



Pages 12 | ₹5.00 | LC

KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

The Sunday Statesman



A LEADER THE WORLD
MUST CHERISH

P7



HARD-LINE JUDICIARY
HEAD WINS IRAN
PRESIDENCY

P11



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

KERALA CONG CHIEF
DENIES VIJAYAN'S CLAIM
OF KIDNAP PLOT

P4



GILMOUR HELPS
SCOTLAND HOLD
OFF ENGLAND

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light rain/thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 37 and 26 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 81% Min: 54%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 35.1°C (-4) Min: 25.3°C (-3)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:24 hrs 19:22 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

14:33 hrs 02:17 hrs

THUMBNAILS



UP CM Yogi Adityanath during an election rally in support of the party candidate Umesh Rai in Howrah district on Saturday.

AGENCIES

HC grants bail to Saradha scam accused: The Calcutta High Court on Saturday granted bail to Debjani Mukherjee, an accused in the multicore Saradha chit fund scam, in one of the several criminal cases against her. A division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Justice Arun Banerjee ordered bail to Mukherjee on furnishing a bond of Rs 2 lakh with two sureties of Rs 1 lakh each, one of whom must be local. Mukherjee will, however, continue to remain behind bars since she is yet to obtain bail in cases pending against her in other states.

P5

SP worker arrested in Ghaziabad case: A Samajwadi Party worker was arrested on Saturday for allegedly instigating an elderly Muslim man to claim in a video that he was beaten up by four youths who also chopped his beard and asked him to chant Jai Shri Ram in Loni area of Ghaziabad. Ummaid Pehelwan Idris, who was absconding since Wednesday was nabbed from Delhi on Saturday, a Ghaziabad police official said.

P2

Japan imposes stricter norms on Olympic-bound from India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

The Indian athletes and officials travelling for the Tokyo Olympics have been asked by the Japanese government to undergo daily Covid-19 tests for a week prior to their departure and not interact with anyone from another country for three days on arrival, strictures that have left the IOA fuming.

Stricter regulations have been put in place for all travellers - including athletes, coaches and support staff - who have resided in 11 countries, including India, where Covid-19 variants have been identified, within 14 days of their arrival in Tokyo.

"The unfair and discriminatory" rules have drawn sharp criticism from the Indian

Olympic Association, which has written to the games organising committee requesting it to ensure that mechanisms to prevent Covid-19 do not have any "adverse and detrimental impact" on performance of athletes.

India's Covid-19 situation has improved considerably after a catastrophic second wave with daily cases declining from more than 3 lakh a few weeks back to just over 60,000 right now.

India has been clubbed in group I alongside Afghanistan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. "Before you travel: You must be tested every day, for seven days, prior to your departure to Japan," the advisory stated for the Group I countries.

Details on Page 12

India abstains from voting on UNGA resolution on Myanmar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS, 19 JUNE

India has abstained on a UN General Assembly resolution on Myanmar, saying its views have not been reflected in the draft and New Delhi does not believe the resolution, tabled hastily, is conducive to "aiding our joint efforts towards strengthening democratic process in the country."

The UN General Assembly adopted the draft resolution. The situation in Myanmar on Friday with 119 Member States voting in favour, including Myanmar while 36 nations abstained, including Myanmar's neighbours - India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Laos, Nepal and Thailand.

This resolution was tabled in the UN General Assembly hastily without adequate consultations with neighbours and regional countries'

Russia also abstained.

Belarus was the sole country voting against it.

This resolution was tabled in the UN General Assembly in a hasty manner without adequate consultations with neighbours and regional countries. This is not only unhelpful but may also prove counter-productive to the efforts of the ASEAN to find a solution to the current situation in Myanmar, India's Permanent

Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti said. In the explanation of the vote in the General Assembly hall, Tirumurti said as Myanmar's immediate neighbour and close friend of its people, India is cognizant of the serious impact of political instability and the potential of its spillover beyond Myanmar's borders.

India has been calling for greater engagement with the objective of peacefully resolving all issues.

We already have such an ongoing initiative under the aegis of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). It is important that we extend support to the ASEAN efforts," Tirumurti said.

BIRTHDAY GIFT



People carry rations distributed among the needy by Congress leaders on the occasion of Rahul Gandhi's birthday, in the Capital on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

Centre cautions against 3rd wave as states open up

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

The Centre on Saturday asked states and Union territories to step up vaccination and open up activities in a "carefully calibrated" manner, as it expressed concern about crowding in markets and other places following the easing of curbs and an expert warned that the third wave can hit India in six to eight weeks if Covid-appropriate behaviour is not followed.

States and UTs have also been urged to ensure the "extremely important" five-fold strategy of Covid-appropriate behaviour, test-track-treat and vaccination is followed to prevent a relapse.

In the wake of reports of attacks on health professionals and establishments treating Covid-19 patients, Union Home Secretary Ajay

Bhalla today asked States to register institutional FIRs against the assaulters and fast track such cases.

In a communication to Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories, the Home Secretary said the States "may also like to invoke provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Amendment Act, 2020, where applicable."

He told the Chief Secretaries "You will agree that any incident of threat or assault on doctors or healthcare professionals may dampen their morale and create a sense of insecurity amongst them. This may adversely affect the healthcare response system."

Bhalla said the Centre's advisories had earlier asked the States to provide adequate security at healthcare facilities, especially at Covid-19 designated hospitals along with controlled and restricted access to the premises.

to Covid-appropriate behaviour, along with the strategy of test-track-treat and vaccination. He said the States were given advisories on the subject on 27 April and 9 June also, which mentioned adequate security for health professionals. "In the present circumstances, it has become imperative that strict action be taken against those who assault healthcare professionals," he said.

"I would also like to reiterate that a close watch be kept on any objectionable content in social media which may exacerbate such situations," he said.

Bhalla said the Centre's advisories had earlier asked the States to provide adequate security at healthcare facilities, especially at Covid-19 designated hospitals along with controlled and restricted access to the premises.

India records 60,753 fresh Covid-19 cases

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

With 60,753 new Covid cases being reported in a day, India's total tally rose to 2,98,23,546, while the number of active cases stand at 7,60,019, the lowest in 74 days, according to Union health ministry data updated on Saturday.

The death toll climbed to 3,85,137 with 1,647 fresh fatalities and active cases comprise 2.55 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has improved to 96.16 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The daily positivity rate was recorded 2.98 per cent. It has been less than five per cent for 12 consecutive days, the ministry said, adding that the

weekly positivity rate has declined to 3.58 per cent.

Recoveries outnumbered daily cases for the 37th consecutive day and the number of people who have recovered from the disease has increased to 2,86,78,390. The case fatality rate stands at 1.29 per cent, the data said.

Cumulatively, 27,23,88,783 Covid-19 vaccine doses have been administered so far under the nationwide vaccination drive.

Delhi cases: Delhi today reported 7 fresh deaths due to Covid-19 - its lowest since 1 April - and 135 new coronavirus cases while the positivity rate slipped further to 0.18 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

(SEE P2)



'Third wave in 6-8 weeks if Covid norms not followed'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

If Covid-appropriate behaviour is not followed and crowd control is not prevented, the next wave of the viral infection can strike the country in the next six to eight weeks, AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria warned on Saturday.

Until a sizeable number of the population are vaccinated, Covid-appropriate behaviour needs to be followed aggressively, he said and stressed on the need for strict surveillance and area-specific lockdowns in case of a significant surge. Guleria reiterated that till now, there is no evidence to suggest that children will be affected more in the next wave of the infection.

Earlier, India's epidemiologists had indicated that a third

wave of Covid-19 is inevitable and is likely to start from September-October.

India was hit by a brutal second wave of the Covid pandemic in April and May, claiming a massive number of lives daily, with shortage in oxygen supply at various hospitals adding to the woes.

However, the number of cases have shown a downward trend and the positivity rate too has been shrinking in the last several days. From a daily case count of over 4 lakh, the number of new Covid-19 cases has been hovering around 60,000 in the last couple of days.

If Covid-appropriate behaviour is not followed, the third wave can happen in six to eight weeks. We need to work aggressively to prevent another large wave till vaccination kicks in," Guleria said.



Time for BJP leaders to think beyond divisive politics because Bengal stands united

GAUTAM DEB, SENIOR TRINAMUL CONGRESS LEADER

ON THE DEMAND BEING MADE FOR A SEPARATE STATE OR UNION TERRITORY OF NORTH BENGAL

Delhi reports 7 fresh Covid deaths, lowest since 1 April

135 new coronavirus cases logged, positivity rate slumps to 0.18 pc, active cases dip to 2,372

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

Delhi today reported 7 fresh deaths due to Covid-19 ~ its lowest since 1 April ~ and 135 new coronavirus cases while the positivity rate slipped further to 0.18 per cent, according

to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

This is the first time since 1 April that the national capital's daily Covid fatality count dropped to a single-digit figure. On 1 April, the city had recorded 9 deaths and 2,790 cases. It had on 3 April logged 10 Covid fatalities.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 165 Covid cases and 14 coronavirus-related deaths while the positivity rate was then 0.22 per cent.

On Thursday, the city had reported 158 cases with a positivity rate of 0.20 per cent and 10 deaths.

The national capital had recorded 212 cases and 25 deaths on Wednesday, when the positivity rate was 0.27 per



cent. It had on the previous day registered 228 cases with a 0.32 per cent positivity rate and 12 deaths, according to

official figures.

On 14 June, the city had registered 131 cases and 16 deaths. It had reported 128 Covid cases on 22 February.

In April, both daily cases and death count had been spiralling in Delhi with over 28,000 cases and 277 deaths recorded on 20 April. The positivity rate had reached over 36 per cent by late April. On 3 May, the city had registered a record 448 deaths, according to official data.

However, the number of daily cases and fatalities has shown a downward trend over the last few weeks and the positivity rate has also been dipping sharply.

As part of the continuing unlocking of the city now, the Delhi government had last Sunday announced the reopening of restaurants with 50 per cent capacity and one weekly market per municipal zone from 14 June. The shops in markets and malls in the city had already reopened last week.

With rising gathering of people on roads and in mar-

kets, eateries and subways amid the continuing "unlock-down", doctors and experts have cautioned that Delhi could face a "worse than second Covid wave situation" if people lower their guards or if they do not adhere to pandemic safety protocols.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of a total of 75,687 tests, including 53,942 RT-PCR tests and 21,745 rapid antigen tests, the health bulletin stated.

Delhi's cumulative caseload rose to 14,32,168 while its Covid toll climbed to 24,907.

According to the bulletin, 201 coronavirus patients recovered over the last 24 hours while the city's total such recoveries mounted to 14,04,889.

The number of Delhi's active cases decreased to 2,372 from yesterday's 2,444, the bulletin said.

The number of patients under home isolation dipped to 668 from yesterday's 698. The tally of containment zones in the city dropped to 5,261 from 5,452 the previous day, it added.

Ghaziabad assault video: SP worker arrested from Delhi

PTI
GHAZIABAD, 19 JUNE

A Samajwadi Party worker was arrested on Saturday for allegedly instigating an elderly Muslim man to claim in a video that he was beaten up by four youths who also chopped his beard and asked him to chant Jai Shri Ram in Loni area of Ghaziabad.

Ummad Peherwan Idrisi, who was absconding since Wednesday when an FIR was lodged against him at the Loni Border police station, was nabbed from Delhi on Saturday, a Ghaziabad police official said.

The accused, identified as Ummad Peherwan, was held near the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LNJP) hospital in Delhi by a team of Ghaziabad police.

After his arrest there, he is being brought here for further proceedings in the case, Ghaziabad Senior Superintendent of Police Amit Pathak told reporters.

The FIR, filed against Idrisi on the complaint of a local policeman, alleged that he

had "unnecessarily" made the video ~ in which Abdul Shamad Saifi narrates his ordeal. It was made with an intention to "create social disharmony" and shared it through his Facebook account, the FIR said.

He was booked under IPC sections 153A (promoting enmity between groups on ground of religion, class etc), 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious belief), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) and 505 (public mischief). A separate FIR was lodged against him on Thursday evening in Bulandshahr district that charged him and around 100 others with violation of the COVID-19 norms by holding a public gathering on June 16, the officials said.

Raja had said Gurjar had a dispute with Saifi over the purchase of a magical amulet from the Bulandshahr man, who also practised occultism. Saifi had sold Gurjar an amulet claiming that it would rid him of all family problems but Gurjar had begun facing a spate of troubles after the purchase of the amulet and suspected that all his misfortunes were due to the amulet.

Court grants bail to man in MCOCA case

PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

ous" as he is involved in more than three cases involving punishment of more than three years.

"He is part of a syndicate of organised crime and his name is specifically mentioned in the FIR. He was absconding and has been arrested after much effort. He is involved in 17 cases, the prosecutor said.

Taking note of the prosecutor's submissions, the court said his involvement in the 17 matters were prior to 2009 and in most of the cases, he was either released by the investigating officer or discharged by the court.

"In three cases, he has been acquitted. There is no case lodged against him after 2009. Even the present FIR is of 2013. The applicant has been arrested after almost eight years of lodging of the present FIR, the sessions judge noted while granting bail on June 18.

Advocate Ajay Kumar

Pipaniya, representing the accused, sought bail on the ground that his client has been falsely implicated in the case and arrested almost eight years after the FIR was lodged.

The FIR was registered against co-accused Satish and Surendra's name was falsely dragged to complete the chain of events, he said, adding that there was no evidence that he was part of an organised crime syndicate.

"He has not been involved in any offence for the past 11 years. In all the cases which were pending against him, he has either been released by the police, Advocate Pipaniya said.

According to the counsel of the accused, the police have not filed any charge sheet in the case.

"In a rare order, first bail under the stringent law to curb organised crime was sought within 80 days without even filing of the charge sheet," he said.

IYC organises vax camps, distributes ration kits on Rahul Gandhi's birthday

PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

The Congress' youth wing observed former party president Rahul Gandhi's birthday by distributing ration kits among the needy and organising vaccination camps on Saturday.

Gandhi turned 51 on Saturday. He has decided not to celebrate this birthday in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Indian Youth Congress, in a statement, said the day was observed as 'Sewa Diwas' as part of which financial assistance was offered to the unemployed and disabled people.

The Delhi Congress also distributed face masks,



People carrying ration distributed among the needy by the Youth Congress on the occasion of Rahul Gandhi's birthday. In the Capital on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

medicine kits and cooked meals for free to the poor in the national capital.

"Ration distribution programmes are being organised at many places in Delhi."

Free vaccination camps have been set up for citizens across India and financial assistance is being provided to citizens who have lost their jobs due to the Covid crisis and to disabled people," Youth Congress president Srinivas Bhat said.

Congress workers also distributed ration to women cab drivers and organised a free vaccination camp for sexworkers at GB Road in Delhi.

All India Congress Committee general secretary K C Venugopal said Rahul Gandhi provided "all possible help to the countrymen in such a dire situation" during the coronavirus pandemic.

"From time to time, by

alerting the Central government about their responsibility and duty, he showed the path of excellent and remarkable contribution in the public interest, which is a source of inspiration for all countrymen," he said.

The Congress' Delhi unit president Anil Kumar Chaudhary distributed food packets, clothes, masks, and medicine kits to students at Andh Mahavidyalaya in Panckhuan Road.

"Congress has always put service to the people as its main aim and under the dynamic leadership of Rahul Gandhi the party's focus during the COVID-19 pandemic has been serving the people," Chaudhary said.

BJP demands probe into 'DTC bus scam'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

The Delhi BJP workers, led by senior leader Vijay Goel, today staged a demonstration at ITO Chowk to demand a probe into the alleged scam relating to the purchase of 1000 low floor DTC buses by the Delhi government.

The Central Bureau of Investigation should initiate the investigation to probe the "scam to the tune of Rs 890 crore" allegedly perpetrated by the Delhi government, Goel said.

He alleged that a tender for 1000 low floor buses included three years warranty of the fleet, then a separate contract of Rs 3500 was awarded for maintenance of the fleet, which, he charged, smacked of corruption.

BJP legislator Om Prakash Sharma, former mayor Jai Prakash and

Nearly 3 lakh Covid jabs available for 18-44: Atishi

NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

With Delhi receiving fresh stock of 1,67,000 Covishield doses for people in the 18-44 age group, the total number of Covid vaccines available for the group has gone up to 2,95,000, senior AAP leader and MLA Atishi said on Saturday.

Presenting a daily vaccination bulletin, the MLA from Kalkaji said Delhi now has 2,58,000 doses of Covishield and 37,000 doses of Covaxin available for the 18-44 age group.

"We have seen that the speed of the vaccination drive goes up with the availability of vaccines for the 18-44 age group, and goes down as soon as they are on the verge of running out of stock. Here, we are happy to share that Delhi Friday received 1,67,000 Covishield doses for the age group," said Atishi.

Out-of-turn promotion for 68 Delhi cops

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

Delhi Police has awarded 'out-of-turn' promotion to 68 police personnel for their "exemplary work" while arresting most wanted criminals or for their "outstanding performance".

Of the 68 who were promoted, 46 are from the special cell, a unit that looks into cases related to terrorism and organised syndicates involved in drug peddling, trafficking of firearms, and large-scale cyber crimes.

Head constables Deepak Dahiya and Siddharth Chhillar have been promoted as ASI. Dahiya was a member of the team that arrested an accused Deep Sidhu in the Red Fort violence case.

Dahiya and Chhillar were part of a continuous 27-hour operation that helped to nab notorious cyber-criminals in October last year.

Delhi Police Commissioner Srivastava decided to give out-of-turn promotion to 68 such cops who have done "commendable work" during the last few years, the city police said.

JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

The Sunday Statesman

KOLKATA

GROOMS WANTED

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

NOTICE

My clients decided to purchase All That piece and parcel of land measuring 2 K 2 C 11 sqft. with II-storey bld. at KMC Premises No. 63, Rajendra Banerjee Rd., Ward 130 of K.M.C., P.S.: Parnasree, Kol-34 from its owners Tapan Chatterjee & ors. If any person, institution or body shall have any right, title and interest and/or any claim or demand over the said property or any objection to purchase the said property from the said owners please inform the undersigned within 15 days from the date hereof otherwise my clients shall purchase the said property from the said owners.

Bimal Ch. Lahiri
Advocate
Alipore Judges Court
Kolkata-700027

TENDERS

E-TENDERS

E-Tenders are invited against NIE No. 08/GI/BADP vide Memo No. 232/G-I dated: 18.06.2021. For more details please visit:

www.wbtenders.gov.in / Office Notice Board.

Executive Officer
Goalpokheri Panchayat
Samity
Uttar Dinajpur

AIR-SURCHARGE: Kathmandu - Re. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1
All other stations in India - Re. 1

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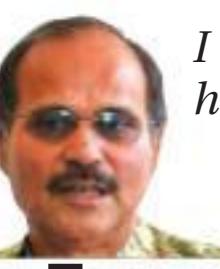
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I wonder why this TMC-run government is not taking up the issue of his removal with the President of India who appoints the governor.

