



'AMERICA COMING  
BACK TOGETHER BUT  
COVID NOT YET OVER'

P10



LALU SLAMS MODI  
FOR DESTROYING  
INDIA'S SOCIAL FABRIC

P5



XI'S SCRIPT



'INDIAN REVELRY  
WILL DESTROY  
CUP PITCHES'

P12

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of thundery development. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 40 and 29 degrees Celsius respectively.

**RAINFALL:** Nil

**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**

Max: 62% Min: 40%

**TEMPERATURE**

Max: 39.5°C (+3) Min: 28.0°C (-2)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:30 hrs 19:23 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

03:04 hrs 16:20 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee activists protest against the rising prices of petrol near Delhi CM's residence on Monday.

SNS

**Mamata writes to PM on fuel price hike:** Censuring the soaring fuel prices that has amplified people's distress, Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday urged Prime Minister Modi to slash tax levied by the Centre and diesel to temper its inflationary trend. She clarified that her government has voluntarily given a rebate to both petrol and diesel.

P4

**Pranab Mukherjee's son joins TMC:** Former President Pranab Mukherjee's son and former Congress MP Abhijit Mukherjee joined TMC on Monday. The former two-time lawmaker from Jangipur LS constituency in Murshidabad district of Bengal had been in talks with the TMC leadership over the past few weeks.

P4

**Tremors in Delhi-NCR:** A medium-intensity earthquake hit Hajjar in Haryana on Monday night, tremors of which were felt in Delhi and nearby areas, the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) said. According to the NCS, the earthquake of magnitude 3.7 occurred at a depth of 5 kilometres at 10.36 pm.

## India records sub-40k new cases

**SNS & PTI**  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

India saw a single-day rise of 39,796 new Covid infections, which took the tally of cases to 3,05,85,229, while the death toll climbed to 4,02,728 with 723 more fatalities, the lowest in around 88 days, according to Union Health Ministry data on Monday.

The active cases have further declined to 4,82,071 and comprise 1.58 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid recovery rate has improved to 97.11 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

It said that there has been a decline of 3,279 active cases in a span of 24 hours.

The ministry said that 15,22,504 tests were conducted on Sunday, taking the total cumulative tests conducted for detection of Covid



adding that the number of people who have recuperated from the disease has risen to 2,97,00,430. The case fatality rate stands at 1.32 per cent, the data stated.

The cumulative vaccine doses administered has reached 35.28 crore under the nationwide vaccination drive, the ministry said.

**Delhi logs 54 cases:** Delhi today recorded 54 fresh Covid cases — the lowest since 15 April last year — and 2 coronavirus-linked deaths while the positivity rate slumped to 0.09 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city has logged 14,34,608 coronavirus cases since the pandemic began early last year. Of this case-load, over 14.08 lakh patients have recovered so far, the health bulletin stated. (SEEPZ)

in the country to 41,97,77,457.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.61 per cent. It has been less than five per cent for 28 consecutive days, it said.

The weekly positivity rate has declined to 2.4 per cent, according to the health ministry.

Recoveries continue to outnumber daily cases for 53 consecutive days, it said.

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The central government should take steps to end the political deadlock in the Hills

NEERAJ ZIMBA, BJP MLA, DARJEELING

ON THE DEMANDS FOR STATE/UT AND OVERALL PRESENT POLITICAL SCENARIO IN THE HILLS

## Covid norm violations: Delhi govt closes Lajpat Nagar market till further orders



Lajpat Nagar market in the Capital has been closed for violating Covid norms. On Monday.

SUBRATA DUTTA  
PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Delhi government has closed the popular Lajpat Nagar market in south Delhi till further orders and the Rui Mandi in Sadar Bazar till July 6 for violation of Covid norms, officials said on Monday.

The order to close the markets was issued on Sunday by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), South East District, Padmakar Ram Tripathi said that an inspection was carried

out by the COVID-19 appropriate behaviour enforcement teams at the Lajpat Nagar Central Market wherein "gross violations" of guidelines was observed.

"It is, hereby, directed that the above market (Lajpat Nagar Central Market) is closed with immediate effect until further orders," the DDMA ordered.

It also directed that the market's association take all measures to ensure Covid-appropriate behaviour is followed and that this be done within a day from the order being issued.

"Whereafter a review shall be taken regarding opening of this segment of the market. Officials of MCD (municipal corporations of Delhi) and the Delhi Police are directed that no street side or unauthorised shops are functional within the Lajpat Nagar market area," the order said.

SDM, Kotwali, Arvind Rana issued the order for closure of the Rui Mandi in Sadar Bazar.

"Marketshopkeepers, vendors and general public in Rui Mandi, Sadar Bazar, are not following Covid appropriate behaviour. Due to large footfall, market association and shopkeepers are unable to ensure Covid protocols," it said.

"Covid protocols are being contravened in the Rui Mandi, Sadar Bazar which may cause super spreading of coronavirus. Therefore I, Arvind Rana, Incident Commander, Sub Division Kotwali hereby order shutting down of entire Rui Mandi, Sadar Bazar, market from July 5 to July 6 or further orders," the order stated.

# Delhi logs 54 new virus cases, lowest since 15 April last year

Positivity rate slumps to 0.09 pc; active cases drop to 912, lowest since 10 April 2020

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

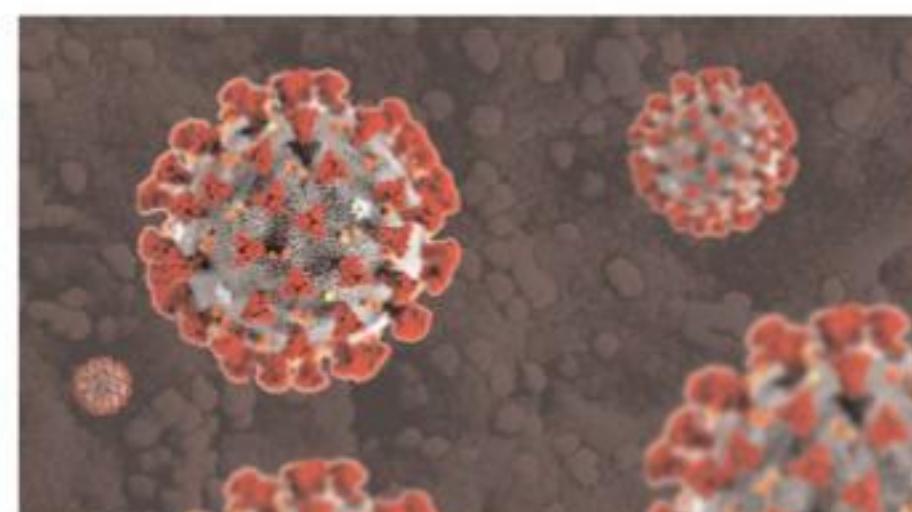
**D**elhi today recorded 54 fresh Covid cases — the lowest since 15 April last year — and 2 coronavirus-linked deaths while the positivity rate slumped to 0.09 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city has logged 14,34,608 coronavirus cases since the pandemic began early last year. Of this caseload, over 14.08 lakh patients have recovered so far, the health bulletin stated.

The city's Covid death toll rose to 24,997, it said.

The fresh infections were detected out of 61,405 tests, including 49,607 RT-PCR tests.

There were currently 912



active cases in Delhi, the bulletin stated. This is the lowest since 10 April last year when 862 cases were recorded.

There were 300 Covid patients under home isolation in the national capital while the number of containment zones in the city stood at 701, the bulletin said.

Yesterday, Delhi had reported 94 cases with a positivity rate of 0.13 per cent and 7 deaths. It had recorded 86 cases with a positivity rate of 0.11 per cent and 5 deaths last Saturday while 93 cases with a positivity rate of 0.13 per cent and 2 deaths were registered on Friday.

Delhi was brutally hit by a

ferocious second wave of the Covid pandemic that claimed a staggering number of lives, with the acute shortage of oxygen, hospital beds, and essential medicines turning the crisis into an unprecedented public health disaster in the national capital.

Since April daily cases as well as death count in the city had been on upward spiral. On 20 April, Delhi had reported 28,395 cases — the highest in the city since the beginning of the pandemic. On 22 April, the city's positivity rate was 36.2 per cent — the highest so far. The highest single-day count of Covid fatalities — 448 deaths — was reported on 3 May.

The city has administered a total of 83,82,845 Covid vaccine doses till Monday, according to the Delhi government's daily vaccination bulletin.

As many as 19,10,694 people have been fully vaccinated while 64,72,151 have received the first dose of the vaccine in Delhi, the bulletin stated.

Total of only 9,509 jabs were administered in the national capital yesterday as the government vaccination centres were closed. A total of 5,651 people received the first dose and 3,858 got the second dose of the vaccine.

According to official data, 12,65,395 people in the 45-plus age group and 1,80,424 in the 18-44 age group have been fully vaccinated.

The city had 3,43,000 vaccine shots — 2,61,000 Covaxin and 82,000 Covishield jabs — in stock, which was expected to last for a day, the bulletin said.

## Delhi records max temp of 39.5 deg C

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The maximum temperature in the national capital settled at 39.5 degrees Celsius on Monday, the India Meteorological Department said.

It said thunderstorm with light to moderate rains would occur in northwest, north, south, and southwest Delhi in the next two hours.

The relative humidity was recorded at 40 per cent at 5.30 pm.

The minimum temperature in the city settled at 28 degrees Celsius, it said.

The city is expected to witness a partly cloudy sky on Tuesday with minimum and maximum temperature settling at around 29 and 41 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Delhi's air quality was in the moderate category on Monday morning.

Data from the Central Pollution Control Board showed that the air quality index (AQI) at 6.40 pm stood at 133.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

tions have been allowed to be open.

Justice Rekha Palli issued notices and sought replies of Delhi government, Ministries of Home Affairs and Health and Family Welfare on the petition filed by owners of two spa centres here.

It is expected that respondent no. 1 (Delhi government) on the next date of hearing will be

ready with the explanation as to why in light of the (earlier) order of this court, spas are not permitted to be open, the court said and listed the matter for further hearing on July 22.

The judge also observed that it was not for the court to direct when to open spa centres, especially when there are experts to look into it.

We are not living in ivory towers, we are aware of the situation. Hotels have opened in some states, we know. But I can't direct them today to open spa centres. I have to hear them also, the judge said.

When the counsel for the petitioners sought advancement of the date of hearing, the judge said don't worry nobody is in a hurry to go to spas.

To this, the counsel said it was a question of livelihood of poor people employed in these spas and they are facing a tough time. Advocate Divesh Vashishth, appearing for petitioners Pritam Raj and Manish Upreti, argued that even though the Delhi government has permitted gyms, ayurvedic centres and salons to open in Delhi in June, they have not passed similar orders regarding spa centres.

## Classified

### TENDER

<b>GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA</b>	
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT	
PRESIDENTIAL DIVISION, MUMBAI	
email: presidencymumbai@mahapwd.com	
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 4 FOR 2021-2022 (Recall)	
Online E-tenders for the following work are invited by the Executive Engineer, Presidency Division, PWD, 2nd Floor Bandhakam Bhawan, 25 Murzban Road, Fort Mumbai-400001 (Tel. No. 22016975/22016977) from the local agencies from New Delhi-Rto reject/accept of all or one offer is reserved by the undersigned. conditional offers will not accept-	
St. No	Name of Work
1.	Cost Rs. lacs
1. Request for Proposal for Appointment of Local Architect Cum Liaison Consultant for " Construction of Staff Quarters at Maharashtra Sadan, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi.	22.32,965

Issued Date: 1-7-2021 To 8-7-2021

Opening Date: 9-7-2021

All the changed pertain to notice will not published in newspapers that will published in online E-notice process.

All the detailed information is available on following websites

1) www.mahapwd.com

2) www.mahatenders.gov.in

No. PTC/5968

Office of the Executive Engineer,

President's Division, P.W.D. 2nd Floor, Bandhakam Bhawan, 25 Murzban Road, Presidency Division, Mumbai, For, Mumbai-400001, Date 28-06-2021

(C.T. Naik)

Executive Engineer  
Presidency Division Mumbai

**QUOTATIONS** are invited within 7 days for printing work in Bijoy Krishna Girls' College, Howrah for: (1) Exterior Masonry (Area 5600 sq. ft.) (2) Interior Masonry (2769 sq. ft.) (3) Wooden & Metal Surface (Area 898 sq. ft.). E-mail Id: bkgc\_howrah@yahoo.com

No. 3, Surya Vihar Part-3, Faridabad-121003 (Haryana), have disowned/debarred their son Gaurav Mishra From all their moveable/immoveable properties and severed all their relation with him due to his misbehavior/misconduct towards my clients. If anybody deals with him in any manner do so at their own risk and responsibility and my client will not be responsible for any kind of act done by him.

Manoranjan Gaur  
Advocate

FMG

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is general public

that my client Sh. Surinder Kumar, 5/6 Lt. St. Raighar Kumar and Smt. Kanta, w/o Sh.

Surinder Kumar, 1/0 WZ-504

and presently, r/o H. No. 22 Gall

## Delhi HC agrees to hear on July 9 plea on calculation of class 10 CBSE marks

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Monday agreed to hear on July 9 a petition concerning the calculation of marks of class 10 students based on the internal assessment by schools.

It was the society's concern that since the members of the Result Committee and other faculty and staff of the school would be required to be physically present for the deliberations, there would be a real danger to the health on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh advanced the date of hearing from August 28 after the NGO, 'Justice for All', moved an hearing.

Advocate Gurcharan Singh Makhan, Advocate Mobile: 981480580

Anybody having any claim, right, title and/or interest in the aforesaid properties/said lost deed should lodge a claim with us within 7 days from this date hereof, failing which no such claim shall be entertained in future.

M/s. Supriya Basu & Associates Advocates 'Temple Chambers' Room No. 48, Ground floor 6, Old Post Office Street Kolkata-700001 Ph. 033 4601 4849 / 4601 4854 E-mail: sbasuadv@gmail.com Date: 29.06.2021

**SALE BY AUCTION**  
E-Auction Unserviceable Stores, 09-07-2021 at 02:30 Inspection 09-07-2021, from 11:00 to 3:00, at National Museum Janpath, Delhi, Security 5,00/- Accurate, 9868215515

**SITUATION VACANT**  
WEST BENGAL UNIVERSITY OF ANIMAL AND FISHERY SCIENCES 37 & 68, K.R. Sarani Kolkata-37

Walk-in interview is fixed on 20.07.2021 at 11 a.m. through online mode for selection of 1 IRF, 1 SRF and 1 Lab Attendant on contract basis under project.

Visit <http://wbuafscl.ac.in> for details.

Devi Rathna, owner of Smt. Sarojini Village, New Delhi-110028, do hereby sever all relations with our son Mohit Kumar reason her being disobedient and also defer him from all our properties and shall have no connection in future whatsoever in any manner.

Kumar has snapped and severed all their relations, and have disowned and dis inherited their eldest son Amit Talwar and wife Meenakshi Talwar who are now living separately.

Both are now separated and have no connection with them. They are now living separately and have no connection with them.

Advocate Arun Vohra D-374/BS Advocate B-222, Greater Kailash-I, N.Delhi-48 (M): 9811089104

**OUR CLIENT** Smt. Sarojini Village, New Delhi-110028, do hereby sever all relations with our son Mohit Kumar reason her being disobedient and also defer him from all our properties and shall have no connection in future whatsoever in any manner.

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**HYDERABAD** The Statesman Limited, 2nd Floor, UNI Building, A.C. Guards, Hyderabad-500004, Mob: 9866323009

Email: dellistatesman@gmail.com

hyderabad@thestatesmangroup.com

**LUCKNOW** 2/2, Butler Palace (Near Jopling Road), Lucknow-226001, Ph: (0522) 2206705

Email: dellistatesman@gmail.com

lucknow@thestatesmangroup.com

**RANCHI** 11/C, Road#1, Ashoknagar, Ranchi -834 002

Fax: (0651) 2247054

Email: dellistatesman@gmail.com

The idol will be housed in a smaller-sized pandal, unlike the giant ones that we have made before the pandemic struck



STATE MINISTER SUBRATA MUKHERJEE

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 06 JULY 2021

03

# Kejri making false promise offree power in Pb: Capt

Amarinder accuses his Delhi counterpart & AAP supremo of just eyeing Punjab Assembly polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 5 JULY

Taking his Delhi counterpart head-on for allegedly "failing" to provide free power to the farmers in the national capital, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Monday slammed Arvind Kejriwal for making "false promise" offree power in Punjab with an eye on the 2022 Punjab Assembly polls.

The Kejriwal-led Delhi government has completely failed the people of Delhi on all counts, with no free power to the farmers in the villages located in the national capital and excessively high power tariffs for the industry, alleged Capt Amarinder, declaring that the people of Punjab have already rejected the "pathetic Delhi model of governance" on all counts.



The Punjab CM termed the Delhi power tariff structure a case of "organised loot" by the Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, which was openly allowing private power distribution companies in Delhi, including the Reliance Group, to fill their pockets by collecting excessively high tariffs at the cost of the common man.

Subsidised power is cur-

rently being given to 1,43,812 industrial units in Punjab with an annual subsidy of Rs 2226 crore, he pointed out, slamming CM Kejriwal.

In sharp contrast to Punjab, where his government was giving free power worth Rs 6,735 crore to 13,79,217 farmers, the AAP government in Delhi had made no effort whatsoever to extend similar support to the agricultural community there, Capt Amarinder charged.

Alleging that the Kejriwal government was among the first to notify one of the anti-farmer farm laws of the Centre in Delhi, he slammed the AAP for "pretending sympathy" for the farmers of Punjab.

Seeking to "expose" the "anti-people" power tariff structure of Delhi, Captain Amarinder said the Delhi government was "befooling" the people by putting a small amount into one pocket, by way of 200 units of

free domestic power, and taking away a higher amount from the other pocket by way of the high tariffs being paid by the shopkeepers, industry and farmers for commercial and agriculture power.

The Delhi government was charging Rs. 11.34 per unit from small shopkeepers and other commercial establishments, which was 50% higher than what was being charged in Punjab, he said. In fact, he said, every resident of Delhi was indirectly paying much more for power than what was being paid by residents of Punjab.

Comparing the subsidies of the two states, the CM said the Punjab government was paying an annual power subsidy of Rs 10,458 crore while the Kejriwal government was paying Rs 2820 crore, when the population of Delhi was two crore compared with Punjab's three crore population.

# H'yan govt asks pvt schools to update student enrolment info

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 5 JULY

Haryana's school education department has directed all private schools in the state to update their Management Information System (MIS) to provide accurate information regarding enrolment of students in the schools.

An official spokesperson of the education department said last year 29 lakh students were enrolled in private schools of the state, out of which only 17 lakh students have been updated on MIS by them so far.

