

SHORT TAKES

2 lakh DU students to take online exams from today

New Delhi: Nearly two lakh final semester undergraduate and postgraduate students are expected to take the online open book exams in Delhi University that will commence from Monday. The examination branch officials held a meeting on Sunday with college principals and nodal officers to discuss the modalities of evaluation and results, DS Rawat, Dean(Examinations) said. "The meeting was held to discuss how to tackle the issues that arise. We want to start the evaluation process on Tuesday. Earlier, the process would start late. The papers will be held in two shifts — 9 AM to 12 noon and 2 PM to 5 PM," he said. The next day, officials will allot the examination sheets to teachers with a deadline to finish evaluating them. The principals will also be given a list of the teachers evaluating the sheets so that they can track the progress, he said. "The results usually take three months. For courses that have less number of students, the results can be finalised early," he said. Rawat said that he also told the principals that they can give "confidential results" to students in case they have to submit them to foreign universities for admission. "Usually, the last date for submission of results in universities is July 31 so in case some student needs the result, they can give us documentary evidence and write to us and we will give them the result," he said. The official said that last time, there was a university that was not accepting the confidential result of a student. "The student informed us and I wrote a personal email with my credentials and the varsity subsequently accepted it," he added. On Sunday night, students taking the exams will receive an email from Rawat with the guidelines of exams. Last year, during the first phase of the online open-book exams, students had complained about technical glitches in the submission of answer sheets. However, Rawat said that during the exams held in March this year, there were very few students who encountered technical glitches. — PTI

₹136cr heroin seized, 2 Afghans held at IGI

New Delhi: Two Afghan men have been arrested at the international airport here by Customs officials for allegedly smuggling in heroin worth ₹136 crore concealed in shampoo and hair colour bottles, one of the biggest seizures in recent times. The accused were intercepted upon arrival from Dubai on Friday. "Their baggages were scanned through the X-ray baggage scanning machine in which some suspicious/objectable images were noticed," a statement issued on Sunday by the Customs department said. On detailed examination, 19.48 kg of a black dense liquid was found contained in several shampoo and hair colour bottles packed in paper packaging boxes and kept in the checked-in baggages, it said. "Representative samples of the recovered substance were subjected to modified drug detection kit which prima facie confirmed the recovered substance to be heroin," the statement said. The value of the recovered substance, suspected to be heroin, is estimated to be ₹136.36 crore, it said. The heroin was seized, and the passengers were arrested, the statement added. — PTI

Elderly woman killed by caretaker during robbery

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

A 75-year-old woman was strangled to death allegedly by her caretaker and his two associates during a robbery at her flat in West Delhi's Hari Nagar area, the police said on Sunday. The recently hired caretaker, Monu (22), hatched a conspiracy along with his associates Vishal (22) and Naveen (31) to rob the woman and her husband as they were an "easy target," it said.

All three of them have been arrested from Burari

in North Delhi in connection with the murder-cum-robbery incident that took place on May 31, the police said. The deceased woman, Savitri Sharma, and her husband Jaipal, who is a chronic cancer patient, also suffered from mental health problems. DCP (West) Urviya Goel said, "We received information on June 1 that Savitri Sharma was admitted to Orchid Hospital in an unconscious state. She was declared unfit for statement by the attending doctor. Prima facie, the matter

► The deceased woman, Savitri Sharma, and her husband Jaipal, who is a chronic cancer patient, also suffered from mental health problems.0

► All three accused have been arrested from Burari in North Delhi in connection with the murder-cum-robbery incident that took place on May 31.

seemed to be of attempt to murder as strangulation marks were found on her neck. Hence, a case was registered accordingly, but she later succumbed to her

Centre stalled doorstep ration scheme 'influenced' by ration mafia, alleges Kejriwal

If pizza home-delivery is allowed during Covid, why not ration: CM

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday asked the Centre why it stalled its ambitious doorstep delivery of ration scheme in the national capital, which he said would have benefited lakhs of poor people. "Just two days before 'Doorstep Delivery of Ration' scheme's implementation in Delhi, the central government stopped it. If pizza delivery can be allowed amid the Covid-19 pandemic, then why not ration?" CM Kejriwal asked.

Mr Kejriwal accused the Centre of taking the step under the "influence" of the ration mafia, which he said has ensured that the "pro-poor and revolutionary scheme" does not get implemented in the national capital.

"If pizza, burgers, smart-phones and clothes can be delivered at home, then why can't ration be delivered at their doorstep?" Mr Kejriwal asked.

"For the first time, a government had taken a step to check on ration mafia. See how powerful they (ration mafia) are, they got the scheme cancelled just a week ahead of its implementation," he said.

Addressing a digital press conference, Mr Kejriwal also disputed the Centre's claim that his government did not take permission for the implementation of the scheme. "The Delhi government did not require the Centre's approval for the implementation of the scheme, but it sought permission five times to avoid any dispute," he said.

The doorstep ration delivery scheme, Mr Kejriwal said, would have benefited 72 lakh ration beneficiaries in the national capital.

He alleged that the Centre was fighting with everyone, including West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, Maharashtra, Delhi and Jharkhand governments, farmers and the people of Lakhsadweep. "People are distressed that the central government is fighting everyone. If we fight like this, how will we tackle Covid-19. Let me implement the scheme, I will give full credit to you (Prime Minister Narendra Modi). Ration does not belong to AAP nor the BJP. People want to read that Modiji and Kejriwal helped deliver ration to poor. With folded hands, I on behalf of 70 lakh poor people in Delhi request you to let us implement the scheme," Mr Kejriwal said.

The implementation of the ration scheme is the latest episode of the tussle between the two sides that share responsibilities in the national capital. The Delhi government on Saturday had claimed the doorstep delivery of ration scheme was rejected by the Lt governor saying the Centre's approval was not sought and that a litigation was pending in the high court regarding it.

The Delhi government had cleared the proposal to allow home delivery of rations to all cardholders of the capital last year in July to implement one of the major promises made by the Aam Aadmi Party in the run-up to the assembly polls held in February.



For the first time, a government had taken a step to check on ration mafia. See how powerful they (ration mafia) are, they got the scheme cancelled just a week ahead of its implementation.

— Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi CM

Kejriwal wants to raise middlemen army for his own money share: BJP

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Hitting out at Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi BJP on Sunday described Mr Kejriwal's claim as total lie. If Kejriwal really wants to do something for the poor, he should implement one-nation one-ration card yojna, said Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta.

Under the National Food Security Act and Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Yojna, the Centre is already giving free ration to 80 crore people in May and June and also 72 lakh

BJP behind theft of ration of 80 crore people: Sisodia

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 6

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday alleged that the BJP is interested in "abusing" chief minister Arvind Kejriwal instead of preventing theft of ration in the country. He also alleged that the saffron party was behind the theft of ration of 80 crore people across the country.

"I watched BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra's press conference. He did not mention the ration theft in the country and instead indulged in a tirade and an abusive

attack on Arvind Kejriwal," the senior AAP leader told reporters.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal claimed that the doorstep delivery of ration scheme was stalled by the Centre.

The BJP wants the ration theft to continue in the country and its leaders will "abuse" anyone who questions it as Patra did about Kejriwal, Sisodia said.

He claimed the BJP-led central government has no interest in investigating the black marketing of ration. "They want this shadow economy of ration to thrive," Sisodia said.

card holders are being given this ration, Gupta said at a press conference.

Leader of opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said, over 70 lakh people applied for ration cards in the last seven years but have not got it yet. Kejriwal wants to raise middlemen army for his own money share, said MP Meenakshi Lekhi.

Mr Gupta said to hide his own failure, Kejriwal is coming up with such lies while the fact remains under PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojna in May and till June 5, Delhi had got more than its fixed quota, that's it

has got 72,782 Mt. Of this state government has so far lifted only 53000 Mt and of this, only 68 per cent has been distributed. He said on top of it, while Kejriwal gives only ₹2 subsidy on per kg wheat the Centre gives ₹23.73 while on rice Kejriwal gives only ₹3 per kg subsidy while center gives ₹33.79. He said if Kejriwal wants to distribute ration in addition to this, he can buy it on the notified rate and neither Centre nor anyone would object to that. But to describe Centre's policies as his own is low level politics, he charged.

Petrol crosses ₹95 per litre in Delhi, ₹100 mark in 6 states

New Delhi, June 6: Petrol price on Sunday crossed ₹95 a litre in Delhi and diesel breached ₹86 per litre mark for the first time ever as fuel prices were hiked again.

Petrol price was increased by 21 paise per litre and diesel 20 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The hike — 20th since May 4 — took fuel prices across the country to a historic high. Petrol is now above ₹100 per litre mark in six states and union territories - Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Ladakh.

In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 95.09 a litre, while diesel is now priced at ₹86.01 per litre.

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

Retail prices have risen after an increase in international oil prices on investors' optimism that improving demand and a dwindling supply glut may mean the market can absorb any additional production from OPEC and its allies.

Brent crude, the global oil-price benchmark, is nearing \$72 per barrel for the first time in two years. — PTI

Court rejects plea to produce Umar Khalid, Saifi in handcuffs

New Delhi, June 6: A court here turned down a plea of Delhi Police to produce former JNU student Umar Khalid and activist Khalid Saifi in handcuffs before trial courts, noting that "they are not gangsters".

The plea application which came up for hearing before Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav sought to produce the 2020 Delhi riots accused in "handcuffs in both hands from back side", contending that they are "high-risk prisoners".

The judge dismissed the plea observing that it is devoid of merits and filed in a mechanical manner and without application of mind by the high echelons of the Delhi Police and prison authority.

"The accused persons, who are sought to be produced in fetters and hand-



Umar Khalid Khalid Saifi

cuffs, are admittedly not previous convicts. They are not even gangsters," the Additional Sessions Judge stated in an order dated June 5.

He further said that the plea is not required at this stage as the accused are not being produced in the court physically due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The judge also noted the replies submitted by the superintendent of Mandoli and Tihar jail, Additional DCP (Special Cell) and DCP of third battalion of Delhi Police, on the plea.

The DCP told the court that in the aftermath of an attempt made by armed assailants to free an undertrial prisoner at GTB Hospital, the police had decided to request the court for permission to handcuff high-risk prisoners who are prone to escape.

"As part of the exercise, the current application for handcuffing UTPs Umar Khalid and Khalid Saifi was moved for the consideration of Hon'ble Court," the senior police officer stated in a reply submitted to the court on April 26.

However, in the reply given by the Additional DCP of Special Cell, it was stated that no such application seeking to produce both the accused in handcuffs, was filed before any court or other authority. — PTI

IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that the Railways have decided to restore & increased in frequency of the following Special Trains, as per the following details:-

RESTORATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name		Revised Frequency	Restoration w.e.f.
02033/02034 Kanpur Central-New Delhi-Kanpur Central Shatabdi Special		4 Days a week (except Tue, Thu, Sun)	07.06.2021 to till further advice
02179/02180 Lucknow Jn.-Agra Fort-Lucknow Jn. Reserved Superfast Special		5 Days a week (except Sat, Sun)	07.06.2021 to till further advice
INCREASED IN FREQUENCY OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Existing Frequency	Revised Frequency	Dates effective from
04113 Subedarganj-Dehradun Express Special	Bi-Weekly (Mon, Fri)	Tri-Weekly (Mon, Wed , Fri)	09.06.2021 to till further advice
04114 Dehradun-Subedarganj Express Special	Bi-Weekly (Mon, Thu)	Tri-Weekly (Mon, Thu, Sat)	12.06.2021 to till further advice
04125 Kathgodam-Dehradun Express Special	Bi-Weekly (Wed, Sun)	Tri-Weekly (Wed, Fri , Sun)	11.06.2021 to till further advice
04126 Dehradun-Kathgodam Express Special	Bi-Weekly (Tue, Sat)	Tri-Weekly (Tue, Thu , Sat)	10.06.2021 to till further advice

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

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

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SHORT TAKES

K'taka govt shunts 2 woman IAS officers

Bengaluru: The Karnataka government has shunted out two warring IAS officers Rohini Sindhuri and Shilpa Nag C.T., who had indulged in an ugly public spat over the past few days, out of Mysuru. Sindhuri, who was deputy commissioner of Mysuru district, has been transferred as commissioner for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, a post she had held earlier. She is replaced by Bagadi Gautham, who was additional commissioner for commercial taxes (Enforcement), until now. Nag, who was Mysuru City Corporation Commissioner, has been posted as director (e-governance) at the RDRP department, and she will be replaced by Lakshminanth Reddy G., who was until now managing director of Karnataka food and civil supplies corporation, an official notification late on Saturday said. The feud between two women officers was out in public in the last few days, with Nag announcing resignation at a press conference, accusing Sindhuri of "harassment". — PTI

Pro-Khalistan slogans at Golden Temple

Amritsar: Supporters of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Mann) raised pro-Khalistan slogans at the Golden Temple and a large number of young people carried banners and placards saying "Khalistan Zindabad" on the 37th anniversary of Operation Bluestar on Sunday. Describing the event as the "ghalughara (holocaust)" of 1984, Jathedar Akal Takht Gyani Harpreet Singh stressed on maintaining unity among the Sikh community. Actor-activist Deep Sidhu, who was arrested in connection with the violence during the farmers' tractor march on January 26 and later released on bail, was also seen at the Golden Temple along with former MP Simranjit Singh Mann. Operation Bluestar was an Army operation which was carried out in 1984 to flush out the militants from the Golden Temple. — PTI

Marathas to hold statewide stir for reservation June 16

BJP MP Sambhajiraje slams party, Maha govt over politics on quota

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, JUNE 6

After the supreme court struck down the reservation for Marathas, the aggressive community leaders have decided to hold a statewide agitation across the state to press for their demands. The BJP MP Chhatrapati Sambhaji, who is not on good terms with his party leaders, announced on Sunday that the first rally will be held on June 16 in Kolhapur.