CONGRESS WEST BENGAL PRESIDENT ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY

ON THE TRINAMUL CONGRESS GOVERNMENT'S TUSSLE WITH THE WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

The Sunday Statesman

NEW DELHI, 20 JUNE 2021

03

6 Delhi bravehearts' kins to get ₹1 crore ex gratia each

The Kejriwal govt stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the families of 6 IAF, Delhi Police and civil defence personnel who attained 'martyrdom' while serving the country, says Sisodia

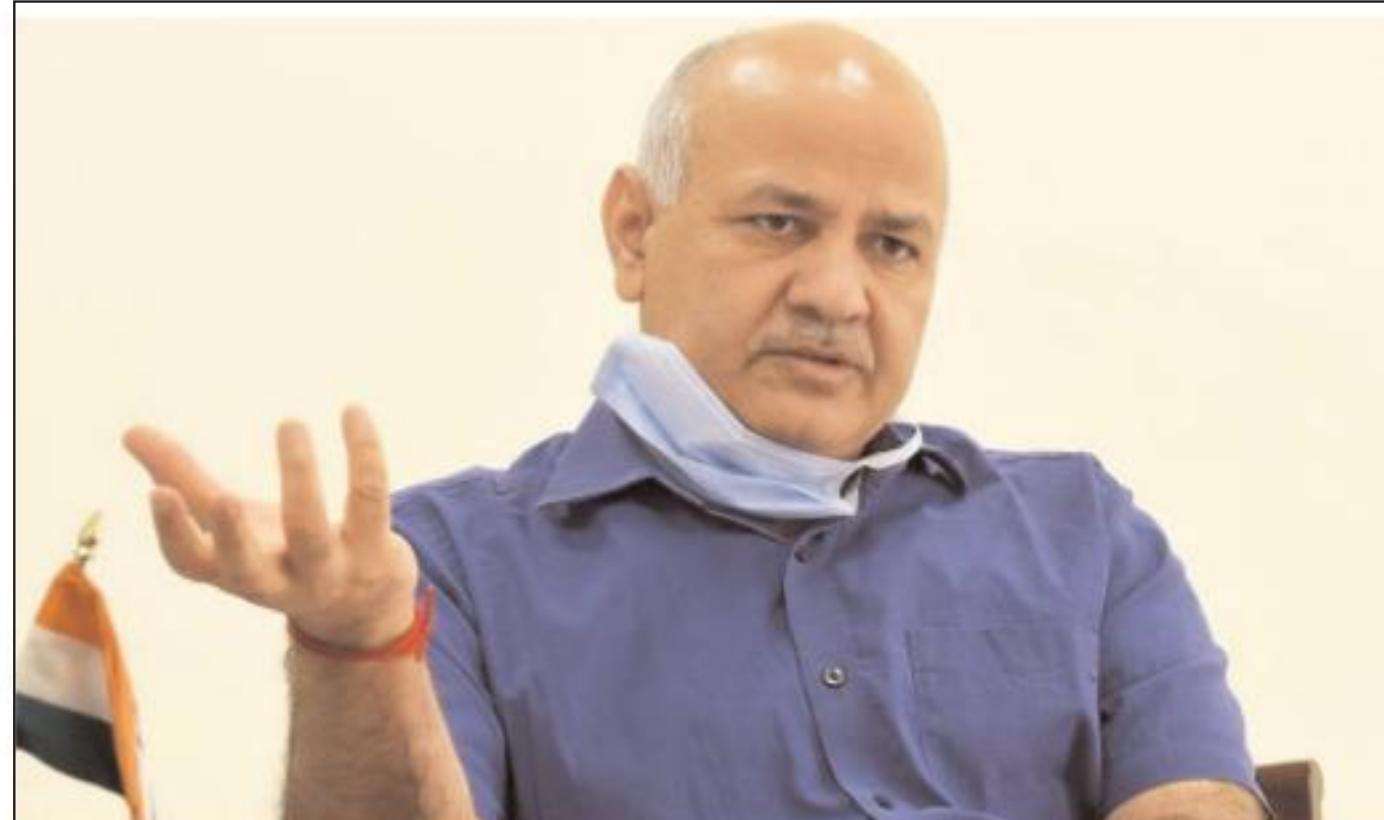
PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday said the families of six IAF, Delhi Police and civil defence personnel who died in the line of duty will get Rs 1 crore ex gratia each and asserted the city government stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the kin of these bravehearts.

Of the six men, three were from the Indian Air Force, two from the Delhi police and one from the city's Civil Defence wing, he said. Sisodia, while making the announcement during an online briefing, said the decision to honour these men and support their families was taken during a meeting on Saturday.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal later, in a tweet in Hindi, said he saluted these bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice while guarding the country against "external or internal threats". The Delhi government will give financial assistance of Rs 1 cr to each of the six families, he said, adding the country stands by them.

Kejriwal's deputy said the Aam Aadmi Party government stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the families of these bravehearts who attained 'martyr-



dom' while serving the country.

"Although the loss of a soldier is irreparable, the Kejriwal government launched a scheme to provide ex gratia to families of such personnel so that it could become a means for them to live with dignity," Sisodia said. From the Delhi Police, a senior officer and a constable are among the six men who died while performing their duty.

Sanket Kaushik was an Assistant Commissioner of Police in Delhi. He was checking vehicles at Rajokri Flyover on July 25, 2020, when a truck hit him leading to his death on September 15, 2016.

Rajesh Kumar from Safdarjung is a "martyr" who lost

and three daughters who now depend on her for sustenance. "And, so to honour his martyrdom and support his family to live a life of dignity we have announced ex gratia of Rs 1 crore to his family," Sisodia said.

Vikas Kumar, a Delhi Police constable, was on picket duty when the driver of a four-wheeler "knowingly increased the speed" and hit him when asked to stop the vehicle. He was injured in the incident and was shifted to AIIMS where he was declared dead on September 15, 2016.

Rajesh Kumar from Safdarjung is a "martyr" who lost

his life while serving the Indian Air Force". His aircraft took off from Jorhat in Assam and later it went missing. The wreckage was found in Arunachal Pradesh and Kumar was found dead on June 3, 2019.

He had married just three months ago. His family will be extended the assistance of Rs 1 cr, the deputy chief minister said in the briefing.

Flight Lieutenant Sunit Mohanty, from Dwarika in Delhi, was on the same flight as Rajesh Kumar. He also died in the plane crash on June 3, 2019. He was living with his family, including his aged father, mother and a younger sister, the government said. Meet Kumar, a squadron leader in the Indian Air Force died on July 18, 2018, after his MiG-21 crashed in an operational flying sortie in the Kangra hills of Himachal Pradesh.

"We cannot compensate for his family's loss but we can pay our respect for his martyrdom. So, we have announced ex gratia of Rs 1 crore to support his family as well," Sisodia said.

Pravesh Kumar, a Civil Defence personnel was on duty at Mangolpuri flyover on September 19, 2020, when a truck rammed into him and fled. His family will also receive the support of Rs 1 cr, the deputy chief minister added.



in the state, quash all illegal appointments made on compassionate grounds and also register cases against those responsible for the wrongdoing.

Majithia said Capt Amarinder had taken a holy oath to provide jobs to each and every household and even got forms filled by the youth in this regard.

"However jobs have only been given to 'corepati' Congressmen be it the family of former chief minister Beant Singh whose grandson was recruited as a DSP, wards of Congress MLAs Fatehjung Bajwa and Rakesh Pandey who have been appointed as inspector and naib tehsildar respectively and son-in-law of Cabinet minister Gurpreet Kangar who was given out of turn appointment as an Assistant ETO," the SAD leader said.

He said in contrast the government had refused to give government jobs as promised to kin of 2,000 farmer suicide victims,

500 farmers' agitation martyrs or even para Olympians. Even thousands of contractual employees are still awaiting regularization of their services as promised to them.

Speaking about the appointments of the wards of Congress MLAs, the SAD leaders said both candidates were not eligible for jobs under compassionate grounds.

He said both candidates were grandsons of Congress leaders and had been given jobs after 34 years which the Cabinet could not do.

He said similarly they were not qualified for the job on basis of financial need also. "Fatehjung Bajwa has filed an affidavit before the Election Commission pegging his worth at Rs 35 crore even though it's actually much more. Similarly Pandey is a six time legislator and earns lakhs of rupees in pension alone," Majithia said.

Ganga, Bhagirathi cross danger mark in U'khand

PTI
DEHRADUN, 19 JUNE

1.5 metres below the danger level in Karnaprayag, Chamoli District Disaster Management office said.

Landslides triggered by heavy rains in the district also blocked three national highways and 84 motor roads with mounds of rubble. Twenty-seven stranded people including women and children between Mona Cheda and Nalgaon in Chamoli district were rescued and brought to Narayanbagd late on Friday night.

The Ganga exceeded the danger level in both Haridwar and Rishikesh while Bhagirathi crossed the danger mark at Devprayag in Tehri district.

The Ganga in Haridwar was flowing at 294.1 metres, 0.10 metres above its danger mark, according to the data on the Central Water Commission's (CWC) website. The Ganga exceeded the danger level in Rishikesh and was flowing four centimetres above it, CWC Superintendent Engineer Rajesh Kumar said.

Triveni ghat which was evacuated on Friday is inundated, said.

The Bhagirathi at Devprayag in Tehri district was flowing at 465.0 metres, two metres above the danger level at 463.0 metres and showed a rising trend, the CWC website said. The residents of villages on the banks of the rivers are being moved to shelters run by the district administrations concerned and other safe locations, officials said.

Heavy rains have lashed various parts of Uttarakhand over the last three days with Chamoli receiving 142 mm of rainfall on Saturday followed by Karnaprayag with 136 mm, Sri Nagar in Pauri district 128 mm, Rudraprayag 103.8 mm, Joshimath 97.2 mm and Rishikesh 53 mm.

The Alaknanda river in Chamoli district was flowing two metres below the danger mark while Pindar river was flowing

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 19 JUNE

A day after the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) accused Punjab Chief Minister for giving jobs to wards of Congress legislators to save his chair, CM Captain Amarinder Singh on Saturday termed it a recognition of the sacrifices made by their grandfathers, who laid down their lives for the country.

Defending his government's decision to give jobs to sons of two Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), the Punjab CM said those who make a sacrifice for the nation can, and should, never be forgotten.

Their families deserve to be compensated for the loss, he added while interacting informally with reporters outside the residence of late Milkha Singh where he had gone to pay his last respects to the legendary athlete.

Taking a dig at the SAD

and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which have criticised the government's move, the CM said if these parties provide names of any youth whose father or grandfathers have made similar

sacrifices for the nation, they will also be provided jobs in the state government.

In fact, remarked Captain Amarinder, he had tried to find such persons in these parties but could

find none.

The CM was responding to a question on the decision to give government jobs to Arjun Partap Singh Bajwa, son of Qadiani MLA Fateh Jung Singh Bajwa, as inspector (Group B) in Punjab Police, and Bhisham Pandey, son of Ludhiana MLA Rakesh Pandey, as Naib Tehsildar. The names of Arjun Bajwa and Bhisham Pandey were cleared by the state Cabinet yesterday.

Asserting that he would give jobs to anyone coming from a family that had made similar sacrifices, Amarinder pointed out that Punjab had been through tough times in the dark days of terrorism, when 35,000 innocent lives had been lost to senseless violence.

As many as 1,700 police personnel had also died, he recalled, adding that it was not sufficient to pay tributes to these people at their memorials, and the state needed to do something

more to compensate their families.

"We cannot allow their sacrifices to go waste," said the CM, adding that Punjab salutes those who have shed blood for the country, and his government will continue to recognise their contribution to the state's peace and harmony.

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Friday said it was shocking that while the poor and meritorious were awaiting jobs to the Congress government was giving jobs to Congressmen only.

"Earlier rules were given the go by to appoint former CM Beant Singh's grandson as a DSP on fake compassionate grounds. Now, again false compassionate grounds have been created to give jobs to the sons of Congress legislators Bajwa and Pandey who have been appointed to the posts of Inspector and Naib Tehsildar respectively," Badal said.

U'khand SIT to probe fake Covid tests during Kumbh Mela



PTI
DEHRADUN, 19 JUNE

The Uttarakhand Police has set up a special investigation team to probe allegations that fake Covid tests were conducted during the Hardwar Kumbh Mela.

One of the world's largest religious gatherings, the Kumbh was held in the state from April 1 to 30, and the notified area for the congregation covered various places in Haridwar, Dehradun and Tehri districts.

The special investigation team (SIT) was constituted by Haridwar Senior Superintendent of Police Senthil Avoodai Krishna Raj S on Friday, a day after a case was registered against Max Corporate Service and private laboratories for allegedly conducting the fake Covid tests during the Kumbh. The SIT has been constituted for a speedy probe, Krishna Raj said.

Max Corporate Service and the two other labs have been booked under the Epidemic Act, the Disaster Management Act besides sections 120B (criminal conspiracy to commit an offence punishable) and 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code.

Pb CM defends govt jobs forwards of 2 Cong MLAs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 19 JUNE



A day after the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) accused Punjab Chief Minister for giving jobs to wards of Congress legislators to save his chair, CM Captain Amarinder Singh on Saturday termed it a recognition of the sacrifices made by their grandfathers, who laid down their lives for the country.

Defending his government's decision to give jobs to sons of two Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), the Punjab CM said those who make a sacrifice for the nation can, and should, never be forgotten.

Their families deserve to be compensated for the loss, he added while interacting informally with reporters outside the residence of late Milkha Singh where he had gone to pay his last respects to the legendary athlete.

Taking a dig at the SAD

and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which have criticised the government's move, the CM said if these parties provide names of any youth whose father or grandfathers have made similar

sacrifices for the nation, they will also be provided jobs in the state government.

In fact, remarked Captain Amarinder, he had tried to find such persons in these parties but could

find none.

The CM was responding to a question on the decision to give government jobs to Arjun Partap Singh Bajwa, son of Qadiani MLA Fateh Jung Singh Bajwa, as inspector (Group B) in Punjab Police, and Bhisham Pandey, son of Ludhiana MLA Rakesh Pandey, as Naib Tehsildar. The names of Arjun Bajwa and Bhisham Pandey were cleared by the state Cabinet yesterday.

Asserting that he would give jobs to anyone coming from a family that had made similar sacrifices, Amarinder pointed out that Punjab had been through tough times in the dark days of terrorism, when 35,000 innocent lives had been lost to senseless violence.

As many as 1,700 police personnel had also died, he recalled, adding that it was not sufficient to pay tributes to these people at their memorials, and the state needed to do something

more to compensate their families.

"We cannot allow their sacrifices to go waste," said the CM, adding that Punjab salutes those who have shed blood for the country, and his government will continue to recognise their contribution to the state's peace and harmony.

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Friday said it was shocking that while the poor and meritorious were awaiting jobs to the Congress government was giving jobs to Congressmen only.

"Earlier rules were given the go by to appoint former CM Beant Singh's grandson as a DSP on fake compassionate grounds. Now, again false compassionate grounds have been created to give jobs to the sons of Congress legislators Bajwa and Pandey who have been appointed to the posts of Inspector and Naib Tehsildar respectively," Badal said.

R-Day violence: Court takes cognisance of charge sheet against Deep, others

PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE



A Delhi court on Saturday took cognisance of the supplementary charge sheet filed against actor-activist Deep Singh and others in the Republic Day violence case.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Gajendra Singh Nagar has summoned all the accused through video conferencing on June 29.

Production warrants have been issued against Maninder Singh and Khempreet

charge sheet relating to various sections of Indian Penal Code, except those sections for which prosecution sanction is still awaited.

Sanction under the Epidemic Diseases Act, the Disaster Management Act and Arms Act is still awaited from concerned authorities.

On January 26, protesting farmers clashed with police during the tractor rally against three farm laws and stormed into the Red Fort injuring scores of policemen.

The police had filed a sup-

plementary charge sheet on June 17. The investigating officer pointed out names of the witnesses who were severely injured or from whom weapon was snatched, in the final report.

The Delhi Police Crime Branch, which is tasked with the investigation, had filed a 3,224 page-long first charge sheet against Sidhu and 15 others on May 17, nearly four months after the violence.

Sidhu, who was accused of being the key conspirator of the violence, was arrested on

February 9. The police had also accused him of fuelling the chaos at the Red fort.

He is facing charges of rioting, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy, dacoity, culpable homicide among the final report.

The Delhi Police Crime Branch, which is tasked with the investigation, had filed a 3,224 page-long first charge sheet against Sidhu and 15 others on May 17, nearly four months after the violence.

Besides Sidhu, the police have also mentioned the name of Iqbal Singh, who was doing a Facebook Live session in which he allegedly instigated the protesters.

Railways ferried 32.56L passengers from Bihar, UP, other states in last 7 days

PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

During the past seven days, the railways ferried 32.56 lakh passengers from states like Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha and Jharkhand, the national transporter said on Saturday, indicating the return of migrant workers to their workplaces after cities gradually unlocked.

In a statement, the railways said that these passengers travelled by long distance mail express trains, with average occupancy being 110.2 per cent, from heavy labour source states to Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Surat, Ahmedabad and Chennai areas between June 11-17.

railways said.

As on June 18, 983 mail/express and holiday specials (56 per cent of the pre-Covid level) are being operated by the Indian Railways.

In addition, about 1,309 summer specials have also been operated to facilitate the movement of people wanting to return to the place of work. These summer specials provide connectivity primarily from states like Bihar, UP, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam to major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune, Bengaluru and others.

For the next 10 days, from June 19-28, approximately 29.15 lakh passengers including migrant workers and other



Assam is to gradually implement two-child norm for availing benefits under some schemes

ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER HIMANTA BISWA SARMA
AT A PRESS CONFERENCE**India**

Medics wait in a queue to receive vaccine dose during a vaccination drive at Shadan Institute of Medical Sciences, near Hyderabad on Saturday.

PTI

Assam Jal Jeevan mission: With an aim to fulfill the dream of providing clean tap water to every household, the Centre allocated rupees 5,601.16 crore grant to Assam under the national Jal Jeevan mission, a hopping increase from rupees 1,608.51 crore in 2020-21. The Jal Shakti ministry has already released rupees 700 crores as first tranche. SNS

Narco-terror module: The police have busted a narco-terror module in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district and arrested 10 people with a huge quantity of heroin, worth Rs 45 crore, along with arms and ammunition, officials said.

PTI

SP declares BSP leader's son as its candidate: The Samajwadi Party on Saturday declared Anand Chaudhary, the son of a BSP leader Ambika Chaudhary as its candidate for the post of Ballia zila panchayat chairman, triggering a sharp reaction from the BSP. He is a zila panchayat member from ward number 45 of Ballia.

PTI

Prasada meets Yogi: Former union minister Jitin Prasada, who recently switched from the Congress to the BJP, on Saturday met Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow and said they discussed issues related to strengthening the organisation. PTI

Codha passes away: Rajasthani governor Kalraj Mishra and CM Ashok Gehlot have condoled the demise of senior journalist Rajendra Godha who passed away on Saturday. Godha, the editor of Hindi newspaper *Samachar Jagat*, was hospitalised for the last several days.

PTI

Kerala Tourism: The Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) is launching a facility that serves travellers food inside their vehicles, thus allaying health risks while eating in public spaces amid Covid. PTI

'Will continue fight till Lakshadweep gets justice'

PTI

TPURAM, 19 JUNE

Filmmaker Ayesha Sulthana, who was booked for sedition in Lakshadweep, on Saturday said she has not done anything against the country so far and would continue her fight till the islanders get justice. She was talking to the media at the airport in Kochi before leaving to the archipelago to appear before the Kavaratti police for questioning on Sunday in connection with the case.

She said her advocate was also accompanying her and she would cooperate with the police. "I believe that I will get justice as I have not done anything wrong. My words were wrongly interpreted and I have already mentioned everything in detail in my recent Facebook post," Sulthana said. On her controversial usage of 'biological weapon' during a television discussion, she said all these controversies had happened based on that particular word.

Telangana lifts lockdown

Decision was taken in view of the loss of livelihood of a large number of people

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 19 JUNE

Schools and other educational institutions are all set to reopen on 1 July in Telangana with students allowed to attend classes physically following the decision of the state Cabinet to lift the lockdown and all restrictions at one go after the number of positive cases of Covid declined in the state.

The Cabinet has examined the reports submitted by the medical and health department officials that Covid cases and numbers and the positive cases have drastically come down and Covid is now under control in the state. Hence the Cabinet has arrived at the decision to lift the lock down," read a statement issued by the chief minister's

The Cabinet also decided in favour of lifting the restrictions in view of Covid cases going down in neighbouring states as well

office. The decision was taken in view of the loss of livelihood of a large number of people. The Cabinet also decided in favour of lifting the restrictions in view of Covid-19 cases going down in neighbouring states as well.

The statement from the chief minister's office also claimed that the state had controlled the second wave of Covid fairly quickly compared to other states.

"The Cabinet has instructed the education department to reopen all categories of educational institutions in

the state from 1 July with full preparedness and students allowed to attend the classes physically," read the statement.

The education department has been directed to prepare instructions and guidelines on compulsory attendance of the students, online classes and other related issues and release the same.

Most of the schools and junior colleges in the state were slated to reopen on 16 June but the education department had extended the summer vacation till 20 June in view of the meeting of the state Cabinet which was expected to review about continuing the lock down.

Schools and other educational institutions had shut down at the end of February this year after a large number of students got afflicted, partic-

ularly in residential schools after reopening from 1 February. The Telangana government had imposed the statewide lockdown from 12 May which was extended twice but it had gradually increased the hours of relaxation of curfew.