He said the MIS of the department is for covering all government and private schools, through which the admissions can be actively monitored through a Unique Student Registration Number (SRN) given to every student.

The spokesperson said that private schools are not updating the students on the portal at a faster pace,

whereas the rights are with the schools and the students can be updated on the portal only from the login of the school.

He informed that 12 lakh children are still on the portal but they have not been updated on MIS whereas private schools can update MIS at a single click.

The spokesperson informed the education minister, Kanwar Pal has directed the private schools to update their MIS immediately. He said that currently 12 lakh children are on the MIS portal, there is no chance of any drop out or disappearance regarding the same.

He said that after the stipulated time frame, strict action would be taken against the schools if they are not able to update the complete record on the portal.

The spokesperson said the department had taken deep cognisance of these 12 lakh children and all the district education officers and district primary edu-

cation officers were directed to discuss with all the private schools in this regard and get this enrollment updat-

ed on MIS.

The spokesperson said a decision was taken to open schools for teachers from 1 May, 2021 with the aim of reducing the dropout rate in schools to zero during Covid-19.

After this, online admissions of students were started so that the parents should not be inconvenienced and after assessing the enrollment on 30 May, 2021 it was found that the parents are not much interested in sending their children to school. In view of this, the admission date was extended till 30 June.

The spokesperson said as a result of continuous efforts and hard work initiated by the government schools, 23.60 lakh students were enrolled and thus 1.60 lakh more children were admitted in the school as compared to the last year.

# Congress, AAP politicising issue of fixed charges paid to pvt power plants: SAD

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 5 JULY

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Monday asked the Congress government in Punjab to provide affordable and dependable round the clock power to Punjabis.

Addressing a Press conference here, the SAD president said the issue of fixed charges was being politicised by both the Congress and Aam Aadmi Party even though they knew the truth that this charge was applicable on private and government thermal plants as well as power purchased from outside the state.

He said while the fixed charge for the private thermal plants was Rs 1.50 per unit that paid to government thermal plants when they were closed was Rs 2.35 per unit.

"Punjab has paid a fixed



charge of Rs 7,000 crore to government thermal plants during the last five years as per State Electricity Regulatory Commission figures," the SAD leader said. Asserting that Punjab wanted cheap power, Badal said if this was possible by cancelling the Private Purchase Agreements (PPAs) done with three private thermal plant companies then the same should be annulled.

Stating that the Congress government was playing politics on the issue of establishment of private thermal plants, Badal said the plants were established after much thought due to huge shortfall in 2007. He said this shortfall occurred because the then Congress government led by Capt Amarinder Singh did

not add a single mega watt (MW) of power to the state kity leading to overloaded sub stations and massive power cuts of ten hours daily. He said PPAs were signed to purchase power between Rs 2.86 to Rs 2.89 per unit, the cheapest at the time.

Speaking about the promises made by AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal, Badal said first AAP should ensure 300 units free power in Delhi before making such promises in Punjab. He said this promise itself was fake as Kejriwal had clearly told in his press conference here that anyone consuming even one unit more than the promised 300 units would have to pay the entire power bill without any concession whatsoever. "This is what AAP is following in Delhi also", Badal added, saying power in Delhi was one of the most expensive in the country.

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Monday said the BJP government has outperformed the previous Congress regime in terms of pace of development in the last three and half years.

Addressing a party meeting in Kullu, Thakur said there was no comparison between present BJP and previous Congress government as the government had accelerated the pace of development in all spheres.

"As many as 1,585 km roads were constructed during the first 3 and half years of Congress government from 1 January 2013 to 30 June 2016 whereas over 2,951 km roads were constructed by the present government from 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2021.

Similarly, 5,354 km roads were metalled during the present government as compared to 3,309 kilometers tarred during the same period of previous Congress regime.

Besides, 145 bridges were



constructed and 261 villages connected by road by the previous Congress regime as compared to 216 bridges constructed and 305 villages were connected by roads by the present government," he added.

He stated that 333 projects worth Rs 1,460 crore were sanctioned under NABARD under the BJP government as compared to 226 projects worth Rs 886.44 crore sanctioned during the previous Congress regime.

Under CRIF, 40 projects worth Rs 941.66 crore were sanctioned during the present regime whereas projects worth only Rs 301.53 crore were sanctioned during the previous government rule.

Grihini Suvidha Yojna, besides providing health cover to lakhs of people under Hicare and Ayushman Bharat schemes, the CM said.

He stated that despite lockdowns and an increase in the number of Covid cases the state government ensured that the pace of development goes uninterrupted.

"The victory of the BJP in the elections to Lok Sabha and two by elections is a testimony to the good work done by the state government.

The performance of BJP was also outstanding in the PRIs and ULBs elections," he added.

HP min hails Centre for including retail, wholesale trades as MSMEs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 5 JULY

Himachal Pradesh urban development minister Suresh Bhardwaj on Monday hailed the Central government for including retail and wholesale trades as MSMEs.

Bhardwaj said Prime Minister Narendra Modi took this decision keeping in view the impact of the second wave of Covid-19 on retail and wholesale trades.

He thanked the Centre government for this decision and also congratulated the traders of the state and stated that this decision will benefit more than 2.5 crore traders of the country.

"The state government is determined for the welfare of the traders and those impacted with Coronavirus pandemic," he stated.

He added that with the revised guidelines, retail and wholesale trades will also benefit from priority sector lending under RBI guidelines.

## Ensure HP bypolls win: Nadda to BJP workers



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 5 JULY

of the Central as well as state governments to ensure strengthening of BJP at the grass root level.

"The party functionaries must also ensure that they discharge their responsibilities with renewed zeal. Party workers are the backbone of any organization and must come up to the expectations of their leadership," he added.

He urged the BJP leaders and workers to visit hospitals and extend all possible help to the needy.

## Nadda, Jai Ram visit Atal Tunnel Rohtang

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 5 JULY

BJP national president JP Nadda and HP Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Monday visited Atal Tunnel Rohtang where they were accorded rousing welcome at the north portal by officers of BRO and GREFF besides gen-

**Nadda and Thakur were also given warm reception at the south portal of the Tunnel and at Sissu by people of Lahaul-Spiti district in traditional manner.**

Later, Nadda appreciated the engineering marvel created by the engineers of BRO and thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for envisaging personal interest in real-



izing the dream of former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee to construct a tunnel to connect the land locked hinterland Lahaul-Spiti with rest of the world.

He added the tunnel was also important from a strategic point of view for ensuring uninterrupted supply of logistics and other support to the Army posted at the frontiers.

## Special drive in central Delhi to vaccinate marginalised people against Covid

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Starting June, the district administration in central Delhi has been running a special drive to vaccinate people from marginalised sections of the society against COVID-19, including sex workers, transgenders, homeless people, migrants and construction workers, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Under District Magistrate Akriti Sagar, the administration has joined hands with several NGOs, including Doctors For You, and held camps to inoculate such people and provide them free medical care and ration.

In association with Kinnar Bharati, an NGO working for the third gender, the district administration has so far organised three special camps at Happy School in Daryaganj to vaccinate transgenders.

"We have identified 500 transgenders, of which 204 have been vaccinated so far. Some have taken the jabs at centres near their home," said Ravikant Vinayak Yadav, OSD to Central Delhi district mag-

istrate.

There are around 900 sex workers in Central Delhi. Around 200 of them left for their hometown during the lockdown, Yadav said.

"Special vaccination drives are being conducted for sex workers at Anglo-Arabic School, Ajmeri Gate, since June 22. So far, more than 240 of them have been inoculated," he said.

Hopefully, all identified sex workers and transgenders will be vaccinated by second week of July, the official said.

Since such people are spread over a large area, including slums, identifying them and getting them vaccinated is a tough job.

"We decided to work with NGOs who have been dealing with such marginalized sections of society to eliminate the element of insecurity and social bias which creates vaccine hesitancy," Yadav said.

The administration also organised special camps for priests and sadhus and their families at Mata Jhandewali temple where more than 200 beneficiaries have been vaccinated so far.

# Delhi HC extends interim protection to woman who willingly converted to Islam

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Delhi High Court Monday extended the interim protection till July 22 granted to a woman who claimed that she and her family are facing life-threats and being hunted by the UP police, media and vigilante groups after her wilful conversion from Hinduism to Islam.

Justice Rekha Palli noted that no one appeared on behalf of Director General of Uttar

Pradesh Police and the UP government, against whom the woman has raised grievances and said it needs to hear them before passing any orders.

Despite service of advance notice, none appeared Respondent no 4 and 5 (UP authorities). It appears that the primary grievance raised by the petitioner (woman) is against respondent no. 4 and 5 who are situated beyond the territorial jurisdiction of this court.

Before passing any orders,

a woman who has expressed apprehension regarding her security.

Advocate Tanya Agarwal, representing the woman, submitted that the petitioner was 29-year-old and has willingly converted to Islam from Hinduism in Delhi and that she apprehends that she will be forcibly taken to Uttar Pradesh and will be reconverted to Hinduism.

Advocate Sameer Vashist, representing Delhi Police, said the woman has stated that she

## Patient's kin allege hospital gave wrong blood, move HC for retaining records, CCTV footage

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The family of a cancer patient, who was allegedly transfused wrong blood at Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre and died, has approached the Delhi High Court seeking direction to the authorities to retain the treatment records and the CCTV footage of the relevant period.

The petition filed by the patient's daughter claimed that her father Reiyaz Ahmed, who was undergoing cancer

treatment at the hospital, was administered blood of A+ positive group whereas his blood group was O+ positive, as a result he suffered adverse reaction and derailed the ongoing treatment.

Justice C Hari Shankar recorded the submissions of the counsel for Delhi government and the hospital that the CCTV footage and medical records of the patient have already been provided by the hospital to the police and said nothing survives for adjudication in this petition as the grievances of the peti-

titioner stand redressed.

The petitioner said she was aggrieved by the criminal medical negligent acts of the Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Hospital, which have recklessly and negligently administered (A+) blood transfusion to her father, although his blood group was (O+).

However, as a consequence of the grossly negligent act on the part of the hospital administration, the petitioner's father suddenly had an acute haemolytic reaction leading to several life-threatening complications, it said.

## THUMBNAILS



BJP Yuba Morcha activists during their march to KMC office in Kolkata on Monday. ■ ANAGHA BANIK

**Adoption agency:** Burdwan (East) is set to get a Specialised Adoption Agency for the fruitless couples and the senior district officials said that it is likely to come into operation by the end of this month. DM, Burdwan (East), Priyanka Singla on 24 June 2021 stated about absorption of different contractual staffs for the unit. ■ SNS

**Jute mill closed:** Suspension of work notice by Chandannagar Gondolpara jute mill have rendered 4,000 jute mill workers jobless. Management cited illegal strike for closure. A workers union leader Biswajit Mukherjee said illegal move by management sparked protest. ■ SNS

## Ex-Prez Pranab's son Abhijit joins TMC; hails 'secular leader' Mamata

SNS & PTI  
KOLKATA, 5 JULY

Former President Pranab Mukherjee's son and ex-Congress MP Abhijit Mukherjee joined the TMC on Monday.

The former two-time lawmaker from Jangipur Lok Sabha seat had been in talks with the TMC leadership over the past few weeks, party sources said.

He was welcomed into the party by TMC leader in Lok Sabha, Sudip Bandopadhyay, amid shouts of 'Mamata Banerjee Zindabad'!

"Didi succeeded in halting the BJP juggernaut in West Bengal. She is the most credible secular leader in the country who can fight and defeat the communal BJP. I have left one Congress to join another. We are sure of resisting the saffron camp across India in the future," Mukherjee said.

The newly inducted leader said that while he was in touch with Miss Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee before the Assembly elections, he had joined the TMC before the polls, it would have been construed that he switched allegiance for some post.

"I don't hanker for any post. I am a grassroots worker. I did not have any post in the Congress but only had its primary membership. Now, I have become a primary member of the TMC and it is

## 'Cruel' fuel price hike, CM urges PM to slash taxes

Miss Banerjee pointed out substantial rise in prices of eggs, edible oil & fruits

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 5 JULY

**C**ensuring the soaring fuel prices that has amplified people's distress, chief minister Mamata Banerjee today urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to slash taxes levied by the Centre and diesel to temper its inflationary trend.

She clarified that her government has voluntarily given a rebate to both petrol and diesel as a "token of empathy for the common people".

Miss Banerjee expressed her "deep concern and anguish" for "pursuing policies which have resulted in this significant hardship for the common people of the nation."

Shocked at the retail petrol price crossing Rs 100/litre in many states, Miss Banerjee wrote that the diesel prices were hiked by the central government eight times since 4 May 2021, of which prices were hiked six times in June with the prices increasing four times in one week itself.

"The rather cruel hike in petrol and diesel prices have affected the common people most adversely and has directly impacted the dangerously rising inflation in the country," Miss Banerjee wrote.

"It is my earnest request that the taxes charged by the central government on petrol

### 'Diesel prices hiked eight times'



I am also alarmed by the fact that the government of India is constantly increasing the cess component of central tax revenues which results in denying the states its legitimate share of 42 per cent of tax collected by government of India since cess accrues wholly with the government of India, without sharing with the states. I sincerely urge you to desist from the anti-federalist trend developed in the last few years

MAMATA BANERJEE  
CHIEF MINISTER

and diesel be substantially reduced to give much-needed relief to the common people and also to check the overall inflationary trend in the country today," read her letter. Miss Banerjee also pointed out that the prices of eggs, edible oil and fruits have risen substantially.

The Wholesale Price Index in the country rose by 12.94 per cent in May compared to last year, she said adding that the Consumer Price Index rose by 6.30 per cent where the prices of edible oils increased by 30.8 per cent, eggs by 15.2 per cent, fruits by 12 per cent and health related items by 8.44 per cent.

Amid Covid-19, the government of India collected revenue amounting to Rs 3.71 lakh crore (including Rs 3.71.125 crore from oil and petroleum products in 2020-21), she

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Amid Covid-19, the government of India collected revenue amounting to Rs 3.71 lakh crore (including Rs 3.71.125 crore from oil and petroleum products in 2020-21), she

complained.

The chief minister's letter comes at a time when the Trinamul Congress and the BJP spar over the soaring petrol prices. While the TMC slammed PM Modi for the petrol price hike, the BJP questioned why the state government is not reducing its duties on petroleum products to bring down the prices.

In February this ahead of the Assembly polls, Miss Banerjee had travelled to and from Nabanna in an electric scooter protesting against fuel price hike.

She rode pillion to state minister Firhad Hakim and even took control of the wheels for a stretch returning to her residence at Kalighat when petrol prices breached Rs 100-mark in some states. The government had then offered a Re 1 VAT cut on petrol and diesel.

TMC will hit the street from 10 am to 5 pm on 10 and 11 July across the state to protest against fuel price hike.

TMC general secretary Partha Chatterjee said, "Due to inordinate rise in fuel prices, it is affecting agriculture sector, transportation cost is on the rise and prices of essential commodities like edible oil, sugar are already too high." He said the Centre has turned a deaf ear to this vital issue. During the protest rallies TMC will follow Covid-19 protocols.

The AP chief minister complained to water resources minister Gajendra Singh Sekhawat that Krishna River Management Board was being discriminatory and is "repeatedly proposing for site visit of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project to supply water to the chronically parched region and urged him to expedite environmental clearance for the project which does not require any land acquisition and is located beyond 10 km of ecologically sensitive zone. Telangana has opposed the project on the ground of fragile ecology as there are several parks including a tiger project in the area. However, Telangana's irrigation secretary wrote to KRMB chairman has said the board has included only those issues raised by AP and not critical matters by Telangana. His government has sought revision of water sharing ratio to make it 50-50 between two states and steps to stop construction of Rayalaseema Lift irrigation project.

## YSR writes to Centre on water projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 5 JULY

Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has written to the Centre complaining about Telangana government's decision to run hydro power projects even though there is not enough water in the shared reservoirs across river Krishna. Seeks environmental clearance for a new irrigation project which has proved to be the bone of contention between the two states, even as the neighbouring state retaliated with complaints to the Centre to withhold clearance citing the fragile ecology of the forest areas in the vicinity.

Reddy wrote both to Union minister for environment and that of water resources complaining about Telangana's "whimsical" decision to continue generating power using the reservoirs shared by both states and allowing the water to flow into the sea instead of storing it, thereby depriving Andhra Pradesh of its share of the water from Krishna.

The AP chief minister complained to water resources minister Gajendra Singh Sekhawat that Krishna River Management Board was being discriminatory and is "repeatedly proposing for site visit of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project to supply water to the chronically parched region and urged him to expedite environmental clearance for the project which does not require any land acquisition and is located beyond 10 km of ecologically sensitive zone. Telangana has opposed the project on the ground of fragile ecology as there are several parks including a tiger project in the area. However, Telangana's irrigation secretary wrote to KRMB chairman has said the board has included only those issues raised by AP and not critical matters by Telangana. His government has sought revision of water sharing ratio to make it 50-50 between two states and steps to stop construction of Rayalaseema Lift irrigation project.

The party also said that Mehta, realising the "gravity of his actions", attempted to offer an explanation to the media that Adhikari came to meet him "unannounced", and hence he had to "apologise" for not meeting him.

"We ask ourselves that means that the solicitor general would indeed have met an accused person in criminal cases if they had come with a

prior appointment. We ask ourselves, has the solicitor general forgotten the ethics and principles which circumscribe his conduct in the high office he occupies," the TMC said in the letter.

The party demanded that Mehtas conduct be investigated, and pending such inquiry, he must tender his resignation.

"Public interest, integrity and neutrality of the office of the Solicitor General of India are required to be protected at all costs," it said.

"We, therefore, approach Your Excellency (the president) to initiate necessary steps for the removal of Tushar Mehta from the post of the Solicitor General of India to uphold India's Constitutional values," the party said.

## George asks Mani to quit LDF

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 5 JULY

Kerala Janapaksham leader PC George on Monday asked Kerala Congress(M) leader Jose K Mani to quit the CPI-M-led LDF if he has any self-respect.

George, former Kerala Congress(M) leader, made this demand after senior advocate appearing for the state government in the case related to vandalism in the state Assembly in 2015 informed the Supreme Court that Mani was a corrupt person. The LDF has always treated Mani as a corrupt person. It is shameful that Mani joined a party that blames his father, George said.

Jose Mani's party should stop supporting CPI-M that raised criticism against his father in the top court, George said. "If Mani continues in the LDF, it will confirm that he is accepting his father is a corrupt person," George added.

The Kerala government had moved the SC seeking its nod to withdraw cases against CPI-M leaders, including present education minister V Sankarthy, in the case related to 2015 Assembly ruckus.