"We will no longer be patient. A protest morcha will be taken out from the samadhi of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj in Kolhapur," he said at

Raigad fort on Sunday while speaking at the event organised to mark the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in 1674.

Five years back, the Maratha community had held similar mammoth but peaceful rallies demanding reservation that had then become the talk of the country. Under pressure, the then BJP-led Maharashtra government had provided quotas to the Maratha community in the educational institutions and government jobs. However, the SC last month struck down the reservation saying that the state government does not have the right to do so.

FIVE YEARS back, the Maratha community had held similar mammoth but peaceful rallies demanding reservation that had then become the talk of the country. Under pressure, the then BJP-led Maha govt had provided quotas to the Maratha community in the educational institutions and government jobs.

Sambhajiraje, a descendant of Shivaji Maharaj, said that he will tour the entire state for the quota demand. He criticised the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government and

the BJP saying instead of helping the community, they both were involved in a 'political blame game' after the Supreme Court's verdict denying reservation to the Maratha community. He appealed to the Uddhav Thackeray-led state government to make every effort to ensure that the community gets justice. The state government has appointed a committee of retired High court judge Dilip Bhosale to study the ruling and suggest a way forward. The committee in this report submitted has recommended the government to move a review petition in the SC challenging its verdict.

Suvendu's aide held for alleged role in job scam

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 6

A close aide of the Leader of Opposition in West Bengal, Suvendu Adhikari, was arrested by the Manicktala police in North Kolkata, on Saturday evening, for allegedly running a fake government job racket when the present BJP MLA of Nandigram was the state irrigation and waterways minister of the Mamata Banerjee government two years ago.

Rakhal Bera, the accused, is from East Midnapore, the native place of Mr Adhikari. Mr Bera, along with another, Chandan Nandi from Contai in the same district, ran a camp inside a flat at the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics Cooperative Housing Society on Maniktala Road between July and September in 2019, preliminary investigation revealed. They had collected ₹2 lakh per head from Sujit Dey and many others promising each a Group-D level job in the state irrigation and waterways department of which Mr Adhikari was the minister, according to sources. But Mr Dey later found their promise was false

THEY HAD collected ₹2 lakh per head from Sujit Dey and many others promising each a Group-D level job in the state irrigation and waterways department of which Mr Adhikari was the minister.

after learning that the department had not issued any recruitment notification.

The resident of Ashoknagar in North 24 Parganas lodged a complaint with the police on February 27 this year against Mr Bera and Mr Nandi among others. Later, an FIR was initiated under Sections 120B, 420, 467, 468, and 471 of the Indian Penal Code.

Mr Nandi, who is a retired employee of the irrigation department, is absconding. On Sunday, Mr Bera was produced at the Sealdah court. His lawyer, Kallol Ghosh, argued that his client was being targeted because of his links to Mr Adhikari. He prayed for his bail. The police, however, sought 14-day custody for Mr Bera for his interrogation to extract further details of the job scam. Hearing both sides, the judge remanded the accused in police custody till June 12.

BJP rules out Yogi & Modi rift, UP Cabinet expansion

Lucknow, June 6: BJP national vice-president Radha Mohan Singh on Sunday dismissed the possibility of an imminent Cabinet reshuffle in Uttar Pradesh and shot down the speculation over a rift between Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr Singh, the party's in-charge in UP, also junked talks over the possibilities of a change in party's or the government leadership in the state, asserting that both are working fine.

Mr Singh made the rebuttals while talking to PTI after his meeting with governor Anandiben Patel, which he described as a personal one.

Asked about a TV news channel report claiming an imminent Cabinet expansion in UP, Mr



Radha Mohan Singh

Singh told PTI, "No expansion is going to take place now. Everyone is focussed on the election of zila panchayat chairpersons. When it takes place, it will be known," he added.

The reports appearing in newspapers and news channels do not make any sense, he quipped.

Mr Singh also junked the reports on the alleged rift between Modi and Yogi, describing the CM as the most competent implement to fulfil PM's dream.

"If you look at newspapers, you will see that

Modi Ji was the first to greet Yogi Ji (on birthday). In fact, we are of the view that Yogi Ji is the most competent implement to fulfil the dreams of Modiji," he said. The BJP vice-president also discounted reports on likely changes in party's and government leadership in Uttar Pradesh, terming them as a figment of imagination.

"This is a figment of imagination. No question arises of it. Both the government and the organisation are working fine," he asserted.

Mr Singh's also dismissed Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's recent claim that dissent and rebellious attitude of BJP workers have left the party leadership in shock and shot back, "What does he know of a party? He runs a company." — PTI

Odisha BJYM leader beaten to death, 3 held

Baripada (Odisha), June 6: A BJP Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader has been beaten to death by miscreants in Mayurbhanj district, a police officer said. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the incident, he said.

Ranjit Pradhan (35), the BJYM district in-charge of Balasore, was on his way to his in-laws' place, when four bike-borne men intercepted his car at Nuasahi in Kaptipada police station area of the district. The saffron party leader reportedly engaged in an argument with the four men, following which he was thrashed at the spot, Sanjay Pradhan, the officer in-charge of Kaptipada police station, said. The BJYM leader was taken to Udala sub-divisional hospital, where the doctors declared him brought dead. — PTI

Ghosh threatens to leave TMC 'suffocating' inside Assembly

AGE CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, JUNE 6

Unfazed by a revolt against him in his party following its whitewash in the West Bengal Assembly election, state BJP president Dilip Ghosh, on Sunday, threatened to leave the ruling Trinamul Congress "suffocated" inside the Assembly. He even asserted that his party would have come to power, in terms of vote percentage, if it was another state.

The Midnapore BJP MP said, "Our party is doing well. We got around 38 per cent votes this time here. Had it been any other state, we could have formed our government with such a vote bank. We also have 75 seats in the Assembly. We will leave them suffocated inside the Assembly while fighting outside over the plight of the people."

Lashing out at Mr Ghosh, Baranagar TMC MLA Tapas Roy claimed, "What a dangerous comment! BJP has imposed suffocation across

the country in the last seven years. People of Bengal felt it and got relief with the results in the Assembly polls. BJP, irrespective of its state or Central leadership, does not have a political stand except for making dangerous comments."

Hours after the state BJP chief's comments, a party worker was murdered by a gang of miscreants, allegedly backed by the TMC, in Barrackpore of North 24 Parganas. The victim, J.P. Yadav, was a jute mill worker. He lived at Bhatpara. In the afternoon, three miscreants visited his home and hurled crude bombs at him. He was fatally injured.

Yadav was declared brought dead at the Bhatpara State General Hospital. The police later detained one of the three accused after finding him lying injured as a bomb had exploded in his hands. Barrackpore BJP MP Arjun Singh visited the area and blamed the TMC for the murder.

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

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

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS			
Train No.	Train Name	Date of Cancellation (from originating station)	
05252	Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Jn Special Express	on 27.06.2021	
05251	Darbhanga Jn - Jalandhar City Special Express	on 26.06.2021	
02238	Jammu Tawi - Varanasi Jn Special Express	on 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021	
02237	Varanasi Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26, 27, 28 & 29.06.2021	
04132	Udhampur - Prayagraj Jn Special Express	on 27 & 30.06.2021	
04131	Prayagraj Jn - Udhampur Special Express	on 26 & 29.06.2021	
02054/53	Amritsar Jn - Haridwar Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021	
05212	Amritsar Jn - Darbhanga Jn Special Express	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021	
05211	Darbhanga Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 24, 26 & 28.06.2021	
02920	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Dr Ambedkar Nagar Special Exp.	on 27 & 30.06.2021	
02919	Dr Ambedkar Nagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Exp.	on 25 & 28.06.2021	
04650	Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Saryu Yamuna Special Express	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021	
04649	Jaynagar Jn - Amritsar Jn Saryu Yamuna Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021	
04674	Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Shaheed Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021	
04673	Jaynagar Jn - Amritsar Jn Shaheed Special Express	on 26, 28 & 30.06.2021	
02380	Amritsar Jn - Sealdah Jaliawala Bagh Special Express	on 27.06.2021	
02379	Sealdah - Amritsar Jn Jaliawala Bagh Special Express	on 25.06.2021	
02026	Amritsar Jn - Nagpur Special Express	on 28.06.2021	
02025	Nagpur - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 26.06.2021	
04672	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Bandra Terminus Swaraj Special Exp.	on 26, 29 & 30.06.2021	
04671	Bandra Terminus - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Swaraj Special Exp.	on 25, 27 & 28.06.2021	
04675	Gandhidham Jn - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express	on 26.06.2021	
04676	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Gandhidham Jn Special Express	on 24.06.2021	
04678	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Hapa Special Express	on 26.06.2021	
04677	Hapa - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express	on 29.06.2021	
04679	Jamnagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Express	on 30.06.2021	
04680	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Jamnagar Special Express	on 27.06.2021	
02356	Jammu Tawi - Patna Jn Special Express	on 27 & 30.06.2021	
02355	Patna Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26 & 29.06.2021	
02422/21	Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021	
04652	Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Jn Special Express	on 23, 25, 27 & 30.06.2021	
04651	Jaynagar Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 25, 27, 29.06.21 & 02.07.21	
04654	Amritsar Jn - New Jalpaiguri Superfast Special Express	on 30.06.2021	
04653	New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar Jn Superfast Special Express	on 25.06.2021	
02318	Amritsar Jn - Kolkata Special Express	on 29.06.2021	
02317	Kolkata - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 27.06.2021	
02358	Amritsar Jn - Kolkata Special Express	on 28.06.2021 & 01.07.2021	
02357	Kolkata - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 26 & 29.06.2021	
05098	Jammu Tawi - Bhagalpur Special Express	on 29.06.2021	
05097	Bhagalpur - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 24.06.2021	
04145	Kanpur Central - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 28.06.2021	
04146	Amritsar Jn - Kanpur Central Special Express	on 29.06.2021	
04646	Jammu Tawi - Jaisalmer Special Express	on 24, 26, 28 & 29.06.2021	
04645	Jaisalmer - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 26, 28, 30.06.21 & 01.07.21	
04662	Jammu Tawi - Barmer Special Express	on 23, 25 & 27.06.2021	
04661	Barmer - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021	
01078	Jammu Tawi - Pune Jn Special Express	on 26, 27, 28 & 29.06.2021	
01077	Pune Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 25, 26, 27 & 28.06.2021	
03006	Amritsar Jn - Howrah Jn Special Express	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021	
03005	Howrah Jn - Amritsar Jn Special Express	on 25, 26, 27, 28 & 29.06.2021	

02332	Jammu Tawi - Howrah Jn Special Express	on 27 & 28.06.2021
02331	Howrah Jn - Jammu Tawi Special Express	on 25 & 26.06.2021
04674	Amritsar - Jaynagar Shaheed Special Express	on 25, 27 & 29.06.2021

DIVERSION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Diversion Route	Date of passing (from originating station)
02426/02425 Jammu Tawi - New Delhi - Jammu Tawi Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Jakhal Jn	on 26, 27, 28 & 29 30.06.2021
02408 Amritsar Jn - New Jalpaiguri Special Express	Diverted via Sanehal - Chandigarh	on 25.06.2021
02407 New Jalpaiguri - Amritsar Jn Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Sanehal	on 16.06.2021
04652 Amritsar Jn - Jaynagar Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Rajpura Jn	on 11, 13 & 25.06.21
02920 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Dr Ambedkar Nagar Special Express	Diverted via Sanehal - Chandigarh	on 11 & 25.06.2021
00464 Amritsar Jn - Howrah Jn Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Rajpura Jn	on 25.06.2021
02278 Jammu Tawi - Tirupati Special Express	Diverted via Gill - Dhuri Jn - Rajpura Jn	on 25.06.2021
02277 Tirupati - Jammu Tawi Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Sanehal	on 15.06.2021
02325 Kolkata - Nangal Dam Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Morinda	on 24.06.2021
02326 Nangal Dam - Kolkata Special Express	Diverted via Morinda - Chandigarh	on 26.06.2021
05252 Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Jn Spl Exp.	Diverted via Sanehal - Chandigarh	on 13.06.2021
02317 Kolkata - Amritsar Jn Special Express	Diverted via Chandigarh - Sanehal	on 16.06.2021

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short Originating from	Partially Cancelled between Station	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
03308 Firozpur Cantt Jn - Dhanbad Jn Special Express	from Saharanpur	Firozpur Cantt Jn - Saharanpur	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
03307 Dhanbad Jn - Firozpur Cantt Jn Special Express	at Saharanpur	Saharanpur - Firozpur Cantt Jn	on 24, 25, 26, 27 & 28.06.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn - Korba Special Express	from Hazrat Nizamuddin	Amritsar Jn - Hazrat Nizamuddin	on 27.06.2021
08237 Korba - Amritsar Jn Special Express	at Hazrat Nizamuddin	Hazrat Nizamuddin - Amritsar Jn	on 25.06.2021
04502/04501 Una Himachal - Saharanpur - Una Himachal Special Express	from / at Ambala Cant	Una Himachal - Ambala Cant - Una Himachal	from 26.06.2021 to 30.06.2021
02904 Amritsar Jn - Mumbai Central Special Express	from Ambala Cant	Amritsar Jn - Ambala Cant	on 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.06.2021
02903 Mumbai Central - Amritsar Jn Special Express	at Ambala Cant	Ambala Cant - Amritsar Jn	on 24, 25, 26, 27 & 28.06.2021

RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Rescheduled of Trains
04502 Una Himachal - Saharanpur Special Express	Train will be Rescheduled to depart from Una Himachal at 15:00 hrs. instead of 13:30 hrs. (90 minutes late) on 25.06.2021

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

SKIPPING OF STOPPAGE AT SIRHIND STATION	
Train No. & Name	Date(s)
08238 Amritsar Jn - Korba Special Express	on 25.06.2021
03308 Firozpur Cantt Jn - Dhanbad Jn Special Express	on 25.06.2021
04662 Jammu Tawi - Barmer Special Express	on 25.06.2021
01078 Jammu Tawi - Pune Jn Special Express	on 25.06.2021

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SPECIAL TRAIN
For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Superfast Special Express Train as per the schedule given below:-

04127/04128 PRAYAGRAJ - ANAND VIHAR (T) - PRAYAGRAJ SUPERFAST SPECIAL EXPRESS (WEEKLY)		04
Train No.: 04127	STATIONS	Train No.: 04128
ARR. DEP.		ARR. DEP.
----	20:20	18:20 ----
06:10	ANAND VIHAR (T)	08:25

DAYS OF RUN: 04127 from Prayagraj on 11.06.2021 & 18.06.2021 (Friday) & 04128 from Anand Vihar (T) on 12.06.2021 & 19.06.2021 (Saturday).