During the past ten days the lockdown was restricted between 6pm and 6am. However, from the beginning of the second wave the state government had not been very keen on either imposing night curfew or a lockdown but the High Court had kept coming down heavily on the government for doing nothing to control the spread of Covid in the state.

The state Cabinet also decided to set up three more super speciality hospitals in the greater Hyderabad area in view of the third wave of Covid.

HEALTH IS WEALTH



Women perform yoga on a beach ahead of International Yoga Day in Surat on Saturday.

IANS

Mekedatu: Opp flays BSY, asks TN govt to safeguard farmers' interest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 19 JUNE

The Opposition AIADMK on Saturday lashed out at the "unilateral" decision of Karnataka government to proceed with the Mekedatu dam project across river Cauvery and urged the Tamil Nadu government not to compromise a wee bit on the state's rights over the issue.

Leader of Opposition and AIADMK Co-coordinator K Palaniswami slammed Karnataka chief minister B S Yediyurappa for saying his state will go ahead with the project after obtaining necessary clearance from the Centre.

"The unilateral announcement of Karnataka chief minister BSY Yediyurappa to go ahead with the construction of Mekedatu dam, especially when a contempt of court case is pending in the Supreme Court, is highly condemnable," he said.

During his tenure as chief minister he had ensured the state's rights on the issue by prevailing upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to halt the construction of the dam and said the delta districts in Tamil

Nadu would become a desert if the dam was built.

He had also initiated a contempt case in the supreme court on the matter, Palaniswami said.

He further said the Cauvery river meets the drinking and agricultural needs of several districts in Tamil Nadu.

People are well aware that late Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's government won many legal battles on this front, he said and recalled the then ruling AIADMK's initiative in ensuring the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery Water Regulatory Commission were set up.

The final order of the Cauvery Tribunal was published in the Central Gazette in 2013, after Jayalalithaa exerted pressure on the union government, Palaniswami said and added that he had requested the PM that environment clearance for Mekedatu dam project should not be granted.

The Ministry of Water Resources should direct the union environment and climate change ministry to reject the project outright, he had urged, Palaniswami added.

transport fleet flew more than 3800 hours within two months in a huge effort across the globe and domestically to transport critical oxygen tankers, and all related medical equipment and supplies," he said. He also told the young IAF personnel to bear in mind that as future leaders, they would stand shoulder to shoulder with their 'comrades' in olive greens (Army) and whites (Indian Navy) and prosecute integrated operations.

Bhaduria said he has always believed that the new generation of officers was technologically adept and well versed with exploiting the digital space. He said the induction of 36 Rafale aircraft into the Indian Air Force would take place by 2022. The IAF is absolutely on target with respect to the Rafale induction plan, he said while responding to a reporters' query on timeline for receiving all the 36 fighter jets from France.



He said that while maintaining operational readiness, the IAF has also been proactively assisting in the national fight against Covid. Proactive vaccination and strict COVID discipline within the IAF enabled the force to undertake all pandemic-related tasks on a war-footing.

'IAF undergoing monumental transformation'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

IAF chief, Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria today declared that his force was undergoing a 'monumental transformation' primarily because of the unprecedented and rapidly evolving security challenges, coupled with a rising geo-political uncertainty in India's neighbourhood and beyond.

"Rapid infusion of niche technology and combat power in every facet of our operations has never been as intense as it is now," he said addressing the Combined Graduation Parade at the Air Force Academy at Dundigal. ACM Bhaduria noted that the last few decades have clearly established the critical role of air power in achieving victory in any conflict. "It is in this backdrop that IAF's on-going capability enhancement assumes tremendous significance," he added.

He said that while maintaining operational readiness, the IAF has also been proactively assisting in the national fight against Covid. Proactive vaccination and strict COVID discipline within the IAF enabled the force to undertake all pandemic-related tasks on a war-footing.

"IAF's heavy lift capability was put into action for airlift of crucial COVID related equipment; wherein our

CENTRAL RAILWAY VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS E-TENDER NOTICE				
OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO. ORMWNGP-18-2021 OF 17.06.2021				
Sr. No.	Name of Work: A)	Elimination of LC No. 276/B at Railway Km. 966-24-26 construction of RCC Box 5.5 x 4.6m by Pushing / Sliding method on AMLA-NAGPUR section.	Elimination of LC No. 278/C at Railway Km. 967-40/08 construction of RCC Box 5.5 x 4.6m by Pushing / Sliding method on AMLA-NAGPUR section.	Elimination of LC No. 278/B at Railway Km. 1009-15-17 construction of RCC Box 5.5 x 4.6m by Pushing / Sliding method on AMLA-NAGPUR section. (i) Approximate cost: ₹ 11,32,05,004.24. Date & Time of closing of tender: 08.07.2021 at 15:00 Hrs. Complete details and instructions for e-tendering and on line participation for the above work is available on Railways website www.ireps.gov.in.
1	Receipt of application for tender forms	29-06-2021	TRR on girder bridges 1125 DN and other allied works in the section of ADEN/BE	Replacement of channel sleepers with H-beam sleeper on bridge No. 974 UP under jurisdiction of ADEN/SPN (394 H beam sleepers)
2	Issue of Tender Forms	30-06-2021	Renewal by Track Relaying Train (TRT) and other allied works in the section of SrDEN-III/MB	TRR and other allied works in the section of ADEN/SPN
3	Receipt of tenders	01-07-2021	Complete Track Renewal by Track Relaying Train (TRT) and other allied works in the section of SrDEN-III/MB	15-07-2021 16:00
4	Opening of Tenders	01-07-2021	1,13,82,920.87	15-07-2021 16:00

RailMadad Helpline 139

Kerala Cong chief denies Vijayan's claim of kidnap plot

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 19 JUNE

At the press conference, Vijayan unleashed a scathing attack on Sudhakaran and levelled a serious allegation that the Congress leader had plotted to kidnap his son and daughter while they were school students in Kannur.

reacts?" Sudhakaran asked.

"This is not appropriate for the dignity of the chief minister post. The chief minister said I was involved in foreign currency transactions. If so, then why has he not initiated a probe? The smuggling was carried out by the chief minister's Office. Swapna, the prime accused in the gold smuggling case, was the right hand of the CM," said Sudhakaran.

Sudhakaran on Saturday denied chief minister Vijayan's allegation of having plotted to kidnap his two children decades ago and asked why a police complaint had not been registered by him then. "Yesterday, we saw the real Vijayan who came out of the cover of a PR agency. He spoke in the language of a political criminal. I can also answer in that language but I won't do so," Sudhakaran said.

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Look at the irony: A hospital in Agra carried out a 'mock drill' by cutting off the oxygen supply of patients and the BJP govt conducted a mock drill of inquiry by giving a clean chit

CONGRESS LEADER PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA

SLAMMING THE CENTRE FOR DASHING THE EXPECTATIONS OF JUSTICE BY IGNORING THE PLEAS OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS

The Sunday Statesman

NEW DELHI, 20 JUNE 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Amidst rain in Kolkata on Saturday. BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

Hooghly DM visits flood-hit areas: Hooghly district magistrate Deepak Priya P. on Saturday visited the flood affected areas of Khanakul-1, Arambagh blocks and municipal areas in Arambagh subdivision on Friday to assess the situation and the necessary steps taken for the flood victims. The district magistrate said the Darkeswar river is overflowing its bank inundating the low-lying areas. However the embankment area is safe. More than 350 villagers have been evacuated from the low-lying areas to the nearby school buildings.

Villager shot dead: A man in Singur was shot dead by snatchers on Friday evening. Manoj Mondal, 48, a resident of Singherberi village was returning home in his motor van when some miscreants who were on a motorbike stopped him and tried to snatch away his belongings. Manoj tried to resist but the snatchers shot him dead.

105-yr-old gets Covid jab

HOOGLY, 19 JUNE

Hemendranath Mukherjee, 105, got vaccinated during the ongoing Duware Vaccine programme at Chandannagar.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee initiated the programme for the senior citizens. Chandannagar MLA and state minister Indranil Sen took the initiative to successfully implement the vaccination programme in Chandannagar with the participation of Chandannagar Corporation. The team reached the doorsteps of the senior citizens even after vaccination was conducted by the health workers.

Mukherjee, a resident of 24 number ward of Chandannagar Corporation, received the vaccination most willingly setting an example and encouraging people of all ages to come forward to get themselves vaccinated.

Mukherjee was specially greeted and felicitated for his awarness on the vaccination drive against the spread of Covid and making the Duware Vaccine programme a success. SNS

High Court allows bail for Debjani Mukherjee

Saradha scam accused won't be freed yet as there are other cases against her

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 JUNE

A Division Bench of acting Chief Justice Calcutta High Court, Rajesh Bindal and Justice Arifajit Banerjee of this court today granted the bail plea of Debjani Mukherjee, an accused in the Saradha chit fund scam. But she will not step out of jail owing to cases against her in other states.

Debjani Mukherjee was arrested on 22 April, 2013. She has been in custody ever since.

The court directed that the Mukherjee should be released on bail on furnishing a bond of Rs.2 lakhs with two sureties of Rs.1 lakh each.

One of these sureties must be local, to the satisfaction of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Kolkata, the court said.

Mukherjee's release is subject to the condition that after release, she shall not leave the jurisdiction of the police sta-



The court said the CBI has not been able to satisfy it as to why further custodial detention of Mukherjee is necessary at a time when there's uncertainty when the trial in the case will start

tion within the territorial limit of which her residence is situated except for the purpose of attending court proceedings.

She shall also meet the investigating officer of the case once every week.

The Division Bench clarified that the CBI shall be at liberty to summon Mukherjee to its office for the purpose of further investigation and interrogation, if so required.

Moreover, before her release the petitioner shall cause her passport to be deposited with the court concerned.

The petitioner shall not make any attempt to contact

any of the prosecution witnesses and shall not tamper with evidence in any manner whatsoever. In case of breach of any of the conditions of bail mentioned in this order, the bail shall be liable to be cancelled by the Court below without reference to this High Court, the Bench said.

The Division Bench pointed out that it is not in dispute that the charge-sheet was filed on 22 October, 2014. It follows that the investigation against the accused persons including the petitioner is complete and CBI has not been able to satisfy the court

as to why further custodial detention of the petitioner is necessary.

Trial has not started and nobody can say with any certainty when trial will start, the court observed.

It does not appear that the trial will conclude within a measurable distance of time and it will indeed be a travesty of justice to keep the petitioner confined in jail any further if after the trial the petitioner is ultimately found to be innocent, it was observed. It is also not the case of the CBI that the petitioner did not co-operate in the process of investigation and there is no allegation that she is likely to tamper with evidence, it was observed.

Bail is still the rule and jail is the exception during or before trial, it was observed.

Personal liberty is sacrosanct, it was observed. A person, even an accused, cannot be kept incarcerated except for compelling reasons, it was pointed out.

No decision yet on Cong-Left alliance in civic polls: Adhir

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 JUNE

A narrow and partisan brand of politics is being followed in raising the demand for creation of a separate state in north Bengal, the PCC chief said, adding that the issue threatens the entire state

president also said not much should be read into his meeting Governor Jagdeep Dhankar recently and wondered why the Trinamul Congress was not approaching the President of India for Dhankar's removal instead of only issuing press statements against him.

He said this when asked to comment on the Governor meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, NHRC chief and Union Coal minister during his Delhi visit and the Trinamul Congress attacking him over his trip to the national capital to flag the issue of post-poll violence in Bengal, he said.

Many Muslims had participated in "strategic voting" to keep BJP out of power in the state, the PCC chief said. The mindset of the Muslims had been triggered by almost back-to-back visits by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister, Amit Shah both of whom had spoken of introducing NRC in the state, he said.

A narrow and partisan brand of politics is being followed in raising the demand for creation of a separate state in north Bengal, the PCC chief said. This issue threatens the entire state and political parties should sink their differences and combat this issue together, he said.

Criticism of the state's law and order situation post election have not brightened the image of the state government, Chowdhury said.

The Congress West Bengal

is also Congress leader in Lok Sabha, added the state government should ensure there is no violence after the state polls are over and none should be attacked in vengeance.

Poll debacle: CPM begins soul search

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 19 JUNE

In a bid to find out the causes behind its complete wipeout in 2021 Assembly polls, the CPI-M state committee is conducting a two-day meeting with all its district-level committees, hoping to find out the root cause behind what led the people of Bengal to totally reject a party that ruled the state for 35 years.

The Left-Front that led an alliance with Congress and the

Indian Secular Front (ISF) in 2021 state polls, barely knew that it would face the worst poll debacle where vote results indicated that the alliance wasn't even in the fray. The votes were apparently divided between the Trinamul Congress and the BJP.

The CPI-M state committee is hence conducting a two-day meeting, which began today, that will be monitored by its senior leaders such as Sitaram Yechury and Prakash Karat from New Delhi.

Party sources claimed that the leadership felt that its district level committees in Bengal need to be included in the meeting as the party had its stronghold mainly in the districts of Bengal than in Kolkata.

A majority of the Assembly seats in the district where the Left has most often remained undefeated, this time slipped out of its hand and went to the Trinamul Congress. The state committee feels that its district leaders need to deliberate on what possibly went

Legislator drives Toto to reach out to the people



TIRTHANKAR MITRA
KOLKATA, 19 JUNE

As doors and windows opened a bit to have a look at what is the source of noise at the doorstep, the people were at a loss for words. It is their very own legislator, Manoranjan Byapari at the helm of a Toto who has come amidst driving rain to know how those who voted for and against him are coping with the inclement weather.

There is not a whit of showmanship in Byapari's act.

Dropping in at the people's door step is a part of the election promises of this Trinamul Congress MLA from Balagarh.

Byapari had promised respect for his fellow beings together with food, clothes and a roof above their heads; none of which he thinks is a tall order. Small wonder, he does not consider travelling in the rain to be an uphill task.

When he drove to the office of the sub-divisional officer to submit his election

nomination on a cycle rickshaw, Byapari sent a message loud and clear. Notwithstanding being a bestselling author and chairman, Dalit Sahitya Academy he represented the marginal men.

Buying the Toto with resources from party activists and the common people, he visits the people come rain or shine. It is a routine from which Byapari does not deviate.

His visits are a pleasant surprise to the people of Balagarh as Byapari continues with his lonely trek down rural roads skirting ponds.

At a time when most prefer to be indoors as skies have opened up, lightning flash and thunder booms, his voters did not reckon their legislator paying them a call.

But Byapari is an exception. Refugee from erstwhile East Pakistan, taking up washing dishes to make a living and then drifting to radical Left politics which earned him a prison term, he is merely performing an article of faith - serving the people.

**BISWABRATA GOSWAMI
KRISHNAGAR, 19 JUNE**

BJP leader and Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday announced that he will file a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the High Court regarding the false cases slapped against his party members across the state by the ruling party with an appeal to grant permission to the CBI for investigating all such cases.

Adhikari said, "After talking with party leaders, I have taken a decision to file a PIL in the High Court against SPs and ICs who have framed our party workers in false cases across the state soon after the Assembly elections results were announced on 2 May. Our party leaders are collecting certified copies of all the cases framed against our workers.

For Terms & Condition, Eligibility, Qualification, Application Form, Remuneration kindly see our website www.echs.gov.in. For details please contact Stn HQ (ECHS) Gangtok at tele No 03592-232363/8170019327/8670808091 E Mail on echsgangtok@gmail.com Last date of receipt of application is 20 Jul 21. Application is to be send by hand/registered post at the following address: - OIC ECHS Cell, Station Headquarter- Gangtok, P.O - Tadong, Gangtok - 737102. Apart from Hard copy a soft copy of application can also be emailed to echsgangtok@gmail.com Interview will be conducted on 23 Jul 21 (0900 Hrs) candidates will bring original certificate and degree along with photocopy of testimonials/experience certificate as applicable and one PP size photograph at the time of interview.

EX SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTION HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS) EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

ECHS invites application to engage the under mentioned staff on contractual basis in ECHS Polyclinic Gangtok:- **Medical Officer - 01, Dental Officer - 01, Pharmacist - 01, Nursing Asst - 01, Lab Tech - 01, Female Attendant - 01, Peon 01, Safaiwala - 01.**
For Terms & Condition, Eligibility, Qualification, Application Form, Remuneration kindly see our website www.echs.gov.in. For details please contact Stn HQ (ECHS) Gangtok at tele No 03592-232363/8170019327/8670808091 E Mail on echsgangtok@gmail.com Last date of receipt of application is 20 Jul 21. Application is to be send by hand/registered post at the following address: - OIC ECHS Cell, Station Headquarter- Gangtok, P.O - Tadong, Gangtok - 737102. Apart from Hard copy a soft copy of application can also be emailed to echsgangtok@gmail.com Interview will be conducted on 23 Jul 21 (0900 Hrs) candidates will bring original certificate and degree along with photocopy of testimonials/experience certificate as applicable and one PP size photograph at the time of interview.

MEDICAL OFFICER: Minimum Qualification: MBBS: Min 03 Years experience after internship. **DENTAL OFFICER:** Minimum Qualification: BDS: Min 03 Years experience. **PHARMACIST:** Pharmacy or 10 + 2 with Science stream physics, chemistry, Biology and Diploma in Pharmacy and Registered as Pharmacist under the Pharmacy Act 1948. Min 03 years of experience. **NURSING ASST:** Minimum Qualification: Diploma in Nursing: Min 05 Years of experience. **LAB TECH:** Minimum Qualification: B.Sc or (10 + 2) with science and Diploma in Medical Lab Tech. min 03 Years of experience. **FEMALE ATTENDANT:** Literate, min 05 Years of experience. **PEON:** Class 8th GD Grade (Armed force) Min 05 years of service. **SAFAIWALA:** Literate Min 05 years of experience.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Chandni, D/o: Hari Om, R/o: Jhuggi Khariya Mohalla, Railway Station, Subzi Mandi, Delhi has been missing since 23.05.2021 from the area of PS Subzi Mandi, Delhi. In this regard FIR No. 313/21, Dated 27.05.2021 U/S 363 IPC has been lodged at Police Station Subzi Mandi, Delhi.

The description of missing girl is as under:

Name: Chandni, **Age:** 14 Years, **Height:** 4 Feet, **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Medium, **ID Mark:** 'H' mark on right hand, **Wearing:** White & Blue Colour Top and Blue Jeans.

If anyone has any information about this missing girl please inform P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, **Email:** cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph: 011-24368638/24368641, **Fax:** 011-24368639
SHO
Police Station, Subzi Mandi, Delhi
DP: 1234/N/2021
Ph: 011-23823161, 8750870126

SPECIAL TRAIN

For the convenience of passengers Railways have decided to run the following Special Train as per details given below:-

04011/04012 Delhi Jn. - Hoshiarpur - Delhi Jn. Special Train (Daily)

Train No. 04011	STATIONS	Train No. 04012	
Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.
--	17:25	Delhi Jn.	07:35
02:10	--	Hoshiarpur	--

Days of Run: 04011 Ex Delhi Jn. (Daily) from 22.06.2021 and 04012 Ex Hoshiarpur (Daily) from 21.06.2021

Accommodation: AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper and Reserved Second Seating.

Stoppages: Panipat Jn., Karnal, Ambala Cant. Jn., Chandigarh Jn., Ludhiana Jn., Phagwara Jn., Jalandhar City, Jalandhar Cant. and Khurdpur stations

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

For any kind of Information such as detailed Time-Table and Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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Atmanirbhar USA

India is not the only major country convulsed by the Covid-19 pandemic that is looking to end one-country dependence for medicines, both generic and specialised critical care drugs. With close to 600,000 fatalities and the loss of millions of jobs, the USA is facing an even greater requirement to do something about the fact that most pharmaceuticals and protective personal equipment are manufactured outside the country. American drug companies have outsourced manufacturing to foreign locations including China and India with the latter, in turn, heavily dependent on the former for the raw materials required to mass-produce medicines, vaccines and APIs. A 2019 US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) analysis iterated three factors that have contributed to this state of affairs: Lack of incentives to produce less profitable drugs; the market not rewarding the manufacturer for top-grade quality management systems; and the logistical and regulatory challenges that make it difficult to recover after a disruption. The solution the US establishment is leaning towards seems to have taken a leaf directly out of India's atmanirbhar (self-reliance) push.