The SC on Monday observed that the unruly behaviour of lawmakers inside the Parliament and Assemblies cannot be condoned and they should face trial for destroying public property inside the House. Further hearing is on 15 July.

## TMC MPs meets Prez, demands Tushar Mehta's removal as SG for 'impropriety'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY



"We would like to use his (Abhijit's) services to fight the communal, undemocratic & fascist forces"

PARTHA CHATTERJEE,  
TMC GENERAL SECRETARY

up to the party to use my services the way it wants," Mukherjee said.

"We are inducing Pranab da's son Abhijit into the TMC with Mamata Banerjee's consent. He had expressed interest to join the party through Abhishek Banerjee.

"We would like to use his services appropriately to fight the communal, undemocratic and fascist forces. He is the son of Pranab Mukherjee, who was our source of inspiration on many matters and mentored us on many occasions. He was a politician with deep roots in secular and progressive values," he said.

On his sister Sharmista Mukherjee's political inclination, he said, "She is an independent person."

Sharmista Mukherjee, a Congress leader, two: "SAD!!", without any further elaboration.

TMC general secretary Partha Chatterjee said the party hopes that Abhijit

## TMC MPs meets Prez, demands Tushar Mehta's removal as SG for 'impropriety'

A delegation of TMC MPs met President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday and sought the removal of Tushar Mehta as the Solicitor General of India, alleging that his reported meeting with BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari raised serious doubts of impropriety. TMC MPs Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Mahua Moitra also submitted a letter to the President, which said, "This meeting took place at Mehta's official residence."

Such a meeting...raises extremely serious doubts of impropriety," the letter submitted by the MPs on behalf of the TMC stated.

Mehta has denied meeting Adhikari at his official residence.

Adhikari, once a TMC heavyweight, and now Leader of Opposition, is accused in the 2016 Narada case.

Mehta is representing the CBI in the Supreme Court and the Calcutta High Court in the agency's probe against senior TMC leaders in the matter.

Various news items, containing videos and photographs, mentions a private one-on-one meeting between BJP's Adhikari, "an accused" in serious criminal offences, and Mehta, the letter stated.

Later in the day, the ruling party, in a press conference, said that Mehta's explanation in the matter was "untenable".

Mehta, in his clarification, claimed that Adhikari was seated in his waiting room and when he was informed about the BJP leader's visit, he apologised and conveyed through his staff his inability to meet him," Moitra told reporters.

Asserting that one cannot just saunter into the residence of the Solicitor General of India, the MP said, "It is news for us and the people of India that the solicitor general has to apologise to an accused of not meeting him."

She added that if Mehta's version is indeed correct then why doesn't he release the CCTV footage of his house.

"This is not just an issue that affects the TMC. Mehta holds the post of the second-highest law officer in the country. We will not let this matter be

swept under the carpet," Moitra said.

Earlier, the party's MPs Derek O'Brien, Ray and Moitra had also written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for removing Mehta alleging that the meeting between Mehta and Adhikari was in violation of established norms and "reeks of impropriety".

The party's letter to the President pointed out in detail their objections to the meeting.

"To make matters worse, this meeting took place subsequent to an equally improper meeting between Adhikari and the Home Minister of India, Amit Shah. Notably, Adhikari is accused in various criminal cases of cheating, illegal gratification, and bribery etc."

"We, therefore, have reasons to believe that such a meeting has been organised to influence the outcome of criminal cases

where Adhikari is an accused person, using the high offices of the solicitor general.

"We state that the act of the solicitor general to provide an opportunity of an audience to Suvendu Adhikari not only indicative of grave impropriety but also raises troubling doubts about his professional integrity," the TMC said in the letter.

The party also said that Mehta, realising the "gravity of his actions", attempted to offer an explanation to the media that Adhikari came to meet him "unannounced", and hence he had to "apologise" for not meeting him.

"We ask ourselves that means that the solicitor general would indeed have met an accused person in criminal cases if they had come with a

## TENDER

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Nishad community wants to see me as deputy CM if NDA wins 2022 UP Assembly polls...



NISHAD PARTY PRESIDENT SANJAY NISHAD  
SPEAKING ON THEIR ALLIANCE WITH BJP

## THUMBNAILS



A Baya Weaver (Ploceus philippinus) prepares nests during monsoon on the outskirts of Ajmer, Rajasthan, on Monday.

■ AGENCIES

**Kumble's offer:** Former cricketer Anil Kumble on Monday met AP chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and offered his support to set up a sports university. He suggested the state might consider setting up a factory for manufacturing sports goods as most are located in Jalandhar and Meerut in N India. ■ SNS

**SC hearing on Ramdev:** Supreme Court on Monday said it would hear on 12 July the plea of yoga guru Ramdev seeking a stay on proceedings in connection with multiple FIRs lodged over his alleged remarks against the use of allopathic medicines during the Covid pandemic, saying it received original records of his statements late Sunday night only. ■ PTI

**Bride arrives at in-laws house in chopper:** A bride arrived at her in-laws place in a village in Bareilly, days after being elected as its head, on a helicopter much to the amusement of the local residents. "For filing of nominations, Sunita Verma had to become a voter of the village. So, she got married to Omenandra Singh. Her husband did the canvassing on her behalf and she won." ■ PTI

**Ex-UP CM slightly better:** The condition of former UP chief minister Kalyan Singh improved slightly on Monday and he is stable. Singh had been unwell for the past two weeks and was hospitalised on Sunday evening. Singh was admitted to the ICU on the evening of 4 July due to infection and reduced consciousness levels. ■ PTI

# SC: Unruly behaviour in Parl unacceptable

Says decorum must be maintained in the House; it is also happening in Parliament and one has to be strict on such conduct by lawmakers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday said it has to take a strict view of unruly behaviour of lawmakers in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies as such incidents are "increasing now-a-days" and this sort of conduct cannot be condoned.

The apex court, which was hearing pleas relating to a criminal case lodged in connection with ruckus inside Kerala Assembly in 2015 during the previous Congress-led UDF rule, said it must be ensured that decorum is maintained in the House.

Prima facie, we have to

take a very strict view on this kind of behaviour. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable, a bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said while referring to the incident in Kerala Assembly.

We must ensure that some decorum is maintained. These are sentinels of democracy, the bench said, adding Such type of incidents are increasing now-a-days. In the Parliament also, it is happening and one has to be strict on this.

One of the pleas was filed by the Kerala government which has challenged the 12 March order of the high court dismissing its petition seeking withdrawal of a criminal case registered in connection with

the ruckus inside the state Assembly in 2015.

The state Assembly had witnessed unprecedented scenes on 13 March, 2015 as LDF members, then in opposition, tried to prevent then finance minister K M Mani, who was facing allegations in the bar bribery scam, from presenting the state budget.

Besides flinging the speaker's chair from the podium, electronic equipment like computers, keyboards and mikes on the desk of the presiding officer were also allegedly damaged by the LDF members. The case, which also involves V Sivankutty who is a minister in the state, was registered against a group of them



LDF MLAs and others.

During the hearing conducted on Monday through video-conferencing, the apex court referred to the incident in the Kerala Assembly and observed that the MLAs had obstructed presentation of finance budget and such behaviour cannot be accepted.

We will not condone this kind of behaviour of MLAs who, on the floor of the house, throw mikes and destroys

public property, said the bench, which posted the matter for hearing on 15 July.

They were MLAs and they were representing people, the bench said, adding What message are they giving to the public. One has to take strict view on such conduct otherwise there would be no deterrence to this kind of behaviour, it said, adding that those involved in such behaviour should face trial under the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

When one of the counsel said the MLAs were protesting against the then finance minister against whom there were corruption allegations, the bench said irrespective of

that, presentation of finance budget is of utmost importance.

On the issue of application under section 321 of the Code of Criminal Procedure which deals with withdrawal from prosecution, the bench observed that it is the prerogative of the public prosecutor.

In its plea filed in the apex court, the Kerala government has claimed that high court had failed to appreciate that the alleged incident had occurred while the Assembly was in session and no crime could have been registered' previous sanction' of the speaker.

The plea has sought a stay on the 12 March order of the high court and also on further proceedings in the case, which

## CPM demands justice for Father Stan Swamy

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The CPI (M) today said accountability be fixed to punish those responsible for the death of 84-year-old Jesuit priest and activist Father Stan Swamy who championed the rights and causes of adivasis in far flung areas of Jharkhand.

In a statement, the party politburo said "those responsible for foisting false cases on him, his continued detention in jail and inhuman treatment cannot escape accountability." The party said Swamy was jailed last October "on trumped up charges under the draconian UAPA and was sought to be linked with the Bhima Koregaon case."

He was denied treatment for and it was only after a campaign was conducted by various human rights and disability rights organisations that even a sipper to drink liquids was made available to him in jail, the party said.

"His appeals for bail and being sent home were rejected." ■ SNS

## Frail Lalu slams Modi govt for destroying country's 'social fabrics'



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PATNA, 5 JULY

Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura town of UP. In a fresh development, the petitioners in the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi case have offered the opposing parties representing Muslims one-and-a-half times more land some distance away from the area where the disputed structure is located.

Alleging that the communal harmony in the country is being disturbed just for petty political gains, Prasad exhorted the party workers to help maintain communal peace at all cost. The RJD chief looked upset and distressed over the way 15-year-old RJD regime was constantly protracted as "Jungle Raj".

According to him, he has missed the elections in the state. He, however, profusely thanked his younger son for running the party in the state and performing excellently in the recently-held Assembly elections.

He said he never imagined that Tejashwi would win so many seats in the state but he got the support of all sections of the society.

Bihar opposition leader and RJD legislator Tejashwi Yadav in his address asked the party leaders to be prepared "for all situations". "I tell you that the fallen government will fall ultimately and the government of the people will come to power," Tejashwi predicted. He also promised to deliver "economic justice" to the masses now that the task of "social justice" was well achieved under Prasad.

After Ayodhya, some people are now talking about Mathura. Kya chahte hain desme (What do you want?) Prasad wondered, subtly referring to the continuing legal battle seeking to remove a mosque adjacent to the Sri

### OVER THE HORIZON



Fishermen look for a catch in the Arabian sea, in Mumbai, on Monday. ■ AGENCIES

## Five SP workers arrested for indecent slogans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW/BALLIA (UP), 5 JULY

Five Samajwadi Party workers were on Monday arrested for allegedly indulging in indecent sloganising against Uttar Pradesh sports minister Upendra Tiwari, police said. Tiwari's family has demanded that the accused be booked under POCSO Act as the slogans targeted the minister's two minor daughters aged nine and 11 along with his mother.

The state police had on Sunday registered a case against 10 people, including a newly-elected chairman of zila panchayat and his father, for allegedly indulging in indecent

sloganeering against Tiwari.

"Five SP workers - Shailendra Yadav, Manish Yadav, Nitin Singh, Shivpal Singh and Vikas Kumar Ojha have been arrested from the party's office today (Monday). Additional Superintendent of Police, Sanjay Yadav said.

Newly-elected Ballia zila panchayat chairman Anand Chaudhary, his father Ambika Chaudhary and hundreds of unidentified people were booked by police, Yadav said.

One of the accused was arrested on Sunday, he added.

According to police, a video in which SP workers can be purportedly seen indulging in sloganising against Tiwari went viral on social media fol-

owing which BJP leaders of the district met the Superintendent of Police Vinod Tada at his residence. Meanwhile, Tiwari had alleged that the SP workers had abused his mother and sister.

In the video, expletives were hurled at my mother and sister, Ambika Chaudhary is trying to join the SP through his son. In 75 districts of the state, elections for the zila panchayat chairpersons were held, but this situation did not come up in the 74 other districts, the minister had said.

Reacting to the charges levelled against him, Ambika Chaudhary said, "Tiwari had hurled expletives at my family members, but I did not say anything. Yesterday, after the

elections, we came back home directly from the collectorate. My son Anand also reached home with police protection, and no victory procession was taken out by us."

### SPECIAL TRAINS

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to run the following Special Trains as under:-

09683/09684 AJMER JN. - CHANDIGARH - AJMER JN.  
GARIB RATH SPECIAL (TRI-WEEKLY)

Train No.: 09683	ARR. DEP.	STATIONS	ARR. DEP.	Train No.: 09684
---	17:55	Ajmer Jn.	08:40	---
06:35	---	Chandigarh	---	19:45

DATE OF RUN: 09683 from Ajmer Jn. on Tuesday, Friday & Sunday from 06.07.2021 & 09684 from Chandigarh on Monday, Wednesday & Saturday from 07.07.2021 to till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Kishangarh, Phulera Jn., Jaipur Jn., Getaor Jagatpura, Dausa, Alwar, Rewari Jn., Bhawani, Rohtak Jn., Gohana, Panipat Jn., Karnal, Kurukshetra Jn. & Ambala Cant Jn. Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-3 Tier.

Train No.: 06317	ARR. DEP.	STATIONS	ARR. DEP.	Train No.: 06318
---	14:15	Kanniyakumari	23:25	---
20:55	21:10	New Delhi	13:35	14:00
10:35	---	Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra	---	22:30

DATE OF RUN: 06317 from Kanniyakumari on Friday from 09.07.2021 & 06318 from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra on Monday from 12.07.2021 to till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Nagarcoil, Kullithurai, Trivandrum, Trivandrum Petta (for Train No. 06318 only), Kollam, Kayankulam, Chengannur, Tiruvalla, Kottayam, Ermakulam Town, Alva, Thiruvananthapuram, Palakkad, Coimbatore, Tirupur (for Train No. 06318 only), Erode, Salem, Jolarpettai, Kalpadi, Chittor, Tirupati, Renigunta, Gudur Jn. (for Train No. 06317 only), Nellore, Ongole, Tenali Jn., Vijayawada, Khammam, Warangal, Ramgundam, Balharshah, Chandrapur, Sevagram, Nagpur, Itarsi, Bhopal, Jhansi, Gwalior, Dholpur, Agra Cantt., Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Shahkorbasi, Bahadurgarh, Rohtak, Julian (for Train No. 06318 only), Uchana (for Train No. 06318 only), Narwana, Tohana, Jakhai, Lehra Ganga, Sunam Udhampur, Sangrur, Dhuri, Malerkotla, Ahmadgarh, Ludhiana, Phagwara, Jalandhar Cantt., Mukerian, Pathankot Cantt., Kathua, Jammu Tawi & Udhampur Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-3 Tier, Sleeper & 2nd Seating Reserved.

02687/02688 MADURAI - CHANDIGARH - MADURAI SUPERFAST EXPRESS SPECIAL (WEEKLY)

Train No.: 02687	ARR. DEP.	STATIONS	ARR. DEP.	Train No.: 02688
---	23:35	Madurai	13:55	---
21:35	21:50	Hazrat Nizamuddin	14:00	14:15

DATE OF RUN: 02687 from Madurai on Sunday from 11.07.2021 & 02688 from Chandigarh on Friday from 16.07.2021 to till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Dindugal, Karur, Erode, Salem, Jolarpettai, Vaniyambadi, Ambur, Katpadi, Arakkonam, Perambur, Nayadupet, Vijayawada, Warangal, Ramgundam, Balharshah, Sevagram, Nagpur, Bhopal, Jhansi, Gwalior, Agra Cantt., Ghaziabad, Meerut City, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Yamunanagar Jagadhri & Ambala Cantt. Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC-3 Tier, Sleeper & 2nd Seating Reserved.

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## Jaishankar to visit Russia this week

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

External affairs minister S Jaishankar is expected to visit Moscow later this week to discuss a wide range of issues with the Russian leadership, including the situation in Afghanistan and the proposed production of Sputnik V vaccines in India.

During the visit from 8 July, he will hold talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov. The two sides are also expected to discuss the possible dates for the annual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In all probability, the summit will be held via video conferencing this year. Sources said the defence cooperation

systems by November.

The deteriorating

## Worst global famine

It isn't just Ethiopia's relentless civil war that has featured in breaking news. No less close to the bone must be that more than 400,000 people in the country's crisis-wracked Tigray region are now facing the worst global famine in decades and 1.8 million are on the brink. While the United States has warned that up to 900,000 people in Tigray face famine conditions in the world's worst hunger crisis in a decade, little is known about vast areas of Tigray that have been under control of combatants from all sides since November last year. With blocked roads and ongoing fighting, humanitarian groups have been left without access. The food crisis and the endemic hunger ought to be no less riveting than the second surge of the pandemic though both scourges have afflicted the world at large and a swathe of embattled Africa to a truly horrendous degree. The United Nations said over last weekend that more than 400,000 people in the Tigray region were facing the worst global famine in decades; it has warned that despite the government's unilateral cease-fire, there is serious potential for fighting in western Tigray. The UN reports are dire. The documents were presented to the first open meeting of the Security Council since the conflict in Tigray began. It was a devastating picture of a region where humanitarian access is extremely restricted, where 5.2 million people are crying out for assistance. The forces in Tigray that returned to their capital, Mekele, after the government's June 28 cease-fire and exit from the region, have not agreed to the halt to hostilities. The food crisis is more severe than has been generally recognised by the memberships. The UN's political chief, Rosemary DiCarlo, has urged the Tigray Defence Force "to endorse the cease-fire immediately and completely underlining that the immediate concern of the voice of the comity of nations is to send desperate assistance to the region". The acting UN humanitarian chief, Ramesh Rajasingham, said the situation in Tigray "has worsened dramatically" in recent weeks, citing "an alarming rise in food insecurity and hunger due to conflict" with the number of people crossing the threshold to famine increasing from 350,000 to 400,000. Some suggest "the numbers are even higher." "The lives of many of these people depend on our ability to reach them with food, medicine, nutrition supplies and other humanitarian assistance," he said. "And we need to reach them now. Not next week. Now." The outlook, in a word, is much too fearful to imagine.

Assistance for Tigray is no less critical than vaccines for protection against the virus. The UN now plans to send convoys to areas that are difficult to reach, but the UN World Food Program only has enough food for one million people for one month in Mekelle. "This is a fraction of what we need for the 5.2 million people who need food aid," the acting aid chief said. "However, we have almost run out of health, water, sanitation and other non-food items. Food alone does not avert a famine."