STOPPAGE: Fatehpur, Kanpur Central, Etawah, Tundla, Aligarh, & Ghaziabad Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

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

For any kind of information such as arrival/departure timings and stoppages enroute, the passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SHORT TAKES

Gangster shot dead in Gorakhpur

Gorakhpur: An alleged gangster involved in a BSP leader's murder over two years ago and operating from neighbouring Nepal was shot dead by UP STF sleuths on a visit here on Sunday, an official said. STF's Gorakhpur unit DySP Dharmesh Kumar Shahi said sharpshooter Navez Ahmed had escaped to Nepal after killing BSP leader Jugaram Mehndi and the police had declared a reward of Rs 1 lakh on his arrest. A resident of Makhdoomnagar in Amedbedkar Nagar district, Ahmed was killed in an encounter with the STF sleuths at Sarhari Road in the Pipiganj of Gorakhpur area where he was spotted on a motorcycle along with one of his associates, said Shahi. The police team surrounded the two on Chiuntaha-Sarhari bridge and asked them to surrender, but he opened fire at the police team, he said. — PTI

Man pushes wife, 2 daughters into well

Chhatrapur, MP: A 42-year-old man allegedly pushed his wife and two daughters into a well in anger at not having a son, leading to the death of his 8-year-old child, police in Chhatrapur in Madhya Pradesh said on Sunday. Raja Bhaiya Yadav's (42) wife had given birth to a daughter three months ago and he was bringing them back along with another daughter from his in-laws' place in neighbouring Panna district on Saturday when he stopped his motorcycle near a well in Padoi village, Sub Inspector Rajendra Singh of Chandla police station said. "He pushed his wife and two daughters into the well. The accused even threw stones at his wife as she struggled to come out of the well. His eight-year-old daughter died, while the woman and her three-month-old daughter were rescued by villagers who heard their cries," he said.

Team in Bengal to assess Yaas damage

Kolkata: A seven-member Inter-Ministerial Central Team, which will assess the damage caused by cyclone Yaas in West Bengal by visiting affected areas, reached Kolkata on Sunday evening, an official said. The team headed by S K Shahi, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, is scheduled to complete its assessment by June 9 and return to Delhi, he said. On Monday, the IMCT will visit Digha and Mandarmani in Purba Medinipur district, where state government officials will give a presentation on the damage caused by the cyclone, the official said. The team is also likely to hold a meeting with the state finance department officials during its three-day visit. — PTI

Panneerselvam urges PM to cancel medical, other exams

AIADMK backs DMK govt on Neet

Chennai, June 6: AIADMK top leader O. Panneerselvam on Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to abolish the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test and other similar examinations for all professional and other courses. A day after chief minister M.K. Stalin urged Mr Modi to cancel all national level tests like Neet and allow Tamil Nadu to fill professional seats, including the MBBS, based on Class 12 marks, Mr Panneerselvam backed the DMK government's position. Till her death in 2016, late AIADMK chief J. Jayalalithaa had strongly opposed Neet and AIADMK government (2011-21) opposed it all



O. Panneerselvam

along and two Bills were also adopted in the Assembly in 2017 but to no avail, Mr Panneerselvam said in a letter to Mr Modi. Listing the difficulties faced by Tamil Nadu students, especially those belonging to socially and economically backward groups, he said there is a need for separate coach-

ing to take the test since it is modelled on NCERT-CBSE curriculum and they cannot afford the fee charged by coaching centres.

Introduction of Neet has made it difficult for aspirants from the marginalised communities in Tamil Nadu to pursue medical education, he said.

Sanctioning 11 medical colleges for TN in recent times, besides the AIIMS in Madurai and cancellation of the Class 12 CBSE board examination were well received and highly appreciated, Mr Panneerselvam, popularly known as OPS, said.

Similarly, OPS, a former chief minister and also Deputy CM requested Mr Modi "to take a uniform

policy decision to abolish not only the Neet for enrolment in medical courses but also the common entrance examinations for all the professional and other courses forever."

The Centre should allow states to make admission based on the marks obtained by students in their higher secondary examination and "for which act of kindness, the people of Tamil Nadu will ever be grateful to you," the AIADMK leader said.

One of the grounds for their opposition is that such tests went against social justice and denied opportunities to students from socially disadvantaged groups and aspirants from rural regions. — PTI

40,000 inoculated in a single day



A mega Covid vaccination drive to inoculate 40,000 people in a single day was taken up in Madhapur, Telangana, on Sunday. The drive was carried out jointly by the Cyberabad police, Society for Cyberabad Security Council and Medicover Hospitals, an official release from the police said. — PTI

Saree-clad horse & Enfield-riding Odia woman a big YouTube hit

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 6

Monalisa Bhadra, a young housewife hailing from Bari area in Odisha's Jajpur district, has now become a rage on YouTube. Crores of people are curiously watching the saree-clad woman getting engaged in daring activities that are often considered of male domains.

While in one of her video clips, 32-year-old Monalisa appears a complete rustic woman cooking food for family on traditional earth-oven, in another clip she is seen ploughing farmlands with a heavy tractor. In yet another clip, she is seen zooming past the villagers on a bullet motorcycle on a submerged road to reach a particular destination to feed stray animals.

In a few other video clips that capture her adventurousism, she is seen flawlessly driving a large Volvo bus in state capital Bhubaneswar and a large truck on the Daitary-Paradip national highway. What has attracted more followers to her is the motherly affection for monkeys.



Monalisa Bhadra rides a horse and a motorcycle



The young lady, mother of two little children, now has 22.40 lakh subscribers and 76 crore views on YouTube. She earns nearly ₹1.50 lakh monthly from the digital platform.

Monalisa's tryst with YouTube began when she posted her first video featuring her love for monkeys. Her husband Badrinarayan had shot the entire scene. The video got a million views within hours, making her a YouTube sensation. Her next video showing her adventurously facing a cobra also got wide admiration and appreciation.

"I'm quite happy people all over the world have bestowed their love and affection on me by appreciating my work. I will continue to do good work for my fellow people and animals," says Monalisa.

Pant hospital drops circular

■ **Continued from Page 1** (GIPMER). "Malayalam, the mother tongue of Malayalees, is one of the official languages of India. Dividing employees on the basis of language and culture is not conducive to a civilised society. In particular, such measures are not in line with our country and its culture, which places great importance on the mother tongue," he said. The Congress party led by Rahul Gandhi demanded strict action against the hospital for issuing a "discriminatory circular" and termed it unconstitutional and denial of the

fundamental rights. "Malayalam is as Indian as any other Indian language. Stop language discrimination," Mr Gandhi said.

Explaining about the said circular, the nursing superintendent of the hospital said that the authorities had to issue a circular against the use of Malayalam because some patients had complained that they were unable to understand what the nurses were talking.

"Maximum patients and colleagues do not know this language and feel helpless and it causes a lot of inconveniences," the

nursing superintendent's circular read. "So it is directed to all nursing personnel to use only Hindi and English for communication otherwise serious action will be taken," the nursing superintendent had said.

An official of the G.B. Pant nurses' association said that there are around 850 nurses working at the hospital and 400 of them are Malayali. The association's president, Liladhar Ramchandani, claimed the circular was issued based on a complaint sent by a patient to a senior officer in the health department.

TMC calls out gov for 'nepotism'

■ **Continued from Page 1** Major Gorang Diksit, ex-ADC to the governor; Prashant Diksit, OSD protocol who is the "brother" of Maj Diksit, Koustav S. Valikar, OSD IT, who is the "brother-in-law of present ADC to governor Srikant Janardan Rao" and Kishan Dhankhar, a "newly-appointed OSD," is a "close relative of the governor." Mr Rao is a 2015-batch IPS officer in rank of a superintendent of police. The names of Ms Dubey and Mr Valikar could not be found on the Raj Bhavan website. The governor had earlier tweeted, "Extremely alarming scenario. Security environment seriously compromised.

With each day state is sliding in lawlessness and vindictive actions are on the rise...The state is in grip of unprecedented post poll retributive violence at unimaginable scale, with lakhs of people being displaced and property worth hundreds of crores vandalised. Rampant vandalism and hooliganism has resulted in large scale arson, loot, destruction of property."

"Numerous instances of rapes and killings at the hands of rogue elements who have no fear of law. People are suffering targeted violence for 'daring' to vote against ruling dispensation. A highly worrisome aspect is that this ostracisation has now

graduated to their social boycott and denial of benefits they are otherwise entitled. They are being made to suffer 'extortion fee' for living in their own house or run their own business," he added. Mr Dhankhar added, "There is state of anarchy and lawlessness. All elements of 'police state' are amply reflected. Democratic values are openly shredded and trampled by ruling party harms. People are in mortal fear of police and that in turn is at the feet of ruling party rogue elements. Most unfortunate that state functionaries are not even recognising this malaise much less take steps to contain it."

Lakshadweep issues order for intel gathering

■ **Continued from Page 1** cover activities of any vessels operating in 30 nautical mile areas.

Faizal said every month or once in three months Coast Guard is having regular interaction with the local fishermen to train them on how to report the movement of suspected objects in the seas. "All this training is given to the fishermen. They are very cooperative with the security agencies. By introducing such a law, what are they (administration) trying to establish?" he asked.

Mr Faizal alleged that the administrations actions showed that they don't believe the innocent fishermen community of Lakshadweep.

"The recent order, which has come in the way of surveillance on the coastal areas of Lakshadweep, is really a mockery... I feel", he told PTI.

Alleging discrimination, he asked why such surveillance using officials onboard fishing vessels were not happening in coastal states like Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Issuing the order on hygiene and cleanliness, the administration said whoever violates or contravenes any of the directions shall be liable for punishment with fine as per Schedule I of the Lakshadweep Solid Waste Management Bye-Law, 2018 and also be liable to criminal proceedings for offence punishable under Section 188 of IPC.

Questioning the provision in the order directing scientific disposal of biodegradable materials like coconut leaves,

Mr Faizal said the land of Lakshadweep became fertile because the forefathers who lived in the islands buried them in the soil.

He also said it is the responsibility of the administration to provide technology for scientifically managing the waste.

Asked whether he had taken up the matter with the Union government, Mr Faizal said, "I feel really ashamed of taking up such matters with them".

Meanwhile, the Congress has decided to step up its agitation against the administration for its "anti-people" reform measures in the islands.

According to party sources, the MPs from the Congress-led UDF in Kerala will organise a dharna in front of the territorial administration office in Kochi on Monday.

Expressing solidarity with the people of Lakshadweep, the Kerala Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution demanding the recall of island administrator Praful Khoda Patel and requesting the Centres immediate intervention to protect the lives and livelihood of the islanders.

An archipelago located in the Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep has been witnessing protests by locals for over the recent actions and administrative reforms being implemented by Patel.

Defending its action, the Lakshadweep administration has said it was laying the foundation for the future of islands in a planned way and to develop it on the lines of Maldives in two decades. — PTI

RSS affiliate calls for big hike in NGREGA funds

Seeks free food grains, financial aid to vulnerable sections

New Delhi, June 6: The Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), an RSS-affiliate, on Sunday suggested the government to substantially increase funds for its rural employment guarantee scheme and extend financial support to the vulnerable sections in addition to free food grains.

In a resolution passed at its two-day national council meeting, the outfit also suggested that the government should consider providing specific stimulus to the sectors most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns, like construction, fishing and horticulture etc "in terms of soft loans".

It is a foregone conclusion that increasing health expenses and reduced employment opportunities have further worsened the economic situation of poorer households, increased poverty level and con-

tributed to wealth disparities, the SJM said. In this unprecedented difficult situation in the country, the SJM suggests consider and extend financial support to the vulnerable sections of the society in addition to free food grains, substantially increase the fund allocation for MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act scheme) to support rural employment, a specific stimulus to sectors most affected by Corona virus-induced lockdowns ie, construction, fishing, horticulture, etc. in terms of soft loans, it added.