The first of Washington's policy prescriptions to meet these challenges is to highlight the domestic risks created by single-country dependence in a world of geopolitical uncertainties. Reliance, in particular, on countries such as China with which America has an adversarial relationship complicated by the trade war, national security concerns, and differing foreign policy objectives is increasingly being seen as unviable, especially because America's differences with China could lead the latter at any point to redirect drug and PPE manufacturing to domestic needs at the cost of foreign ones or, indeed, use its control of drug production to reward allies and punish adversaries. There is also consensus in the US policy establishment that it makes sense, against this backdrop, to develop domestic drug manufacturing capabilities for essential medicines which would insulate the USA from international disruptions. Legislation designed to encourage American drug manufacturing is pending before Congress. The government has had a "buy American" policy in place for a while; now, President Joe Biden has signed an executive order that clarifies the definition and puts stronger regulatory protections in place to make sure the policy is implemented, and American-made products include materials with at least 55 per cent domestic content. At the same time, domain specialists are urging the US government to define the market to include friendly nations as it would be too costly to rely solely on US-based manufacturing facilities. Avoiding guaranteed contracts to a handful of firms is a priority as the production of essential medicines requires a manufacturing policy that is pro-competition. Experts say federal funds in the USA need to be spread around to incentivise more companies and this financial support could include tax credits, loans, infrastructure investment, and direct support for production facilities. Last but not least, a faster drug approval process without compromising the safety of patients is an overdue policy pivot.

Urban regression

Kolkata and different parts of Bengal had a foretaste of what to expect in the weeks ahead when the city was thrown out of joint by overnight rain, as torrential as it was almost incessant. The extensive waterlogging worsened the predicament of the people, their patience sorely tried for more than a month by the suspension of public transport, notably buses, the Metro and the local trains that link the city to the peripheral regions. Even vehicular traffic on the roads was brought to a halt by the swirling and filthy water. The flooding of low-lying areas and throughfares have over time become part of the city's furniture; more to the point must be the fact that the underground sewerage network, believed to have been laid in the 19th century, can scarcely bear the pressure of the city's development of under-development for much longer. The waterlogging from South to North Kolkata via the arterial stretch of Chittaranjan Avenue is testament to negligent nonchalance. The situation was worsened by the high tide in the Hooghly, once again an annual phenomenon. In the net, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission has regrettably been reduced to urban regression. The outlook is bleak indeed and fears of imminent floods in South Bengal are not wholly unfounded with water levels increasing in no fewer than six rivers, notably Ajoy in Birbhum, Darakeswar, Brahmani, Shilabati, Subarnarekha and Kangsabati. This is not to forget the collapse of embankments.

Minister Firdhad Hakim, who helms the Kolkata Municipal Corporation's Board of Administrators, has attributed the annual urban scourge to what he calls "unfinished drainage projects". His prognosis has served to underlined the collective failure. It devolves on the municipal authorities, therefore, to answer the query of the people ~ resonant in the echo chambers of the KMC headquarters on SN Banerjee Road ~ as to why drainage projects are made to languish in an "unfinished" state. Mr Hakim's ultimatum to the agencies concerned to "complete all work by September" ~ failing which their contracts will be terminated ~ comes terribly late in the day. While the elections, the lockdown and the preoccupation with matters political may explain some of the tardiness, the admonition ought to have been issued weeks, if not months ago. The underground drainage, especially in the vulnerable low-lying areas of Kolkata, ought to have been improved during the dry seasons of winter and summer. The rains will continue for at least another three months. It has been officially acknowledged that the volume of rainfall surpassed the capacity to drain out water. The city's underground drainage network is designed to prevent waterlogging only if it rains up to 6 mm an hour.

Rethink Development

Some policy changes may be required to rejuvenate the economy, the first being to remove the focus from big business and promote small enterprises, primarily, by reducing their burden of taxation. As of now, the tax structure favours the rich; the rate of taxation on firms and individuals is almost double the corporate tax rate



The Covid-19 pandemic shows no signs of fading away, even after ravaging humanity for the last eighteen months. Softening its depredations periodically, it lulls us into complacency ~ only to come back to continue its devastation with renewed fury. The occurrence and recurrence of Covid-19 remains a mystery; the epidemiology of coronavirus has not been fully understood, even by the most learned scientists.

For India, the Covid-19 pandemic has proved disastrous, both economically and socially. Our economy slipped into recession for the first time ever, when we recorded negative GDP growth in the first two quarters of FY 2020-21. For the entire financial year 2020-21, we had a negative GDP growth of 7.3 per cent ~ the first time since 1979. Common people bore the brunt of the economic slowdown; 23 crore Indians were pushed back into poverty, with a 15 per cent increase in the poverty rate in rural areas, and a 20 per cent increase in urban areas. Disturbingly, unemployment has soared to 12.2 per cent.

With varying levels of lockdown imposed in most States, daily labourers are out of work, migrant labour have returned to their villages, pensioners have seen their meagre incomes shrink because of low interest rates. On the other hand, the earnings of the uber rich have grown exponentially, India has added 55 billionaires in 2020, and Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani are now the richest persons in Asia, upstaging their Chinese counterparts.

Probably, the strategy of achieving rapid growth, financed by cheap credit to big businesses, so assiduously promoted by successive Governments, has failed to achieve its purpose. Rather, most bank-financed businesses have gone kaput, bringing the banking sector to its knees. The RBI appointed, KV Kamath Committee, which worked out the financial parameters for loan restructuring, has concluded that 72 per cent of banking sector debt worth Rs 37.72 lakh crore was under stress.

Further, according to the Committee, the coronavirus pandemic is not solely responsible for the stressed loans; Rs 23.71 lakh crore, or 45 per cent of banking sector debt, was under stress even before Covid-19 hit the economy. All these stressed bank loans are, ultimately, to be paid for by the Indian public through taxes like GST.

The trend of Income-tax collections reflects on the present anomalous taxation structure. As on today, after many years, Personal Income-tax collections exceeded Corporate Tax collections. We seem to have reached the stage where Warren Buffet noticed that his secretary was

VAT and Income-tax. The repeated moratoriums on loan recovery have only postponed the bad debt problem which would hit us once the moratoriums run their course.

In fact, the availability of easy credit has prompted many promoters to overvalue their assets and then borrow to the extent of their actual investment, leaving them with no financial stakes in their enterprises. More dishonest promoters have borrowed against non-existent assets or have fraudulently disposed of their assets and hot-footed to foreign shores. The interest cost on borrowed funds ensures that only established and well-run businesses can thrive; investors flock only to such enterprises, an example being the Reliance group that has attracted approximately Rs.2 lakh crore of foreign equity investment in the last financial year.

Some policy changes may be required to rejuvenate the economy, the first being to remove the focus from big business

and promote small enterprises, primarily, by reducing their burden of taxation. As of now, the tax structure favours the rich; the rate of taxation on firms and individuals is almost double the corporate tax rate. Given the heavy statutory compliance burden on corporates, most small businesses are organised as firms, the smallest ones being proprietary concerns, which results in a higher tax burden for small businesses.

Giving relief to firms by bringing income-tax rates for firms on par with those of corporates would not cost much to the exchequer. Income-tax Departmental statistics for the assessment year 2018-19 show that the aggregate tax liability for 12,69,736 firms was Rs.42,993 crore while aggregate tax liability for 8,41,942 companies was Rs.4,31,041 crore. Thus, halving the tax rate for firms would result in an outgo of less than Rs.20,000 crores.

The trend of Income-tax collections reflects on the present anomalous taxation structure. As on today, after many years, Personal Income-tax collections exceeded Corporate Tax collections. We seem to have reached the stage where Warren Buffet noticed that his secretary was

paying tax at double the rate at which he himself was paying tax. According to CMIE data, the profitability of listed companies grew by 212.4 per cent in the last quarter of FY 2020-21, while their revenues increased by 14.7 per cent, but corporate tax collections declined by 18 per cent in FY 2020-21.

Earlier, due to the lowering of corporate tax rates in Budget 2019, collections had fallen by 16 per cent in 2019-20. In all, corporate tax collections have fallen by more than 31 per cent since 2018-19. On the other hand, Personal Income-tax collections increased in FY 2019-20 and went down only marginally (by 2.3 per cent) in FY 2020-21.

Then, GST at high rates on a number of essential goods and more particularly the extortionate levies on petroleum products have fuelled inflation and hit the poorer segments of society badly. To control inflation and maintain social equity, GST rates need to be reduced.

Moreover, the Government

should stop favouring

business over agriculture. After Budget 2019, the FM announced a reduction in corporate tax rates, providing a relief of Rs.1.40 lakh crore to corporates, thereafter, the FM also gave further relief of Rs.2 lakh crore to the business sector. Tax rates for Foreign Portfolio Investors were also cut. On the other hand, out of an allocation of Rs.3.34 lakh crore in Budget 2019 for agriculture and allied activities, only Rs.2.35 lakh crores was spent. Around 80 per cent of the stimulus of Rs.25 lakh odd crore announced by the FM from April to November 2020, had gone to MSEs and corporates. The cash component of the stimulus of Rs.4.30 lakh crore for farmers was only Rs.50,000 crore, which was only half of the Budgetary shortfall of Rs.99,000 crore.

Despite the step-motherly treatment meted out to it, the agricultural sector was the only sector of the economy that withstood the vagaries of the Coronavirus scourge, growing by 3.4 per cent in FY 2020-21, when other sectors floundered and the economy shrank by 7.3 per cent. Demand for tractors, agricultural implements, fertilisers etc kept the cash registers of many manufacturing concerns ringing. Exports of agricultural com-

modities rose by 22.62 per cent in FY 2020-21, to Rs.3.05 lakh crore – at the time when overall exports declined by 7.3 per cent.

In these circumstances, we should be doubly cautious in the implementation of the Farming Acts because agriculture employs 45 per cent of our population and the US model which we want to copy through the Farming Acts has little use for manpower – the USA has only 20 lakh farmers for a population of 33 crore. So, we have to take care that the Farming Acts do not end up eliminating farmers. Moreover, modern mechanised farming has an environmental downside; typically, those engaged in farming as an industry practice monoculture with the aid of large doses of chemical fertilisers and pesticides that degrade farmland and exact a huge cost on the environment.

A better course could be to put aside the Farming Acts for a while, and provide farmers with the markets, expertise and finance for diversification of crops and the ability to grow non-traditional crops. To make agriculture remunerative, instead of increasing MSP, the Government can implement the comprehensive Swaminathan Report on Agriculture of 2006, which earlier regimes had failed to do. Indeed, if sufficient money and sincere efforts are put in by the Government, farming could be rejuvenated without seeking private investment in agriculture.

Sadly, the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative has failed to enhance manufacturing substantially or increase employment. Even otherwise, large-size modern manufacturing facilities are mostly automated and do not have a significant labour component. So, a rethink of our industrial growth strategy is required. We have to think small rather than big, incentivising small businesses that are employment intensive can boost both employment and the economy. Instead of frying pakoras, with technical guidance and adequate capital, our vast army of unemployed engineers can set up small technical units which could re-energise the economy and provide gainful employment to many. Another idea worth exploring, is the promotion of agro-based, export-oriented industries to dovetail with the farm sector. Such synergy would prove beneficial to the entire economy.

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going" is an old saying, the time to put it in practice for the Indian economy has come now.

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

ASIAN VOICES

Let Olympics win over Covid-19

Historically, the Japanese love the Olympics, but they haven't had the best luck with them. In the 1930s, Japan successfully made a bid to host the Summer Olympics in 1940, four years after Nazi Germany's Berlin Olympics, but they had to give up the great enterprise because of World War II. In 1964, two decades after the war ended, they finally realised the ambition. Since then, Japan twice played host to Winter Olympics in Sapporo and Nagano. And no one had thought of a pandemic when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) meeting in Buenos Aires in 2013 gave Tokyo the right to host the Summer Games for the second time. It was an act of compassion and encouragement for a nation suffering the severe consequences of a tsunami and nuclear disaster two years earlier. Now, less than 50 days before the grand opening of the Games of the XXXII Olympiad, already delayed by one year, a big question mark looms over the brand new Tokyo Olympic Stadium. If the IOC decides to cancel the 32nd Summer Olympics, as it did in 1916, 1940 and 1944, the calendar will move on to the Winter Games in Beijing in 2022, while Paris and Los Angeles are not likely to concede to Tokyo their respective designations for the 2024 and 2028 Summer Olympics. The administration of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is struggling between

The Star
the people's growing opposition to the Games and the robust stand of the IOC leadership to go ahead with the Tokyo Olympics. The Olympic Stadium and other facilities for the Games have been completed at the cost of approximately US\$26bil (RM107.3bil) but the coronavirus has disinterested the people from the Games.

Some 70 per cent of the Japanese public is telling pollsters that they do not want the Games to be held in Tokyo for fear of infection. The US State Department's travel warning for Japan over virus risk must be particularly embarrassing because it followed the White House summit between President Joe Biden and Suga in April where they agreed to cooperate closely in fighting the pandemic, among other things. How in a country that boasts the world's top level of healthcare and medical service systems do we hear daily reports of new coronavirus infections by the thousands and of the extremely slow pace of vaccination, ranked 130th among nations? One of the primary reasons, as critics argue, was the Japanese authorities' early complacency with their antiepidemic posture and their excessive caution in approving the use of foreign-made vaccines. The Asahi Shimbun, one of the official sponsors of the Games, came out last week with a strong appeal to the prime minister, the metropolitan government of Tokyo and the Tokyo Olympic Organising Committee to call off the Summer Games and the Paralympics. In a lengthy editorial, the influential liberal newspaper said that "it is simply beyond reason" to hold the Games this summer amidst the people's distrust and apprehension. The foremost concern must be about citizens' lives, health and livelihoods which are the basis of the Olympic spirit pursuing equal opportunities, friendship, solidarity, fair play and mutual understanding, the paper stressed.

IN MEMORIAM

CHATTERJEE PROFESSOR BHABATOSH — Who left us this day in the year 2000, "to sleep, perchance to dream". Fond remembrance. — Sati, Monita, Shubhashish, Somdev, Anita, friends and relatives.

NOSE AND MOUTH

SIR, If your mask does not cover your nose, you are doing it wrong. Why do you think they swab your sinuses when they take a Covid-19 test? If you are next to people, the nose should be covered. For some folks it's a matter of comfort; the mask gets too hot, or their eyeglasses fog with the mask over their nose. But how comfortable is it to be hooked up to a ventilator for a few weeks?

For most, it's either a complete lack of scientific understanding or they are wearing the mask minimally only to technically comply with rules. People who leave their noses uncovered are still capable of spreading the virus to other people, and are at very high risk of acquiring the disease if they come into contact with someone who is shedding the virus.

Yours, etc., Swagatika Pradhan
Cuttack, 17 June.



seriously expand India's economy. For this, India must grow at 8 per cent per annum for the next decade.

Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra,
Mohali, 18 June.

CHANCE MISSED

SIR, Referring to the letters of Mihir Kanungo and PK Tripathi, arguments are still swirling around what happened with regard to a breach of protocol by at Kalaikunda. The Chief Minister and former Chief Minister chose to rebuff the Prime Minister who had come to evaluate the dest-

A challenge for India

SIR, The first summit between Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin has provided a challenge to India. Russia is getting close to China, due to the West's pushback against Moscow's muscle flexing in Europe. And, with the West constricting China as a geopolitical rival, the relationship between Washington and Beijing-Moscow becomes two clear geostrategic poles, India's space for manoeuvre may shrink, and China won't at all mind exploiting that.

India's best scenario is that America and Russia feel better about each other, so that Moscow has less reason to court Beijing. Indeed, for Washington, too, a Beijing-Moscow axis is something to be avoided. Russia isn't strong enough to be a global disruptor, whereas China is. But India may not get what it wants with rivalry between US and Russia-China. The best way out is to

reduction caused by Cyclone Yaas.

The Prime Minister will be in office for at least three more years and a majority of the funds come from the Centre. We are going through very difficult times because of the pandemic. After all the rhetoric of the political campaign from both sides, polite and diplomatic behaviour would have helped the state. The Chief Minister missed that opportunity and a perfect gentleman like Alap Bandyopadhyay had no choice except to follow her.

Yours, etc., Ratan Chakraborty,
Kolkata, 15 June.



ANDREW SHENG

We criticize more than praise. Good news is no news. Sensationalising everything to attract attention for revenue, modern media spins everything just to prove the point that free speech is an end in itself. But words have no meaning if there is no action. Fiery or flowery rhetoric cannot disguise the fact that most politicians have not delivered what they promised. Hence, we must praise those leaders who seemed dull but performed spectacularly and did so quietly and without fuss.

Angela Merkel steps down as Chancellor of Germany after 16 years at the helm. If she leaves office at the end of this year, she would have beaten the record of her mentor, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who served from 1982 to 1998. Kohl seized the historical opportunity to reunite Germany, but Merkel will be recognized in history as the centrist, no-nonsense builder on that foundation. Lesser leaders would have fumbled or wasted the opportunity.

This is no mean feat for the only woman leader of G7, if not G20. Other than Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has been de facto leader since 1999, no one has served longer or dealt with more crises that have tripped many of her male counterparts. Under her stewardship, Germany consolidated its position as the fourth largest economy in the world, compared with Japan slipping from 2nd to 3rd, UK from 4th to 5th, France from 6th to 7th, and Italy from 7th to 8th.

Merkel is also the most intellectually qualified of her peers, having obtained a doctorate in quantum chemistry, but she is neither proud nor flashy. When asked why she often wore the same suit, she retorted, "I am a government employee and not a model."

Born in West Germany but raised in East Germany, she was the first woman Chancellor, first to be born after World War II and the first from East Germany. Her centrist, no-nonsense, prudent and low-key leadership was exactly what was needed by Germany during a tough period of integration between the socialist East and advanced Western parts. Her predecessor, Gerhard Schroder (1998-2005), led the Social Democrat-Green Party coalition that refused to sign off on the Iraq invasion. That period experienced very tough economic restructuring and challenges to German economic integration in the face of high labour costs and severe manufacturing competition from Japan and the Asian global supply chain.

But by the end of the Schroder period, the country needed healing, which Merkel provided.

The first major challenge was the 2008 global financial crisis, which hit Germany badly in terms of exports,

Merkel: A leader the world must cherish



but also through the huge damage to the European banking system because of excessive investments in US financial derivatives as well as non-performing loans to South European countries. The 2008/2009 European debt crisis split the European Union into weak debtors and strong creditors. Unlike the 1997/9 Asian crisis economies, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain could not devalue their way out, although Euro weakening and exports to China helped. The austerity drive demanded by the European surplus economies alienated many Southern debtors, forced into humiliating and painful belt-tightening. Merkel had to balance domestic right-wing conservatives who demanded austerity, with the reality that European unity remained fundamental to German peace and stability. The Euro and European Union survived the crisis, but the internal fractures became more open, with Brexit and right-wing populism as major consequences.

The second crisis that Merkel survived was the 2015 influx of refugees. That year, the number of migrant arrivals into Europe was nearly one million, of which asylum applicants to Germany alone were half a million, with 750,000 the next year. Whilst the rising migrants spooked many in Europe, Merkel famously said, "we can do this", which sent a humane message that Germany welcomed the refugees, half of which were from Syria. That courageous statement unfortunately did not sit well with some of Merkel's supporters and her party lost many seats in the next election.

It was Merkel's foreign policy that impressed Asians most. The key tenets were an avowed European and North Atlantic alliance, a great belief in multilateralism and trade, and firm conviction that global solutions are resolved best through negotiation, rather than military intervention. Over time, this reflected a more independent line from that of the United

States. In 2013, *Der Spiegel* magazine made the startling claim that the US had been bugging Merkel's phone since 2002, which sparked outrage in Germany. But it was President Donald Trump's election in 2016 that triggered a review of US-European relations. In May 2017, after the contentious G7 and NATO meetings, Merkel stated pointedly that Europe could no longer rely on the US and Britain, and it was time "to take our fate in our own hands."

Merkel's philosophy is best summed up by her brilliant 2019 Harvard Commencement Speech. Her six lessons were: "Take joint action in the interest of the moderate lateral global world. Keep asking yourselves, 'Am I doing something because it is right, or simply because it's possible?' Don't forget that freedom is never something that can be taken for granted. Surprise yourself with what is possible. Remember that openness always involves risks. Letting go of the old is

part of the new beginning. Above all, nothing can be taken for granted. Everything is possible."

