed wide of an empty net from Richardlison's cross on a lightning counter-attack after Dominguez made a rash dart out of his area. — AFP

ITALY CRUISE PAST CZECHS IN WARM-UP

Bologna, June 5: A week before they kick off Euro 2020 in Rome, Italy crushed the Czech Republic 4-0 in Bologna on Friday, keeping an eighth straight clean sheet.

Ciro Immobile, Nicolò Barella, Lorenzo Insigne and Domenico Berardi all scored for the hosts who will open the Euro against Turkey next Friday.

In the absence of Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Marco Verratti, who is nursing an injured knee, Jorginho, a Champions League winner with Chelsea, and Barella quickly set the tempo for Italy. Italy's strikers Lorenzo Insigne and Ciro Immobile wasted early chances, before Immobile of Lazio broke the deadlock in the 3rd minute. — AFP

LECLERC TAKES POLE IN BAKU

Bake, June 5: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc claimed pole for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix after a crash-laden, red-flagged qualifying session in Baku on Saturday.

Mercedes' world champion Lewis Hamilton will start alongside Leclerc, who is looking for quick redemption after taking pole in Monaco only to retire from the race when his car broke down on the warm-up lap. Red Bull's Max Verstappen leads Hamilton by four points in the drivers' championship and is on the second row of Sunday's race with the Alpha Tauri of Pierre Gasly for company. Q3 was halted with a minute remaining when Gasly's teammate, Yuki Tsunoda, crashed at turn three, with Carlos Sainz in the following Ferrari taking quick avoiding action, locking his wheels and smashing into a safety barrier. — AFP

WORLD | T20

Cup to be shifted to UAE & Muscat

New Delhi, June 5: The marquee T20 World Cup in October-November is set to be shifted to the UAE and Muscat (Oman) with the BCCI having internally intimidated the ICC to go ahead with its preparation due to a tricky Covid-19 situation in India.

While the UAE was always the first back-up option, Oman's capital Muscat has been added as the fourth venue, apart from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, for the tournament that will start in the last week of October. "Yes, the BCCI, during the ICC board meeting, has formally asked for a four-week window to take a final call but, internally, they have said that they would like to keep the hosting rights and wouldn't mind the tournament being held in UAE and Oman," a senior board official, privy to ICC board developments, said.

He said that Muscat has been zeroed in specifically for the preliminary rounds of the 16-team competition, which will also allow the three UAE grounds to get sufficient time to freshen up after 31 IPL games.

"If IPL finishes by October 10, then the UAE leg of World T20 can start off in November which would give three weeks' time to the pitches to be spruced up for the global event. In the meanwhile, the first week can be held

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in Oman," he said. A majority of the ICC board members believe that India is trying to bide time as they take stock of the situation at a time when it is very difficult to predict how things pan out in October-November.

"If you think about it practically, India is now reporting around 120,000 plus cases which is close to one third of what was being reported at the end of April and start of this month.

"But sitting on June 28, if you say 'yes' to holding the World T20 in India, how can you predict the health situation in October if there is a third wave," the seasoned official asked.

The second question is if the BCCI is wary of resuming the eight-team IPL in September in India, how can it hold a 16-team event in the country within a month's time. — PTI



New Zealand pacer Tim Southee celebrates after dismissing England's James Bracey for a duck on the fourth day of the first Test at Lord's on Saturday. — AFP

Southee's six-for puts Kiwis on top

London, June 5: Rory Burns hit a gutsy century to help England recover from a collapse on the fourth day of the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's on Saturday.

England were in danger of following-on but Burns' 132 meant they avoided that embarrassment, although a total of 275 all out was still 103 adrift of New Zealand's first-innings 378 that featured debutant opener Devon Conway's remarkable 200.

Veteran paceman Tim Southee led New Zealand's attack with 6-43 in 25.1 overs to secure yet another place on the Lord's honours board after his 10-wicket haul in 2013.

But the Black Caps would have been in an even stronger position had they not reprieved Burns on 77

and 88 in the first of this two-match series.

Burns was still nine runs shy of his third Test century when he was joined by last man James Anderson.

But their entertaining stand of 52 delayed the tea interval before Southee had Burns, in sight of batting for the whole innings, caught behind to end a stay of nearly eight hours that saw the Surrey left-handed opener face 297 balls including 16 fours and a six. Anderson's presence encouraged Burns, 91 not out when joined by the No 11, to go for his shots, including an extravagant slog-swept six off left-arm quick Neil Wagner. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES (DAY 4, AT TEA)
New Zealand 378 vs England 275 in 101.1 overs (Rory Burns 132, Joe Root 42, Ollie Robinson 42, Tim Southee 6/43).

TEAM MRF POST DOMINANT WIN IN ITALIAN GRAVEL RALLY

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JUNE 5

Team MRF Tyres have won the Campionato Italiano Rally Terra (CIRT) in style with Paolo Andreucci and Rudy Brian winning three out of four stages to win the Rally Italia Sardegna National.

The success for MRF Tyres continued as they took third place with Simone Campedelli and Gianfrancesco Maria Rappa. Tamara Molinaro and Piercarlo Capolongo won the ladies class.

This result is the first victory for Team MRF Tyres in top-line national rallying in Europe after the Indian tyre manufacturer committed to European rallying in 2019.

Team MRF Tyres took a podium in the first round and were coming into this weekend after a podium run the weekend before in Finland.