The RSS-affiliate also

suggested that the emergency credit line guarantee scheme should be extended for a few more months and its scope can be further expanded to other pandemic hit sectors.

The government should announce a package for employment-linked incentives (ELI) to strengthen the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector, it said.

The SJM said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) should clearly announce need-based moratoriums to suit every sector of the economy and direct banks for liberal monetary support.

The corporate and business houses should fully support to manage the difficult situation by liberal contribution for Covid relief, payment of salaries to employees without retrenchment and timely payment of dues to MSMEs, it said. — PTI

'India slips 2 spots on SDGs adopted as 2030 agenda'

■ **THE STATES/UTS** with the best overall score which are on the path to achieving the SDGs are Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh

SDGs are Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

There are 17 SDGs which are an urgent call for action by all countries — developed and developing — in a global partnership.

The report also said that India ranked 168 out of 180 countries in terms of Environmental Performance Index (EPI) which is calculated on various indicators, including environmental health, climate, air pollution, sanitation and drinking water, ecosystem services, biodiversity, etc.

India's rank was 172 in the environmental health category, which is an indicator of how well countries are protecting their populations from environmental health risks. — PTI

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Cases fall to 2-month low

■ **Continued from Page 1** can also operate in the same time period with 50 per cent seating capacity, said an order. The Sikkim government on Sunday extended the statewide lockdown for one more week till 14 June while announcing some relaxations, like allowing hardware shops to remain open from 7 am to 2 pm. Shops selling groceries and vegetables can now remain open from 7 am to 2 pm, an extension of two more hours.

Delhi, which reported 381 new Covid-19 cases on Sunday and a daily positivity rate of 0.50 per cent, is preparing to unlock from Monday.

Delhi will see reopening of markets and malls and resumption of Metro services, while Maharashtra will implement a five-level plan to ease curbs based on weekly positivity rate and occupancy of oxygen beds in districts.

On Sunday Uttar Pradesh announced that "Covid-19 curfew" will be lifted across state barring three districts from 7 June — Meerut, Saharanpur and Gorakhpur.

Even as the Covid situation has relatively improved in most northern and western states, southern and eastern parts of the country are still reporting a high number of cases. Tamil Nadu

chief minister M.K. Stalin announced the extension of lockdown by a week till June 14 with some easing of restrictions from Monday, except in 11 districts where the number of new cases is still high. Earlier, Karnataka had extended the lockdown till June 14. Himachal Pradesh and Goa have also extended "Corona curfew" till June 14.

The Delta variant of Covid-19, or the B.1.617.2 variant first identified in India, is around 40 per cent more transmissible than the Alpha or so-called Kent variant of concern (VOC), UK health secretary Matt Hancock said on Sunday.

Include N-E in NCERT books

■ **Continued from Page 1** video posted on YouTube, one Paras Singh had described the Congress MLA as "non-Indian". He ostensibly also claimed that the "state (Arunachal) is a part of China". After the comments triggered outrage in the Northeast, Mr Singh was arrested. Samujjal Bhattacharyya, an advisor to Northeast Students' Organisation, wrote: "Ignorant mainlanders seem to be unaware of our existence as an inextricable part of India. Sensitise students by adding #AChaperForNE to begin with; for #NortheastMatters. The land of rich heritage, exot-

ic flora/fauna and impeccable culture, N-E is more than a resource frontier alone."

One Kabyashree Kalita from Assam wrote, "Mughals couldn't invade Assam 17 times. Northeast is the only part of India that the Mughals failed to conquer during their reign for over two centuries. Don't you think #ASSAM #AHOMS #NE deserves a chapter in NCERT?"

Another user, Chophika Sumi from Nagaland, tweeted, "We are only asserting our rights as Indians. Please hear us out."

need a place in NCERT textbooks," tweeted Amar Sangma, a senior journalist from Arunachal.

Asmita Bharadwaj, who is the vice-president of Northeast Students' Union of Vadodra, said that the incident involving Mr Ering and years of discrimination against people from the Northeast were the reasons behind the Twitter campaign.

Mr Ering added, "These demands are on the line of key recommendations made by the Bezbaruah Committee Report and also a Private member bill introduced by me in 2017 for compulsory teaching of Northeast in syllabus."

THE ASIAN AGE

7 JUNE 2021

No more tax havens: Big Tech must share profits

The clampdown on tax avoidance by multinational companies and global digital tech giants that has just been proposed by G7 nations promises the biggest overhaul of international tax rules. Some of the world's most profitable trillion dollar companies, which have grown in revenues and earnings without paying much tax in many of the geographic locations they operate in, will now be forced to pay a global minimum tax of at least 15 per cent on their profits. The consensus among the richest nations now is that these multinational companies must be stopped from distributing most of their earnings to convenient tax havens around the world. A sweeping reform of the global tax system could be round the corner as G20, slated to meet in Italy in July and other global alliances like OECD are bound to see the logic in tax reform that could bring in an estimated \$57 billion.

The Silicon Valley giants have been in the crosshairs lately for more than one reason, primarily to do with their oversized power in terms of riches and larger than life influence on the everyday lives of citizens around the world through their control of social media. This tax swoop on them was only to be anticipated. The new method of taxation will be based on where these profitable companies operate rather than where they are headquartered. The crux of the problem of how little they contribute to the local economy where they do business is illustrated in this example of the slim taxes they pay in the UK where Amazon paid £300 million tax on revenues of £14 billion in 2019 whereas even supermarket chains like Tesco and Asda paid much more.

Is it contrition or a game of smokes and mirrors that Amazon, Facebook and Google are playing in welcoming the tax reforms?

Is it contrition or a game of smokes and mirrors that Amazon, Facebook and Google are playing in welcoming the tax reforms? The basic issue is a lot more complex as nations invite multinationals to do business on their soil with a host of tax breaks and other concessions in order to attract FDI dollars. While profitable manufacturing and services companies would expect to pay taxes in all the overseas jurisdictions they operate in, the same is not true of Big Tech czars of the new economy who are ruling the roost since the world transformed rapidly around the turn of the millennium to be predominantly tech-driven. Glaring discrepancies are highlighted now because returns from capital are currently taxed very differently depending on the business or industry and on what incentives nations offer to invite investment.

The depleted coffers of governments strapped for cash during the raging of the pandemic will benefit in the short term provided global standards of accounting are enforceable. To find a fair way to tax would be the trickiest part in this exercise. A theory on flat tax has it that all taxes should be merged into a single levy on all cash flows as they leave the corporates as in dividends or marked to reserves, etc. To forge an international agreement on all this is going to be a challenge as US tech giants are the ones which will be asked to cough up the most. To find the balance while aiming to fill the coffers is a global task for economists and accountants now.

Is RBI being unduly optimistic?

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which has been entrusted with framing the country's monetary policy has recently met virtually to assess the country's monetary situation, and its outcome was all but expected. The MPC left policy rates — the repo and the reverse repo rates — unchanged, and announced a special window for Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) and contact-intensive sectors like hospitality, tourism, among others.

The members of the MPC, who met amid the second wave of coronavirus cases, however, believe that businesses have adapted to working amid pandemic. So the impact of the second wave on the country's economic growth, they believe, would be limited. In sync with this assessment, the MPC revised its forecast for the country's economic growth from the previous 10.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent. It suggests that the massive second Covid wave would shave off just one percentage point from the country's economic growth.

Unlike the previous forecast of 5.4 per cent growth in Q3 and 6.2 per cent of the current financial year, the RBI's revised assessment claims that the economy would grow by 7.2 per cent in Q3 and 6.6 per cent in Q4. This optimistic view appears to be largely based on a better handling of next Covid waves, if any, by the government and a faster vaccination programme.

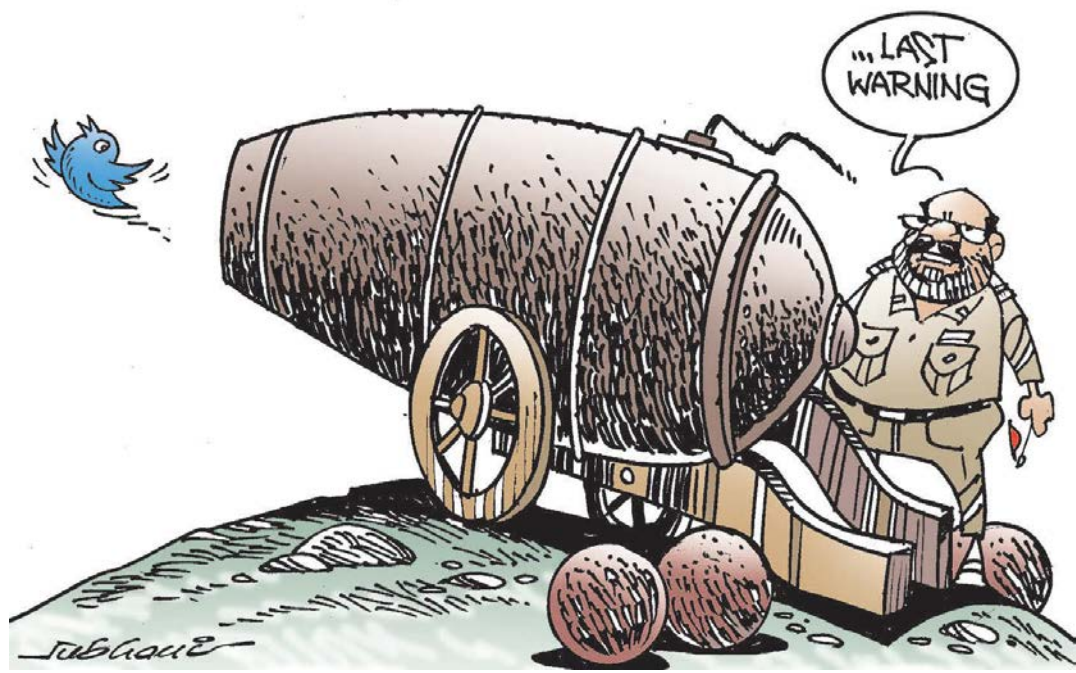
The RBI flagged the prospect of Covid-19 infections in rural areas and lower urban demand could pose a downside risk. But it sees a silver lining in a normal monsoon, the resilience of the farm economy, and the gathering momentum of global recovery. While the RBI may be correct in its assessment, it appears to have glossed over the impact of higher healthcare spending on the overall indebtedness of people and a diminished physical ability of Covid-recovered people on their earning capacities.

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Subhani



Mamata's priorities as TMC sets a new course

Shikha Mukerjee

Through the reassignment of roles and redistribution of responsibilities in the Trinamul Congress, Mamata Banerjee has definitively set her priorities, signalled her expectations and introduced a new work culture, without destabilising the older and established leadership in West Bengal. And these are clean government, greater accountability and expanding the political horizon of this quintessentially Bengal party.

Looked at from the outside, the "one person, one post" formula has been used to reassign roles and responsibilities, initiating a process that would make the Trinamul resemble other formally structured outfits, hallmarked by the creation of a hierarchy with a bureaucracy, rigidities, identity and purity issues. A closer look, however, suggests that the dynamics and the energy that flows through the informally managed party, that has served more as a marquee than an organisation, has been not been significantly disturbed.

The much anticipated anointment of her "Bhai-po" (nephew), Abhishek Banerjee, as the heir apparent is more a segue from youth leader to promotion as office-bearer within the Trinamul Congress. It is an acknowledgment that he has earned his spurs. In fact, all it does is give him a job with a designation, national general secretary, whose functioning will be overshadowed by whatever Mamata Banerjee does and says vis-a-vis national politics.

Abhishek Banerjee's greatest advantage as national general secretary will be that he needs no introduction on the national political scene; the hard work of building his credibility has already been done, by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah and the rest of the BJP leader-

ship, national as well as in the state. His stamina and his composure in the face of extreme provocation from the BJP that targeted him, using every trick in the playbook to discredit him, and by extension Mamata Banerjee, was watched by every political party and that he can leverage to get more national attention.

Expanding the Trinamul Congress beyond its base in West Bengal is ambitious, even for Mamata Banerjee, who knows only too well that no regional party, most of whom are either her friends or potential allies should a national coalition of non-BJP non-Congress parties emerge, would welcome a new player on their home turf. It would be smarter for Ms Banerjee to use her base in West Bengal as leverage to be a challenger to the BJP in national politics by occupying the vacant space of the Opposition leader, because the sham-bolic Congress is unlikely to get its act together in time to do so.

By making him national general secretary, Ms Banerjee has inducted him into the party without destabilising the equations in the TMC's state leadership. The other appointment within the state party is that of Kunal Ghosh, as a general secretary, who was jailed for his alleged involvement in the Shardha scam. The appointment is a poke at the BJP, which harbours other tainted leaders like Mukul Roy and Suvendu Adhikari, washed clean of their misdeeds by having switched sides.

The changes within the frontal organisations of the Trinamul Congress rather than within the state party indicates that Ms Banerjee is choosing to step carefully as the risks of alienating state leaders outweigh whatever gains she may expect. The BJP lost the Assembly polls and the TMC won a land-

slide victory for the third time. True as this is, the fact that the BJP is working overtime to destabilise and discredit Mamata Banerjee's leadership and role as chief minister is a threat that cannot be ignored.