The quantum scientist in Merkel enabled her to understand the new era of "quantum politics" where given massive uncertainty, the politician has to recognize that everything is possible, and nothing can be taken for granted. But she had the moral conviction that peace is best achieved by working together, to heal and transit to a better beginning. She had the common sense to seek the truth, knowing "not to describe lies as truth and truth as lies."

At a time when the West seemed adrift, the Rest admires Germany and Europe precisely because Merkel projected the virtues of humility, balance, stability and simple common sense. Asia especially will need these qualities to survive the coming turmoil.

The writer, a former Central banker, comments on global affairs from an Asian perspective. The views expressed are his own. Special to ANN.

NOW AND AGAIN

Remembering my father

RUP NARAYAN DAS

I lost my father, whom we called Bapa, in 1993 and not a day has passed since when I do not remember him. As I try to recapture the earliest memory of Bapa, I remember him taking me seated on the child seat fitted on his bicycle to the Police Line field in our town, Balasore, for the Republic Day Parade. This is my faintest memory of Bapa.

He was a revenue supervisor when he retired from the service of the state government and was last posted in Balasore. In those days, salaries were not remitted to the bank account; in fact Bapa didn't even have a bank account. He used to draw his monthly salary in cash from the local treasury.

On salary day, while returning from office on his cycle, he would stop at the Bombay Canteen at Motiganj Bazar to buy 'puri', 'alu dum' and 'rasgulla' for dinner at home and we would relish the sumptuous meal together. On other days, he would bring fruits - mostly mangoes during summer - and sometimes vegetables.

Ahead of Durga Puja, he would take us to a Gujarati cloth shop, seat us on the vinyl floor and ask for shirt and pant pieces. Either Bapa would pay cash or the owner, Mr Jatania, would willingly extend credit. Bapa would then take us to the tailor and ask him to stitch the clothes before the Puja.

On Dussehra day, he would try to requisition the office jeep, a vintage Land Rover, to enable us to see Puja pandals in town. Bapa lost his parents when he was a toddler. He was an indulgent father and showered us with bounties of love.

When he would go on tour, and if the Tahsildar allowed him use of the office jeep, sometimes he would take me with him. I would enjoy the ride and the revenue inspectors, his subordinates in the revenue circle, would treat us to frugal meals. These were courtesies extended to him, as Bapa was regarded as a highly honest officer who would spurn any attempt to bribe him. Being the revenue officer in charge of land records, his position was fraught with such pitfalls, but he never succumbed. So much so that when he retired, we did not even have a house to live in.

He was also a highly spiritually inclined person and always kept the Gita by his bedside. I do not know whether he read it or not; nevertheless he was guided by its lofty ideals and internalised its values in his daily life.

He died of cardiac arrest at the age of 76 without any physical suffering. But I always feel he should have lived longer. I regret I couldn't pamper him as a son although he was never wanting in his filial indulgence.

100 YEARS AGO

PROHIBITION

To The Editor Of The Statesman
SIR, - In the Prohibition debate in the Bihar Council, as reported in your issue of today, the Excise Commissioner, Mr. Weston, is reported to have quoted newspaper extracts to show that prohibition in America had not been a success. It will be time enough for Excise Commissioners to try and influence the Excise politics of Provincial Governments with this argument when the U.S. Congress repeals the Prohibition law. Meanwhile lookers-on can see what they look for. My American Temperance exchanges tell me that the first year under prohibition, just ended, enables the country to boast of the greatest revenue it ever had in any single year; in almost every city less crime and less poverty are reported and there has been a marked tendency towards thrift and contentment.

Fourthly, while he was cultivating the BJP and was hoping to get a berth in the Modi cabinet, the BJP did not come to his help. The Speaker recognized the rebels without delay.

Thirdly he was no match to Nitish Kumar's wily politics, and he underrated the chief minister. Nitish had power, and he was a partner in the NDA.

Fourthly, while he was cultivating the BJP and was hoping to get a berth in the Modi cabinet, the BJP did not come to his help. The Speaker recognized the rebels without delay.

There are few options left for his future. The first is to build up the party again with hard work. The second is to join a party like the BJP. The BJP strategy is to import leaders from other parties, and it can adopt and promote them. The third is to fade away and go back to his acting. Age is on his side, and he can afford to wait and watch.

HERBERT ANDERSON.
Calcutta.

ARMY FOOD CONTRACTS
To The Editor Of The Statesman
SIR, - It is understood that the Government are considering a proposal to transfer the buying of food supplies for regiments and regimental canteens to an Army Council in England. This body would buy food requirements in England and ship them to India, thus abolishing the regimental contractors who generally obtain their supplies from importers and merchants here. There are many objections to the proposal, and it is hoped that these objections will receive the serious attention of Government before they adopt any such plan as the one before them. The Indian Army is paid for out of Indian taxes, and the Indian business man has the first claim on any business which may be going in connection with it. It would be very inadvisable to stir up a bad feeling now and openly take business away from Indian firms to put it in the hands of British firms.

AN INTERESTED MERCHANT.
Calcutta.

POLITICAL DIARY | KALYANI SHANKAR

Hubris caused Paswan's downfall

In the game of snakes and ladders in politics, Chirag Paswan has come tumbling down and lost his top position in the Lok Jan Shakti party founded by his late father, Ram Vilas Paswan. In a way, it is the family feud and his arrogance and disconnect with party workers that has brought him down. It was his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras who toppled him in a bloodless coup this week and spoke against his nephew's "arrogance and inaccessibility".

While Ram Vilas Paswan held the family and party together, Chirag lacked this quality. Paswan doted on Chirag, and it was on his son's advice that he joined Narendra Modi's coalition in 2014 - climbing down from the ideological high ground. His reward was a place in the Modi cabinet. Ram Vilas often jumped ships and remained a minister till his death.

Paswan senior had to struggle in politics to create his own space. There was a time he had prime ministerial ambitions.

He had played an essential role in Bihar politics since the 1980s. But Chirag got his position just by being Ram Vilas Paswan's son. Before Chirag joined politics in 2013, he was an upcoming film star.

Chirag's story is an example of how those who got power on a silver



platter fail. Many such examples are starting from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. Some like Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena), M.K. Stalin (DMK), Naveen Patnaik (BJD), Jagannath Patnaik (YSR Congress) are our chief ministers today. There are others like Akhilesh Yadav (SP), Mehmood Ali (PDP), Omar Abdullah and Kumaraswamy who have lost power.

government. He, too, has been criticised for his inaccessibility and his style of functioning. He, too, lost connection with the public and his party. Rahul has frittered away goodwill, but you cannot write him off. Other second-generation leaders retained power inherited from their parents. Jayant Singh, son of the late Rashtriya Lok Dal founder, Ajit Singh, is yet to prove himself. Therefore it is up to the individual to lose or retain the position, and we have examples of both categories.

Why is Chirag in this position when he had all the advantages of a dynasty? He is a presentable, second-generation, teleogenic young leader - essential qualities in today's politics. Ram Vilas groomed his son as his political heir and when his health began to fail, Chirag had taken firm control of party affairs before the 2020 Assembly polls.

The LJP, which had a history of getting between 5 and 12 per cent of the vote in previous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, got less than 1 per cent and just one seat under Chirag's leadership. After the election drubbing, Chirag had been spending most of his time in Delhi. As he took his eyes away from his detractors, he saw the ground cut from under his feet.

Politics is a very different game in

Bihar and Chirag was not experienced enough to run the party. In Bihar, where caste plays a vital role in politics, LJP emerged as a galvanizing force for two ends of a social spectrum. Still, Chirag was not able to make use of the unique formula. He decided to take on chief minister Nitish Kumar. There was a time Chirag was one of the pawns in the BJP's game in Bihar.

The second thing was his arrogance, even with his uncles and cousins. Unlike his father, Chirag did not see the importance of keeping his family members in good humour. So when the time came, his uncle stabbed him in the back.

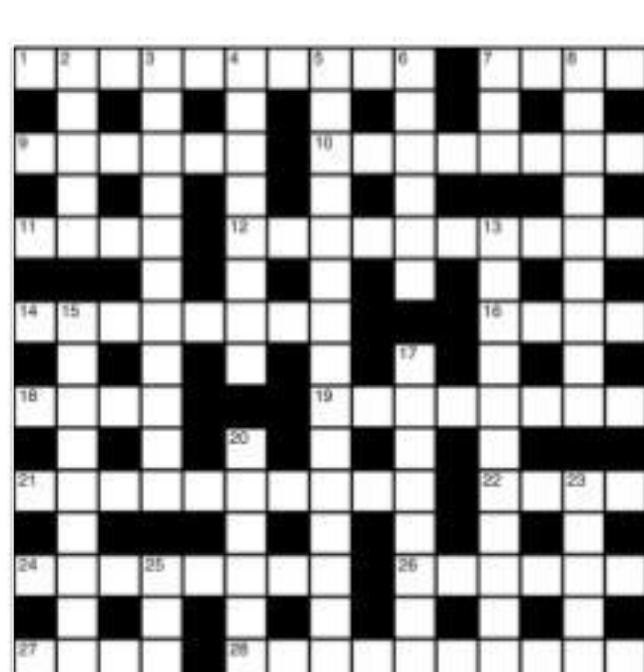
Thirdly he was no match to Nitish Kumar's wily politics, and he underrated the chief minister. Nitish had power, and he was a partner in the NDA.

Fourthly, while he was cultivating the BJP and was hoping to get a berth in the Modi cabinet, the BJP did not come to his help. The Speaker recognized the rebels without delay.

There are few options left for his future. The first is to build up the party again with hard work. The second is to join a party like the BJP. The BJP strategy is to import leaders from other parties, and it can adopt and promote them. The third is to fade away and go back to his acting. Age is on his side, and he can afford to wait and watch.

NO 28948

CROSSWORD



SOLUTION FOR 13 JUNE

ACROSS

- 1 Break from wearing corsets? (10)
- 7 One might pick this rugby forward (4)
- 9 Girl corrupted round adult clubs: item for the press? (6)
- 10 Parasite in record dispute sent back millions (8)
- 11 Japanese fighter gives you nothing (4)
- 12 Mimicking bird, cat who looks for excitement? (7,3)
- 14 Orchestra to transgress, less authentic for an audience? (8)
- 15 FARTHING OSPREY
- 16 LADYBIRD IMPORT
- 17 TREESPARROW
- 18 PYLON MINNESOTA
- 19 ERSTWHILE ENNUIT
- 20 NS SLA JO
- 21 CLEANSHAVEN
- 22 CEAR DUUA
- 23 HEXOSE CRIMINAL
- 24 AAT EA CLE
- 25 TAMEST SWANNERY

DOWN

- 16 Value returned welcoming a Biblical brother (4)
- 18 Kevin shortly consuming one chicken dish (4)
- 19 Stretch out scandal involving Mister Musk? (8)
- 21 Both rather drunk, fans may swoon over him (5-5)
- 22 Duck takes sheep outside For wander (4)
- 24 All for end in feud in Maltese capital (8)
- 26 One died in fight - but when? (6)
- 27 Go mad when retired (4)
- 28 Pedant and stoic clash (8)
- 1 Value returned welcoming a Biblical brother (4)
- 2 Kevin shortly consuming one chicken dish (4)
- 3 Outbreak of cowardice? (5)
- 4 Gangster on his own without detonator (2,6)
- 5 Sharing soapy water on getting into it together? (2,3,4,6)
- 6 Pot knocked over - family needs serviette (6)
- 7 Deep Blue (3)
- 8 Winger wrecked motor car (3)

touring north (9)
13 Large singer dressed in Scots headgear (11)
15 One can rave about European wandering (9)
17 Certain people cannot be so described (8)
20 Position figures around university (6)
23 Craftsman on the fiddle a dull one (5)
25 Room for experimentation in alcohol abuse (3)

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



The second wave of Covid-19 may worsen stressed assets in the banking system, adding pressure on the financial stability.

RAKESH MOHAN
FORMER RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

THUMBNAILS

Srei arm gets investment proposal: Srei Equipment Finance Ltd (SEFL) on Saturday said it has received investment interest of Rs 2,000 crore from US-based Arena Investors LP (Arena) led consortium. The strategic coordination committee has received a term sheet from Arena Investors LP (Arena), USA and its consortium and their affiliates indicating interest for investment of an aggregate amount of Rs 2,000 crore subject to terms and conditions contained in the term sheet, Srei Equipment Finance said.

PTT

Automatic cars: Automatic cars are gaining popularity in India, especially in the mass-market segment. The demand for automatic cars is further expected to grow as the Indian customers are looking for a comfortable driving experience with better mileage, according to a study. Top automatic cars in the country under Rs 10 lakh include Volkswagen Polo 1.0 TSI AT, Maruti Suzuki Baleno, Toyota Glanza CVT, Honda Amaze CVT, Nissan Magnite, Renault Kiger and Hyundai Venue 1.0 Turbo DCT, according to the study.

SNS

Samsung devices: Samsung has launched Galaxy Tab S7 FE and Galaxy Tab A7 in India. The two devices are the latest additions to Samsung's Galaxy Tab portfolio. According to the company, Galaxy Tab S7 FE brings the fan-favourite features from Galaxy Tab S7+, including a large display & S Pen in the box for work, studies, design and entertainment. Galaxy Tab A7 Lite's compact design and features make it suitable for on-the-go entertainment and gaming, it said.

SNS

Delivery service: Leading supply chain services provider Delhivery has launched its consumer-to-consumer express parcel service, the company said. The new product enables individuals to ship parcels to friends and family across 19000+ PIN codes and 2500+ cities in India, from the convenience of their homes, said a Press release.

SNS

NEWSFEED

IDP Education ties up with Air Canada to provide discounted airfares to international students

IDP Education, the global leader in international education services, has entered an agreement with Air Canada to help international students avail budgeted air travel. The tie-up would allow Canadian education aspirants applying via IDP to fly from any part of the world to Canada with a 15% discount on Air Canada flights. To access the same, students can book their flights at www.air-air.ca.com. International students can access the offer only if they book their tickets by 31st August 2021, scheduling their travel to Canada on or before 31st December 2021. The special offer stands applicable for the Economy Class (Basic, Standard, Flex, Comfort, Latitude), Premium Economy and Signature Business class. Furthermore, up to nine passengers can fly per PNR.

Infosys continues to strengthen talent pool

The IT major has recruited 19,230 graduates in India and 1,941 outside the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani today said the IT major has continued to strengthen its talent pool by recruiting 19,230 graduates in India and 1,941 outside the country to serve its clients' burgeoning demand for digital acceleration.

Speaking at the company's 40th annual general meeting, Nilekani noted that Infosys is well-positioned for another year of "market-leading performance" in a post-pandemic, cloud-first, distinctly digital era.

"While a challenging 2020 has ushered in a 2021 fraught with uncertainty, one thing is clearly evident: Infosys is well-positioned for another year of market-leading performance in a post-pandemic, cloud-first, distinctly digital era. The dramatic shift to living and working online has altered the entire business landscape in irrevocable ways."

NANDAN NILEKANI
INFOSYS CHAIRMAN

committed to double Infosys' Canadian workforce to 4,000 employees by 2023. In the UK, we announced plans to create 1,000 digital jobs to fuel post-pandemic growth".

Nilekani said Infosys had industry-leading, healthy revenue growth at 5 per cent in constant currency, totalling \$13.6 billion in financial year 2020-21.

Its large transformation deals peaked to an all-time high of \$14.1 billion, with 66 per cent being net new, he said.

"While a challenging 2020 has ushered in a 2021 fraught with uncertainty, one thing is clearly evident: Infosys is well-positioned for another year of market-leading performance in a post-pandemic, cloud-first, distinctly digital era. The dramatic shift to living and working online has altered the entire business landscape in irrevocable ways," he noted.

The Aadhaar architect said over the last three and a half years, Infosys has built a highly credible market position for itself as a global digital services and consulting provider of choice for enterprises.

"While the pandemic put

this to a test, the results we delivered, the resilience we have displayed and the brand strength that we have accrued clearly shows how well-placed we are to thrive and to help our clients thrive in challenging but exciting digital-first markets...we will seize the moment to build on this head start to expand our market share further as we serve global enterprises in their digital acceleration journey," he said.

Nilekani pointed out that the company has expanded its financial commitment towards Covid-19 relief to Rs 200 crore, supporting community efforts in the country.

For employees and their families in India, the company has set up vaccination centres at its campuses and Covid-19 care centres across locations; collaborated with hospitals and ambulance services; facilitated access to oxygen and medicines; and deepened employee support.

"Globally, we implemented more than 900 employee wellbeing initiatives to help them better manage these trying times," he said.

Grofers co-founder Saurabh Kumar leaves company

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

“After almost 8 years of building Grofers, I have decided to call it time on my current Grofers journey...I have been reflecting on my life and personal ambitions for some time. And my decision to step away is the outcome of that. I want to wander again.

Saurabh Kumar
GROFERS CO-FOUNDER

Grofers co-founder Saurabh Kumar has decided to leave the company but will continue to remain a board member and shareholder in the online grocery delivery platform, according to chief executive officer Albinde Dhindsa.

The development comes at a time when the SoftBank-backed company is looking at launching an initial public offering (IPO).

Dhindsa, in a tweet on Friday, said he spent the last 8 years building Grofers with Kumar and that "SK is moving on to other challenges".

"So, while SK will no longer be involved in day-to-day responsibilities at Grofers, he will continue to be a board member and a shareholder at the company. This is the end of an era for Grofers, and I know all of us will absolutely miss having him around everyday," Dhindsa said in a blogpost.

Kumar shared an e-mail he had written to employees announcing his exit. His next destination is not known.

"After almost 8 years of building Grofers, I have decided to call it time on my cur-

rent Grofers journey...I have been reflecting on my life and personal ambitions for some time. And my decision to step away is the outcome of that. I want to wander again.

advanced its plan to launch an IPO by the end of 2021 as it continues to focus on enhancing customer experience and strengthening its capabilities in the segment.

Grofers competes against players like Amazon, Flipkart, Alibaba-backed Bigbasket and billionaire Mukesh Ambani's upstart JioMart in this space.

India's \$950-billion retail market is predicted to grow to \$1.3 trillion by 2025-26. Of this, e-commerce business is estimated at around \$78 billion and forecast to cross \$100 billion by 2025.

Grocery is the latest category where e-commerce firms are now slugging it out. Reports suggest that Grofers is in talks for a \$100-120 million fund raise.

NTPC reports nearly 3-fold jump in profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 JUNE

February 2021. The board has also approved enhancement of borrowing limit of the company from Rs 2,00,000 crore to Rs 2,25,000 crore.

NTPC's gross power generation in March quarter was 77.63 billion units compared to 68.27 billion units (BU) in the same period a year ago. Gross power generation in 2020-21 was 270.90 BU compared to 259.61 BU in the previous year.

In 2020-21, NTPC group recorded the highest-ever gross generation of 314.07 BU as against 290.19 BU during the previous year.

Its coal production in the March quarter stood at 3.7 million tons, up from 2.6 million tons in the same period a year ago. In 2020-21, its coal production was 9.46 million tons, down from 9.63 million tons in 2019-20.

Plant load factor or capacity utilisation of coal-based power plants also rose to 77.12 per cent in March quarter from 69.52 per cent.

Tech hiring rebounds; overall job market still weak: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 19 JUNE

Hiring across sectors declined in May, though the tech industry job market rebounded from the pandemic-induced downturn as many technology companies have been on full expansion mode, according to a report.

There was a two per cent decline in the overall number of new job posts in May on the SCIKEY Market Network, a job site, including in sectors like banking with a dip of 12 per cent, retail 16 per cent and FMCG 12 per cent, while there was a growth of 5 per cent in the insurance sector.

The proposed transaction enables the bank to participate in the growth opportunity of HDFC ERGO and augment HDFC ERGO's growth prospects leading to long-term value creation by HDFC ERGO to its shareholders," it said.

The bank has been a distribution partner of the insurer since 2009.

However, hiring for entry-level professionals (0-3 years experience) declined by 4 per cent.

"It's been a rough patch for most sectors since the lockdowns took place. Although, tech companies have gained good momentum on hiring.

Due to the shift to remote work and the surge in demand for certain online services, tech has been immune to the lockdowns to some extent," SCIKEY co-founder Karunjiit Kumar Dhir said.