## Hardliners in vanguard

The theocratic swingback in Iran ~ from an Islamic Republic under a moderate to one under a hardcore conservative ~ has been reinforced within a span of three weeks. Iran's supreme leader has promoted a hardline cleric to serve as head of the judiciary amidst international calls for investigations into allegations of abuses. It thus comes about that Gholam Hosseini Mohseni Ejei, now the judiciary's deputy head, will replace Ebrahim Raisi, who takes office in August as President after winning the election on June 18. Ejei was put on the US and EU sanctions blacklists a decade ago for his role in a crackdown on a popular uprising when he served as intelligence minister during a disputed election. The choice of a high profile hardliner could draw further attention to allegations of past abuses by Iran at a time when the new US administration is trying to negotiate a thaw in its frosty relations with Tehran. Last week, a UN expert called for a new investigation into Raisi's alleged role in the deaths of thousands of political prisoners when he served as a judge in the 1980s. Raisi denies wrongdoing. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called on Ejei to "promote justice, restore public rights, ensure legitimate freedoms, and oversee the proper implementation of laws, prevent crime, and resolutely fight corruption". The UN investigator on human rights in Iran, Javid Rehman, said there should be an independent inquiry into allegations of state-ordered executions of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, and the role played by Raisi as Tehran's deputy prosecutor at the time. "As I have described in my reports, there is a widespread and systemic impunity in the country for gross violations of human rights, both historically in the past as well as in the present," he said. "There are very few if any real avenues for accountability in line with international standards within domestic channels." Iran has repeatedly dismissed the criticism of its human rights record as baseless and a result of a lack of understanding of its Islamic laws. It says its legal system is independent and not influenced by political interests.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said last month that Raisi's election was a blow for human rights and called for him to be investigated over his role in the 1988 executions. Whereas Rouhani was a moderate in his conduct of domestic and foreign affairs, his successor in Tehran's presidential palace is a hardcore conservative, who will likely play to Ayatollah Khamenei's orthodox gallery and arguably the Islamic bloc generally. It can reasonably be expected that Raisi will work in tandem with the hardline cleric. In a sense, both will have to address the torpid economy, which means they can scarcely afford to offend the Western powers, least of all the United States of America. How well they walk that tightrope will determine Iran's immediate future.

# Xi's script

Besides hailing its first centenary goal of building a 'moderately prosperous society' for all, the focus shifted towards drumming nativist passions by insisting that it would not get 'bullied, oppressed or subjugated' and that it would not accept 'sanctimonious preaching' from anyone. The wary instinct of protectionism was palpable, and all-pervasive



With global economies and communities still reeling under the crippling weight of the Covid-19 pandemic that started from China, the scale of the 100th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was almost mocking in its temerity. While propaganda is an irreplaceable and invaluable tool in the hands of authoritarian regimes to 'control' the essential narrative, no example comes as close to the success of propaganda as that of Xi Jinping's China.

Symbolism of confidence, assertion and future were at the heart of the highly orchestrated display of purpose as Xi spoke of 'Making China Great again', in the backdrop of impressive fly-pasts and marches, 56 guns firing 100 times and release of 100,000 eco-friendly balloons and doves. A fiery, defiant and intimidatory show of steely resolve was omnipresent.

Behind the puerile display of self-congratulatory tonality for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for creating the 'great wall of steel', the foremost thought that haunted the CCP top brass was clearly visible ~ fears of a popular uprising leading to regime change, and its accompanying insecurities. Xi Jinping's words echoed the desperation to equate the perpetuity of CCP to China's prosperity. "China's success hinges on the Party... without the Communist Party of China, there would be no new China and no national rejuvenation".

The continuum of China's manifest destiny was carefully stitched weaving the past, present and the inevitable glories that awaited ~ towards the same, the ever-evolving admixture of Chinese nationalism, coercion, control, and purge was ubiquitous.

There was no hesitation or awkwardness imagined to curate the national sentiment, as the

revered and ancient Chinese texts sanctify the leader's, 'Mandate of Heaven'. So, besides hailing its first centenary goal of building a 'moderately prosperous society' for all, the focus shifted towards drumming nativist passions by insisting that it would not get 'bullied, oppressed or subjugated' and that it would not accept 'sanctimonious preaching' from anyone. The wary instinct of protectionism was palpable, and all-pervasive.

To the credit of the Chinese Communist Part, unlike the more intransigent and doctrinaire forms of residual communism in the world, it has managed to evolve and incorporate the topical aspirations of societies, whilst still retaining the levers of 'control' and denial.

The tokenism of concluding the ceremony with 'The Internationale' or invoking the foundational legacy of Mao Zedong, with images of him looking into the skies in a theatrical fashion (despite having the blood of over 40 million Chinese on his hands, with programmes like Cultural Revolution and Great Leap famine, notwithstanding), Xi's phraseology and vision reflects the burning desires of 'today's generation', and therefore his supreme ability to ensure 'connect' with the masses, who no longer suffer the wounds of the past. His hybrid model of governance may even look contradictory ~ but China is determined to showcase a muscular, integrated, and efficacious face of 'State Capitalism'.

In times like the pandemic, Xi Jinping's ability to muster resources, action and focus as a one-party state is unmatched, leading him to mock US and other democracies for their ostensible fail-

ures. Yet the celebrations with the carefully vetted crowds, picture-perfect images of cultural performances, weaponry of unprecedented stealth and reach, could barely mask the nervous tension that besets the Chinese undercurrents. Cues of Chinese popular passions were resonating in Xi's speech, both in what he did mention, and in what he did not. While the Chinese PLA (People's Liberation Army) is a unique phenomenon as the military of a political party, it did posthumously honour a PLA soldier, Chen Hongjun, who was amongst the several who died in the clash with Indian forces, at Galwan, last year. Even then, the delayed acceptance of its own casualties after the initial denials, was a typical attempt of 'controlling' the narrative ~ now, this soldier was one of the 29, awarded the July 1 medal' for his ostensible efforts to, 'stay true to the original aspiration and dedicate everything, even the previous life, to the cause of the party and people'.

Other than this event preceding the main celebrations, there was no specific mention or allusion to India, despite the fractured reality. This signifies a far less-than-glorious Chinese performance during the violent standoff, as indeed, suggestions of an amoral, expansionist and intimidatory image that could militate against the one Xi was desperately cultivating. This also signified the limited traction in 'enemyfying' India, vis-à-vis other options available.

The core of Xi's international focus and wrath revolved around the 'US and Western organisations', confirming his principal adversarial concerns and out-

look. The gentle cooption of Russian history and import of Communism to China was telling in its strategic outreach and dynamics. On the simmering tensions in Hongkong and Macau, Xi confirmed, 'We will stay true to the letter and spirit of the principle of One Country, Two Systems', and on the most contentious issue of Taiwan, he reiterated, 'Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China's complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the Communist Party of China', knowing fully well the reaction it would elicit, domestically and internationally.

The deliberate play of words to cherry pick some, whilst not intending to carry forward the same in letter and spirit was visible, when he posited the hybrid Chinese model with the assurance to continuously work to 'develop whole-process people's democracy' ~ this when the illiteracies, intolerances and impulses of 'control' have regressed to the levels of earlier decades.

Obviously, there was no mention of the elephant in the room as far as the international community was concerned, that is the incarcerated Uighur minorities, as that explicitly did not suit the projected storyline. Reaffirmation of its Belt and Road Initiative (without addressing the growing international concerns on its 'debt-trap' inevitabilities) was undertaken, as was the ponderous promise to continue, 'building of a human community with a shared future'!

In all Xi Jinping stuck to the expected script with shades of grandstanding, grandiloquence, and barely veiled intimidations, which were not lost on anyone. The neologism of an emerging 'Chinese Century' with the usual filters to hide blemishes, blunders and insecurities marked the day ~ more of the same is to be expected going forward from a no-longer-shy China.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIAN VOICES

## America's false imbalance

One obstacle to productive public debate in the United States is the media's tendency to engage in "false imbalance" when reporting on economic policies. No, I don't mean "false balance." False imbalance refers instead to the temptation to disparage policies that are in fact reasonable attempts to balance competing objectives. We have recently seen examples of this in US health care reform, as well as fiscal and monetary policy. The problem of false balance is well known. For example, media reports on climate sometimes give the impression that skeptics who question the scientific case for anthropogenic climate change warrant comparable weight to experts who say global warming is a genuine problem that needs to be addressed. The net effect is to give a false impression of where the overwhelming preponderance of scientific evidence lies.

False imbalance, by contrast, is not a familiar concept ~ but it should be. It describes reporting that suggests that a particular policy is generally considered bad or unpopular, when in reality it appropriately seeks to reconcile rival forces or goals. Typically, news coverage misleadingly lumps together critics coming from different directions, leaving audiences with the impression that most people hate the policy. A prime example of false imbalance arose in reporting on the 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA, or "Obamacare").

The Korea Herald

macare"). In the years after the ACA was passed, many journalists, citing opinion polls, reported that a majority of Americans opposed it. But their reports tended to combine respondents who thought Obamacare went too far and gave government too big a role in people's lives with respondents who believed the ACA should have extended health insurance coverage further than it did. For example, the media reported that 62 percent of respondents in a 2013 CNN poll opposed the ACA. But that included 15 percent of Americans ~ 24 percent of the 62 percent classified as opposed ~ who thought the law did not go far enough. After Donald Trump was elected president, the percentage of Americans who wanted to extend the ACA rose sharply, and the share favoring its repeal declined. In a November 2017 Kaiser poll, for example, 62 percent of respondents favored a "Medicare for All" single-payer system.

Most of the time, the best economic policies lie somewhere in the middle of a public-private spectrum. Relatively few Americans want all health care to be administered by a government agency like the United Kingdom's National Health Service. But probably even fewer are so obsessed with individual responsibility that they want to prohibit ambulance drivers from picking up an accident victim lying on the side of a highway until they have established whether he or she has health insurance. The key is to find the right balance. And Americans have come to support a balanced health care policy.

a lifelong motivating factor, a habit, that can lead to aspirational goals for higher targets and path-breaking achievements. But we need to accept that excellent leaders will have excellent followers, and thereby hangs a tale.

Yours, etc., Sanjukta Dasgupta, Kolkata, 3 July.

## CAUSE OF ACTION

SIR, Apropos your news report "Post-poll violence: Shift cases outside state, says Suvenu" (July 3), I would like to inform Mr Suvenu Adhikari that cases cannot be shifted outside the state at his whims and fancies.

He must know cases having jurisdiction within the State of West Bengal cannot be tried by any other state as the latter shall have no power to take cognizance. Under the provisions of the Code of Criminal procedure, a case has to be filed where the cause of action arises.

In the instant matter, no cause of action arose outside the state of Bengal and thus prayer for shifting post-poll violences cases made by Mr Adhikari is invalid. Being an MLA, he should not make himself a laughing stock.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 3 July.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Quest for excellence in schools

SIR, This is with reference to the 'Pursuit of Excellence' (Perspective, July 2). Devendra Saksema highlights the grandstanding of examination boards regarding phenomenal high scores and the masses of "outstanding" students who clear their school leaving examinations. However, he does not mention the state administered local board examinations. The maximum number of our students are enrolled in these schools and the number of drop-outs each year should factor in as we address issues of excellence and mediocrity.

These Covid years are exceptional. No external examinations could be held. Parents and students have threatened schools and teachers to raise the internal online examination marks, as they did not get a chance to improve their scores in the externals.

However, a lingering suspicion regarding high scores in school grades gestures towards the global education business which seduces our bright, not so bright and average students to opt for higher studies outside India. The chunkier the scores, straight A+ and clearing of international qualifi-

ying examinations such as SAT, GRE, GMAT and others imply that the "excellent" students are all set to make a home away from home. Registering for education opportunities abroad most often come with the job permit tag. If the job permit tag is withdrawn, immediately the volume of aspirants in pursuit of knowledge, drops abysmally. Partial scholarship is a very effective seductive tool. Loans, selling of land and property are not unknown as the students and their complicit parents pursue knowledge outside

India, for which super-high scores are mandatory. Almost everyone now knows that securing 60 per cent marks, considered traditionally as first class marks in our country, is rated as Grade D or likewise in the dream campuses abroad. Even in these Corona times, such students and their parents have just this single-track obsession ~ leave India, enroll in some university in the USA, Europe or anywhere else where the currency is robust and competition not as back-breaking as in the motherland.

## PROPER REVIEW

SIR, 'Pursuit of excellence' by Devendra Saksema (2 July) is an excellent write up that underscores the deficiencies of governance. There had been a system of annual confidential report (ACR) prior to the Left Front regime in West Bengal. After 1978 it was changed to open performance report (OPR) which diluted its purpose and importance. No officer dared to write annual performance report openly. There is a need to bring back ACR for all government employees to ensure carrot and stick policy for better governance.

Yours, etc., Basudeb Dutta, Santipur, 2 July.

Saxena has repeatedly used homicidal and suicidal phrases to describe the duplicitous education system, that are hell-bent on a 'dogged pursuit of non-excellence', thereby having "murdered excellence" by tagging all and sundry as "outstanding". Probably the "outstanding" tag is the password for quitting the country that will be celebrating 75 years of Independence from British rule. But if the imperialists could be wrested out, the much more suave neo-imperialists with their corporations and glitz devices have found a firmer footing.

While the disadvantaged migrants walk home jobless, caught between the Scylla and Charybdis of life and livelihood, the advantaged work from home, and work themselves out on tread mills, in order to be hungry for the next 'healthy' meal.

The crucial factor is that excellent teachers can nurture, motivate and inspire students towards the pursuit of excellence. If teachers are insincere shirkers, their attitude is very soon perceived by the alert students. So, students commence emulating their teachers, as well as their parents and adult family members who are the products of such education.

The proof of excellence is not the marks recorded in academic score cards, pursuit of excellence should be



Universalizing education should be the target, but universalizing quality education from the primary school level is a different ball-game.

Even in these Corona times, such students and their parents have just this single-track obsession ~ leave India, enroll in some university in the USA, Europe or anywhere else where the currency is robust and competition not as back-breaking as in the motherland.

HARSHA KAKAR

**S**peaking at a seminar organized by the Global Counter Terrorism Council last week, both the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Bipin Rawat, and the air chief, Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, spoke on the role of air-power. Their comments, partly contradictory, were blown out of context, leading to remarks that they displayed major differences in the creation of theatre commands, which is the primary mandate given to the armed forces with the appointment of the CDS.

Theatre commands have been in discussion since the Kargil committee report. However, views from the services have been at variance. Initially no service desired theatre commands as they would reduce service chiefs from being both force providers and employers to being force providers. For the last three decades, the forces suggested adopting a 'bottom-up' approach, implying commencing jointness from basic levels of training. It was an eye-wash and the approach remained on paper.

Globally, theatre commands have been created by adopting the 'top down' approach, implying that political authority forced armed forces to integrate and operate jointly. In no democracy were armed forces willing to shed their power bastions and lose control of their force to other services. India is following similar lines.

The current contradiction stemmed from the CDS's comment, "Do not forget that the Air Force continues to remain a supporting arm to the armed forces just as the artillery or engineer supports the combatant arms in the army. They will be a supporting arm and they have an air defence charter and supporting ground forces in times of war."

Speaking later, the air chief stated, "I have said it on record many times before that we are for establishing an integrated theatre command but the issues we have raised in our internal discussions, have got to do with how we should do it. We must get it right. It is the most important reform that will have an impact on war fighting."

There is no doubt that air power is a versatile force in modern warfare. All conventional wars commence with launching of air power. The air force's roles stretch from the strategic to the tactical. Its task commences with destruction of vital strategic targets leading to shaping and isolating the battlefield, thereby creating conditions for launching ground forces. Gaining air superiority, even for limited durations, provides avenues for ground and naval forces to push

## Armed forces must change, in the nation's interest



through their offensive plans. The air force is also responsible for securing the nation from enemy air threats. Ground and naval forces remain vulnerable to airstrikes, needing air cover. Finally, air support to ground forces in their offensive enhances chances of success.

Simultaneously, determination of victory in conventional war is by gaining territory and destruction of the enemy's fighting potential. Gaining territory is the task of the army, whereas destruction is the task of all forces working in unison. Assaulting troops are supported by fire power of the artillery and air force. Nowhere was this more devastating than during Kargil, where the combined power of guns and air power resulted in destruction of enemy positions enabling assault troops to achieve success.

Even during the Ladakh crisis, air power, mainly strategic airlifts, played a major role. If it was not for the air force employing airlifts, rapid army deployment to stem the Chinese may not have happened at the pace it did. Ultimate victory, whether

in Kargil or in 1971 was determined by physical occupation of ground, possible with support from the air.

Individually, neither service can guarantee success. The nation can only emerge victorious when forces operate jointly. Success on land flows from joint army-air force operations. Hence, the larger picture must be considered. Splitting hairs on a command does not display maturity.

Due to cost of procurement, maintenance and multirole capability, air power resources will always be at a premium, especially as their tasks continue to expand. The air force's concern about splitting its meagre resources within theatre commands is genuine and a solution needs to be evolved. Simultaneously, unless theatre commands are created, the drawbacks of the current system, where coordination and directions are needed from Delhi, rather than by the commander responsible for operations, will continue. The senior most commander in a theatre must be given forces essential to ensure victory from the outset, rather than piecemeal, with the risk of a

part being withdrawn if other contingencies emerge, even in the midst of operations.

With theatre commanders tasked to operate under the Chiefs of Staff Committee, maintaining authority to withdraw resources from dormant sectors can be considered. Other options including allocation of additional resources after a certain stage of operations is another option. However, using shortfall of resources as an excuse to stall transformation is wrong.

A turf war on the term "land-based and maritime commands", implying ignoring the air force has also emerged. Air power would play a dominant role in every theatre of operations, maritime or land. The term "land-based" is employed to clarify that the commands facing China and Pakistan will not possess a naval element, while marine commands would include army and air force assets. Exploiting this term to claiming domination by the army is possibly immature.

Currently, Indian armed forces officers have not moved forward in

understanding concepts of employment, deployment and logistic requirements of other services. This is because the 'bottom up' approach, advocated by service chiefs for the past three decades, has existed only on paper. Cross-service training and understanding employment and joint operations is still at a nascent stage and would only increase once theatre commands emerge. If its implementation is delayed, everything would revert to status quo.

With passage of time, when understanding of employment of other services increases, command of theatres could be given to any capable commander, irrespective of service, as is the global norm. The nation needs its brightest to command important theatres, not solely those from a single service. The hierarchy needs to find solutions to contentious issues by themselves and move forward. It is in national interest that the armed forces transform, setting aside egos, rather than remain mired as armed forces of the 1940s.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

## Whither Nepal's foreign policy

KUL CHANDRA GAUTAM

**T**he fundamental principles of Nepal's foreign policy have been clearly and consistently communicated to the international community ever since Nepal joined the United Nations in 1955, and especially since the country's first democratically elected Prime Minister, BP Koirala, addressed the 15th regular session of the UN General Assembly in 1960. In his memorable speech entitled *Small Nations Have a Role to Play*, BP Koirala eloquently outlined how Nepal's foreign policy would be fully inspired by the principles and purpose of the United Nations Charter.