There are crucial byelections in the offing: Mamata Banerjee has to get re-elected in the next five months. There are overdue municipal and municipal corporation elections that the Trinamul Congress wants to win decisively, so that it can squeeze out the BJP. Mismanaging the party by disturbing locally powerful leaders will endanger Ms Banerjee's larger goal of cutting the ground from under the BJP's feet.

The other changes by way of appointments of new blood, people who either joined the party in 2021, and fought the elections, or joined earlier and worked during the elections are in the frontal organisations. The appointment of a young woman, actor Shayoni Ghosh, as the Trinamul Youth Congress leader, as a replacement for Abhishek, and the induction of Ritabrata Banerjee, once a promising CPI(M) leader, as the state's trade union organiser, replacing Dola Sen, who has clearly been shunted upstairs as national head of the Indian National Trinamul Trade Union Congress, are two of the politically significant appointments Ms Banerjee has made. These are messages to young women voters and to Left voters whose support was crucial in this election.

The changes that Ms Banerjee has made in fill-

The appointment of a young woman, actor Shayoni Ghosh, as a replacement for Abhishek, and the induction of Ritabrata Banerjee, once a promising CPI(M) leader, as the state's trade union organiser, are two of the politically significant appointments

ing leadership positions in the frontal organisations is her way of strengthening the voter base as she prepares to challenge the BJP's dominance in national politics. She has to be absolutely secure in West Bengal, for which she must cut the ground from under the BJP's feet and significantly weaken the organisation. In order to do so, Mamata Banerjee has to win decisively, not only her own re-election and the other byelections, but the overdue municipal and municipal corporation elections.

The shakeup and reorganisation of the Trinamul Congress is incomplete. Having promised to clean up governance and stop party functionaries from skimming targeted benefits by taking "cuts", Ms Banerjee has to exorcise the party and strengthen the organisation. She has said she will; the next thing she must do to hammer home the message is eject tainted and unpopular leaders and inject new people.

As part of the exercise in reorganisation, the TMC needs to work out how it will deal with defectors, who rushed to join the BJP before the elections and are now queuing up to rejoin the parent party. By crossing over to the BJP, these ambitious or disgruntled leaders crossed a line that divides inclusive, secular and unifying politics from aggressively communal, divisive identity politics. They cannot be left adrift; nor can they be allowed to rejoin without publicly abjuring and atoning for having crossed the line. By postponing the discussion and decision, Ms Banerjee has bought herself some time, but face the problem she must.

These are extremely testing times for Ms Banerjee as she has acquired a maturity in the 10 years that has added to the aura of her leadership. How she runs West Bengal and her party will be keenly watched nationwide and will shape the politics of the anti-BJP parties in the run-up to the 2024 general election.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

THE BEGINNING

The G-7 countries have agreed to a minimum tax on multinational corporates. The age-old tax regime for allocating profits to different jurisdictions was being exploited by big tech companies. They were managing to declare their profits as originating from low tax rate locations. Governments were collectively losing nearly a trillion dollars in corporate taxes. No surprise that Ireland, with tax rates among the lowest across industrialised nations, is the European headquarters of companies including Google, Facebook and Apple. A beginning has now been made for each nation receiving its fair share of taxes.

R. Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

MISSING TICK

TWITTER FOUND itself in a muddle after the Centre on Saturday issued "one last notice" to comply at once with the new IT intermediary rules, failing which the social media company would be liable for the content posted by its users. Curiously, the ministry did not set any deadline for the tech giant to comply with the rules. Earlier, Twitter had courted controversy for removing the verified "blue tick" marks of Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and RSS functionaries Suresh Soni, Arun Kumar, Suresh Joshi and Krishna Gopal, citing inactivity in these accounts.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

CANCEL TOKYO GAMES

NEARLY 50 DAYS to go, but still the fate of the Tokyo Olympics hangs in balance. Although president of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics organising committee Seiko Hashimoto has said the Games will go ahead as planned, Shigeru Omi, head of the panel of experts that has been advising the Japanese government on its Covid-19 response, issued his strongest warning yet on the risks of holding the Games. Eighty-three per cent of Japanese citizens, too, are against holding the Olympics. But too much money is at stake, so, sadly, the show will go on.

Bidyut Chatterjee
Faridabad

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to N.J. Ravi Chander (June 3). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Kishwar Desai
London Diary



Canny Carrie's thrifty choice; a princess by any other name

Freedom day is supposed to be June 21, and we are longing to get out of this cycle of lockdowns. But of course, things can never be so simple when you are dealing with a mutating virus. Will we actually be able to walk out on that day and do what we used to before the virus attack last year? Or will Freedom day arrive with a set of rules once again? There is a scramble to get as many vaccinated as possible — and particularly the 18 plus. It is possible that the time between the two vaccines might be reduced from 12 to eight weeks.

Everything depends on the number of infections of course. One can only hope! Already there is talk that the Freedom Day may be shifted to July 5, so it is getting more and more difficult to plan too far in advance.

Canny, clever Carrie Symonds has once again come up with a winning strategy to deflect any criticism against her. She organised her own "surprise wedding" at the beautiful Westminster Cathedral — and to ensure that this would be the

much-married Prime Minister's final nuptial ceremony, it was a Catholic ceremony, as in the Catholic faith divorces are practically impossible. For someone who had been a live-in girlfriend and an "unwed" mother — this "return to the Church" private ceremony was sufficiently old fashioned to melt the hardest hearts.

I must confess that I have always liked her spunk, and the fact that she can outwit most other people. To throw everyone off the scent, she had sent out "save-the-date" invitations for next year just earlier last month — so that the media would think that the wedding would be much later. The ceremony on the Bank Holiday weekend had only a few family members attending — amid claims that even the Prime Minister's children from his previous marriages/relationships were not invited.

But the real game changer was the long white dress that the bride wore. As always, the moment the photographs were pub-

lished, fashionistas began their research and it was discovered that this was a dress which cost a little less than 3,000 pounds. But within minutes, all dresses, of all sizes, in that style were immediately sold out. And then — there was yet another surprise! Carrie, herself, had not bought the dress — she had merely hired it! All for £45, for a few days from a website, My Wardrobe HQ. The company later said that since she often hires clothes from them, no red alerts flashed when she asked for this dress.

That is the smartest thing she has ever done, especially after the impression some in the media have been trying to create that the new-lweds were living beyond their means, often requesting rich donors to support them, be it holidays or refurbishments. But this was thrifty move. And that made one wonder why so many of us have always thought of getting a brand new wedding dress (or in my case, saree) — when in reality you only wear it once!

Taking the idea forward, she has also (if media reports can be believed) hired more formal dresses and coats for the G7 summit! Let us hope they once again publish the hiring rates — as this will certainly lead to decreased unnecessary consumption, and maybe reversal of climate change!

While the dress created its own media frenzy — many people were wondering how did the PM manage to convince the Church that his previous marriages did not matter, and he could be married in a Catholic ceremony?

More or less since Henry the Eighth (the other one with many wives) broke with Rome because the Catholic Church would not grant him a divorce, no English Prince or Prime Minister has taken to the Catholic Church for marriage while in office!

And meanwhile, the terrible two, Harry and Meghan, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex

still managed to remain in the news. Their move to the US has made not a jot of difference, to the British media. This time the excitement is over their second child, a daughter — expected to arrive this week. So the race for guessing-the-name has begun, with bets being placed in two countries, the UK and the US. The most popular choice seems to be Diana (after Harry's late mother) but it could also be Pip, to honour Prince Philip, who recently passed away. The baby may also arrive on Prince Philip's birthday. Another popular choice is Lily, after the Queen. The latter two are certainly unconventional names. But then what can you expect from a couple who names their first child "Archie"? Perhaps they would like to create a bridge of names between UK and the US.

Kishwar Desai's latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life And Times of Devika Rani, has just been published and she is the Chair of the Trust that set up the world's first Partition Museum in Amritsar

SHORT TAKES

MAN WITH KNIFE
KILLS SIX, HURTS
14 IN CHINA

Beijing, June 6: A man armed with a knife killed six people and wounded 14 others in a city in eastern China, state media reported Sunday.

The attack occurred Saturday afternoon in the streets of Anqing, Anhui province, 430 kilometres (270 miles) west of Shanghai, state television CCTV said. The suspect was arrested and an investigation was under way to determine the circumstances of the attack that unfolded in a pedestrian shopping street, Anqing Public Security Bureau said.

SUGAR WORKER,
86, FATALLY
SHOOTS BOSS

Belle Glade (US), June 6: An 86-year-old sugar mill worker with 31 years on the job fatally shot his boss after he was refused another year at the mill, authorities said Saturday.

The Palm Beach Sheriff's Office said in a news release that Felix Cabrera was jailed without bail on a first-degree murder charge following the Friday morning shooting at the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative in Belle Glade.

Jail records did not list an attorney for Cabrera.

The victim's name was not released by the sheriff's department. He was a 67-year-old man from nearby Martin County.

Authorities say Cabrera sought to work one additional year for financial reasons but was turned down.

DEATH TOLL
RISES TO 88 IN
NIGERIA ATTACK

Kano, June 6: Police in north-west Nigeria's Kebbi state said Sunday that the death toll from an attack by a gang of cattle thieves on seven villages Thursday had risen to 88.

The region has struggled with decades-long communal clashes over resources but more recently some groups have become more violent, looting, killing and kidnapping for ransom.

"Initially 66 bodies were recovered but 22 more have been found," Kebbi state police spokesman Nafiu Abubakar said, adding that the search for more bodies was ongoing.

Dozens of assailants on motorcycles attacked seven neighbouring villages in Danko-Wasagu district on Thursday, Abubakar said.

ELEVEN KILLED AS
ROADSIDE BOMB
HITS AFGHAN BUS

Herat, June 6: At least 11 civilians, including four women and three children were killed when a roadside bomb struck a bus in Afghanistan, officials said Sunday, in the latest attack targeting passenger vehicles in the violence-wracked country. The attack occurred on Saturday evening in the western province of Badghis, raising fears of fresh violence in the months ahead as the US military continues to pull out its last remaining troops from the country.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blast but Badghis governor Hessimuddin Shams accused the Taliban of planting the bomb.

Another official from the province, Khodadad Taveb, confirmed the toll and said that the bus fell into a valley after it was hit by the bomb.

Saturday's attack came after a series of blasts targeted passenger buses in Kabul this week.

NICARAGUA
DETAINS ANOTHER
OPPN LEADER

Managua, June 6: Police in Nicaragua on Saturday took opposition politician Arturo Cruz into custody, detaining a second presidential hopeful in less than a week.

Cruz was seized at the Managua airport upon return from the United States, on accusations of acting "against Nicaraguan society and the rights of the people," prosecutors said.

His detention came three days after opposition figure Cristiana Chamorro — a possible challenger to leftist President Daniel Ortega in November elections — was placed under house arrest, after government claims that she was guilty of money laundering. The Nicaraguan Center for Human Rights called Cruz's detention a "perverse strategy" on the part of Ortega's government to silence people he considers political enemies. "These are not criminal investigations, this is political persecution," it said.

Mexico votes



Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador waves to supporters as he walks with first lady Beatriz Gutierrez after voting in Mexico City, on Sunday. Mexicans were electing the entire lower house of Congress, almost half the country's governors and most mayors to determine if Obrador's Morena party gets the legislative majority. — AP

BIDEN TO BACK
EURO ALLIES
AGAINST RUSSIA

Washington, June 6: The United States will stand with its European allies against Russia, President Joe Biden has promised ahead of the first face-to-face meeting with Vladimir Putin of his administration.

Biden will head to Europe Wednesday, and is set to attend both the G-7 and NATO summits as well as holding a high-stakes meeting with the Russian leader in Geneva on June 16.

The summit comes amid the biggest crisis in ties between the two countries in years, with tensions high over a litany of issues including hacking allegations, human rights and claims of election meddling.

In an op-ed for the *Washington Post* published Saturday, the US president promised to shore up Washington's "democratic alliances" in the face of multiple crises and mounting threats from Moscow and Beijing.

"We are standing united to address Russia's challenges to European security, starting with its aggression in Ukraine, and there will be no doubt about the resolve of the United States to defend our democratic values, which we cannot separate from our interests," he wrote.

"President Putin knows that I will not hesitate to respond to future harmful activities," he said.

— AFP

PROTEST OVER
POC KILLED IN
MINNESOTA

Minneapolis, June 6: Protesters faced off with officers in Minneapolis early Saturday over the shooting death of a PoC man by members of a US Marshals task force.

Photos from the scene following a vigil for Winston Boogie Smith Jr, 32, showed dumpster fires in the street and a line of officers standing guard. It was the second night of protests in response to the fatal shooting Thursday in Minneapolis' Uptown neighbourhood. Police said 27 people were arrested in the protest, with 26 accused of rioting and one facing a weapons charge.

No injuries were reported. Some businesses sustained damage, police said. Authorities said Friday that Smith was wanted on a weapons violation and fired a gun before two deputies shot him while he was inside a parked vehicle.

Members of the US Marshals Fugitive Task Force were trying to arrest him on a warrant for allegedly being a felon in possession of a gun. Family and friends described Smith as a father of three who was often harassed by police. They are demanding transparency in the investigation.