The increase in tech hiring indicates that such roles remain the most in demand due to increased competition and demand for new digital technology-led projects during the pandemic, he noted.

"This is a positive indicator that businesses are moving towards getting their growth plans into action and not just survival or business continuity strategies," Dhir added.

The data also indicated that hiring for mid-level executives with 8-12 years of experience and leadership roles (more than 16 years of experience) grew by 5 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively.

human resources, finance and project manager witnessed flat demand, the report added.

The data has been collected using SCIKEY's job portal and the market research conducted by SCIKEY Market Network based on over 10,000 job postings across India.

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In connection with World Environment Day, Directorate of Tourism, Jammu organized plantation drive at various locations of Jammu region. On this occasion Director Tourism Jammu, Sh. Vivekanand Rai, IRS kick started plantation drive at YatriNiwas, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. The plantation drive at various other locations like Mansar, Patnitop, Katra, Rajouri, Kishtwar etc was later followed on. Further, Director Tourism, Jammu advised all the participants of the plantation drive to look after the plants they have planted so that they grow well into lofty trees.

On 5th June 2021 in the first phase, Covid Vaccination Drives were organized by NBCC and its subsidiary NBCC Services Limited (NSL) especially for maintenance/construction workers at different strategic locations in New Delhi. The camps witnessed an enthusiastic response wherein over 600 construction workers of different sites were inoculated at various locations in New Delhi. Both the Vaccination Camps were successfully managed and supervised by senior Officials, HRM Team and Staff of NBCC as well as NSL who voluntarily came forward for this initiative.

NBCC with NSL vaccinated over 600 construction workers



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NTPC leads the way to care for its people sets benchmark by pioneering employee friendly policies

New Delhi, May 29, 2021: Since March last year, the world, including India, have hit by an unprecedented wave of COVID-19 crisis that has unfolded in India. While the largest power generator, NTPC has pioneered these employee friendly policies, other organizations in the country have followed. NTPC is not only providing light to the country but also pioneered great policies for welfare its employees and showed the way for many organizations in the country.

SCOPE Webinar on Myths & Realities of COVID

The world is waging a two-front battle of infection and dubity due to onslaught of information amidst the pandemic. Elucidating solutions, Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) with Famhealth organized '3M (Mindfulness, Meditation & Medication) COVID Protocol: Today & Tomorrow (Myths and Realities)' with Dr. H.K. Chopra, Senior Consultant Cardiologist, Medanta Moolchand Heart Institute, New Delhi; Ms. Soma Mondal, Chairman, SAIL & Chairperson, SCOPE; Mr. Atul Sobti, Director General, SCOPE and Ms. Asha Kapoor, MD, Famhealth also addressed the webinar.

NEWSFEED

IDP Education ties up with Air Canada to provide discounted airfares to international students

IDP Education, the global leader in international education services, has entered an agreement with Air Canada to help international students avail budgeted air travel. The tie-up would allow Canadian education aspirants applying via IDP to fly from any part of the world to Canada with a 15% discount on Air Canada flights. To access the same, students can book their flights at www.air-air.ca.com. International students can access the offer only if they book their tickets by 31st August 2021, scheduling their travel to Canada on or before 31st December 2021. The special offer stands applicable for the Economy Class (Basic, Standard, Flex, Comfort, Latitude), Premium Economy and Signature Business class. Furthermore, up to nine passengers can fly per PNR.

BIS enables you to "Know Your Standard"

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has launched a smart feature "Know Your Standards" on its website on 5th June 2021, enabling common consumers to find Indian Standards and the related information at just click of a button. BIS always keeps consumers on forefront and has been formulating Standards to ensure quality, safety and reliability of products and services since 1947 (earlier as ISI). Through the "Know Your Standards" feature, documents like Indian Standard, associated amendments, gazette notifications and information including list of licensees and labs for a product can easily be accessed. User merely needs to enter the IS number to find all these details. The interface also allows user to download various lists for further utilization. The portal is accessible by clicking on "Know Your Standards" icon on BIS website

Now pay at HPCL Retail Outlets with ICICI Bank FASTag

In a revolutionizing move for easy Digital payments, HPCL has enabled direct payment of Fuel, LPG and Lubes thru ICICI Bank FASTag at their Retail Outlets. This facility is available for all customers thru HP Pay App. HPCL is the first & only Oil Marketing Company to integrate payment systems with FASTag, FASTag for toll collection for all vehicles is now mandatory and now accounts for approx. Rs. 2500 crore per month. ICICI Bank with 37% spends in market share in FASTag, will add lot of volumes from the customers for Fuel, LPG and Lubes payment thru HP Pay App. Integration of HPCL's Drive-Track Plus loyalty program with ICICI Bank FASTag is also in progress.

World Environment Day Celebration by Jammu & Kashmir Tourism

In connection with World Environment Day, Directorate of Tourism, Jammu organized plantation drive at various locations of Jammu region. On this occasion Director Tourism Jammu, Sh. Vivekanand Rai, IRS kick started plantation drive at YatriNiwas, Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu. The plantation drive at various other locations like Mansar, Patnitop, Katra, Rajouri, Kishtwar etc was later followed on. Further, Director Tourism, Jammu advised all the participants of the plantation drive to look after the plants they have planted so that they grow well into lofty trees.



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Covid Vaccination camp organized by KRIBHCO

During the COVID pandemic, KRIBHCO has extended all possible support to the employees and their family and dependents by purchasing Oxygen concentrators, medicines, providing on-line consultancies by our consultant doctors & impaled hospital, reimbursement of vaccination cost etc. In continuation to the above KRIBHCO, partnered with SHARDA HOSPITAL Gr. Noida to organize a Vaccination Camp at KRIBHCO BHAWAN Noida, on 11th June 2021 for its employees and their dependents, and also for the employees of its support vendors connected directly or indirectly with KRIBHCO. The camp received, good response and around 200 peoples were vaccinated at the cost of KRIBHCO.

Vaccination Camp organized by KRIBHCO

A COVID Vaccination camp was organized in RHQ, Kolkata on 07.06.2021 for employees and their family members, retired employees and their family members, family members of deceased employees, AMC workers of RHQ, Kolkata, Rajarhat Substation, Subhashgram Substation, Kalyani Construction Office, ERLDC, CEA, ERPC and CAG. Vaccine was administered to 311 persons in the camp. The vaccination camp was organized in association with Medica Superspeciality Hospitals, Kolkata.

SBI organizes plantation on World Environment Day



On World Environment Day, SBI New Delhi Circle in collaboration with Prabhaav Foundation planted 2500 saplings and trees at Yamuna River bank near Fuddhishriti Set

Odisha expert team to study post vaccination Covid cases

Check on 2 lakh health workers, frontline workers yet to be inoculated

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

With instances of fully vaccinated people getting re-infected by coronavirus and cases of fatality being reported, Odisha government today set up a technical committee to study such cases.

It has now come to the notice of the government that a number of suspected &/or breakthrough Novel Coronavirus infections are being reported amongst the people in the State, who have completed the full schedule of COVID-19 vaccination. This needs further Epidemiological, Microbiological, Immunological, Genomic & Clinical studies for planning/preparedness of the State for possible future

Naveen dedicates 200-bed Vedanta Covid Hospital

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik dedicated a 200 bedded Covid Hospital set up by Anil Agarwal Foundation, of Vedanta Aluminium Power and Business in Kalahandi on Saturday in virtual mode in the presence of Mr Anil Agarwal, Chairman Vedanta management and Mr Agarwal for the support and said Kalahandi district has transformed.

The hospital funded by the company will provide free treatment and will be managed by the state government.

It is a 200-bedded fully oxygenated facility having 16 Intensive Care Units (ICU) and 16 High Dependency Units (HDU) with ventilator support, and a dedicated team of doctors and

medical staff to render medical services to the patients.

The hospital has a pediatric ward for attending to potential COVID cases in children.

Vedanta has also set up an oxygen plant in the hospital campus. The CM thanked Vedanta management and Mr Agarwal for the support and said Kalahandi district has transformed.

Two decades ago it was known for poverty and hunger, today it feeds the nation and is a rice bowl. The farmers, youth and women of Kalahandi district have led the turn around, he said.

When the entire country was facing acute shortage of medical oxygen, Odisha stood up and provided the same to 18

states, he said before adding that every Odia feels proud of having the opportunity to serve and save people. He called upon people to abide by Covid protocol sport double masks and get vaccinated in view of the threat of a third wave.

Mr. Anil Agarwal praised the CM and said Odisha is known world wide for its success in handling natural calamities. He said working in the state has been a pleasure and that the Kalahandi district is dear to the CM's heart, he added.

Rahul Sharma reaffirmed the company's commitment to support the state.

State health minister Naba Das, Energy Minister D S Mishra, MPs and MLAs were present.

waves of COVID 19, said the official note while announcing the formation of the technical committee.

The committee will study the incidence, spectrum of microbiological and clinical presentations and their outcome in such suspected / confirmed breakthrough COVID-19 during post-vaccination period, it stated.

The director of Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) Dr Ajaya Parida will head the committee. The move to conduct such a study has assumed importance after a few Covid fatalities of people who had been fully vaccinated two months prior to getting infected were reported.

While the health authorities at all levels, both national and state, have been insisting that double dose vaccination does avert severity,

hospitalization etc, there is certainly, a need to study the few cases to be better prepared in future, said state health officials.

In another development, the Additional chief secretary (health), P K Mahapatra has asked district collectors to check and take steps in two days time with regards to registered health care workers and front line workers who have not been vaccinated.

The data available data indicates that around two lakh HCW and FLW are yet to be vaccinated. As per available figures, Bhubaneswar has the maximum of such cases at 17,407 followed by Sundargarh 14,856, Ganjam 13,613. The official note asked collectors to check, correct and update such cases.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

Adding yet another feather to its cap, the Smart City Bhubaneswar has earned the distinction of being ranked fourth among the top 10 Livable Capital Cities across the country.

It is pertinent to note here that Bhubaneswar has earlier topped in the Citizen Perception Survey with the highest score of 94.8 out of 100.

As per the New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)'s Ease of Living Index Report, 2020, Bengaluru is the top-1 Livable Capital City in India followed by Chennai, Shimla and Bhubaneswar, the smart city officials said here today.

Mr Sanjay Singh , IAS, CEO, Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited informed that four parameters were used to



determine the score on the Ease of Living Index; quality of life, economic ability, sustainability and citizens' perceptions. The cities were given scores on all four parameters out of 100.

However, the index did not rank four capital cities: Dispur, Daman, Amaravati and Kolkata on the survey.

While Bhubaneswar has scored 59.85 in Ease of Living Index, Mumbai and Delhi have scored 58.23 and 57.56 respectively. However, Bengaluru, Chennai and Shimla were above Bhubaneswar with scores of 66.7, 62.61 and 60.90 respectively.

Real estate sector needs govt support: Odisha Minister

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

Urban Development, panchayati raj and law Minister Pratap Jena, acknowledged the need to support the real estate sector which has been impacted adversely by the pandemic.

Addressing the virtual roundtable on COVID-19 'Impact on Urban Development, Real Estate & Smart Cities and Way Forward', organized by FICCI, Mr Jena said that unemployment is yet another major problem during these unprecedented times.

"We have taken multiple flexible steps to boost the real estate sector and I urge the industry to submit any suggestions or proposals to the department through FICCI," he added.

"The state government is aware of the problems faced by the real estate sector. The

workforce, daily wage earners in the sector have been worst hit", he noted.

The state government, he said has also announced COVID relief package worth Rs 1690 crore for the poor and weaker sections. The government would allocate Rs 300 crore to urban local bodies to provide employment opportunities under various schemes like MUKTA and MGNRRES, he said.

Mr Sanjay Kumar Singh, Commissioner, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Vice Chairman, Bhubaneswar Development Authority and CEO, Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited said that the government wants to translate industry requirements and ease problems in the city of Bhubaneswar.

"Out of the real estate activities in the entire state, around 80 percent contribution is in the city of Bhubaneswar. The government and authorities are aware and appreciate the

contribution of the real estate sector in the economic growth and the GDP of the state," he stated.

On the smart city project, Mr Singh stated that the role of 5G will be critical in developing a good and liveable smart city.

"The state government is focusing on inclusive growth and has set a target of building 50,000 affordable houses by 2024 out of which 14,000 houses have already been sanctioned. We have identified the plots for the balance as well," he informed.

Ms Monica Nayak Patnaik, Chairperson, FICCI Odisha State Council, Ms Monica Nayak Patnaik, Matraddatta Mishra, Director, SJ Developers & Housing Pvt Ltd; Mr Tapan Kumar Mohanty, MD, Z Estates; Mr Kantilal Patel, president, CREDAI Bhubaneswar Foundation, Member and others participated.

Odisha logs less than 4,000 Covid cases for fifth day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

Odisha on Saturday registered 3,427 new COVID-19 cases while 42 fresh fatalities raised the toll to 3,550.

With the latest positive cases, the state has logged less than 4,000 COVID-19 infections for the fifth consecutive day, giving evident signs of declining trend of the contagion.

The samples tested during the last 24 hours found the test positivity rate (TPR) at 5.20 percent.

Even though the TPR which hovered above 20 percent in May has declined substantially in the current month, it continues to be high in some of the coastal districts.

The mineral-rich Jajpur district has reported the highest TPR at 21 per cent, said the health and family welfare department officials.

The number of active cases in the state fell from 43,338 to 40,471 on Saturday.

Of the 3,631 new cases reported from 30 districts, 1,954 were registered in quarantine units and the rest detected during contact tracing.

Khordha district recorded the highest 553 cases in the last 24 hours followed by Cuttack (396), Jajpur (285), Balasore (261), Puri (217), Mayurbhanj (162), Nayagarh (142), Bhadrak (139), Angul (138), Kendrapada (111) and Jagatsinghpur (108).

While six fatalities were reported from Khordha district in the last 24 hours, Cuttack, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh and Puri districts accounted for four deaths each.

Similarly, three patients each succumbed in Balasore, Kendrapara and Koraput, two each in Angul, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj and Nuapada districts and one each in Kalahandi, Rayagada and Sonepur districts. A total of 64,850 samples were tested on Friday. The State's recovery rate currently stands at 94.95 percent.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

The BJP legislators on Saturday have asked the state government to come clean on the 'actual death toll' due to COVID and release a white paper.

The government's statistics on the COVID death toll smacks of widespread under-reporting. The erroneous submission of death toll by the state has given rise to a humanitarian crisis of sorts as bereaved family members who lost their loved ones to the contagion are destined to be deprived of social security schemes.

"Uncertain future stares at the children and adolescents who are overwhelmed with bodies of COVID patients particularly in May when the COVID infection had peaked. The death data being reeled out by the government agencies was meticulously recorded and there is every possibility of orphans being left out from government's security coverage due to death under-

reporting", the BJP MLAs alleged in a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik,

"There exists glaring discrepancies between the actual numbers of Covid fatalities and the toll data furnished by the health department. It should be sorted out and set right so that the kin of the deceased persons could be awarded ex-gratia gratuity relief and other benefits provided by both the State and central government in accordance with the provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005 provisions", the petition charged.

The crematoriums and burial grounds were overwhelmed with bodies of COVID patients particularly in May when the COVID infection had peaked. The death data being reeled out by the government agencies was abysmally on a lower side. It is widely believed that the government willfully covered up the toll as an image saving

exercise. If there is iota of truth in the allegation, it amounts to a gross act of criminality, the BJP lawmakers alleged.

Rectifying the death toll will be an honour and will be an act of paying homage to those succumbing to the deadly pandemic. The department souls will rest in peace if their loved ones are taken care of by the elected government, they observed.

It maybe recalled here that the State unit of Congress party had earlier demanded the special audit of the COVID-19 death toll while accusing the COVID managers of resorting to under-reporting of fatalities in the midst of a raging pandemic.

Official sources however insisted that there is no cover-up as an audit of the fatalities takes place at three levels before being made public. There are set guidelines by the central government and ICMR which are followed, they claimed.

Cremation of Covid victims: Sensitization need of the hour

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

Innumerable instances of families and villages scared of cremating the dead as Covid facilities rise in the state pour in. At a few places youths, officials and social activists have helped in doing the last rites of bodies shunned by family members.

There are also inhuman instances of half-burnt bodies found in fields or just dumped near shrubs.

The need for a protocol in the disposal of bodies has been stressed. But everybody is hard pressed.

The other way out is to sensitize people at large on performing the last rites with due dignity and respect with-

out fear of the spread of infection. It has taken more than one year and yet the same fear continues.

Reports from districts narrate how the local administration takes up the task.

In Jajpur district yesterday the local administration performed the last rites of a Covid-19 victim as his kin abandoned him.

A 55-year-old man, identified as Damodar Dalai succumbed. Family, relatives and even the villagers did not turn up to cremate the body.

The BDO called for an ambulance to take the body and arranged for firewood to conduct the cremation.

The report from Kalahandi districts said social stigma and fear prevails among villagers who refuse to cooperate in cremating Covid victims. A team of youths under the banner of Svaradwar Seva Sangathan in Mahagaon village led by Manjoy Patnaik have taken up the

task of cremating such bodies. There are quite a few individuals who are devoted to such work and serve the dead.

Arun Kar of Balasore is one such person. He is 62 years old who had a photo studio near Balasore railway station which was shut.

Since then he has started spending time at the crematorium consigning abandoned bodies and that of Covid victims to flames.

In fact, a local committee of the Nayabazar area had formed a committee to renovate a cremation ground near Nuniajodi. The committee comprising over 30 members developed the ground with Rs 35 lakh they named as Mukti Dwar. Arun is involved as a trustee.

Cuttack Barabati Stadium was witness to Milkha Singh's record-shattering feat

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Bhubaneswar, 19 JUNE

Country's legendary sprinter Milkha Singh, who succumbed to Covid, had a memorable connection with Odisha and his athletic record feat in Cuttack was a prelude to the 'Flying Sikh' becoming the first Indian athlete to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

Singh, who had narrowly missed out on an Olympic medal, finishing fourth at the 400m final of the 1960 Rome Games, had a record-shattering feat in Cuttack in 1958 in the 200 metres and 400 metres

race in the National Games.

"1958 was a glorious one for me; one that I firmly believe was the year of my destiny. My coach was an American called Dr Howard, who taught me an advanced technique of taking a start. Once again, there was

the usual cyclone of events", Singh wrote in his autobiography "The Race of My Life".

My demanding routine had brought the expected results and I was a running machine, breaking the records I had set the previous year –

clocking 46.2 seconds for 400 meters and 21.2 seconds for 200 meters – at the National Games held at the Barabati stadium in Cuttack, Singh had stated in his autobiography.