Article 51 of the 2015 Constitution also clearly reaffirms that Nepal would conduct an independent foreign policy based on the Charter of the United Nations, non-alignment, principles of Panchasheel, international law and the norms of world peace, taking into consideration the overall interests of the nation. This harks back to BP Koirala's original affirmation that Nepal would regard the United Nations not only as a bulwark of independence and security, and a protector of rights and freedom, but also as an instrument for promoting peace and justice among nations. Accordingly, Nepal would judge every international issue on its merit without consideration of any-

body's fear or favour. Nepal has pursued this line in its foreign policy fairly consistently during the past six decades, despite numerous changes in not only the government but even the political system.

However, on June 18, Nepal seriously deviated from this age-old policy when it abstained from voting for the UN General Assembly resolution on Myanmar that was approved by an overwhelming majority of 119 members voting 'yes', one voting 'no' and 36 abstaining. It is worth recalling that the key provisions of the resolution on Myanmar condemned its military junta's crackdown on peaceful protesters and civil society. It called for the immediate and unconditional release of arbitrary detainees and an end to restrictions on freedom of expression. And it called on all countries to stop selling arms to Myanmar.

It seems to me that there was nothing objectionable for Nepal in that resolution which was supported by a cross-section of countries from all regions of the world, including a majority of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and Myanmar's fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbours. Nor was Nepal's position guided by any agreement among the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries, as two of its members, Afghanistan and the Maldives voted for the resolution.

As there was no compulsion for Nepal to vote the way it did, my speculation is that it took the cue for abstaining from its two large neighbours, China and India. Along with Russia, China and India are major arms suppliers to Myanmar, and they also have other competing strategic and economic interests. But Nepal has no such vested interest. Hence it is all the more puzzling and deplorable why it chose to vote the way it did. I would hazard a guess that if we had more principled and courageous leaders like BP Koirala, GP Koirala or Man Mohan Adhikari guiding Nepal's foreign policy, in a case like this one, Nepal would have joined the majority of UN members and supported the resolution.

Nepal and Burma have long-standing, friendly relations. When the people of Nepal were struggling to overthrow the autocratic Rana regime, the newly independent Burmese government supported the Nepali freedom fighters and even provided military assistance. Myanmar's democratically elected, but now detained National League for Democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi herself knows Nepal well.

The Myanmar case indicates that Nepal needs to revisit not so much the values and principles guiding its foreign policy, which are perfectly appropriate, but its practical application by the current crop of diplomats

and their political masters. Perhaps a little historical retrospective might be helpful in this context. As BP Koirala had articulated so eloquently six decades ago, small nations like Nepal can and have played a large and important role at the United Nations. Backed by visionary leaders like BP Koirala, Mahendra, Birendra, GP Koirala and Man Mohan Adhikari, capable diplomats like Padam Bahadur Khatri, Rishikesh Shah, Shailendra Kumar Upadhyaya, Yadunath Khanal, Bhekh Bahadur Thapa and others have made their mark in Nepal's diplomacy, including at the United Nations.

A hallmark of Nepal's neutral and non-aligned foreign policy has been that it has dared to take independent positions based on the merits of the case, often contrary to the views and wishes of the Big Powers, including its neighbours China and India. Thus, notwithstanding pressure from the United States, Nepal advocated for the membership of the People's Republic of China (in lieu of the Republic of China) in the UN in the 1950s and 1960s. Resisting pressure from the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Nepal condemned the Soviet invasion of Hungary in the 1950s and Czechoslovakia in the 1960s.

While supporting the rights of the Palestinian people, Nepal became the first country in South Asia to recognise Israel. Taking a principled stance, Nepal firmly opposed apartheid in South Africa even when

many Western powers were dithering. It voted to impose sanctions against apartheid-era South Africa, but it has consistently voted to lift unilateral US sanctions on Cuba.

Nepal commanded sufficient respect at the UN in the 1960s to be entrusted with the responsibility of chairing a high-profile investigation on the death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld in the 1960s. In the 1970s, Nepal provided strong global leadership in UN negotiations on the Law of the Sea. In more recent times, Nepal has been a strong and eloquent advocate on behalf of the least developed and land-locked countries.

In all such cases, the hallmark of Nepal's foreign policy has been exercising its independent judgment, not swayed or pressured by the Big Powers, including its large neighbours or any other ideological pressure groups or voting blocs. In light of this historic heritage and track record, Nepal's abstention from voting for the UN General Assembly resolution on Myanmar was a regrettable mistake. I sincerely hope that Nepal will make a course correction and revert to pursuing a better thought through, independent and principled position in its international relations. Most of Nepal's professional diplomats are smart and capable, but they deserve better political masters who listen, consult, motivate and empower them to better serve the nation.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN.

100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

The question of re-admitting Germany into the circle of civilised nations is once more brought up by General Smuts' proposal to admit her as a member of the League of Nations as soon as possible, and "the sooner the better." That Germany should join the League eventually has always been contemplated by the founders of it, but it was an implied condition that she should first purge herself of the crimes and iniquities associated with her precipitation and conduct of the war. To the immediate realisation of General Smuts' vision there are, at present at least, two objections. The first is that Germany has never applied to join the League of Nations. The second is that should she apply tomorrow, she would do so as a thoroughly mean and fraudulent loser, who has tried to escape by every loophole from an honourable settlement of her obligations. More prosperous than her victims, she pleaded poverty as an excuse for shunning the payment of compensation, and it was not until the Ruhr valley was on the verge of passing from her that she suddenly discovered she was not so poor after all. Apart from this, the bitterness excited by the Leipzig trials is a formidable, and, so far as can be seen, insurmountable obstacle to the re-establishment of friendly relations with the burglar state. Germany has not begun to purify herself in any real sense.

### NEWS ITEMS

### LABOUR TROUBLE IN MADRAS

Madras, July 5  
The Hon. Mr. K. Srinivas Ayyengar, Member for Labour, the Hon. Sir Lionel Davidson and the Hon. Mr. A.R. Knap, Members of Government, arrived in Madras this morning in connection with the strike disturbance. It is understood, that at an emergent meeting of the Council, it was decided to take steps to maintain law and order in Madras. It is also understood that His Excellency will accord interviews to labour leaders in the city if they approach him. His Excellency's stay in Madras, it is stated, is at present for an indefinite period, and his return to Ootacamund depends entirely on how events progress in the near future. Mr. Rajah was accused of creating a division among the workmen and inducing the Audhi Dravidas to resume work.

### STRENGTH OF AUXILIARY FORCE

Simla, July 5  
The strength of the Indian Defence Force was nominally 33,451 in September, 1920. The effective strength was very much less. The returns of the Indian Defence Force were at all times somewhat misleading. They included at first all persons liable to service, in spite of the fact of their exemption. They included cadets and they included volunteers who were absent on military service. The Auxiliary Force returns for January, 1921, after three months recruitment, showed a total of little more than 17,000. By April 1 the total had risen to nearly 24,000, and is now approaching 26,000. An addition of some thousands is expected. In the more remote areas the strength of units is generally higher than at any previous period.

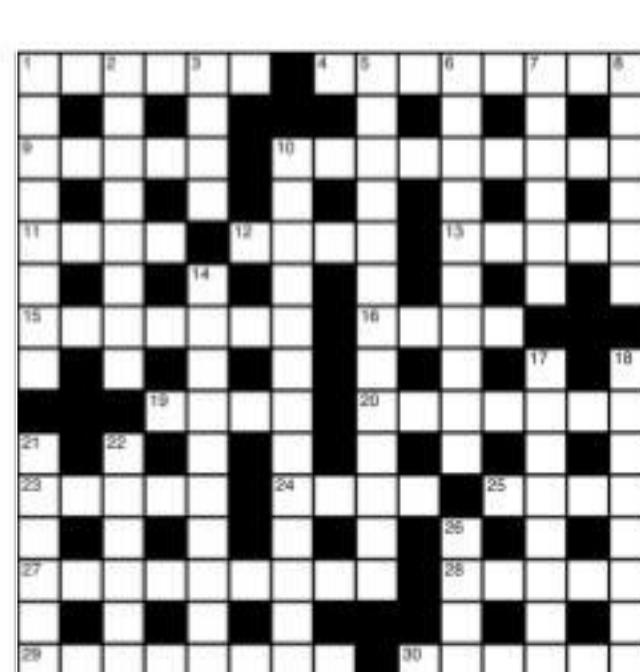
### PARLIAMENT AND LABOUR CONVENTION

In the House of Commons, in the course of a discussion on the Washington Labour Conventions, Dr. Macnamara said that the Government was prepared to ratify Conventions except with regard to the eight hour day and maternity benefit. Mr. Chamberlain repudiated the suggestion that the Government desired to wreck the League of Nations or render futile any labour organisation arising from the League, but he pointed out that the accomplishment of all ideals of labour organisation was impossible so long as some of the greatest industrial nations, for example the United States, were not parties to its decisions. A motion by Dr. Macnamara approving the policy of the Government with regard to the Conventions was carried by 164 votes to 53.

### PILFERAGE COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS

The interim report of the Pilferage Commission condemns the custom of issuing bills of lading with goods received for shipment, as it facilitates pilferage. The report urges ship-owners not to issue a "shipped" bill of lading until goods are on board a steamer. It says that owing to lack of support the London police scheme for supervision of cargoes is about to be withdrawn regarding certain docks chiefly used by lines which are not controlled in London, but it is understood that the police authorities are considering the extension in London of their special dock police scheme to the whole river at a cost pound 50,000 annually. The report recommends ship-owners to keep in touch with the Department of Overseas Trade, who have already rendered valuable assistance in connection with pilferage.

### CROSSWORD



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

#### ACROSS

- President Biden finally pursuing the big picture? (6)
- Small Channel Islands firm – with my backing – imported heater from Africa (8)
- One of Boris's progeny? (5)
- Candidates for transplant dopy coming round in London hospital (4,5)
- Devout priest discharged debts (4)
- Hence Rees-Mogg & co ring? (4)
- 26 billion invested in 1A's cheese? (5)
- Hunt ruthlessly admits lie (7)
- Firm provided partial cover (4)
- Thought India deal almost complete (4)
- German theologian never to accept a new Germany (7)

#### DOWN

- Tiny island stupidly quits EU following conclusion of referendum (8)
- Irish family group put off dividing spoils (8)
- Bess's partner quietly leaving wild party (4)
- More competent sailor holding end of rope in both hands (5)
- Tough husband taken on by harbour vessel (4)
- Anna possibly stealing Colin's heart (4)
- Lowering a cellar (9)
- Taste a bit of satsuma Miss? (5)
- Funny story involving dance and broken toe (8)
- Shining silver lamé creation (6)
- Top officer over in DEFCON reportedly avoided rules (4,2,7)
- Conservative/right English landlord (10)
- Young mum with expensive taste stealing a grand from coach (6)
- Got rid of old American Cruz? (6)
- Anniversary gift using a third battery (8,5)
- Simpleton runs hotel in Scottish city commercial (10)
- Recommend eggy drink when dropping a tablet (8)
- Cons' miry, dirty, dodgy practice? (8)
- Like the sound of lamb stuffed with Indian bread fruit (6)
- Lazies around Spain fiddling? (6)
- Seal upper part of single-storey residence (4)

NO 28964

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



Imposition of stock limits (on pulses) and information disclosure of stock from traders will further bring down prices in the coming weeks.

SUDHANSU PANDEY  
UNION FOOD SECRETARY

## THUMBNAILS

Petrol near ₹100/litre in Delhi & Kolkata: Petrol price on Monday neared ₹100-a-litre mark in the national capital after the rate was hiked yet again. Petrol price was increased by 35 paise per litre while there was no change in diesel rates, according to a price notification from state-owned fuel retailers. In Delhi, the petrol price soared to ₹99.86 per litre. Diesel rates were unchanged at ₹89.36. Petrol price rose to ₹99.84 a litre in Kolkata. Rates are already above ₹100 mark in other metros. Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as value-added tax (VAT) and freight charges.

PTI

**Reliance Nippon bonus:** Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Company Limited, a joint venture between Reliance Capital and Nippon Life Insurance of Japan, announced a total bonus of ₹306.88 crore for its participating policy-holders in financial year 2020-21. This bonus is on the back of a strong financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2021 where the company realised ₹50 crore as profits after tax, said a Press release from the insurance company.

SNS

**Hindon Chem:** Hindon Chemicals, a Kolkata-based chemical manufacturing company, has migrated from NSE Emerge to the main board of NSE. The company is all set to start its listing on the main board of NSE in a short span of three years after its listing on NSE Emerge. Hindon's consolidated profit after tax grew by 59 per cent to ₹4.52 crore in financial year 2020-21 from ₹2.84 crore in the previous fiscal, according to a Press release issued by the company.

SNS

**Samsung smartphone:** Samsung has launched a new smartphone "Galaxy A22 ~ with 6.4" HD+ Super Amoled display that comes with 90 Hz refresh rate, 48MP quad camera and powerful 5000mAh battery. The phone also features Dolby Atmos support on wired and Bluetooth headsets. Galaxy A22 has been priced at ₹18,499 for 6GB + 128GB variant, said a Press release issued by Sam sung.

SNS

**Quantiphi honoured:** Quantiphi, an AI-first digital transformation engineering company, has been recognised by the HRD Congress for its campus hiring practices and has been honoured with the "Best Employment Engagement Practice Award", according to a Press statement.

SNS

**G-sec purchase:** The Reserve Bank on Monday said the first purchase of government securities for an aggregate amount of ₹20,000 crore under the G-sec acquisition programme (G-SAP 2.0) will be conducted on 8 July.

PTI

## Rupee rises by 43 paise vs US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 5 JULY

The rupee snapped its four-day losing streak to settle 43 paise higher at 74.31 (provisional) against the US dollar today, tracking a firm trend in the domestic equity market.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 74.51 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.00 and a low of 74.55.

It finally ended at 74.31 against the American currency, registering a rise of 43 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 74.74.

"India's rupee is the biggest gainer today, leading emerging Asian currencies higher,

## Services sector shrinks at fastest rate in 11 months

Intensification of Covid-19 crisis and reintroduction of containment measures hit demand: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

India's services sector activities contracted further in June as the intensification of the Covid-19 crisis and reintroduction of containment measures restricted demand, a monthly survey said today.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 46.4 in May to 41.2 in June, as new work intakes and output contracted at the fastest rates since July 2020, which prompted companies to reduce employment again.

## REPORT CARD FOR JUNE

► The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 46.4 in May to 41.2 in June, as new work intakes and output contracted at the fastest rates since July 2020, which prompted companies to reduce employment again.

► Subdued demand conditions resulted in a second successive monthly drop in new business received by services firms. The pace of contraction was sharp and the quickest since July 2020, the survey said.

► In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.



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In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"Given the current Covid-19 situation in India, it was

expected that the service sector would take a hit. PMI data for June showed quicker declines in new business, output and employment than those recorded in the first lockdown," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit.

According to Union health ministry data updated today, India saw a single-day rise of 39,796 new Covid infections, which took the tally of cases to 3,05,85,229, while the death toll climbed to 4,02,728 with 723 more fatalities.

The international demand for Indian services deteriorated further in June, with new export orders falling for the 16th consecutive month.

Meanwhile, the overall level of business sentiment was down for the third month in a row in June, reaching its lowest mark since last August. The

Covid-19 pandemic was the main factor seen as a threat to the outlook among survey participants.

"Uncertainty about the path of the pandemic restricted business confidence among services firms, who were generally neutral in their forecasts for output in the year ahead.

The overall level of sentiment slipped to a ten-month low," Lima said.

Lima further noted that

"with India expanding its vaccine options and the government announcing ambitious plans to immunise the entire adult population by the end of the year, it is hoped that the pandemic can be brought under control and a sustainable economic recovery can begin."

Private sector companies in India noted a second successive monthly decline in business activity during June as market conditions remained challenging due to the escalation of the pandemic.

The Composite PMI Output Index, which measures combined services and manufacturing production, fell from 48.1 in May to 43.1 in June, signalling the sharpest rate of reduction since July 2020.

Meanwhile, rising prices of edible oils and protein-rich items pushed the retail inflation to a six-month high of 6.3 per cent in May, breaching the comfort level of the Reserve Bank of India and thus rendering a reduction in interest rates a difficult proposition in the near term.

## Tata Motors plans to hike prices of passenger vehicles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Steel prices have gone up considerably in the country over the last few months. In June, leading domestic steel makers had hiked the prices of hot rolled coil (HRC) and cold rolled coil (CRC) by up to ₹4,000 and ₹4,900 per tonne, respectively.

HRC and CRC are flat steel products used in industries such as auto, appliances and construction. Hence, any rise in steel prices impacts the prices of vehicles, consumer goods, and construction costs.

Besides, the prices of precious metals like rhodium and palladium have almost doubled, impacting the production cost. Rhodium and palladium are used in the catalysers and their demand has gone up manifold due to the introduction of stricter emission norms across the world.

With input costs going up, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) in June announced that it would increase the prices of its entire product portfolio in the September quarter.

The homegrown auto major had in early May also hiked prices of its passenger vehicles by an average of 1.8 per cent.

## CLL's coal exported to Bangladesh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 5 JULY

The destination of below 2200 gross calorific value coal purchased under spot e-auction from Dahanbari siding of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCLL), the Jharkhand-based coal producing subsidiary of CIL, is Rampal Power Station, Khulna, Bangladesh, CIL said. This falls under Maitree Super Thermal Power Project - a joint venture between the Indian power producer NTPC Limited and Bangladesh

Power Development Board, the

said the statement.

The Bangladesh-bound coal left the Indian shore from Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, the sea route which links India and Bangladesh.

Effective 8 June, the Maharashtra coal miner amended its e-auction sale policy allowing across the border sale of coal bought under spot e-auction and special spot-e-auction by domestic coal

purchasers, including traders. This ushered the way for coal exports. Both types of auctions are meant for all categories of Indian coal buyers and traders. Special spot e-auction though offers extended time for lifting coal.

"Though small in quantity, what is encouraging is that a beginning has been made. We look forward for more exports that would help in improved coal sales under the two categories of the auction platform," said a senior executive of the company.

For April-June 2021 quarter, CIL has allocated 6.7 million tons (MTs) of coal under spot e-auction which is nearly one-fourth of the entire booked quantity of 27.3 MTs, fetching the company 30 per cent add-on over the notified price. For the comparable period last year, the add-on was 16 per cent under spot e-auction.

## Zomato gets Sebi go-ahead to float ₹8,250-crore IPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Tiger Global, Kora and others, valuing the online food ordering platform at \$4.5 billion.

Kotak Mahindra Capital Company, Morgan Stanley India Company Pvt Ltd and Credit Suisse Securities (India) Pvt Ltd are the global coordinators and book running lead managers to the issue.