— AP

2 drones shot above Iraq
base housing US troops

Baghdad, June 6: The Iraqi army said Sunday two drones were destroyed above a base housing US troops, one month after the same base was targeted by an armed drone. The US military's C-RAM defence system was activated to shoot down the drones above the Ain al-Assad base, located in Iraq's western desert, the Iraqi military said.

Several hours earlier a rocket was shot down above Baghdad airport, "without causing casualties or damage," said Colonel

Wayne Marotto, spokesman for the US-led military coalition in Iraq.

The coalition was sent to Iraq to help the country's military fight the Islamic State jihadist group — a campaign that Baghdad declared won in late 2017.

There are currently 2,500 US troops in Iraq, feeding into total coalition troop strength of 3,500.

The US consistently blames Iran-linked Iraqi factions for rocket and other attacks against Iraqi installations housing its personnel. Since the start of

this year there have been 39 attacks against US interests in Iraq.

The vast majority have been bombs against logistics convoys, while 14 were rocket attacks, some of them claimed by pro-Iran factions, who aim to pressure Washington into withdrawing all their troops. For Western diplomats and high-ranking military officials in Iraq, the attacks are not only a danger to US personnel, but they also compromise the fight against IS.

— AFP

US reporter records not
to be seized: Justice Dept

Washington, June 6: The Justice Department said Saturday that it no longer will secretly obtain reporters' records during leak investigations, a policy shift that abandons a practice decried by news organisations and press freedom groups.

The reversal follows a pledge last month by President Joe Biden, who said it was "simply, simply wrong" to seize journalists' records and that he would not permit the Justice Department to continue the practice. Though Biden's comments in an interview were not immediately accompanied by any change

in policy, a pair of statements from the White House and Justice Department on Saturday signalled an official turnaround from an investigative tactic that has persisted for years. Democratic and Republican administrations alike have used subpoenas and court orders to obtain journalists' records in an effort to identify sources who have revealed classified information.

But the practice had received renewed scrutiny over the past month as Justice Department officials alerted reporters at three news organisations — *The Washington Post*,

CNN and *The New York Times* — that their phone records had been obtained in the final year of the Trump administration.

The latest revelation came Friday night when the Times reported the existence of a gag order that had barred the newspaper from revealing a secret court fight over efforts to obtain the email records of four reporters.

That tussle had begun during the Trump administration but had persisted under the Biden Justice Department, which ultimately moved to withdraw the gag order.

— AP

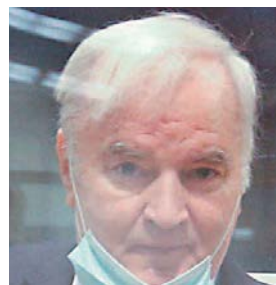
'Butcher of Bosnia' faces verdict

The Hague, June 6: Former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic will on Tuesday hear the decision on his appeal against his genocide conviction, in a Hague tribunal's final verdict on the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. The ruling will be the closing chapter in the case against the man dubbed the "Butcher of the Balkans", who was sentenced to life imprisonment by a UN war crimes tribunal in 2017.

Now an ailing 78-year-old, the once-burly military strongman of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war is expected to be in court, where

he has previously delivered angry outbursts against the West.

Mothers of some of the 8,000 men and boys killed in the worst act of bloodshed on European soil since World War II will be outside the court where they have long campaigned for justice. "We will go to The Hague to look the executioner in the eye once again as he is finally sentenced," Munira Subasic, president of one of the "Mothers of Srebrenica" associations, said. The verdict will be handed down at 1300 GMT, viewable on a livestream with a half hour delay because the courtroom is



Ratko Mladic

closed to journalists due to coronavirus restrictions, at the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

Its prosecutor Serge Brammertz said he was "cau-

Trump: Support
those loyal to me

Teases prospect of Presidential bid in '24

North Carolina, June 6: Donald Trump on Saturday pushed Republicans to support candidates who are loyal to him in next year's midterm elections as the former president launched a new more active phase of his post presidency.

Trump, 74, teased the prospect of another presidential bid of his own in 2024, but vowed first to be an active presence on the campaign trail for his allies in next year's fight for control of Congress.

The survival of America depends on our ability to elect Republicans at every level starting with the midterms next year, Trump charged early in a rambling speech that spanned more than an hour and 20 minutes.

Trump delivered his latest comments in a speech to hundreds of Republican officials and activists gathered for the North Carolina GOP convention, the opening appearance in what is expected to be a new phase of rallies and public events.

Out of office for more than four months and banned from his preferred social media accounts, the former president hopes to use such events to elevate

his diminished voice ahead of another potential presidential run.

His advisers are already eyeing subsequent appearances in Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Georgia to help bolster midterm candidates and energise voters. Some party leaders worry that a rise of pro-Trump candidates in the coming months could jeopardise the GOP's fight for control of Congress in 2022.

While Trump remains a dominant force within his party, he is deeply unpopular among key segments of the broader electorate. He lost the last election by 7 million votes after alienating Republican-leaning suburban voters across the country.

In contrast to the mega rallies that filled sports arenas when Trump was president, he faced a crowd of just over 1,000 North Carolina Republicans seated at dinner tables inside the Greenville convention center Saturday night. Tens of thousands more followed along on internet streams.

Invited to the stage briefly during his remarks, Trump daughter-in-law and North Carolina native Lara Trump announced

she would not run for the Senate because of family obligations.

I am saying no for now, not no forever, Lara Trump said.

Minutes later, Trump announced his endorsement of loyalist Rep. Ted Budd in the crowded Republican primary, adding a slap at former Gov. Pat McCrory, who has been critical of Trump's falsehoods about the 2020 election. You can't pick people who have already lost two races and do not stand for our values, Trump said.

The former president waited more than an hour to advance falsehoods about the 2020 election, which he described as the crime of the century.

Since leaving the White House, Trump has regularly made baseless claims that the last presidential election was stolen.

The claims have triggered a wave of Republican-backed voting restrictions in state legislatures across the country, even though Trump's cries of voting fraud have been refuted by dozens of judges, Republican governors and senior officials from his own administration.

— AP

HOUSHI REBEL
MISSILE KILLS 17
IN YEMEN

Cairo, June 6: A ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthis rebels on Saturday killed at least 17 people in a government-held city, including a five-year-old girl, officials said, as a US envoy to the country accused the rebels of failing to try to reach peace in the war-torn nation.

The missile hit a gas station in the Rawdha neighborhood in the central city of Marib, according to Ali al-Ghulisi, the provincial governor's press secretary.

Information Minister Moammar al-Iryani said the attack killed at least 17 people and wounded at least five others. All casualties were civilians, he added.

He called on the UN and the US to condemn the attack, saying it amounted to a war crime.

There was no immediate comment from the Houthis. The government-run SABA news agency reported that the rebels also fired an explosive-laden drone shortly after the missile attack.

— AP

S'porean's racist
remarks against
PIO goes viral

Singapore, June 6: A video of a Singaporean man allegedly making racist remarks against an Indian-origin man for dating a Chinese woman has gone viral here, drawing a strong reaction from the Home Affairs and Law Minister who described the incident as "quite unacceptable" and "very worrying".

The video of the confrontation, which lasted over five minutes, was shared on Facebook by Dave Parkash, 23.

In the video, a Chinese Singaporean man accused Parkash of "preying on a Chinese girl". The man also added that a Chinese woman should not be with an Indian man, *The Straits Times* reported. The video was shared nearly 3,000 times less than three hours after it was shared on Sunday. Commenting on the video, Home Affairs and Law Minister K. Shanmugam said that while he does not have the full facts of the story, it seems like more people are finding it acceptable to make "in-your-face" racist statements openly.

Describing the incident as "quite unacceptable" and "very worrying", Shanmugam said that he used to believe that Singapore was moving in the right direction in terms of racial tolerance and harmony, but in the light of recent events, he is "not so sure" anymore.

In the video, Parkash also clarified that he is half-Indian and half-Filipino while his girlfriend is half-Singaporean Chinese and half-Thai.

"We both are of mixed race but we are proud to be Singaporeans," he said. He added in his post that he felt "embarrassed, humiliated and hurt" by

the way he was being treated by another fellow Singaporean.

Parkash said the man told them they should only date "people of our own race".

"He called himself a racist and even blamed us for being racist just because (we) are from different races," Parkash was quoted as saying.

"Love is love. Love has no race, love has no religion. You and I should be able to love whoever we wanna love. Let's not become like this man in the video."

Parkash's post added, "To this man who may end up watching this, I hope you learn to stop being a racist and let us all live in harmony."

The video sparked an outcry against the racist behaviour by the stranger, with many calling for the authorities to deal with the man for harassing Parkash and his girlfriend, *Today Online* reported. Facebook user Nora Kamsari praised Mr Parkash for being calm throughout the incident, adding: You guys are a beautiful couple. Keep the love strong and ignore this self-entitled cave-man.

The behaviour of the guy in red is disgusting. I would have called the cops on him, wrote another Facebook user Lim Deqiang.

— PTI

TRIBUTE | OVERDUE
Inscribed with names of 22,442 men, women who died in the summer of '44

D-Day fallen: British memorial opens in France

Ver-Sur-Mer, June 6: A memorial to almost 22,500 servicemen and women under British command killed during D-Day and subsequent battles is to be unveiled on Sunday in northern France, a tribute seen as a long overdue commemoration of their sacrifice. The British Normandy Memorial, inscribed with the names of 22,442 men and women who lost their lives during the invasion of Nazi-occupied France in the summer of 1944, will open on a hillside in

the Normandy village of Ver-sur-Mer on the 77th anniversary of the landings. It overlooks Gold Beach, one of three beaches where British forces landed on the morning of June 6, 1944 to begin the liberation of Western Europe from Nazi occupation.

The memorial — constructed at a cost of 33 million (\$47 million) met by both the UK government and private donors — is the first such in Normandy to commemorate those who fell under British

command. "The construction of a national memorial in Normandy has been a long-held ambition of Normandy Veterans, frustrated that Britain alone among the main wartime allies did not have such a memorial," the Normandy Memorial Trust said in a statement ahead of the ceremony.

It consists of a series of 160 standing white stones where the names of the soldiers who fell are inscribed in chronological order from June 6 to

August 31, 1944. Some 4,000 tonnes of stone were used. The British heir to the throne Prince Charles, in a video message shared by the Normandy Memorial Trust, described the memorial as "long overdue".

"I have long been concerned that the memory of these remarkable individuals should be preserved for generations to come as an example of personal courage and sacrifice," he said. "The memorial... will provide a place of private and perpetual contempla-

tion where visitors will be able to reflect on what we owe to all those who so gallantly carried out their duty with such extraordinary selflessness and resolve," he added.

Soldiers from over three dozen nationalities, including from across the Commonwealth and French resistance fighters, served under British command in the landings.

Steven Dean, the manager of the project, said he hoped that the site could draw in a quarter of a mil-

lion visitors every year. "This is the only place with all the names, so it took a lot of research to find the 22,442," he said.

Until now, the main site of pilgrimage for paying respects to those who died under British command has been the cemetery in the nearby town of Bayeux. The American cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, whose 10,000 graves overlook Omaha Beach, used to welcome some one million visitors annually.

— AFP

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,100.05	-0.25
Nifty 50	15,670.30	-0.13
S&P 500*	4,229.89	0.88
Dollar (₹)	73.0	-0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.91	0.51
Euro (₹)	88.44	0.497
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,917*388	0.80
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	71.95	0.90
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.028	0.52
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.564	-0.063

* As of Friday/Saturday

Vijaya
Diagnostic files
IPO papers

Vijaya Diagnostic Centre, a healthcare chain, has filed papers with the Sebi to raise funds through an initial share-sale. The IPO will be an offer for sale of 35,688,064 equity shares by the promoters, Dr S. Surendranath Reddy and investors Karakoram Ltd and Kedaara Capital AIF, according to the draft red herring prospectus. The IPO will see 35 per cent stake dilution by the promoter and existing shareholders.

FPIs invest ₹8K cr
in equities in last
four sessions



Foreign portfolio investors have infused Rs 7,968 crore into equities in the first four trading sessions of June as the risk-on sentiment improved amid rapidly falling new Covid cases and robust corporate earnings. The inflow comes following a net withdrawal of Rs 2,954 crore in May and Rs 9,659 crore in April. A dip in virus cases and pick-up in vaccination may attract higher FPI investments going ahead, Morningstar India said.

Dettol handwash
to sport Covid
protectors image

FMCG major Reckitt, which owns popular hygiene brand Dettol, said it is replacing its logo on its handwash with the image of Covid protectors along with their inspiring story. Under its #DettolSalutes campaign, Reckitt has curated 100 such stories from across India and carried them on its liquid handwash packs in honour of the protectors who have helped numerous people during the pandemic.

Philippines bars
nurses from
working abroad

The Philippine government suspended the sending abroad of nurses, and their assistants and aides because the annual limit of 5,000 healthcare workers deployed has been reached. The processing of permits for the medical workers has been suspended immediately, Bernard Olalia, head of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, said. The Philippines sends thousands of medical staff overseas every year.

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■ Ever rising prices hurt small players
MSMEs demand
steel regulator

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 6

With rising steel prices disrupting operations, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the downstream industries have demanded setting up of a regulatory authority for the commodity.

"Between September 2020 and June 2021, steel prices increased sharply and in the last six months there has been an increase of almost 100 per cent. Not only this, an increase of 50 to 67 per cent is being seen in the prices of HR sheet, copper, cold roll, which is very worrying for the MSME sectors," said Rajive Chawla, chairman, IamSMEofIndia.