"Other runners lagged far behind me. Seemingly, I had broken the previous Asian record in 400 meters, but I found my new record hard to believe and requested the National Games organizing committee to measure the track again. They did so and I was assured that my timings were correct", according to the autobiographical account of India's first sporting icon and superstar.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



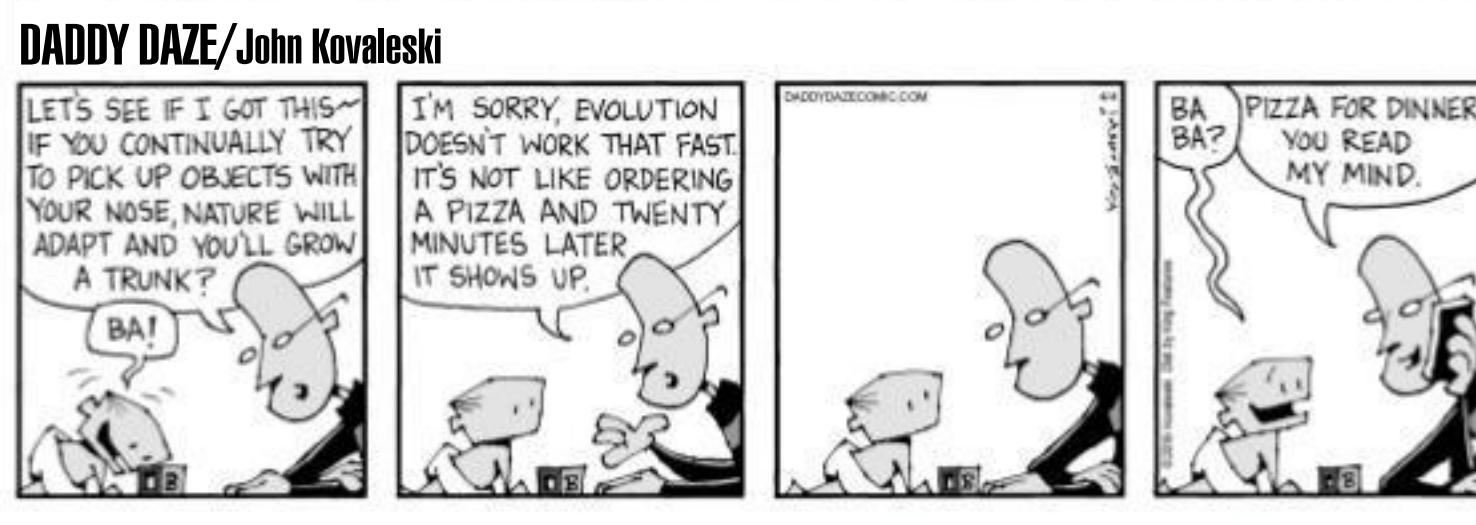
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

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We can't pretend that corona is over

GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL

CALLING FOR VIGILANCE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF A CORONAVIRUS VARIANT

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C
TOKYO	18°C	12°C
LONDON	17°C	9°C
DUBAI	30°C	25°C
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C
NEW YORK	10°C	07°C
MOSCOW	16°C	09°C

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

THUMBNAILS



Ethiopian police march during a parade to display new police uniforms and instruct them to maintain impartiality and respect the law during the upcoming election, in Meskel Square in Addis Ababa. ■ AP

Partygoers, police injured at rave party: A 22-year-old man lost his hand and several others were also injured amid clashes as police tried to break up an unauthorised rave party in western France, authorities said Saturday. Police repeatedly fired tear gas and charged clusters of violent partygoers who hurled metal balls, gasoline bombs and other projectiles at security forces.

AP

US storm: Tropical Storm Claudette formed on Saturday morning along the US Gulf Coast, bringing heavy rains and flooding to coastal states including Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Flooding had already begun overnight Friday into Saturday, with local reports of high water over roads and stranded vehicles. Flash flood warnings dotted the coast. ■ AP

UK holds 1st festival since pandemic: Thousands of heavy metal fans are camping, singing and even moshing in the rain at Britain's first music festival since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The three-day Download Festival, taking place at Donington Park in central England, is one of a series of test events to see whether gatherings can resume without triggering outbreaks of Covid-19. ■ AP

US man who stabbed Asian American charged with attempted murder

SAN FRANCISCO, 19 JUNE

A man arrested after he allegedly stabbed a 94-year-old Asian American woman in San Francisco in an unprovoked attack has been charged with attempted murder, the city's top prosecutor announced on Friday.

Daniel Cauchi, 35, was also charged with battery causing serious bodily injury and elder abuse, San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin said. Cauchi's arraignment was scheduled for Friday. It wasn't immediately known if he has an attorney who can speak on his behalf.

Ahn Peng Taylor was on her downtown apartment Wednesday when Cauchi allegedly hit her in the head and stabbed her on the forearm, hip and torso. He then continued walking and threw away the knife, Boudin said.

Police officers who responded to a report of a stabbing found a knife near the crime scene and obtained a photo of Cauchi and circulated it to all officers. Police arrested him two hours after the attack. Taylor was taken to a local hospital, where she is recovering, Boudin said.

The attack comes amid a wave of assaults against Asian Americans in San Francisco since the pandemic. ■ AP

Delta Covid-19 variant becoming globally dominant: WHO official

Dr Swaminathan voiced disappointment in the failure of CureVac's vaccine candidate in a trial

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

GENEVA, 19 JUNE

The Delta variant of Covid-19, first identified in India, is becoming the globally dominant variant of the disease, the World Health Organisation's chief scientist said on Friday.

Dr Soumya Swaminathan also voiced disappointment in the failure of CureVac's vaccine candidate in a trial to meet the WHO's efficacy standard, in particular as highly transmissible variants boost the need for new, effective shots.

Britain has reported a steep rise in infections with the Delta variant, while Germany's top public health official predicted it would rapidly become the dominant variant there despite rising vaccination rates. The Kremlin blamed a surge in Covid-19 cases on reluctance to have vaccinations and "nihilism", after record new infections in Moscow, mostly with the new Delta variant, fanned fears of a third wave.

"The Delta variant is well on its way to becoming the dominant variant globally because of its increased transmissibility," Dr Swaminathan told a news conference.

Coronavirus variants were cited by CureVac when the German company this week reported that its vaccine proved only 47 per cent effective at

preventing disease, shy of the WHO's 50 per cent benchmark.

The company said it documented at least 13 variants circulating within its study population.

Given that similar mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and BioNTech and Moderna posted efficacy rates topping 90 per cent, Dr Swaminathan said the world had been expecting more from CureVac's candidate.

"Just because it's another mRNA vaccine, we cannot presume all mRNA vaccines are the same, because each one has a slightly different technology," she said, adding that the surprise failure underscored the value of robust clinical trials to test new products.

WHO officials said Africa remains an area of concern, even though it accounts for only around 5 per cent of new global infections and 2 per cent of deaths. New cases in Namibia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Rwanda have doubled in the last week. WHO emergencies programme head Mike Ryan said, while vaccine access remains minuscule.

"It's a trajectory that is very, very concerning," Dr Ryan said. "The brutal reality is that in an era of multiple variants, with increased transmissibility, we have left vast swathes of the population, the vulnerable population of Africa, unprotected by vaccines."

Urgently trying to work with AstraZeneca, SII, Indian govt to restart vaccine shipments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS, 19 JUNE

The WHO is urgently trying to work with AstraZeneca, Serum Institute of India (SII) as well as the Indian government to restart shipments of COVID-19 vaccines to countries that had to suspend the rollout of second doses of vaccines amid the disruption in supplies, a senior official at the UN health agency has said.

We have a huge number of countries that have had to suspend rollout of their second doses of vaccines," Bruce Aylward, Senior Advisor to World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said on Friday at a press briefing.

"It's over 30 or 40 countries that could have been targeted for second doses of AstraZeneca vaccines (but they) will not be able to do that," Aylward said.

We are now urgently trying to work with AstraZeneca itself as well as SII, the Government of India to restart those shipments so that we can get those second doses into those populations

because we are running to a longer interval than we would have liked, he said.

Aylward added that several countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Middle East and South Asia have been hit hard by this.

Some countries particularly hit hard include those that surround India like Nepal, Sri Lanka, others who suffered a severe wave of disease. We are very, very desperately trying to access doses. We've had quite a substantial problem related to this, he said.

Earlier this month, Aylward had said about 80 million (8 crore) doses have been distributed through COVAX and the global alliance for equitable vaccine distribution is about 200 million (20 crore) doses behind where it should be due to disruption in COVAX supplies as a result of the devastating second wave of the coronavirus in India.

The problem now is the supplies are being interrupted. We're having disruptions because of the problems in India and others and having trouble filling that

gap. And as a result, the countries are having trouble getting momentum and getting started well, Aylward had said.

He added that supplies out of India were interrupted because of the need to redirect them there amid the surging second wave.

He noted that the donation of vaccines is a short-term solution in the face of a very imperfect market and those countries that have the financial resources and are producing the products actually have access to vaccines.

That is what we're trying to change, particularly in this period June through September, he said.

Earlier this month, Aylward had said WHO expects SII volumes to open up again in the fourth quarter at least and had warned that we're setting up for failure if we don't get early doses.

The Serum Institute of India, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, is the key supplier of AstraZeneca doses to COVAX. However, the supply of vaccines from SII to COVAX has been impacted as the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic ravages India.

Third wave of Covid-19 definitely underway in UK, says vaccine expert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 19 JUNE

ple is infected, with the Delta variant now the dominant strain of the deadly virus.

According to the latest data from PHE, a single dose of vaccine reduces a person's chances of catching coronavirus and needing hospital treatment by about 75 per cent, even with the Delta variant.

The latest R number or rate of infection is between 1.2 and 1.4, which means on average every 10 people infected will infect between 12 and 14 other people. It comes as the UK recorded a further 10,476 cases of Covid-19 on Friday.

Delta variant constitutes over 6 pc of cases in NYC
The Delta variant, first detected in India, constituted over 6 per cent of Covid cases tested for virus variants in New York City, according to official data.

The New York City Health Department said in its recent update that out of the 105 NYC COVID-19 cases tested for variant viruses for the week ending June 5, the Delta variant (B.1.617.2) constituted 6.7 percent. "Currently, B.1.1.7 (Alpha) and B.1.526 (Iota) are the most widespread variants in the city. We are also closely monitoring P.1 (Gamma) and B.1.617.2 (Delta), which have been spreading rapidly in the US and other countries," the NYC health department said.

The Alpha variant constituted 36.2 percent (38 cases) of the 105 NYC Covid-19 cases.

Voting debate roils Washington, leaves many voters cold

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PLANO (US), 19 JUNE

many voters are disconnected from the fight. A passionate base of voters and activists on both sides may be intensely dialed in on the issue, but a disengaged middle is baffled at the attention.

Unemployment, climate change – this stuff should be on the top of the list, not the voting thing, said Neupane, 34. That disconnect is now the challenge before Democrats, who are trying to marshal public support for federal legislation that would thwart a series of new state laws tightening election procedures. With rallies, ads, White House events and a certain-to-fail vote in the Senate next week, Democrats are aiming to fire up their voters around the issue, hoping their passions hold through next year's midterms.

As politicians from Austin to Washington battle over the practical aspects of how to run elections clashing over details such as polling booth hours and the number of ballot drop boxes per county

fidence that they say they won't vote again. Meanwhile, the party's push for additional restrictions runs the risk of driving away moderate voters.

That debate is still roiling in Texas, where the legislature is due to return to a special session to consider voting legislation. That comes after Texas Republicans, following the lead of Republican-controlled legislatures in more than a dozen states, tried to muscle through a sweeping elections bill that increased the power of partisan poll watchers, limited the power of local election officials and prevented voting on Sunday mornings when Black churchgoers traditionally flock to the polls.

Democrats in the Texas House walked out in the final hours of the legislative session, depriving the GOP of the quorum needed to pass the bill. Since then, advocacy groups have stepped up organizing and outreach. Former congressman and president-

tial candidate Beto O'Rourke has seized on the issue, holding rallies and knocking on doors to discuss voting, as he considers launching a campaign for governor. On Wednesday, Vice President Kamala Harris, the Biden administration's point person on the voting debate, hosted the Texas Democrats at the White House. "We have a great challenge before us and a fight, which is to fight for every American's right meaningful right to vote," Harris said.

But Harris' message has yet to reach many back in the politically mixed suburbs north of Dallas, a potential battleground in next year's midterm elections. The swath of comfortable, diversifying neighborhoods was once dominated by the GOP but is now politically divided. As a heat wave this week brought fresh warnings of blackouts, several voters were confused about why legislators are spending so much time on election issues.

FRIENDLY NEIGHBOUR



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, welcomes the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, right, for a meeting at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany on Friday. ■ AP

Biden objects to raising gas tax to pay for infrastructure

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 19 JUNE

The White House has made clear that President Joe Biden was opposed to letting the federal gasoline tax rise at the rate of inflation to help pay for an infrastructure package that a bipartisan group of 21 senators is trying to craft.

The gas tax increase was part of an early package that called for USD 579 billion in new spending on roads, bridges, rail and public transit. It's unclear if it will make the final cut and the White House seems intent on making sure it doesn't.

Republicans face their own pressures. Donald Trump's false claims of massive fraud in the 2020 election have so eroded some GOP voters' con-

cern. Congress has traditionally relied on the user-pay principle to pay for road and bridge work, but is increasingly relying on general funds to accomplish that task. Lawmakers from both parties are wary of attack ads accusing them of supporting a hike in gas prices.

Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said that indexing the gas tax to inflation was a nonstarter for him. Sen. Sherrod Brown, said a gas tax hike is a Republican thing. "Democrats want to fund this by taxing people (earning) USD 400,000," Brown said.

The gas tax increase was part of an early package that called for USD 579 billion in new spending on roads, bridges, rail and public transit. It's unclear if it will make the final cut and the White House seems intent on making sure it doesn't.

They want to expand insurance coverage for working-age people and their families, add new benefits to Medicare for older people and reduce prescription drug costs for patients and taxpayers. But health care is expensive, there's concern about deficits and with Democrats holding only bare majorities in Congress, a winnowing down of expectations seems likely later this year.

For now, Democrats are

potentially save hundreds of billions of dollars, depending on how they are structured. But coverage and benefit expansions could cost an equal or even much greater amount.

Complex budget procedures that Democrats plan to use to pass President Joe Biden's domestic agenda by a simple majority vote in the Senate may also limit the types of proposals that can be considered.

There is a sorting going on, said John McDonough, who was a senior Democratic aide in the Senate during the debate over the health law. I think people are fired up and ready to go. There is no shortage of proposals. Some, such as authorizing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, could

potentially save the more they spend. His group advocates for reducing federal deficits, and Goldwein adds that it's my hope they abide by the basic rule that you pay for what you're willing to spend.

Early on, a hierarchy of proposals has started to emerge. At the top of the list, and most likely to be included, is Biden's plan to permanently extend more generous HealthCare.gov insurance subsidies. They're now provided through the end of next year under his COVID-19 relief bill. The price tag is estimated at \$163 billion over 10 years.

Another health law issue involves figuring out how to cover more than 2 million low-income people in mainly Southern states that have not expanded their Medicaid programs. A federal fix is not just a matter of pumping more money in because of arcane legal issues involving Medicaid. Also uncertain is the outlook for authorizing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., passed a robust bill in the House almost two years ago, and the issue remains a priority for congressional Democrats as well as Biden. The 2019 legislation would have saved the government more than USD 450 billion over 10 years through Medicare price negotiations, but Pelosi's tough approach to the politically powerful pharmaceutical industry is seen as a problem for some Senate Democrats.

The catch is that without big savings from prescription drugs, it gets harder to deliver other parts of the health care agenda. For example, adding dental, vision and hearing benefits to Medicare could cost about USD 360 billion over 10 years. Some ideas that energise progressive Democrats may have the hardest time getting through the winnowing process. That could be the case with the proposal for a new public option health insurance plan to be offered alongside subsidized private coverage through HealthCare.gov.

Democrats see springboard for health care in high court win

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 19 JUNE

With the Affordable Care Act now secure in the framework of the nation's health care programs, Democrats are eager to leap above and beyond.

They want to expand insurance coverage for working-age people and their families, add new benefits to Medicare for older people and reduce prescription drug costs for patients and taxpayers. But health care is expensive, there's concern about deficits and with Democrats holding only bare majorities in Congress, a winnowing down of expectations seems likely later this year.

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The decisive election of Raisi promises the establishment of a strong and popular government to solve the country's problems

IRAN HARD-LINER MOHSEN REZAEI
IN A POST ON TWITTER AFTER THE IRAN ELECTION RESULTS

The Sunday Statesman
NEW DELHI, 20 JUNE 2021

11

THUMBNAILS



People march along the 9 de Julio Avenue to demand better wages and jobs, in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Friday. AP

Uganda tightening Covid measures: Uganda is tightening its lockdown measures to try and stem a surge in coronavirus infections in the East African country that is seeing an array of variants. The measures announced late Friday by President Yoweri Museveni include a ban on private and public transportation within and across districts. AP

Warsaw pride parade: Warsaw is set to hold the largest gay pride parade in the region Saturday after a pandemic-induced break and amid a backlash in Poland and Hungary against LGBT rights. The parade comes days after Hungary's parliament with an election planned next year passed a law that makes it illegal to show any materials about LGBT issues to people under 18. AP

Virus cases, deaths at three-month low in Pak: Pakistan on Saturday reported the lowest daily number of new Covid-19 cases and deaths in the past three months. Federal authorities reported 27 deaths and 974 new confirmed cases. That brings the total deaths to 21,940 and more than 947,000 cases. Southern Sindh province announced on Saturday that it was easing restrictions. Authorities in Sindh said junior schools would reopen on Monday. AP

EU threatens Lebanese politicians with sanctions over crisis

BEIRUT, 19 JUNE

The European Union's foreign policy chief Saturday berated Lebanon's politicians for delays in forming a new Cabinet, warning the union could impose sanctions on those behind the political stalemate in the crisis-hit country.

Joseph Borrell made his comments at the presidential palace near the capital Beirut after meeting with President Michel Aoun. It was the first meeting in a two-day visit to Lebanon.

Borrell said Lebanese politicians should quickly form a new government, implement reforms and reach a deal with the International Monetary Fund to start getting the tiny country out of its paralyzing economic and financial crisis. Lebanon's economic crisis triggered by decades of corruption and mismanagement began in late 2019 and has intensified in recent months.

The World Bank said earlier this month the crisis is likely to rank as one of the worst the world has seen, adding that the economy contracted 20.3 per cent in 2020 and is expected to shrink 9.5 per cent this year.

A power struggle between premier-designate Saad Hariri on one side, and Aoun and his son-in-law Gebran Bassil on the other, has worsened the crisis despite warnings from world leaders and economic experts of the dire economic conditions tiny Lebanon is facing. Hariri was named to form a new government in October and has not succeeded so far.

The government of PM Hassan Diab resigned days after a massive blast in Beirut on 4 August, that killed 211 people and injured more than 6,000. AP

Hard-line judiciary head wins Iran presidency

Voter turnout among lowest in the Islamic Republic history, amidst widespread perception the election was a coronation for Ebrahim Raisi

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, 19 JUNE

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief won the country's presidential election in a landslide victory on Saturday, propelling the supreme leader's protege into Teheran's highest civilian position in a vote that appeared to see the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history.

Initial results showed Ebrahim Raisi won 17.8 million votes in the contest, dwarfing those of the race's sole moderate candidate. However, Raisi dominated the election only after a panel under the watch of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei disqualified his strongest competitor.

His candidacy, and the sense the election served more as a coronation for him, sparked widespread apathy among eligible voters in the Islamic Republic, which has held up turnout as a sign of support for the theocracy since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. Some, including former hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called for a boycott.

In initial results, former Revolutionary Guard commander Mohsen Rezaei won

3.3 million votes and moderate Abdolnasser Hemmati got 2.4 million, said Jamal Orf, the head of Iran's Interior Ministry election headquarters. The race's fourth candidate, Amirhossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi, had around 1 million votes, Orf said.

Hemmati offered his congratulations on Instagram to Raisi early Saturday.

I hope your administration provides causes for pride for the Islamic Republic of Iran, improves the economy and life with comfort and welfare for the great nation of Iran, he wrote. On Twitter, Rezaei praised Khamenei and the Iranian people for taking part in the vote.

God willing, the decisive election of my esteemed brother, Ayatollah Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, promises the establishment of a strong and popular government to solve the country's problems, Rezaei wrote.

The quick concessions, while not unusual in Iran's previous elections, signaled what semi-official news agencies inside Iran had been hinting at for hours: That the carefully controlled vote had been a blowout win for Raisi amid the boycott calls.

As night fell Friday, turnout

appeared far lower than in Iran's last presidential election in 2017. At one polling place inside a mosque in central Tehran, a Shiite cleric played soccer with a young boy as most of its workers napped in a courtyard.

At another, officials watched videos on their mobile phones as state television blared beside them, offering only tight shots of locations around the country as opposed to the long, snaking lines of past elec-

tions.

Balloting came to a close at 2 a.m. Saturday, after the government extended voting to accommodate what it called crowding at several polling places nationwide.

Paper ballots, stuffed into large plastic boxes, were to be counted by hand through the night, and authorities said they expected to have initial results and turnout figures Saturday morning at the earliest.

"My vote will not change anything in this election, the number of people who are voting for Raisi is huge and Hemmati does not have the necessary skills for this," said Hediya, a 25-year-old woman who gave only her first name while hurrying to a taxi in Haft-e-Tir Square after avoiding the polls. I have no candidate here."

Iranian state television sought to downplay the turnout, pointing to the Gulf

Arab sheikhdoms surrounding it ruled by hereditary leaders, and the lower participation in Western democracies. After a day of amplifying officials' attempts to get out the vote, state TV broadcast scenes of jam-packed voting booths in several provinces overnight, seeking to portray a last-minute rush to the polls.