BofA Securities India Ltd and Citigroup Global Markets India Pvt Ltd have been appointed as merchant bankers to the public issue. The shares of the company will be listed on BSE and National Stock Exchange.

Last year, Zomato founder and chief executive officer Deepinder Goyal had told employees that the company was planning to go for an IPO in the first half of 2021.

## Retail prices of pulses on declining trend: Food secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

prices of pulses have declined up to ₹7/kg in one month.

At present, retail prices of gram are ruling at ₹73/kg in the national capital, masoor dal at ₹87/kg, moong at ₹100/kg, tur dal at ₹110/kg and urad at ₹114/kg in the said period, as per the government data.

Highlighting steps taken by the Central government to check prices of pulses, the secretary said import policy was tweaked by shifting tur, urad and moong from restricted to free category till October this year.

Recently, the government had imposed stock limits on all pulses except moong until October in order to prevent hoarding.

"Imposition of stock limits and information disclosure of stock from traders will further bring down prices in the

coming weeks," the secretary said. Asked if the government plans distribution of edible oil and pulses via ration shops, the secretary said the Centre distributes only rice and wheat as per the provisions of National Food Security Act. However, some states are distributing items like edible oil and pulses.

Meanwhile, India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA) has expressed shock over the stock limits imposed on the stakeholders and sought immediate withdrawal of the order.

IPGA vice-chairman Bimal Kothari, in a separate statement, said retail prices have been traditionally higher than wholesale prices.

A study conducted by IPGA in June showed that the gap between wholesale and retail prices was fairly large, he said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Leading FMCG companies in the country are expecting their sales growth numbers in high double digits in the April-June quarter, a period when the broader market was severely impacted by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

FMCG companies such as Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) and Marico, in their quarterly updates to bourses, informed about double-digit sales growth.

Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) MD and CEO Sunil D'Souza in an interview had said, the Tata Group FMCG firm expects higher growth in the Q1/FY'22 over the Q4/FY'21.

GCPL today said it expects sales in India to grow "in high

## FMCG companies see double-digit sales growth in April-June quarter



teens" in the first quarter ended 30 June, while at a consolidated level also it is confident of delivering "strong double-digit" sales growth.

In its quarterly update for Q1 financial year 2021-22, the company said: "During the quarter, demand trends in our categories across the key countries we operate in, remained steady."

In India, GCPL said: "We expect to deliver sales growth in high teens, driven by strong volume growth and calibrated price increases."

The Godrej group firm witnessed strong double-digit sales growth in its home care and personal care categories. The home care was led by strong growth in household.

Marico had last week said its domestic business has witnessed over 30 per cent growth in the April-June quarter helped by double-digit volume growth.

The company is seeing improving demand trends, as the second wave appears to be receding and the vaccination drive progressing

steadily, said Marico in its quarterly update for Q1 of financial year 2021-22.

The India business delivered 30 per cent plus revenue growth, backed by a robust double-digit volume growth, said Marico.

On the international business front, Marico said, it has posted constant currency growth in the low 20s on the back of sustained momentum in Bangladesh and broad-based recovery across other markets.

According to Edelweiss Financial Services executive vice-president Abneesh Roy, in Q1/FY'22, the first three weeks of April saw continued growth momentum from Q4/FY'21, then the Covid cases shot up sharply leading to May being a very challenging month. However in June, the sector saw a decent recovery.

## Equity indices extend gains for 2nd day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 5 JULY

as risk appetite got a boost after a US jobs report disappointed dollar bulls. Domestic currency bounced back from four days of depreciation amid a broader risk-on sentiment and as Covid cases slows," said Dilip Parmar, research analyst, HDFC Securities.

Moreover, the expectation of foreign fund inflows this month also supported the rupee as there are 11 IPOs lined up, he said.

Rising for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 395.33 points or 0.75 per cent higher at 52,880 points.

A surging rupee, which snapped its four-day losing streak, also boosted the bulls, traders said.

Rising for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 395.33 points or 0.75 per cent higher at 52,880 points.

State Bank of India was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, climbing 1.92 per cent, followed by Tata Steel, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, M&M and ICICI Bank.

## SENSEX JUMPS 395 PTS



► Rising for the second straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 395.33 points or 0.75 per cent higher at 52,880 points.

► The broader NSE Nifty surged 112.15 points or 0.71 per cent to 15,834.35 points.

► State Bank of India was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, climbing 1.92 per cent, followed by Tata Steel, L&T, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finance, M&M and ICICI Bank.

"A strong US job data signalled that the economy is recovering at a steady pace, which eased concerns over an earlier-than-expected interest rate hike by the Fed. The overall optimism boosted appetite for most sectors bar-

ring IT and pharma, while small and mid-cap stocks continued their outperformance," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

India's services sector activities contracted further in June as the intensification of the Covid-19 crisis and reintroduction of containment measures restricted demand, a monthly survey showed.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 46.4 in May to 41.2 in June, as new work intakes and output contracted at the fastest rates since July 2020, which prompted companies to reduce employment again.

According to Binod Modi, head - strategy at Reliance</



The government may do broad ranging after-action review as there are many aspects to this particular pandemic.

COORDINATING MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY OF SINGAPORE TEO CHEE HEAN  
ADDRESSING A MEDIA BRIEFING

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 06 JULY 2021

09

# Philippine military's plane disaster kills 50, wounds 49

Seven people on the ground were hit by aircraft parts and debris and three of them died

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, 5 JULY

Philippine troops found the last five dead from the crash of a transport aircraft in the south, raising the death toll to 50 in the military's worst air disaster, officials said Monday.

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules was carrying 96 mostly combat troops when it over-shot the runway while landing on Sunday at the Jolo airport in Sulu province, military officials said. It slammed into a coconut grove beyond the airport and burst into flames in a disaster witnessed by horrified soldiers and villagers.

Troops, police and firefighters rescued 49 military personnel, including a few who jumped off the aircraft before it exploded and was gutted by fire. Seven people on the ground were hit by aircraft parts and debris and three of them died, the military said.



The plane was one of two refurbished US Air Force aircraft handed over to the Philippines, Washington's oldest treaty ally in Asia, as part of military assistance this year.

The aircraft earlier had carried two-star Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., his wife and three children from Manila to southern Cagayan de Oro city, where he became the new military regional commander on Monday.

Brawner was stunned to learn the plane he'd just flown on had crashed. We're very thankful that we were spared,

but extremely sad that so many lost their lives, Brawner told The Associated Press.

Those who boarded the C-130 in Cagayan de Oro for the flight to Sulu were army troops, many of them newly trained recruits, to be deployed in the battle against Abu Sayyaf militants in the south.

They were supposed to join us in our fight against terrorism, Sulu military commander Maj. Gen. William Gonzales said. Government forces have been battling Abu Sayyaf militants in the predominantly Muslim province

of Sulu for decades.

A video taken by troops showed the aircraft landing in clear weather and then vanishing beyond the airport. It vanished, it vanished, one soldier exclaims. Dark gray smoke later billowed from the crash site in a wooded area as the troops yelled It fell, it fell! in horror.

It was not immediately clear what caused the crash and investigators were looking for the C-130's cockpit voice and flight data recorders. At least one other C-130 was grounded while investigators determine the cause of the crash, military officials said, adding that smaller aircraft would be used for routine missions including the transport of COVID-19 vaccines and medical supplies across the archipelago.

Regional military commander Lt. Gen. Corleto Vinluan said it was unlikely that the aircraft took hostile fire. Military chief of staff Gen.

Cirilito Sobejana told reporters Sunday that the plane missed the runway and it was trying to regain power but failed and crashed.

An air force official told the AP that the Jolo runway is shorter than most others in the country, making it more difficult for pilots to adjust if an aircraft misses the landing spot. The official, who has flown military aircraft to and from Jolo several times, spoke on condition of anonymity because of a lack of authority to speak publicly.

President Rodrigo Duterte expanded the military presence in Sulu to a full division in late 2018, deploying hundreds of additional troops, air force aircraft and other combat equipment after vowing to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf. The small but brutal group has been listed by the US and the Philippines as a terrorist organization because of ransom kidnappings, bombings and beheadings.

## Thai factory blast: 1 killed, 11 injured as rea evacuated over toxic fume fears



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BANGKOK, 5 JULY

A massive explosion at a factory on the outskirts of Bangkok early on Monday killed at least one person and injured 20 more, while prompting the evacuation of a wide area, including the hospital where casualties were initially treated, over fears of poisonous fumes from burning chemicals and the possibility of additional detonations.

The fire broke out at around 3 am at a foam and plastic pellet manufacturing factory just outside Bangkok near Suvarnabhumi Airport, blowing out windows of surrounding homes and sending debris raining from the air.

Firefighters used helicopters to dump water on

hard-to-access areas in the large complex. By mid-morning the main blaze at the Ming Dih Chemical factory had been brought under control, but a massive tank containing the chemical styrene monomer continued to burn, said local disaster prevention official Chailit Suwan-naknitpong.

Styrene monomer, a hazardous liquid chemical used in the production of disposable foam plates, cups and other products, can produce poisonous gas when ignited.

Chailit said officials were trying to move all people out of the area, including doctors and patients from the neighborhood's main hospital, over fear of the fumes and the possibility of more explo-

sions.

Firefighters could be seen in photos from Thai media climbing through twisted steel wreckage of the complex's warehouses to get their hoses close enough to the flames as they fought to control the blaze. The charred body of the only fatality identified so far a male volunteer rescue worker lay face down among the wreckage.

Other photos showed nearby homes with their windows blown out and wreckage in the streets, with black smoke billowing over the area even hours later.

The area around the blast is a mixture of older industrial complexes and newer housing developments that were built after the opening of the airport in 2006.

Jarawan Chamsopa, who lives about 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from the factory, said the loud explosion in the middle of the night broke her house's windows, damaged the roof and caused parts of the ceiling to tumble down.

The flames are quite high so it takes quite an effort, he said as the rescue effort was underway.

## Jailing me during Covid is same as death sentence: Jacob Zuma

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JOHANNESBURG, 5 JULY



after he was ordered by the country's apex court to hand himself over to police to start his 15-month prison sentence.

"Sending me to jail during the height of a pandemic at my age is the same as sentencing me to death. The death sentence was declared

unconstitutional in South Africa in 1995," he said. On Saturday, the Constitutional Court agreed to hear an application by Zuma to rescind the judgement. The former president cited his age, health condition and other unspecified reasons for this.

The hearing will take place on July 12, effectively keeping him out of jail until then. The Constitutional Court sentenced Zuma to 15 months in jail on Tuesday after he repeatedly refused to appear at the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture.

## Malaysian Parliament to convene on 26 July

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 JULY

Malaysia's lower house of parliament is set to reconvene from July 26 for a five-day sitting after it was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic earlier this year, the government said on Monday.

The sitting will explain the national recovery plan and make necessary amendments to allow for hybrid sessions, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Other items on the agenda include the Covid-19 sit-

uation in the country and the current state of emergency declared in January, following which Parliament and also the state assemblies have been suspended.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin had sought and received the consent of King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah to declare a state of emergency on January 12 in an effort to curb the spread of the pandemic.

Sultan Abdullah on June 16 had called for the country's Parliament to reconvene as soon as possible.

## Indian national found murdered in Nepal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, 5 JULY

An Indian national has been found murdered by suspected robbers inside his house in Nepal, police said.

Satyendra Parikh, 59, was found lying face down in a pool of clotted blood when police and neighbours discovered his body inside his rented house at Sanepa in Lalitpur district on Sunday, the Himalayan Times reported.

He was working as a sales manager at a local electronic materials supplying company. Lalitpur is one of the three districts in the Kath-

mandu Valley. According to police, Parikh's body was found on Sunday at least 36 hours after the incident.

"Circumstantial evidence proves that Parikh was murdered on Friday evening after the housemaid left the house," Senior Superintendent of Police Kiran Bajracharya said.

"The culprits had broken the back window of the house to barge in and left the house from the same window after killing and robbing him," he said.

Bajracharya, chief of Metropolitan Police Range, Lalitpur, said that the preliminary investigations showed that

the murderers barged into the room with the motive of robbery, but eventually killed Parikh after he tried to stop them.

Police suspected that the robbers used the same hammer with which they broke the window hinges to get inside the house to kill the victim.

"They have also vandalised cupboards, beds, piggy banks and drawers in the house and stole Parikh's valuables and money," Bajracharya said.

The incident came to light after Parikh's housemaid did not receive any response to her phone calls and the door was locked from inside.

## China launches new meteorological satellite to improve weather forecast

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 5 JULY



parameters for numerical prediction applications, improving China's weather forecast capacity.

It will also monitor the global snow cover, sea surface temperature, natural disasters and ecology to better respond to climate change and prevent and mitigate meteorological disasters.

In addition, the satellite will monitor solar and space environments and their effects, as well as ionospheric data to meet the needs of space weather forecasts and supporting services, the report said.

## Philippines' Taal volcano could erupt 'anytime soon'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

MANILA, 5 JULY

Authorities in the Philippines have warned that the Taal volcano, south of Manila, could erupt "anytime soon" after recording the highest levels of sulfur dioxide gas emission.

"The highest levels of volcanic sulfur dioxide gas emission were recorded today at an average of 22,628 tonnes a day, the highest ever recorded in Taal volcano," the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said in an update on Sunday.

The institute said it has recorded "a total of 26 strong and very shallow low-fre-

quency volcanic earthquakes associated with magma degassing beneath the eastern sector of Volcano Island".

The institute added that some of the earthquakes were accompanied by rumbling and water, which typically interact explosively.

caretakers off the northeastern shores of the volcano island. These observation parameters may indicate that an eruption similar to the one on July 1 "may occur anytime soon", according to the institute.

It raised the alert level to 3 on Taal volcano in Batangas province on July 1, following a phreatomagmatic eruption that "generated a short-lived dark phreatomagmatic plume 1 km high".

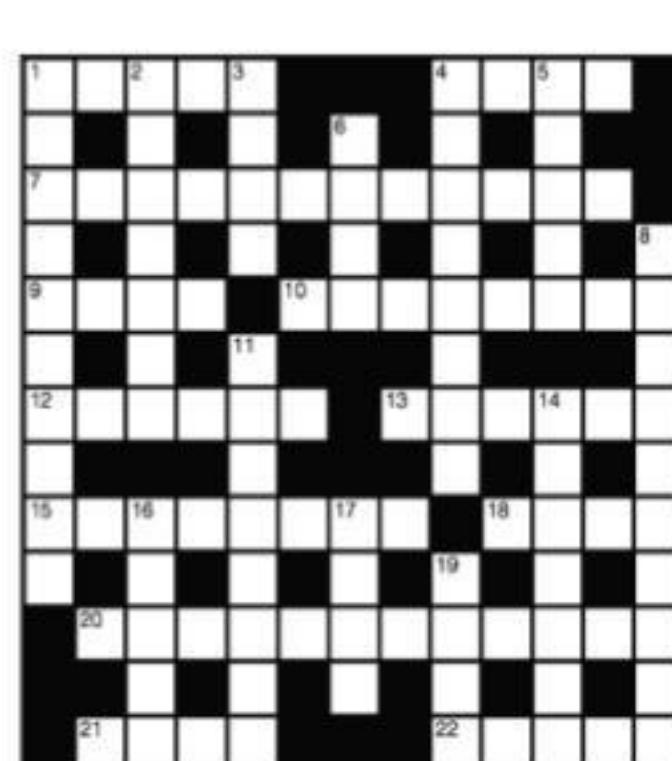
A phreatomagmatic eruption refers to "an eruption that involves both magma and water, which typically interact explosively".

Meanwhile, local authorities said that more than 5,000 villagers living close to the volcano have been evacuated to the temporary government shelters. Taal volcano, one of the most active volcanoes in the Philippines, last erupted in January 2020.

The last eruption there in January 2020 shot ash 15km (9 miles) high and spewed red-hot lava, crushing scores of homes, killing livestock and sending more than 135,000 people into shelters. Taal also has the distinction of being the only known volcano in the world within a lake on an island.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**  
1 Beautiful woman (5)  
4 Facility (4)  
7 Extremely painful (12)  
9 Boat part (4)  
10 Contiguous (8)  
12 Fester (6)  
13 Mistake (informal) (4-2)  
15 League (8)  
18 Gran refuse (4)  
20 California city (3,9)  
21 Calf meat (4)  
22 Anklebone (5)  
  
**DOWN**  
1 Have a meal (5,5)  
2 Reading desk (7)  
3 Need case (4)  
4 Intestines (8)  
5 Feeling (5)  
6 Gentle (4)  
7 Apse, 13 Anon,  
17 Permit-  
tent,  
8 Snip,  
9 Exciting,  
10 Cosmo-  
19 Panorama,  
20 Hall,  
21 Cinema,  
22 Nephew,  
14 Outlive,  
2 Lens cap,  
3 Nap,  
4 See you,  
5 Pick on,  
6 Kirttwe,  
7 Ninja,  
11 Stevedore,  
15 Impala,  
16 Attain,  
18 Naafi,  
20 Hop.  
  
**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

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

**BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker**



BEETLE BAILEY,  
THE LAZIEST  
CHARACTER  
IN THE  
COMICS...  
...WAS  
CREATED  
BY ONE OF  
THE MOST  
PROLIFIC  
CARTOONISTS  
OF ALL TIME  
9 SYNDICATED  
COMIC STRIPS  
MORT WALKER

**RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson**



WHAT'S IN THOSE BUFFALO HORNS YOU CARRY, MR. JERKYMAH?  
WAL, TH' ONE ON MY LEFT SIDE IS FER GUNPOWDER, AND TH' ONE ON MY RIGHT SIDE IS FER TOBACCO  
ALEX DAVIS  
OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND?  
ALEX DAVIS

**DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski**



HI, ANGUS.  
BA BA  
WHY DON'T YOU GET TO BE IN A NEST LIKE A BABY BIRD?  
WELL, NOT ALL BABIES GET TO DO THE SAME STUFF.  
GOOD GUESS. I WILL NOT BE GETTING A SURGICALLY-IMPLANTED KANGAROO POUCH.

**NEED TO KNOW**

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800125151

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Center 099109383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Center 099109383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186

ROADWAYS INQUIRY



*As we begin to live with this virus, we must all continue to carefully manage the risks from Covid and exercise judgment when going about our lives*

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON

SETTING OUT PLANS TO END SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS IN ENGLAND

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26 R
HONG KONG	31	28 H
TOKYO	28	19 CL
LONDON	28	14 S
DUBAI	38	30 S
SAN FRANCISCO	19	12 H
NEW YORK	22	18 R
MOSCOW	26	16 R

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

## THUMBNAILS



King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Queen Maxima arrive at the Brandenburg Airport in Berlin, Germany, on Monday.