"The most impacted by the increase in raw material prices are those units which supply under rate contracts to the Railways, defence, government undertakings, OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) and they do not get immediate compensation for the raw material price change," he said.

According to Motilal Oswal Financial Services, from the beginning of this month, steelmakers have raised the wholesale price of hot-rolled coils (HRC) by up to Rs 3,000 per tonne taking it to Rs 69,000/tonne. Cold-rolled coils (CRC) prices too have increased by around Rs 5,000 a tonne to Rs 86,000 per tonne. As a result, HRC prices are now high-



er by Rs 14,000 per tonne over March 2021 exit prices. Average HRC prices for April-June are higher by Rs 11,000 per tonne over January-March 2021 and have resulted in higher margins for flat steel producers.

"Rise in commodity and metal prices has rightly raised concerns in the user industry. In a globalised industry, the prices of finished products are directly linked to the globalised raw material prices and international stainless steel prices," said K.K. Pahuja, president, Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (Issda).

Though the second wave of the pandemic has posed demand-related concerns in the domestic market, the latest price increase follows buoyant international steel prices. The buoyancy is largely due to less availability of the material in the international market following China's decision to dis-

courage exports by withdrawing 13 per cent duty rebates on exports. China has also taken a decision to gradually reduce production from the current level on environmental concerns.

The ever-rising steel prices have squeezed the margins of downstream industries. MSMEs want a regulatory body to be formed in order to keep price hikes under check. "A regulatory authority can check arbitrary price hikes," said Chawla of IamSMEofIndia.

Earlier this year, the Builders' Association of India, along with other real estate organisations, too had demanded a regulatory authority for the cement and steel sectors, alleging cartelisation and 'undue profiteering' by major manufacturers.

Even Union MSME and road transport minister Nitin Gadkari had also supported the idea of setting up a regulator for the steel sector.

13 LAKH DEMAT
A/CS ADDED
EVERY MONTH
SINCE APRIL '20

Mumbai, June 6: Amid near-record rally in the equity markets during the pandemic-ravaged FY21, brokerages have added on an average 13 lakh new demat accounts every month since April last year, taking the overall retail investor headcount to record 6.97 crore as of May 31 this year, according to BSE data.

After the bloody March 2020, when the bourses tanked about 35 per cent in a single month after the WHO declared Covid-19 as a global pandemic, the market was on a song from June.

The markets ended the year to December with a 15 per cent gains and the fiscal year to March with a historic 68 per cent, the second best in its history after an 80 per cent in 2008-09 after taking 40 per cent due to the global financial crisis in the previous year.

Brokerages and exchanges on an average added 12-15 lakh new investors every month in the past 14 months, taking the total to 6.97 crore, BSE chief executive officer Ashish Kumar Chauhan told PTI.

He added that 40 per cent of the new demat accounts were added by the BSE brokers.

As of May 31, there were over 6.9 crore demat accounts in the country. Of this, about a quarter is from Maharashtra, followed by Gujarat with 85.9 lakh accounts, according to BSE data. —PTI

Michelin is out to make world's greenest tyre

KYLE STOCK
JUNE 6

Making tyres for an electric vehicle (EV) is a ruthless exercise in compromise. Too much sticking and the car won't travel as far on a charge; too little, it will silently slide off the road. Exacerbating the equation is the fact that these vehicles are ponderously heavy.

Michelin, however, says it has finally perfected the mix after 30 years of tinkering with its rubber recipes. If EV ranges tick slightly higher in the next few months, the battery chemists won't deserve all the praise; save some for the tyre wizards.

Alexis Garcin, chairman and president of Michelin North America, talks about how he's preparing for a massive wave of electric vehicles.

How does your approach
change with an electric
vehicle?

It has more or less the same complexity as making a tyre for a combustion car, but it brings it to another level. You have to ensure safety but you have to minimise resist-

ance, because it has a direct link with the fuel consumption. And the high tech materials used have to be lighter and lighter, because if the car is getting heavier, we have to make sure that the tyre won't. That's really a subtle mix.

So these tyres are purpose-built for EVs?

In March, we unveiled the ePrimacy, which will come later this year for larger SUVs in the US. That tyre is bringing up to 7 per cent additional range to electric vehicles, because it is optimised to reduce the road resistance without compromising any of the performance. That's a technology we mastered and we're just rolling it out.

The second example is on the Pilot Sport, which we just released. It's a dedicated tyre for electric sports cars and it brings up to 37 miles of additional range, because of that optimisation of running resistance.

What does R&D look like now?

We have massively re-accelerated our investments in what we call the



Alexis Garcin

high-tech material division. Those open us up to new domains, like aerospace, like medical and other industries. Our vision is to have a fully renewable and recyclable tyre by 2050. Today, more or less, 30 per cent of the tyre is renewable and recyclable.

Has EV adoption changed your sales and distribution strategy?

I think personally what's happening right now is a deep transformation of the auto industry and it pushes the car manufacturers to think about a new business model. The value stream will probably move from buying a car and getting maintenance to some services that you buy every month or some packages you can

integrate every six months, depending on new features and technologies that are being developed. We were the first manufacturer, starting in 2012, to put an RFID chip in every medium- and heavy-duty truck tyre. By 2023, every passenger car tyre will be equipped with an RFID chip because we believe they are a nice business model. There are so many offers we can build around tyres, because at the end of the day that's the only part of the car touching the road.

When you have these conversations, with say, Tesla or Rivian, how customised do you get?

When we talk to [manufacturers], most of the time, the tyres developed are made specifically to those cars. Because the cars are so unique, because of the interaction of the weight, the torque and the chassis of the vehicle, each one is different. Most of the tyres are very, very tuned and made specific down to the model level. It's much more complex than it appears. —Bloomberg

MIT Bitcoin experiment nets
13000% windfall for students

SOPHIE ALEXANDER
JUNE 6

Mary Spanjers has a winning lottery ticket, tucked away in a drawer, uncashed. It's an artifact of her freshman year of college seven years ago at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She took advantage of a free offer of something strange and new: cryptocurrency. One-third of a Bitcoin, to be exact. It was worth \$100.

Since then, this virtual pittance has skyrocketed in value. Before a May selloff, it could have fetched \$20,000 and still trades for about 13 grand-a 13,000 per cent return. "It's truly remarkable," Spanjers said of her windfall. "Most of us thought it was a bit of a joke."

Spanjers, now a 24-year-old software engineer for oil firm Schlumberger in Houston, profited from a grand experiment, the MIT Bitcoin Project. In 2014, every undergraduate on the Cambridge, Mass., campus had the chance to claim fractional ownership of a Bitcoin, a string of code on an online ledger.

About 3,100 students grabbed the offer, which required only that they fill out long questionnaires and go over some educational handouts. They'd then set up a digital wallet, which holds the code that they could exchange for something of value, including cash.

The experiment was the brainchild of two "Bitcoin evangelists": Dan Elitzer, then an MBA student who had just founded the



school's Bitcoin Club, and Jeremy Rubin, an undergrad computer science major. The pair sought "to take a glimpse into the future and see what's possible with this technology," says Elitzer, now 37.

The MIT study illustrated that Bitcoin could function like an investment-or, as MIT alum Alex Morcos, co-founder of Bitcoin researcher and developer Chaincode Labs, put it, "an asset, a store of value." Morcos provided about \$250,000-or half the money raised-to buy Bitcoin for the experiment.

Back then, the enterprise was dismissed as something of a failure. The bookstore installed a Bitcoin ATM and began accepting the new currency, but only a few dozen students ever used it. "Bitcoin Doesn't Gain Much Currency at MIT," a 2016 Boston Globe headline read.

After zooming to a record high of almost \$65,000 in mid-April, Bitcoin has retreated to around \$36,000. A spotlight on environmental risks and the way tweets from prominent personal-

ities drive swings in prices-have undermined the narrative that it will gain more mainstream adoption. On Friday, prices were down after a cryptic tweet from Elon Musk.

Still, the biggest believers in crypto argue the token is consolidating before a fresh run to new highs.

Today, no one knows how many of the MIT alums, still in their 20s, are nursing tidy nest eggs-or just some serious regrets. If, like Spanjers, every student had held on, their Bitcoin in May would have been worth more than \$60 million.

One in ten cashed out in the first two weeks-one in four, by the time the experiment ended in mid-2017, according to Christian Catalini, an MIT associate professor in its business school who oversaw the study.

Some of the luckiest MIT grads forgot about it, as if they had found a quarter on the sidewalk and threw it in a jar. They may now have enough for a car or a house down-payment.

—Bloomberg

Rosneft warns of
severe oil shortage

OLGA TANAS &
DINA KHRENNIKOVA
JUNE 6

Russian oil giant Rosneft PJSC warned of an impending shortfall in supply as global producers increasingly channel funds into a "hasty" energy transition.

"The world risks a severe deficit of oil and gas," Rosneft chief executive officer Igor Sechin said on Saturday at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. "The world consumes oil, but isn't ready to invest in it."

His comments echo those of Russian deputy prime minister Alexander Novak, who last week rejected calls for a rapid shift away from oil and gas, saying starving the industry of investment would harm the global economy. But fossil-fuel producers are facing mounting pressure to switch to cleaner forms of energy as governments step up efforts to prevent damaging climate change.

"It shouldn't be about rejecting oil, but about rejecting crude from environmentally unfriendly projects," Sechin said on

an energy panel that also included BP Plc CEO Bernard Looney and Glencore Plc boss Ivan Glasenberg. "Oil consumption will continue to grow despite a relative drop in its share in the global energy mix."

The discussion comes in the wake of a controversial road map published in May by the International Energy Agency, which urged an end to new oil and gas investments to avert disastrous climate change. The report was dismissed by petrostates Saudi Arabia and Russia, with Novak warning of skyrocketing prices. Sechin said it will still take decades to develop economically efficient green technologies.

"Some ecologists and politicians urge for a hasty energy transition, yet it requires an unrealistically fast launch of renewable energy sources and faces issues with storage, ensuring reliability and stability of power generation," he said at the forum.

Instead, oil and gas producers must allocate sufficient funds to avoid further depleting resources, he said. —Bloomberg

IFFCO BEGINS
PRODUCTION
OF NANO UREA
LIQUID

New Delhi, June 6: Fertiliser cooperative Ifco on Sunday said it has started commercial production of nano urea liquid and send the first consignment to Uttar Pradesh for use in farming.

The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd (Ifco) has priced the nano urea liquid at Rs 240 per bottle, which is 10 per cent cheaper than the cost of a bag of conventional urea.

It is a patented technology Ifco developed at its Nano Biotechnology Research Centre in Gujarat.

"Ifco Nano Urea is a product of the 21st century and it is the need of hour to keep the environment soil, air and water, safe for future generations." Ifco vice chairman Dilip Shanganai said on the occasion of the World Environment Day.

According to Ifco, the process of construction of nano urea plants at Kalol in Gujarat and Aonla and Phulpur in Uttar Pradesh has already been initiated.

In phase-I, the annual production capacity of 14 crore bottles is being installed, which would be ramped to additional 18 crore bottles in phase-II by the year 2023.

These 32 crore bottles are expected to potentially replace 1.37 crore tonnes of urea by the year 2023, Ifco said.

It may be noted that urea forms 82 per cent of the total nitrogenous fertilisers consumed in India. Around 30-50 per cent of nitrogen from urea is utilised by plants and the rest gets wasted.

Due to its ultra-small size and surface properties, nano urea gets absorbed by the plants when sprayed on their leaves. Upon penetration, these nanoparticles reach plant parts where nitrogen is required and release nutrients in a controlled manner. —PTI

BULLISH | OUTLOOK Julius Baer says investors should stick to value stocks in China, India & Korea

EM stocks in pole position to gain as world reopens

ISHIKA MOOKERJEE,
FARAH ELBAHRAWY &
FILIPE PACHECO
JUNE 6

A bullish case is building for emerging-market (EM) stocks, which have trailed their developed-nation peers this year, with strategists saying the asset class is better positioned to benefit from a global reopening.

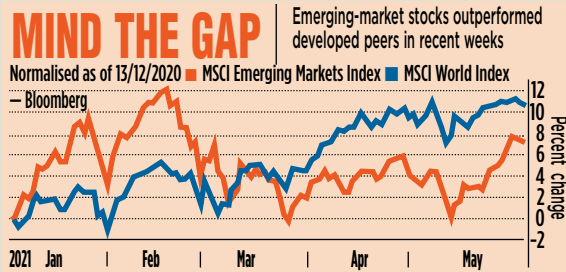
There are already signs the gap is narrowing, with the MSCI Emerging Markets Index last month outperforming the MSCI World Index for the first time since January.

Relatively attractive valuations, a weaker dollar and expectations that global supply chains will whirl back into high gear

are burnishing the appeal of developing-nation equities. The surge in global commodity prices is adding to optimism that improving growth will help boost cyclical shares in these markets.

"Investors who missed out on the strong US and EU consumer and cyclical equity bull run so far this year should consider investing in EM stocks," said David Chao, a global market strategist in Hong Kong at Invesco Ltd, which oversees about \$1.4 trillion. "Rising inflation expectations and bond yields should drive continued investor rotation from growth to cyclical assets-EM economies are more cyclical in nature."

Analysts see the MSCI



EM Index, which is trading at 14 times forward earnings, rallying about 20 per cent over the next 12 months, data compiled by Bloomberg shows. That's almost double the advance seen for the developed-nations' gauge, which has a valuation multiple of about 20.