But since the 1979 revolution overthrew the shah, Iran's theocracy has cited voter turnout as a sign of its legitimacy, beginning with its first referendum that won 98.2 per cent support that simply asked whether or not people wanted an Islamic Republic.

The disqualifications affected reformists and those backing Rouhani, whose administration both reached the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and saw it disintegrate three years later with then-President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal of America from the accord.

Tensions remain high with both the US and Israel, which is believed to have carried out a series of attacks targeting Iranian nuclear sites as well as assassinating the scientist who created its military atomic program decades earlier.

Whoever wins will likely serve two four-year terms and thus could be at the helm at what could be one of the most crucial moments for the country in decades.

Speculation already has begun that Raisi might be a contender for the position, along with Khamenei's son, Mojtaba.

the first serving Iranian president sanctioned by the US government even before entering office over his involvement in the mass execution of political prisoners in 1988, as well as his time as the head of Iran's internationally criticized judiciary one of the world's top executioners.

It also would put hard-liners firmly in control across the government as negotiations in Vienna continue to try to save a tattered deal meant to limit Iran's nuclear program at a time when Tehran is enriching uranium at its highest level ever, though it still remains short of weapons-grade levels.

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LEADER & FOLLOWERS



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, centre, attends a Workers' Party meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Friday. Kim ordered his government to be prepared for both dialogue and confrontation with the Biden administration. AP

North Korea's Kim Jong Un swears to overcome economic hardships

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, 19 JUNE

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "solemnly swore" to navigate his country out of deepening economic troubles as he concluded a major ruling party meeting, acknowledging food shortages and urging officials to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation with the US.

North Korea's state media released Kim's comments shortly before President Joe Biden's special representative for North Korea, Sung Kim, arrived in South Korea on Saturday for talks over stalled nuclear diplomacy with the North. Kim Jong Un had presided over a four-day plenary meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Com-

mittee, which he summoned to discuss efforts to salvage a dismal economy, hurt by years of mismanagement and US-led sanctions that were made worse by pandemic border closures.

As he closed the meetings on Friday, Kim solemnly swore on behalf of the Central Committee that the party will surely break through head-on the difficulties lying in the way of the revolution, the Korean Central News Agency reported.

Kim earlier ordered his government to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation with the United States, which has been urging the North to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions and return to talks.

Kim has threatened to bolster his nuclear deterrent and says the fate of diplomacy and bilateral relations depends on whether Washington abandons what he calls hostile policies.

US officials have suggested President Joe Biden would adopt a middle ground policy between his predecessors Trump's direct dealings with Kim and Barack Obama's strategic patience. But some experts say Washington won't likely provide the North with meaningful sanctions relief unless it takes concrete denuclearization steps first.

During his stay in South Korea, Sung Kim will meet with South Korean senior diplomats and participate in a trilateral meeting that includes Japanese nuclear envoy Takehiro Funakoshi on Monday.

over disagreements in exchanging the lifting of sanctions with the North's denuclearization steps.

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Editor, CEO denied bail in Apple Daily case

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG, 19 JUNE

A Hong Kong court ordered the top editor of pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily and the head of its parent company held without bail Saturday in the first hearing since their arrest two days ago under the city's national security law.

Ryan Law, the chief editor, and Cheung Kim-hung, the CEO of Next Digital, have been charged with collusion with a foreign country to endanger national security in a case widely seen as an attack on press freedom in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Chief Magistrate Victor So said there was not sufficient grounds to believe they would not violate the security law again and ordered them held at the Lai Chi Kok detention center. He set the next hearing for 13 August.

Law and Cheung arrived at the court in an unmarked

white van with covered windows. A handful of activists held up a banner and copies of the Apple Daily outside before the hearing began.

Three others also arrested Thursday two Apple Daily senior editors and another executive have not been charged yet and were released on bail late Friday pending further investigation.

The Apple Daily has long been one of the most outspoken defenders of civil liberties in Hong Kong. It supported massive protests demanding more democracy in 2019 and has criticized the subsequent crackdown, including the enactment of a national security law last year.

The government in Beijing has defended the legislation and the crackdown on Opposition voices as necessary to restore order. The 2019 protests that challenged Beijing's rule often started as peaceful marches during the day but turned into violent clashes between hard-core demon-

Polarised by war, Armenia votes today in an early election

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YEREVAN (ARMENIA), 19 JUNE

Armenia's leader is facing a tough challenge at the polls after a humiliating defeat for Armenian forces in last year's fighting with Azerbaijan over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called the early election for Sunday, seeking to assuage public anger over the peace deal he signed in November that triggered months of protests demanding his resignation.

The Moscow-brokered agreement ended six weeks of fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces, but saw Azerbaijan reclaim control over large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas that had been held by Armenian forces for more than a quarter-century.

The deal was celebrated as a major triumph in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku, but thousands of Armenians took to the streets in Yerevan and denounced it as a betrayal of their national interests.

This is very much a referendum or an election defined by security or more correctly, insecurity given the unexpected and very much unprecedented loss in the war for Nagorno-Karabakh, Richard Giragosian, director of the Yerevan-based Regional Studies Center, told.

The attack by Azerbaijan, with Turkish military support, has redefined the political landscape in Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but was under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the government in Yerevan since a separatist war between the two Caucasus Mountains neighbor-

bours ended in 1994, leaving the region and substantial surrounding territory in Armenian hands.

Hostilities flared in late September 2020, and the Azerbaijani military pushed deep into Nagorno-Karabakh and nearby areas in six weeks of fighting involving heavy artillery and drones that killed more than 6,000 people.

Pashinyan, who came to power after leading large street protests in 2018 that ousted his predecessor, has defended the deal as a painful but necessary move that prevented Azerbaijan from overrunning the entire Nagorno-Karabakh region. He stepped down as prime minister as required by law to hold the early vote but has remained in charge as acting prime minister.

In Sunday's election, more than 2,000 polling stations will open across Armenia, with nearly 2.6 million people eligible to vote. The ballot includes 21 political parties and four electoral blocs, but two political forces are seen as the main contenders: the ruling Civic Contract party led by Pashinyan and the Armenia alliance, led by former President Robert Kocharyan.

Both have used harsh rhetoric while campaigning. Kocharyan suggested a duel against Pashinyan with any type of weapon instead of debates, while Pashinyan brandished a hammer at his rallies, promising political vendettas and staff purges, referring to officials supporting the Opposition as rusty nails. Recent media reports cite polls showing Pashinyan's party and Kocharyan's bloc neck and neck, and it's unclear if either will be able to win 54 per cent of Parliament seats necessary to form a government.

Covid-19: The three barriers that stop people being vaccinated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MANCHESTER (UK), 19 JUNE

Getting everyone in a country vaccinated is like watching software updates load; it whizzes along for the first 80 per cent or so and then seems to take forever to finish the rest.

Around 80 per cent of the UK adult population has received at least one dose of the vaccine.

To fully vaccinate all adults is going to take a final big push. For it to be successful, those responsible for the vaccine rollout need to ensure that the public are sufficiently capable, have sufficient opportunity, and are sufficiently motivated to take the vaccine.

Motivation is about having the desire to have the vaccine. For example, some people might not believe the vaccine will protect them from Covid-19, or they may not be able to overcome their fear of needles.

People differ in their capa-



bilities, opportunities and motivations, so steps to increase vaccination uptake need to target the appropriate barrier.

For example, it is not helpful to tell people about the positive outcomes of Covid-19 vaccination if the vaccination is not available to them.

New guidance Researchers in the UK recently reviewed the evidence about what works to encourage people to take up vaccinations in pandemics and epidemics. They found

that the focus of previous interventions were mainly on changing capability (explaining why vaccines are safe and correcting misunderstandings) and motivation (telling people about the benefits of vaccination). There was little in the interventions that seemed to address opportunities.

This research formed the basis of a guidance, written by the British Psychological Society, to be considered by people in public health when trying to get people to have the vaccine. It recognised that people's capability, opportunity and motivation to take up the vaccine differed because of factors that are often outside of people's control.

For example, some countries have low opportunity because of the cost of the vaccine prevents mass vaccination. Some people may have low capability as there may not be enough information about vaccine safety for their particular group for example, pregnant women. And some people may have low motivation if they are afraid of leaving the home after shielding.

A person can have different capability, opportunity and motivation over time.

For instance, some may worry more about vaccine safety for the first dose but have problems with opportunity, because of a lack of local vaccination sites, for the second dose. Public health experts need to address all of these barriers to ensure that people can have the vaccine so we can all be protected from Covid-19 and get back to normal life.

Addressing the health officials on Friday to announce the easing of travel restrictions from 21 June till 25 June, Rajapaksa said he was planning to lift the lockdown on 14 June but could not do so due to the presentation of wrong data on Covid-19 deaths.

Sri Lanka shuffles senior health official

COLOMBO, 19 JUNE

A senior health official in Sri Lanka has been transferred after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa expressed his unhappiness over not being able to ease the Covid-19 restrictions in the country on 14 June due to



SHOTPUT WORLD RECORD

Olympic champion Ryan Crouser broke the 31-year-old world record of Randy Barnes in men's shot put at the US Olympic Trials, recording a throw of 23.37 metres. "I've wanted that world record for so long, it feels like a weight has been lifted," the 28-year-old said.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

CPL changes schedule: The BCCI seems to have ensured the participation of the Caribbean players in the remainder of the IPL as the organisers of the CPL have revised their schedule to avoid a clash of dates with the popular Indian T20 tournament. IPL was suspended mid-season last month after the coronavirus breached its bubble and is scheduled to restart in the UAE from 19 September.

Argentina beats Uruguay: Argentina beat Uruguay 1-0 in its second match at Copa America, making Lionel Messi's team co-leaders of Group A with Chile with four points each. Mid-fielder Guido Rodriguez scored the only goal at the Man Garrincha stadium in Brasilia with a header.

Of geese, swans and humans around football

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

Sunil Chhetri (in photo) gone merrily past Leo Messi and now breathing down the nape of Pele, said the paper, which would in due season also say "Eureka!" with a whoop and a holler. No one is making a molehill of a mountain, honestly here. The point at issue, of course, is who has scored how many for his country to afford a comparative basis, probably because a hack was at a loose end the day before India's World Cup qualifier against Afghanistan, never mind the quality of the football with which Chhetri's achievements were associated.

He has been around for an appreciable length of time and doing obviously well enough at domestic level to be carrying

on elsewhere, with the numbers suggesting proficiency of a sort but, let alone football's household names, would he even have been in the reckoning for a spot in the squad for the Asian Games in 1970 or thereabouts? No chance. And even later, when India had virtually ceased to matter continentally, Chhetri would not have had a berth in a first-choice Indian 11 except without an extremely unusual situation, owing maybe to injuries, overtaking them. IM Vijayan and Surajit Sengupta would surely have made it to Indian teams that they would have watched in action when they had been very young but Chhetri was never in the same class.

Football's ever-widening commercial opportunities had taken him to Major League Soccer all right but, accord-

SHORT POINT



ing to very well-placed sources, when disillusionment followed failure, it was the national federation which coughed up a huge amount of money to secure his release. Neither was he a sensational success

in Portugal, where he had fetched up too.

But Southern Asia is far less taxing and when individual abilities fall well short of justifiable, youthful ambitions, serviceable enough. What do

the goals signify, then? Consistency, certainly, and fitness as well - at the level where Chhetri plays. No more, no less. But then, we hardly get it right when Shuvo Pal's Bayern Munich break is written up to create the impression that he is Gerd Mueller all over again. At the moment, he hints only at interesting possibilities and we must recall how S Malswamitluanga spurned FC Cologne's overtures when on a tour of Germany with the Tata Football Academy.

If contemporary Indian football abounded in real heroes, celebrations of the goals by Chhetri or what Pal has pulled off would have been accorded their true perspective. Lacking them, we mistake geese for swans, though Pal has a lot of time to prove himself.

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Kohli takes India to 120/3

AGENCIES

SOUTHAMPTON, 19 JUNE

Virat Kohli's watchful effort in challenging conditions helped India reach 120 for three at tea on day two of the World Test Championship final here on Saturday.

India, who had reached 69 for two at lunch, was only able to add 51 runs in the afternoon with the loss of Cheteshwar Pujara (8 off 54). Kohli (35 not out off 94) had the company of his deputy Ajinkya Rahane (13 off 54) when early tea was taken due to bad light.

Compared to the morning session, New Zealand's all pace attack showed much more discipline to not allow the batsmen any easy runs.

With the Dukes ball moving around, Kohli paid due respect to the bowlers including Colin de Grandhomme, who bowled three successive maidens to the India skipper.

He was happy leaving anything outside the offstump and was quick to pick up runs when bowled into the pads. Such was Kohli's intent that he did not hit a single boundary in the session.

Pujara at the other end took 36 balls to open his account, a cut shot off Wagner that went for a boundary. Like Shubman Gill earlier in



the day, Pujara too was hit on the helmet but the blow from Wagner did not seem to bother him much.

Soon after, the gritty batsman was trapped in front by another left-arm, Boult, who swung it back enough sharply to beat the batsman.

Earlier, Rohit Sharma (34 off 68) and Shubman Gill (28 off 64) stayed off the initial swing threat posed by the opposition pace attack with disciplined batting before New Zealand fought back to leave India at 69 for two at lunch.

After day one was rained out,

cool and overcast conditions at the Hampshire Bowl on day two made it a no-brainer to bowl first and Kane Williamson did just that.

India decided to stick to the playing eleven they announced two days ago despite change in conditions while New Zealand went in with a four-prong pace attack at the expense of a specialist spinner with all-rounder de Grandhomme being the fifth seam bowler option.

Opening for the first time in England, Rohit and Gill came into the middle with a

clear gameplan and applied themselves brilliantly against the potent pace duo of Boult and Tim Southee to share a 62-run stand.

As often does, Rohit batted with an open stance to negotiate left-arm pacer Boult's trademark inswinger while Gill stood outside his crease to tackle Southee's outswinger. There were times when Gill was not afraid to come down the first hour of play.

The young Gill took a nasty hit on his helmet grill after Jamieson caught him by surprise with a sharp bouncer.

The lanky pacer was the one

who provided the much-needed breakthrough by having Rohit caught at third slip with Southee taking a terrific catch.

Wagner sent Gill back in his very first over with the one angling away and straight into the hands of wicketkeeper B J Watling, scripting New Zealand's late fightback in the session.

Brief scores: (Tea, Day 2): India 120/3 in 55.3 overs (V Kohli batting 35, Ajinkya Rahane batting 35, R Sharma 34, S Gill 28, K Jamieson 1/14, N Wagner 1/19, T Boult 1/29)

One-off women's Test: Wickets tumble but India reach 243/8, lead by 78 runs

AGENCIES

BRISTOL, 19 JUNE

Indian women suffered yet another batting collapse before their lower-order lifted them to 243 for 8 at tea as the one-off Test against England headed for a tense finish here on Saturday.

India lost four quick wickets for 28 runs after lunch but debutant Sneh Rana (27 not out) and veteran Shikha Pandey (18) kept the visitors afloat with a crucial 41-run partnership for the eighth wicket.

The duo batted for almost 17 overs before Pandey was

caught behind off N Sciver's bowling in the 91st over.

At the tea break, Tanvi Bhatia (3 not out) and Rana were at the crease with India leading by 78 runs with two wickets in hand. A minimum of 40 overs still remain in the match.

Resuming the second innings at 83 for one, India were 171 for three at lunch with Deepti Sharma producing a resolute 54.

Sharma shared 72 runs with Punam Raut (39 off 83 balls) but was dismissed at the stroke of lunch.

After the break, England

dealt two quick blows, dismissing skipper Mithali Raj (4) and Raut cheaply to leave India at 175 for five. While Raj completely misread a Ecclestone delivery only to see it clip the bails off, Raut, who was looking good till then, ended up giving a straight catch at square leg.

Pooja Vastrakar (12) then smashed three boundaries off Ecclestone in the 68th over before being cleaned up by Heather Knight in the 71st over.

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur, who had scored just 4 in the first innings, too couldn't last long in the middle as she

got out playing a slog sweep to become the fourth victim of Ecclestone.

Pandey and Rana then stemmed the rot as the duo hit eight boundaries between them.

Earlier, India lost opener Shafali (63) Verma early when she was caught by Katherine Brunt off Ecclestone in the 30th over. The India prodigy could add just eight more runs, which included a six off Ecclestone, to her overnight score of 55 as India slipped to 99 for 2.

Smacked for a straight six in the first ball of the over, Ecclestone came back to dismiss

Verma in the last delivery with Brunt taking a spectacular catch at long-on.

Sharma then produced a dogged half-century to keep alive India's hopes of forcing a draw.

Joining hands after losing Verma, Sharma and Raut showed great resilience as India took a lead of six runs with seven wickets in hand at lunch.

However, a sudden lapse of concentration saw Sharma go for a reckless slog off Sophie Ecclestone in the 58th over only to drag the ball onto her leg-stump in what was the last ball before lunch.

Unfazed Gilmour helps Scotland hold off England at Euro

AGENCIES

LONDON, 19 JUNE

Billy Gilmour (in photo, left) made his first international start against his team's biggest rival at a major soccer tournament.

And he wasn't fazed even a wee bit.

"I was ready," the 20-year-old Scotland midfielder said Friday after helping his team hold England to a 0-0 draw at the European Championship.

"I trained with the squad and all the boys have helped me settle in really well," Gilmour said.

To come in and play against England my first game so proud. Then to come here and do really well was even better."

Gilmour was included in Scotland's Euro 2020 squad before ever even playing a match for his national team.



"We know what we have got in camp," Scotland coach Steve Clarke said. "We try to manage him properly, keep a lid on things, and performances like that will do him no harm whatsoever."

Gilmour only turned 20 last week, on the opening night of the Euro 2020 tournament. On Tuesday, he'll likely be on the field again in Glasgow when Scotland plays Croatia at Hampden Park with a spot in the round of 16 on the line.

It wasn't until actually we were coming to the game, the last meeting we found out the team, Gilmour said.

Gilmour has been part of the team since June 2 in a friendly against the Netherlands, then came on again as a sub against Luxembourg four days later.

Gilmour is one of the most highly rated youngsters in the Premier League, making 11 appearances for Chelsea last season. He collected a Champions League winners' medal last month but stayed on the

bench throughout the final.

At Euro 2020, he again was an unused substitute in the team's opening loss to the Czech Republic. That's changed now.

It was nice for Billy to get that start. A big platform, a big stage, a big player, Clarke said.

Gilmour said he had an inkling he would be starting against England because he was involved in practicing set pieces. The good news came soon after.

It wasn't until actually we were coming to the game, the last meeting we found out the team, Gilmour said.

"The unfair and discriminatory" rules have drawn sharp criticism from the Indian

athletes and officials travelling for the Tokyo Olympics have been asked by the Japanese government to undergo daily COVID-19 tests for a week prior to their departure and not interact with anyone from another country for three days on arrival, strictures that have left the IOU fuming.

Stricter regulations have been put in place for all travellers -- including athletes, coaches and support staff -- who have resided in 11 countries, including India, where different variants of COVID-19 have been identified, within 14 days of their arrival in Tokyo.

"Before you travel: You must be tested every day, for seven days, prior to your departure to Japan," the advisory stated for the Group 1 countries.

"Physical distancing: For seven days prior to your departure to Japan, you must keep your physical interaction with all others, including from another team, delegation or country, to an absolute minimum," it added.

"On arrival, athletes and officials will also not be allowed to interact with anyone else apart from their delegation for three days."

"At the Games, you will be tested every day as is the case for all athletes and officials."

"For three days after your arrival in Japan, you will not be able to physically interact with anyone from another team, delegation or country."

"Athletes have been asked to check into the Games Village five days before their competition begins."

"IOA president Narinder Batra and secretary general Rajeev Mehta, in a joint statement, questioned the new

regulations.

"Athletes are allowed to arrive in the Games Village only 5 days before their event. Now 3 days will be wasted, this is the time the Athletes need to be moving towards their mode to Peak. Highly unfair for Indian Athletes," the joint statement read.

"Where and when will the Athletes have their Breakfast, Lunch Dinner etc during these 3 days, as everyone has food in the Games village food hall where all Athletes and officials of other NOCs are present all the time. If Food Packets are being delivered outside the Rooms of the Athletes then who will plan their body requirements like Proteins, food preferences etc and will not get their preferred diet, just 5 days before the Olympics."

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