## Johnson: UK must live with virus but restrictions can ease

## AGENCIES

LONDON, 5 JULY

Prime Minister Boris Johnson says people in England will no longer be required by law to wear face masks in indoor public spaces and to keep at least 1 meter (3 feet) apart as soon as later this month, confirming plans to reopen society despite rising coronavirus cases.

Johnson confirmed Monday that legal sanctions will be replaced by individual "informed decisions" when the country moves to the final stage of its lockdown-lifting roadmap. He said that's scheduled to happen on 19 July, although a final decision will come on 12 July.

The change will mean people can throw away masks after months of enforced face-covering, though businesses and transit operators may still require them, and they will still be recommended in some enclosed spaces.

Britain has recorded more than 1,28,000 coronavirus deaths, the highest toll in Western Europe, and confirmed infections are rising due to the highly transmissible delta variant.

Public health officials say Britain's robust vaccination program has weakened the link between infections and deaths, but not severed it entirely.

The government acknowledges that infections, hospitalizations and deaths will all rise once the remaining restrictions are lifted.

Johnson said "this pandemic is far from over" and "we must reconcile ourselves, sadly, to more deaths from Covid-19."

Under plans, nightclubs will be allowed to reopen and there will be no limits on capacity of hospitality venues. Social distancing guidelines will be scrapped.

"We must be honest with ourselves that if we can't reopen our society in the next few weeks when we will be helped by the arrival of sum-

## Duchess of Cambridge in isolation

LONDON, 5 JULY

Britain's royal palace says the Duchess of Cambridge is self-isolating after a contact tested positive for the coronavirus.

Kensington Palace office says the duchess is self-isolating at home after coming into contact last week with someone who subsequently tested positive.

Under current British rules, contacts of confirmed coronavirus cases must quarantine at home for 10 days.

The palace says Kate, who is 39, does not have any symptoms of Covid-19. Both Kate and William received first Covid-19 vaccine doses in May.

mer and by the school holidays, then we must ask ourselves when will we be able to return to normal?" Johnson said at a news conference.

Johnson sets health policy for England, but not for Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Britain has suffered the seventh highest global death toll from Covid-19, and Johnson has been accused of being too slow to implement each of England's three lockdowns.

But the take-up of vaccines in Britain has been strong, with 86 per cent of adults receiving a first dose and 64 per cent receiving two doses as of Monday, according to government data.

Johnson also said that people under 40 would be invited for their second Covid shots from eight weeks after their first dose, rather than 12 weeks, bringing it into line with the policy for over-40s.

## Biden: US 'coming back together,' but Covid-19 not yet finished

White House encouraged gatherings in the country to mark USA's 'independence' from the virus

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 5 JULY

Calling a vaccination "the most patriotic thing you can do," President Joe Biden on Sunday mixed the nation's birthday party with a celebration of freedom from the worst of the pandemic. He tempered the strides against Covid-19 with a warning that the fight against the virus wasn't over.

"Today, all across this nation, we can say with confidence: America is coming back together," Biden declared as he hosted more than 1,000 service members, first responders and other guests for a July Fourth celebration on the South Lawn of the White House.

For Biden it was a long-awaited opportunity to highlight the success of the vaccination campaign he championed. The event was the largest yet of his presidency, the clearest indication yet that the US had moved into a new phase of virus response. Shifting from a national emergency to a localised crisis of individual responsibility, the nation also moved from vaccinating Americans to promoting global health.

"This year the Fourth of July is a day of special celebration, for we're emerging from the darkness of a year of pandemic and isolation, a year of pain fear and heartbreaking loss," the president said before fireworks lit up the sky over the National Mall.

Noting the lockdowns that shuttered businesses, put millions out of work and separated untold numbers of families, Biden said, "Today we're closer than ever to declaring our independence from a deadly virus. That's not to say the battle against Covid-19 is over. We've got a lot more work to do."

Biden wanted all Americans to celebrate, too, after enduring 16 months of disruption in the pandemic and more



### NYC marks 4 July with eating contest, fireworks

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK, 5 JULY

try in front of live audiences. Last year, because of pandemic restrictions, there were a series of shorter fireworks shows in the days leading up to the holiday, with the locations kept secret in advance to keep people from congregating.

"It's hugely significant because we're all back together again. We were apart for so long," said Mike Marone, who took in the fireworks among a throng of onlookers along the Franklin D. Roosevelt parkway.

Other revelers expressed a mix of joy and apprehension, noting the coronavirus remains far from vanquished. Slightly more than half of the city's population is fully vaccinated, according to the city health department, but

rants were open, hiring was picking up and travel was getting closer to pre-pandemic levels.

However, Biden's optimism was measured for good reason.

The vaccination goal he had set with great fanfare for July Fourth, 70 per cent of the adult population vaccinated, fell short at 67 per cent,

according to figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More concerning to officials was the gap

many spectators were masked. "This is a refreshing relief for me. It gives us a sense of being out and being free," said Richard Armstrong, a retired police lieutenant who quarantined for months and, before Sunday, hadn't photographed any fireworks in three years.

"I'm always glad to be above ground," he quipped, "but as I look around, I can't tell who is vaxed and who isn't." The annual spectacle of gluttony that is the Nathan's Famous July Fourth hot dog eating contest also once again welcomed live audiences to watch the epic chowdown in Brooklyn. Joey "Jaws" Chestnut topped his own record by downing 76 franks and buns in 10 minutes.

between heavily vaccinated communities where the virus was dying out and lesser-vaccinated ones where a more infectious variant of the virus was already taking hold.

More than 200 Americans still die each day from Covid-19, and tens of millions have chosen not to get the lifesaving vaccines.

"If you've had the vaccine, you're doing great," said Dr Mati Hlatshwayo Davis, an infectious disease physician.

"If you haven't had the vaccine, you should be alarmed and that's just the bottom line, there's no easy way to cut it."

Still, about 1,000 counties have a vaccination rate below 30 per cent, and the federal government is warning that they could become the next hot spots as virus restrictions ease.

The administration was sending "surge" teams to Colorado and Missouri. Additional squads of infectious disease experts, public health professionals and doctors and nurses were getting ready to assist in additional locations with a combination of low vaccination rates and rising cases.

Overall, the vastly improved American landscape stood in stark contrast with much of the rest of the world, where there remained vast vaccine deserts and wide community spread that could open the door to even more dangerous variants. The Biden administration was increasingly turning the federal response to the complicated logistics of sending excess US vaccines abroad in an effort to assist other nations in beating back the pandemic.

With US demand for vaccines falling even as they have been widely available for months, and as governments and businesses dangled an array of incentives at Americans to get a shot, officials were increasingly emphasizing that the consequences of disease now largely reflect the individual choices of those who are not yet vaccinated.

"The suffering and loss we are now seeing is nearly entirely avoidable," said the CDC's director, Dr Rochelle Walensky.

When asked about the potential risks of holding gatherings around July Fourth in areas where there are large pockets of unvaccinated individuals, White House press secretary Jen Psaki had countered that "if individuals are vaccinated in those areas, then they are protected."

Pope responding well: Pope Francis spent his morning convalescing on Monday in a Rome hospital following intestinal surgery. The Vatican said late on Sunday that Francis, 84, responded well to the surgery on the lower part of his colon. AP

German visa: German authorities said on Monday they have granted 2,400 visas so far to Afghan employees of the country's military and their relatives, although not all of them want to come to Germany immediately. AP

Swedish caretaker leader tapped to present new govt

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

COPENHAGEN, 5 JULY

is expected to present his government on Friday.

In Sweden, prime ministers can govern as long as there is no majority against them.

Neither the Centrists nor the Left Party are part of the caretaker government, but they have been supporting it.

Monday's development means two groups, the Center Party and the Left Party, will abstain from voting against Lofven and two - his own Social Democrats and the Greens - will vote for him. This gives Lofven 175 lawmakers in the Riksdagen - the exact number of seats needed to form a two-party Cabinet.

Speaker Andreas Norlen said Lofven told him he can find enough support in the 349-seat Riksdag needed to form a Cabinet. A vote in parliament on his government is set for Wednesday, and Lofven

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# 'Engineering graduates seldom have aspirations of their own'

In this interview, Souradeep Basak and Lavkesh Balchandani from The Energy and Resources Institute speak about their award-winning alternative fodder unit, ongoing research projects, future plans and more

MADHURIMA SENGUPTA

**A**s a country where more than half the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, India grapples with the issue of farmer suicides owing to reasons like increasing cost of cultivation, crop failure and debt, to name only a few. It is said that from 1997 to 2005, one farmer died by suicide every 32 minutes. The ongoing pandemic has only added to the grim scenario.

All is not lost, however, as responsible, young minds are doing their part by coming up with innovative solutions to alleviate farmers' suffering. Two bright students from India, Souradeep Basak and Lavkesh Balchandani, have developed an affordable and easy alternative to the time-consuming and elaborate process of growing traditional fodder. Their solar-powered, hydroponic fodder unit doesn't require soil but speeds up yield. The model has won a bronze award at the Efficiency for Access Design Challenge, a global competition encouraging university students to invent sustainable solutions.

Basak and Balchandani, both studying Master's in technology in renewable energy engineering management from The Energy and Resources Institute's School of Advanced Studies, are awaiting their degrees this month. Excerpts from an interview with the duo:

#### What are your key takeaways from the competition?

It was a wonderful journey that involved interactions with students from across the world, industry leaders and entrepreneurs in the quest to develop impactful designs. The most significant takeaway was learning the importance of empathy in design thinking. Sensitivity is the name of the game; if one can truly understand the problem, the solution is but a few thoughts away.

#### How did you come up with the idea of an alternative fodder unit?

We wanted to address the key cause of farmer suicide, which is their excessive reliance on seasonal crop income. While most farming communities own livestock, they seldom get economic benefits owing to lack of



fodder, the use of hay, straw and other crop residue. We devised an affordable fodder unit that requires only seeds and water as inputs.

Interestingly, there is an overlap between regions without energy access and the communities dependent on livestock income. Solarising the unit was the final step in achieving energy independence from the grid, which is crucial for villages suffering from power issues despite having grid access.

#### What benefits will the new model have?

The hydroponic growing route requires 95 per cent less water than conventional fodder. It has a crop cycle of eight days with zero downtime against conventional fodder, which requires a minimum of 45 days and is followed by a fallow period. The entire fodder biscuit (root mat, seed matrix, stalks and leaves) can be fed to the livestock, in contrast to low utilisation of plant biomass in usual fodder production. The energy inputs are also drastically reduced due to sensor-based evaporative cooling and passive solar architecture, which set our unit apart.

#### What setup will the unit require and how will it work?

At the simplest level, we have a meta-structure that supports grow trays with holes drilled at the bottom. Seeds or grains are washed, germinated and transferred to the system once sprouted. A controller takes temperature and humidity inputs from a network of sensors and

decides the cooling protocol accordingly.

The fodder is ready for harvest in about eight-10 days with one kilogram of seeds producing six to seven kg of fodder on average. No nutrients or fertilisers are required as the seed contains enough nourishment for the first 10 days of the plant. The soil is recreated naturally by the root matrix of the seeds, which holds moisture, provides support and aerates the crops.

#### How long did it take for the project to come to fruition?

We have been working on this idea for about a year, tweaking it every now and then in the light of some new research we came across.

#### How challenging was it to conduct this research amid the pandemic?

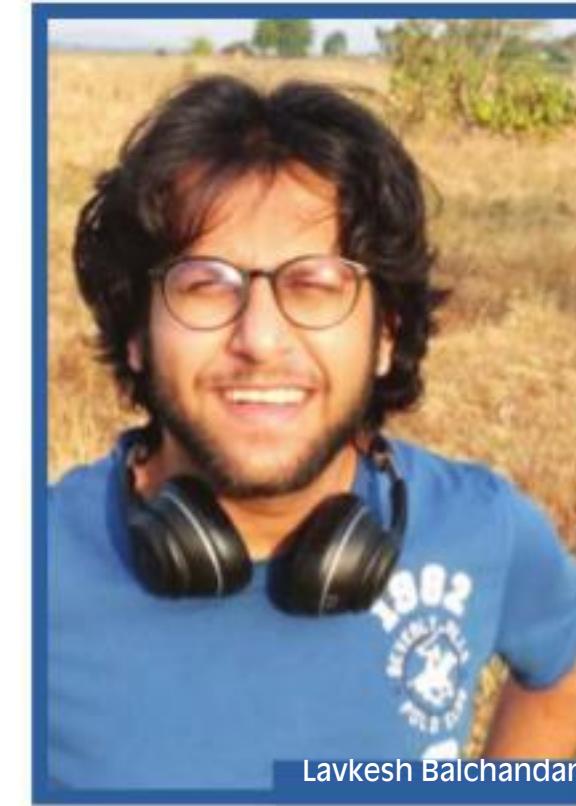
Since our prototype was in the Teri campus in New Delhi, we had some problems travelling amid the pandemic. We had to sacrifice a lot of crops due to the pandemic and its limitations. We decided to replicate the prototype at a small scale in our apartment and carry out the research and observation. This was necessary to adapt with a constraint that dictated our circumstances.

#### How will the new model encourage nature conservation?

This design has extremely high land-use efficiency due to its ability to be vertically scaled. The land-sparing nature, in stark contrast to the



Souradeep Basak



Lavkesh Balchandani

land-sharing nature of fodder cultivation, has great potential for habitat conservation and biodiversity enhancement.

In terms of emissions, scientific literature suggests hydroponic fodder can significantly reduce methane from enteric fermentation in cows. Furthermore, the high embodied energy of fodder, in terms of fuel, fertiliser and storage is bypassed by this method.

#### How can common people contribute to the restoration of ecological balance?

People can contribute to climate action by responsible sourcing. They should strive to reduce food miles, which is an indicator of the energy that goes into our food. Growing your own vegetables, sourcing from local markets and supporting sustainable ventures are the easiest ways in which we can help in the transition.

#### Given how climate change has become a pressing issue across the world, do you feel there's enough scope for education and research on this subject in our country?

Our institute is one of the finest in the nation, dealing with multiple facets of the climate emergency. That said, in this age of digital learning, barriers are constantly disappearing. A disturbing trend in engineering academics is that graduates seldom have any aspirations of their own, resulting in many going abroad aimlessly and others settling for well-paying

jobs. There can only be more institutes when there is a trend of good students leaning towards sustainability. More students need to break out from this abstraction of education and embrace it as a means to an end.

#### Are you working on any research project?

We are developing an associated facility for the cultivation of mushrooms using agricultural waste. Varieties of medicinal and gourmet mushrooms can be grown throughout the year to enhance community revenue.

Besides this, we are also exploring the feasibility of growing hydroponic vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs in a low-cost greenhouse. We plan to polish this prototype into a one-stop solution for under-served communities.

#### What do you aspire to be in future?

Basak: I wish to carry this project forward and develop solar-powered small business models for rural communities like seaweed farming, flour milling and other value addition processes. I intend to focus on this venture as a part of my PhD. I also wish to collaborate with state governments and help in capacity building and community empowerment.

Balchandani: I intend to explore opportunities in clean energy space and green product design.

The writer is a staff member, Features, *The Statesman*, Kolkata

PLUS POINTS

## Welcoming learners

Batch 2021-23

July 1, 2021

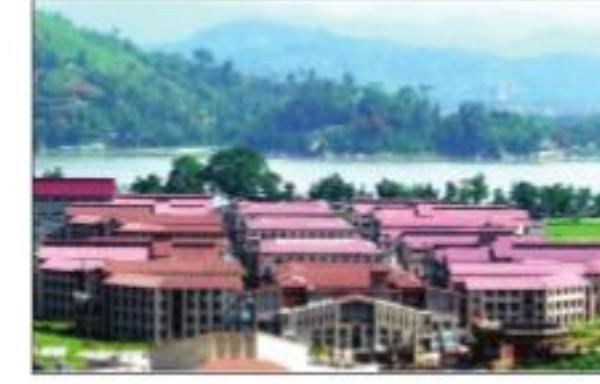


The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad virtually announced the commencement of the 58th class of its two-year post-graduate programme in management and 22nd class of the post-graduate programme in food and agribusiness management.

The inauguration and orientation programme was held in the Ravi J Matthai auditorium of the institute in the presence of the director, dean (programmes), dean (faculty) and other senior faculty members.

Delivering the inaugural address to the incoming classes, professor Errol D'Souza, director, IIM-A said, "The two years at IIM-A will present you with unlimited opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills, explore your interests, and most important of all, build a network of friends and mentors who will support you in the future."

## Joint efforts



The Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati will collaborate with North Eastern Space Application Centre in Meghalaya to carry out several initiatives jointly for development of the Northeast region and create a mass of skilled professionals in the field.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the two institutions recently. Some of the initiatives include internship programmes, joint degree programmes, short-term training programmes, student exchange programmes and joint projects, among others. A multi-disciplinary approach would be adopted to study ways to tackle disasters as Northeast India is prone to floods, earthquakes, landslides, and riverbank erosion.

## Warriors in white



Sanskriti University School of Medical and Allied Science and School of Pharmacy conducted a webinar on "Warriors in white: Unexpected Heroes in a historical pandemic" recently. Sujata Sharma, professor, department of biophysics at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, was the key speaker. By rising above pandemic constraints and helping others in need, real-life Covid warriors are playing a pivotal role. Reeling under the effects of the pandemic this year, Doctors' Day (1 July) held even more importance.

The sacrifices that they are making for the safety and welfare of humanity is priceless and deserves lifelong gratitude.

## Future proof



TeamLease EdTech – a learning solutions company in India launched their survey, "Impact of up-skilling on performance management", a detailed survey analysing how up-skilling has impacted performance management and growth opportunities for employees recently. Conducted with more than a thousand employees across 11 sectors, according to the report, about 53 per cent of employees felt that taking up up-skilling has influenced their salary hike. Not only that, a significant percentage of employees felt that they are able to shift to better job roles because of up-skilling. Around 84 per cent of respondents echoed that up-skilling initiatives have helped them get a better job/position. Interestingly, 54.3 per cent respondents chose their up-skilling courses based on industry trends and reducing the dependence on their employer, friends or self-research clearly indicating a shift towards acceptance to continuously up-skill to be future proof.

# GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD

## Transparency in organisations boost effective collaboration between employees and leaders

VANYA GAMBHIR

**T**ransparency, as a concept, is a primary part of businesses that one undoubtedly hears in official meetings. It is applicable on several levels, including concerned customers seeking to know what they consume (origin, composition of products or even respect for the environment). Then there are employees involved in the strategy and significant decisions of the company.

Teams expect essential information, previously considered confidential and exclusively reserved for top management. Beyond expectations from employees, transparency also has a positive impact on employee performance and involvement. But how can this be put to practice, to make it more evident and anchor it in the corporate culture?