At the same time, 12-month forward earnings

estimates for EM shares have jumped by about 40 per cent from a June 2020 low.

"Expectations for the year ahead remain high," said Emily Whiting, an investment specialist for EMs & Asia Pacific equities at JPMorgan Asset Management in London. "A successful vaccine rollout leading to a resump-

tion of normalcy in the developed world and parts of EM. With that, comes optimism for corporate earnings and markets."

Not everyone is convinced EM will outperform. Risks include a vulnerability to escalating inflation, and a potential pullback in commodity prices, said Mathieu Racheter, an emerging-market strategist at Julius Baer Group Ltd in Zurich. Investors looking for EM exposure may want to consider sticking to value stocks in Asia, particularly in markets like China, India and South Korea.

The MSCI EM gauge is trailing the developed-nations index by about four percentage points so far this year.

Developing-nation stocks are also seen benefiting relatively more from expectations that commodities will extend gains as vaccine rollouts help economies rebound after grinding to a halt due to the pandemic. Materials and energy shares carry a weightage of almost 14 per cent in the MSCI EM Index, versus about 8 per cent for the MSCI World gauge.

An index of global commodities has surged 20 per cent this year as prospects for the global recovery have improved. Cyclical stocks, which include sectors such as auto makers, clothing stores and restaurants, are seen getting a boost as growth gathers momentum. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Milkha's health closely monitored

Chandigarh: Indian sprint icon Milkha Singh is showing "continuous improvement" as he battles Covid-19 in the Intensive Care Unit of PGIMER hospital, the facility's spokesperson said on Sunday. The 91-year-old is being closely monitored by a medical team. "On the basis of all the medical parameters today, that is June 6, his condition has been observed better than previous days," Prof Ashok Kumar, official spokesperson said. Milkha's family also issued a statement through a spokesperson stating that the iconic athlete is improving and his condition is stable. His Covid positive wife Nirmal Kaur (82), however, "continues to battle it out bravely," according to the spokesperson. — PTI

India eye win over Bangladesh

Doha: A winless India desperately need a positive result against neighbours Bangladesh in their joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers match here on Monday, if they want to avoid the ignominy of playing in the qualifying play-off round of the continental showpiece. India are already out of contention for a World Cup berth but still in the reckoning for a place in the 2023 Asian Cup. But with just three points from six matches, India are at the fourth spot in Group E and are not yet guaranteed an automatic berth in the third round of the Asian Cup qualifiers. Only the best four fourth-place finishers in each of the eight groups directly qualify for the third round of the Asian Cup qualifiers. The other four fourth-place finishers will play in a play-off round. — PTI

Oliveira reigns in Catalonia MotoGP

Montmelo: Portuguese rider Miguel Oliveira held off a late surge from Frenchman Johann Zarco of to win the Catalonia MotoGP on Sunday. Australian Jack Miller took third after championship leader Fabio Quartararo was hit with a three-second penalty for straying off the track a few laps from the end. "Everything was so hard: tyre management, keeping cool when Fabio was putting the pressure on me for so many laps," said Oliveira, who rides for KTM.

"I kept it really cool when he overtook me. I saw my chance on the straight and overtook him back. It was the perfect race." Both Quartararo and Miller led briefly, but both had problems on a warm Catalan afternoon. Quartararo remains top of the rider standings. — PTI

Podium & points for Jehan in F2

Baku: Indian racer Jehan Daruvala capped off a productive outing in Azerbaijan with a seventh place finish in the feature race of the FIA Formula 2 Championship here on Sunday. He had registered a podium finish in sprint race two earlier in the weekend. Jehan, a Red Bull junior driver, secured crucial points in all three races in his maiden run on the streets of Baku. He finished fourth in the opening sprint race on Saturday and came third in the following sprint race. It was a much needed result for Jehan, who had a forgettable time in the previous round in Monaco. With 24 points from the weekend, he sits on the seventh spot in the drivers' standings. — PTI

Nets roll over Bucks in opener

Los Angeles: Kevin Durant had 29 points and 10 rebounds as the Brooklyn Nets withstood Giannis Antetokounmpo's 34-point performance to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 115-107 in the opening game of their second round series. The Nets won the battle between two of the NBA's most potent offences on Saturday night despite losing James Harden to a nagging hamstring injury in the first minute of the game. Harden was forced out just 43 seconds in, pulling up and grabbing the back of his leg after a drive. — AFP

Paris, June 6: Roger Federer said on Sunday he was withdrawing from the French Open despite having reached the fourth round, opting to focus on his primary objective of winning a ninth Wimbledon title.

"After discussions with my team, I've decided I will need to pull out of Roland Garros today," the 39-year-old said.

"After two knee surgeries and over a year of rehabilitation it's important that I listen to my body and make sure I don't push myself too quickly on my road to recovery.

"I am thrilled to have gotten three matches under my belt. There is no greater feeling than being back on court."

Federer, a 20-time Grand Slam title winner, who will be 40 in two months' time, battled over three and a half hours until 12:45 Sunday morning to reach the last 16 with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 win over 59th-ranked Dominik Koepfer.

He was due back on court on Monday to tackle Matteo Berrettini for a place in the quarter-finals.

However, having undergone two knee surgeries in 2020, the Swiss star had admitted there were doubts over whether he'd make it.

Federer is playing only his third tournament since last year's Australian Open and has always said Wimbledon is his main goal.

He is chasing a ninth title at Wimbledon which starts on June 28.

He is also scheduled to play the warm-up grass court tournament in Halle beginning on June 14, the day after the French Open ends.

SERENA KNOCKED OUT BY RYBAKINA

Serena Williams' latest quest for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title ended with a 6-3, 7-5 defeat by Kazakh 21st seed Elena Rybakina in the last 16 on Sunday.

The 39-year-old American, still one short of Margaret Court's all-time record of most Grand Slam singles titles, has not gone beyond the fourth round at Roland Garros since losing the 2016 final. Russian-born Rybakina, 21, extended her best run at a major as she advanced to her first quarter-final, where she will face Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova for a spot in the last four. — AFP

FEDERER

Roger chooses to rest, pulls out of French Open



Switzerland's Roger Federer leaves the court after winning his third round match against Germany's Dominik Koepfer at the French Open in Paris on Saturday. — AFP

RESULTS

Men (fourth round):
Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x5) bt Pablo Carreno Busta (ESP x12) 6-3, 6-2, 7-5; Daniil Medvedev (RUS x2) bt Cristian Garin (CHI x22) 6-2, 6-1, 7-5. **Third round:** Roger Federer (SUI x8) bt Dominik Koepfer (GER) 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-5. **Women (fourth round):** Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (RUS x31) bt Victoria Azarenka (BLR x15) 5-7, 6-3, 6-2; Tamara Zidansek (SLO) bt Sorana Cirstea (ROM) 7-6 (7/4), 6-1; Paula Badosa (ESP x33) bt Marketa Vondrousova (CZE x20) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.

Tsitsipas sweeps into quarters

Paris, June 6: Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the French Open quarter-finals on Sunday for the second year running with a 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 victory over Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta.

The Greek fifth seed will take on two-time Grand Slam runner-up Daniil Medvedev for a spot in the last four.

Tsitsipas, 22, has reached the semi-finals at

the past two majors, and was beaten in a thrilling five-setter by Novak Djokovic at last year's Roland Garros.

He has won a tour-leading 37 matches this season, including 20 on clay.

Second seed Medvedev of Russia, who had never won a match at Roland Garros before this year, defeated Cristian Garin of Chile 6-2, 6-1, 7-5 in his last 16 tie.

Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova came from a set down to beat Victoria Azarenka 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 and reach her first French Open quarter-final since 2011.

The Russian 31st seed broke former world number one Azarenka eight times to advance to her seventh Grand Slam quarter-final. She will play Serena Williams or Elena Rybakina for a place in

the last four.

BOPANNA-SKUGOT IN DOUBLES QF

India's Rohan Bopanna and his Croatian partner Franko Skugor advanced to the quarterfinals after receiving a walkover from their opponents here on Sunday. The Indo-Croat duo got a walkover from Matwe Middelkoop and Marcelo Arevalo of El Salvador. — Agencies

SWEDEN SEE OFF ARMENIA IN WARM-UP

Solna, June 6: Sweden will head into Euro 2020 on a positive note after Saturday's 3-1 win over Armenia which came despite the absence of injured Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Janne Andersson's side kick off their European Championship campaign against Spain in Seville on June 14 and also face Slovakia and Robert Lewandowski-led Poland in Group E. They came out on top at the Friends Arena just outside Stockholm thanks to goals from Emil Forsberg, Marcus Danielson and Marcus Berg.

Forsberg opened the scoring in the 16th minute when his weak free-kick somehow squeezed past Armenia goalkeeper David Yurchenko.

SOUTH KOREA THUMP TURKMENISTAN 5-0

In Doha, Hwang Ui-joo scored a brace as South Korea thumped Turkmenistan 5-0 on Saturday to regain first place in Group H in the second phase of Asian World Cup qualifying.

It was South Korea's third win in four matches, the only blip being a goalless draw against Lebanon in November 2019 before Covid-19 played havoc with the competition.

The Lebanese had taken first place by beating Sri Lanka 3-2 in the first part of a double-header in Goyang, South Korea. Victory in the second match allowed the hosts to retake top spot with a far superior goal difference. The Turks spent the game chasing shadows. — AFP

WORLD TEST | CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

It should be best of 3 games: Yuvi

New Delhi, June 6: Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh feels the World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand should have been a three-match tie as the current schedule puts Virat Kohli's men at a "slight disadvantage".

The Indian team, which landed in England on Thursday, goes into the game starting June 18 in Southampton with limited preparation time while New Zealand are already playing a two-Test series against hosts England.

"I feel in a situation like this, there should be a best of 3 Tests, because if you lose the first one then you can come back in the next two. India will have a slight disadvantage because New Zealand are already playing Test cricket in England," Yuvraj said.

"There are 8-10 practice sessions but there's no substitute for match-practice. It will be an even contest but New Zealand will have an edge," he said.

Yuvraj said India have a stronger batting line-up compared to the Kane Williamson-led Black Caps.

"I do believe India is very strong because lately we have been winning outside the country. I think our batting is stronger, in bowling they are at par," he said.

The 2011 World Cup hero said Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill will have to get used to the Dukes ball

India who landed in England on Thursday go into the game with limited preparation time while New Zealand are already playing a two-Test series against hosts England.

quickly in their maiden appearance as openers in England.

"Rohit Sharma is very experienced now in Test matches. He has almost 7 hundreds, 4 hundreds as opener. But both Rohit and Shubman Gill have not opened in England ever," Yuvraj said.

"They know the challenge, the Dukes Ball swings early. They have to get used to the conditions quickly.

"In England, it's important to take it one session at a time. In the morning, the ball swings and seams, in the afternoon you can score runs, after Tea, it swings again. As a batsman, if you can adapt to these things, you can be successful."

Gill impressed in his maiden series in Australia but did not get runs in the home series against England. Yuvraj wants him to draw confidence from the performance in Australia. — PTI

CHAPPELL AND MANJREKAR SPAR OVER ASHWIN DEBATE

New Delhi, June 5: Australian great Ian Chappell has described senior India spinner R. Ashwin as one of the best Test bowlers playing the game right now. But when former India player Sanjay Manjrekar expressed his "problems" with Ashwin being seen as an all-time great by citing his overseas record and the recent successes of Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel, Chappell recalled West Indies pace great Joel Garner's handsome contributions when bowling alongside some of the game's finest speed merchants.

"When people start talking about him as being one of the all-time greats of the game then I have a few problems," Manjrekar said.

"One basic problem I have with Ashwin is that when you look at SENA countries, Ashwin doesn't have a single five-wicket haul there. And the other thing when you talk about him running through sides on Indian pitches that are suited to his kind of bowling is that in the last four years, Jadeja has matched him with wicket-taking abilities," he added. — PTI



New Zealand's Neil Wagner (right) celebrates an England wicket during the fifth day of the first Test at Lord's on Sunday. — AP

Kiwis push for enterprising win

London, June 6: Neil Wagner saw off first-innings century maker Rory Burns as New Zealand pressed for an enterprising win over England in the first Test at Lord's on Sunday.

Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson's bold declaration at lunch on Sunday's fifth and final day left England with a target of 273 in 75 overs to win the first of this two-match series after the whole of Friday's play was washed out. But England did not appear in any mood to take up the challenge as they reached tea on 56-2, needing a further 217 runs from 43 overs.

Burns, who anchored England's modest first-innings 275 with 132, had made 25 when he edged a swinging delivery from left-arm paceman Wagner

low to second slip Tim Southee. And England's 49-1 soon became 56-2.

Southee, who had taken 6-43 in England's first innings, had Zak Crawley out for a second two of the game when his sliced drive off a swinging ball to Henry Nicholls in the gully. Dom Sibley, out for nought in the first innings, had ground his way to just 19 not out off 83 balls, with England captain Joe Root yet to score after coming in just before the break.

Wagner, one of several South Africa-born players in New Zealand's XI, had tea figures of 1-5 in six overs, with Southee taking 1-21 in nine. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES (DAY 5, AT TEA)
New Zealand 378 & 169/6d in 52.3 overs (Tom Latham 36, Ross Taylor 33, Ollie Robinson 3/26) vs England 275 & 56/2 in 32 overs.