#### Key to success

Transparency is one of the pillars of success, both for the company and its teams. According to *Forbes*, it facilitates exchanges between the members of a team and speeds up problem solving. It also helps build trust in leadership and thereby, directly impacts everyone's well-being at work and performance.

Similarly, when trust reigns, teams tend to feel more valued and stay longer. Furthermore, it helps in reducing the turnover and costs associated with recruiting new profiles. Likewise, employees who feel good within their company will not hesitate to recommend people to join them.

#### Vital element of corporate culture

To be effective and have a substantial impact on employee involvement, transparency should be limited to two or three annual announcements. It must be made an important part of the corporate culture as well as the internal communication strategy.

Employees are, in fact, becoming increasingly sensitive regarding the culture of the company they find themselves in. It even becomes a criterion of choice for many candidates. This is the reason why a company must share values close to them so that they are attracted to apply. In the context of a substantial talent shortage, however, especially in the digital sector, it is essential to develop a solid and attractive corporate culture.

Transparency is also essential in the recruitment process. Candidates appreciate companies that keep them informed at all stages of recruitment, the number of competitors running or even possible career developments. Organisations often overlook such steps, even though employee experience must be thought through in order to both make and leave a good impression from the get-go.

#### Concrete actions necessary

While transparency should be present at all levels of employee experience, one essential point is employee retention. A well-integrated employee will be the one who will stay. Transparency is, of course, a great help to quickly understand all the company's workings.

Thus, highlighting projects in progress across various departments



allows everyone to understand the issues and work better. The goal is both to bring out new ideas (not limited to team members) and create synergies between groups, thereby boosting effective collaboration.

Various tools allow one to be more transparent and be of great help for better collaboration. There are platforms that enable one to allocate tasks to team members and easily monitor progress. This ensures greater transparency, higher levels of collaboration and a much clearer vision of the project.

Objectives and key results for performance management also play a vital role in instilling a culture of radical transparency. Defining it on a monthly, quarterly and yearly basis allows for a much more concrete analysis of objectives, which increases the involvement of employees.

Making transparency a priority helps adopt a flat organisation model as well as limit bureaucracy. Leaders can conduct an open-door policy, hold all-hands meetings and even reorganise offices to encourage

expression.

Encouraging – even celebrating – honest feedback is critical in maintaining a healthy workplace atmosphere. To achieve a transparent culture, a platform must be provided to employees to share constructive feedback. Anonymity must also be an option since it helps employees be more comfortable with their feedback, especially on sensitive topics.

Just implementing a system to give honest feedback, however, is not enough. The leadership needs to ensure that they respect and consider the feedback given by the team.

Significant advances, be it in product or business, new arrivals, promotions, upcoming challenges and important milestones for a company, are critical news to share with teams. Even when the information is upsetting, it is essential to keep employees as up to date as possible.

In fact, the significance of sharing bad news might be higher than sharing positive ones. Since it is necessary for everyone onboard to be potentially ready for a difficult period, sharing

unfavourable information helps them bond and lend support to one another. It shows an organisation's respect towards its employees, which allows them to be transparent and share their vulnerabilities.

Transparency, in a company's culture, is quite a sensitive topic and a significantly challenging one at that. There is confidential information that cannot be shared across multiple employee levels. Moreover, sharing too much information can also prove to be counterproductive. Finding the right balance between transparency and not letting employees become overwhelmed with information can be a challenge.

Selective propagation of information is a tactic that can prove helpful. Adjusting information instead of disallowing it might help promote employee commitment. Though difficult to achieve, effective, transparent communication allows team members to assess the situation rather than be wary of it.

The writer is chief operating officer, Khojdeal, Gurugram





## BIG BOY

Australian Olympic officials urged Nick Kyrgios (photo, left) on Monday to commit to the Tokyo Games after the maverick tennis star suggested he might not go. He had been in an 11-strong Australian team, led by Ashleigh Barty, announced last week, but threw doubt over his participation subsequently.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**Sri Lanka contracts:** Sri Lanka Cricket and its cricketers are heading for a further showdown with the players being offered only 36 hours from Tuesday to sign the contentious national contracts. SLC sources said the players are returning from the UK on Tuesday and they will be served with an 8 July deadline to sign the contracts. Anyone failing to do so would be excluded from selection for the home series against India starting 13 July.

**CSA hearing:** Cricket South Africa's Social Justice and Nation-Building (SJA) hearings on racial discrimination in the game started on Monday after former players shared their unpleasant experiences. The hearings will go on till 23 July and as many as 58 submissions are likely to be heard, according to a report in 'ESPNcricinfo'.

**Jayasundara banned:** Former Sri Lanka performance analyst Sanath Jayasundara was handed a seven-year ban on Monday for breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code. "Sanath Jayasundara, a former performance analyst at Sri Lanka Cricket, has been banned from all cricket for seven years after the ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal found him guilty of breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code."

**Olympic tickets:** The Tokyo Olympic organizing committee signaled on Monday that it will change its ticket policy this week for any local fans hoping to attend. This comes with the pandemic-delayed Olympics opening in just under three weeks.

## Karthik apologises after comparing bat to 'neighbour's wife'

**SHWETA SHARMA**  
LONDON, 5 JULY

Indian cricketer Dinesh Karthik (in photo) was forced to apologize after he fielded a volley of criticism for a sexist remark comparing cricket bats to a "neighbour's wife" during on-air commentary for the second England-Sri Lanka One-Day International match.

The 36-year-old cricketer, who recently debuted as a commentator, was trying to explain that most batsmen do

not like their own bats, or find playing gears of teammates better than their own when he came up with the analogy. "Batsmen and not liking bats, they go hand in hand. Most of the batters don't seem to like their bats. They either like another person's bat. Bats are like a neighbour's wife. They always feel better," he said in his on-air remarks that went viral.

The right-handed batter faced a torrent of criticism on social media, with users slam-

ming him for his "disgusting" comments and calling him out for "toxic" masculinity. "Yo Dinesh Karthik, we're always excited to hear your voice in the background of good games and your analysis has been on point but you gotta do better than that misogynistic joke. Perpetuates the same toxic masculinity that doesn't need to exist in sport. A joke in poor taste!" a user said.

Several cricket fans demanded an apology from Karthik. "Dinesh Karthik that



was disgusting. Will you apologize?" said another. The cricketer-turned-commentator issued an apology on Sunday while opening the third ODI

between England and Sri Lanka. He said it was definitely not the right thing to say and he got a "stick from my wife and my mum" for his comments. "I want to apologize for what happened last game. It's not really what I intended. I just got it all wrong. I apologize to everybody," Karthik said. "I am really sorry that it shouldn't happen again. I got a lot of stick from my wife and my mum for saying that," he added.

Karthik forayed into com-

mentating for matches with the World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand at Southampton's Ageas Bowl. He impressed fans with his commenting skills and gave regular weather updates from Southampton. But this is the second time the Chennai-born star has had to apologize in his short stint as a commentator.

Previously he ended up taking a swipe at iconic co-commentator Nasser Hussain. Hussain praised cricketer

Rohit Sharma, saying he was a "great puller of the short ball and uses his feet well against spin," when Karthik quipped, "Yes, exactly the opposite of you."

England secured the victory over the series against Sri Lanka with 2-0 after the third Royal England ODI in Bristol was washed out by rain. The hosts dismissed the Sri Lankan team all out for 166 in 41.1 overs before rain ruined the match, sparing them a 3-0 washout.

THE INDEPENDENT

## Mary Kom, Manpreet Singh to be India's flag bearers at Tokyo Games opening ceremony

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

Celebrated boxer MC Mary Kom (in photo, left) and men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh (in photo) will be the country's flag bearers at the opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympics, the Indian Olympic Association announced on Monday.

One of India's biggest medal hopes, wrestler Bajrang Punia, will be the flag bearer at the closing ceremony on August 8.

The IOA has communicated the decision in this regard to the organizing committee of the Tokyo Games.

In a first, India is having two flag-bearers -- one male and one female -- at the upcoming Tokyo Games to



ensure "gender parity". This was recently informed by IOA chief Narinder Batra.

"It would be a huge huge

moment for me given that it is my last Olympics. Who knows I might even get emotionally overwhelmed," Mary Kom told PTI after being



named as one of the flag bearers.

"I am truly honoured to get this opportunity of leading the team out during the opening

ceremony and I thank the sports ministry and IOA for naming me. It would be added motivation for me. I promise to do my best for a medal,"

the six-time world champion added.

The country's lone individual Olympic gold-medalist Abhinav Bindra was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro.

"This is amazing, and I am speechless. I think it's a huge honour to be named the Flag Bearer for the opening ceremony alongside the incredible Mary Kom," Manpreet was quoted as saying in a Hockey India release.

"I have always been inspired by her journey in boxing and personally for me, this is a big moment in my career, and it is also a huge moment for hockey."

"I thank the Indian Olympic Association for this great opportunity, and I am looking forward to the respon-

sibility at the Opening Ceremony in Tokyo," he added.

The Tokyo Games are scheduled to open on July 23 and over 100 Indian athletes would be gunning for podium finishes at the showpiece, which was postponed by a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At its executive board meeting last year, the International Olympic Committee had made provisions for flag-bearers from both genders at the opening ceremony.

"...the IOC Executive Board decided that there should be for the first time ever at least one female and one male athlete in every one of the 206 teams and the IOC Refugee Team participating at the Games of the Olympiad," IOC chief Thomas Bach had said.

## 'No reason to remove Shastri if he's doing well'

**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

There is no reason to remove Ravi Shastri (in photo) from the Indian cricket team's head coach's position if he continues to produce results, says Kapil Dev.

The 59-year-old Shastri's contract comes to an end after the Twenty20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates in October-November. Retention will also depend on whether the former India all-rounder is to apply again. There is speculation that the Board of Control for Cricket in India may elevate current National Cricket Academy head Rahul Dravid as coach.

"I don't think there is any need to speak about it. Let this Sri Lanka series get over. We'll get to know the kind of performance our team have dished out," Kapil Dev told a television network. "If you're trying to groom a new coach, there's nothing wrong with it. Then again, if Ravi Shastri continues



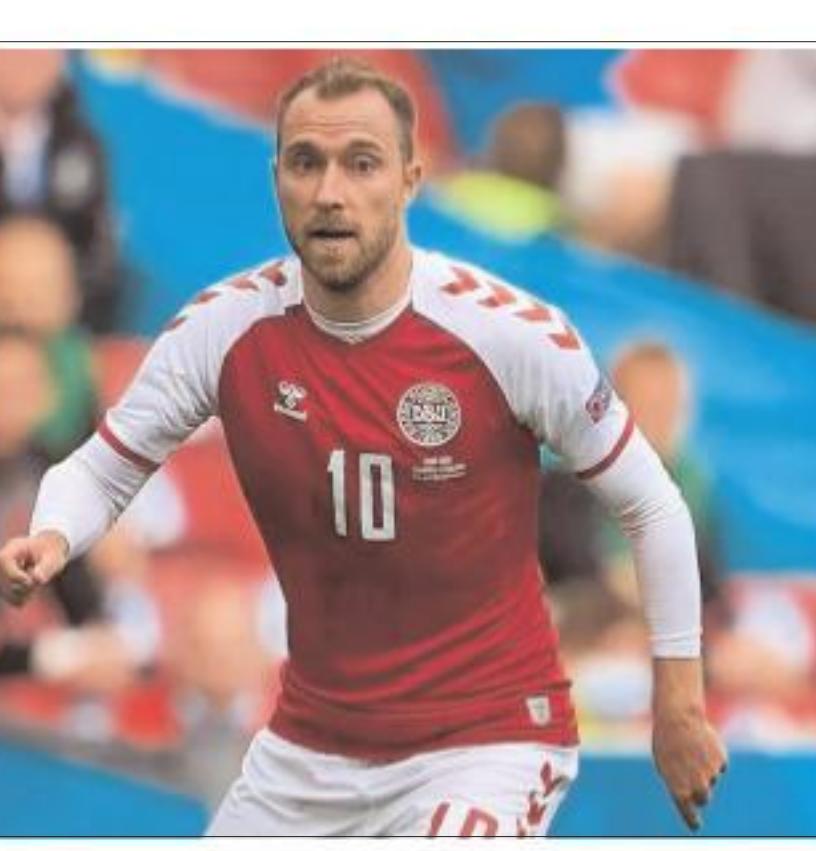
to do a good job, there's no reason to remove him either. Only time will tell. Before that, I think it will put unnecessary pressure on our coaches and players," Kapil Dev said about his former vice-captain.

Shastri has guided the Indian team to two Test series wins in Australia. Under him, India reached the semi-final of the 2019 World Cup and the World Test Championship final but went down to New Zealand in both the knock-out games. Two Indians teams

are set to play in two different countries with Virat Kohli and his men gearing themselves up for the five-Test series in England, while a Shikhar Dhawan-led team will take on hosts Sri Lanka in a limited-overs series.

Kapil Dev said: "The Indian team have a lot of bench strength. If players get the opportunity and India can assemble two teams that can claim to win in both England and Sri Lanka, there is nothing better."

There will also have to be a tax-waiver decision which the BCCI needs to get from the government in New Delhi to host any International Cricket Council event. It was learnt that the BCCI would bid for one Champions Trophy, a T20 World Cup and a 50-over World Cup.



ley but, inspired by a "proud" Christian Eriksen (in photo), they have no intention of stopping there.

2-1 victory over the Czech Republic on Saturday propelled the Danes into the last four of a major tournament for the first time since their shock triumph at Euro 1992.

It has been a remarkable effort, under a coach who would not have been in charge if not for

## 'Indian glamour league will leave West Asian World Cup pitches jiggered up'

**AGENCIES**

NEW DELHI, 5 JULY

The rest of the Indian Premier League shifted to the United Arab Emirates will hugely affect the pitches, which might be worn out and help spinners "massively" during the Twenty20 World Cup, says South Africa head coach Mark Boucher.

The 2021 IPL, suspended following Covid-19 infections inside the bio-bubble, will be completed in the UAE, which will also host the T20 World Cup.

The International Cricket Council decided to shift the showpiece event from India owing to the unprecedented health crisis.

The next phase of the IPL is to be held from 19 September to 15 October, while the T20 World Cup will begin on 17 October.

"The wickets after the IPL are going to be a bit dry. It's not the same as we are used to back in South Africa where you can

go out and bash your way to 180 to 200 runs. You've got to be skilful here; you've got to be smart," Boucher was quoted as saying on a website.

"If anything, it's going to go even further into sub-continent conditions, on the extreme side. They are playing the IPL there, there are not a lot of grounds and those wickets are going to be worn, so scores will probably go even further down."

Boucher said that batting would be tough on those pitches as spinners would hold the key.

"It's going to be tough to bat on especially at the backend," said the South African. "We will have an idea of what the scores are going to be by watching the IPL and then taking a look and assessing how the wickets are playing during the beginning of the World Cup. I suspect spinners will play a massive role."

Left-arm wrist-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi claimed seven wickets as South Africa won a

five-match T20I series against the West Indies 3-2 at the National Cricket Stadium in St George's, Grenada.

## Starc's target

Australian pace bowler Mitchell Starc is completely focused on the T20 World Cup and sees the 10 T20Is lined up over the next month as a great "opportunity" to play the role of the central figure for his team.

"It's a great opportunity for the group to start preparing with a bit more focus on that World Cup," said Starc, who also wants to give himself the "best chance" to play Test cricket for his country when Australia take on Afghanistan and then play the Ashes. "Don't think I've played 10 T20s in the past four years let alone in the space of a few weeks so personally it would be nice to get a bit of a rhythm of T20 cricket," Starc told a website.

## Of a fixture laced with history and Denmark's drive to make a mark

**AGENCIES**

LONDON, 5 JULY

Spain's cycle of dominance of European football began and ended with Italy so it is fitting their hopes of a reconquest will see them face Roberto Mancini's side, who are on their own path towards redemption, in Tuesday's Euro 2020 semi-final.

This is a fixture laced with history, not least for coach Luis Enrique, who was left with a broken nose by opponent Mauro Tassotti which went unpunished in a 1994 World Cup quarter-final defeat and to this day sparks feelings of injustice in Spain. Spaniards have happier memories of their Euro 2008 quarter-final, when they prevailed on penalties after a goalless draw in their toughest game on their path to their first international trophy in 44 years.

They met again in the Euro 2012 final in arguably Spain's best display in that glorious four-year cycle, winning 4-0 in a performance so dominant captain Iker Casillas pleaded with the referee to blow his

whistle and put Italy out of their misery. But the Italians would have their revenge four years later in the last 16 when a team fired up by Antonio Conte deservedly won 2-0 at the Stade de France to end Spain's long period of continental hegemony. But that win did not spark the revival Italy hoped and a 3-0 defeat to Spain in qualifying for the 2018 World Cup led to them missing out on international football's biggest event for the first time since 1958.

It also provoked a deep identity crisis which led them to appoint Roberto Mancini. Mancini has got the country falling back in love with the national team by overseeing some sparkling football and creating a real sense of unity demonstrated in the way they have celebrated every victory as if they had won a trophy.

That sense of togetherness could be seen on the pitch as they defended like gladiators in their 2-1 win over Belgium in the quarter-finals and in their raucous tribute on the flight home to defender Leonardo Spinazzola, who tore his Achilles

tendon and is out of the tour-

nationals.

Spain's path to the semi-

finals has been less smooth,

getting off to a croaky start with dull draws against Sweden and Poland before coming to life with a 5-0 win over Slovakia and a 5-3 win against Croatia after extra time. Their quarter-final success over Switzerland on penalties was far less exciting but had the hallmarks of the shootout win over Italy 13 years ago and showcased the team spirit players and Luis Enrique have talked up throughout the tournament.

"From day one we were confident we were a solid and united group and that we were good enough and we've proved that," said forward Mikel Oyarzabal ahead of the Wembley semi-final. "Italy are a top level team with players who keep performing at the highest level with their clubs but we're not any less than them."

Denmark v England

Denmark may have achieved one goal by reaching the semi-finals of Euro 2020 at Wemb-

ley but, inspired by a "proud" Christian Eriksen (in photo), they have no intention of stopping there.

2-1 victory over the Czech Republic on Saturday propelled the Danes into the last four of a major tournament for the first time since their shock triumph at Euro 1992.

It has been a remarkable effort, under a coach who would not have been in charge if not for

the Covid-19 pandemic, and after two opening defeats, the first of which, to Finland, was overshadowed by the terrifying collapse of star player Eriksen after he suffered a cardiac arrest on the pitch.

But 10 goals in three successive wins have put the Scandinavians two matches away from following in the footsteps of the class of 92, while Inter Milan midfielder Eriksen

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