



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



PDP, ANC TO
BOYCOTT
DELIMITATION PANEL

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 41 and 29 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 66% Min: 35%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 40.6°C (+4) Min: 28.7°C (-1)

SUN RISES

05:30 hrs

MOON RISES

03:46 hrs

SUN SETS

19:23 hrs

MOON SETS

17:16 hrs

THUMBNAILS

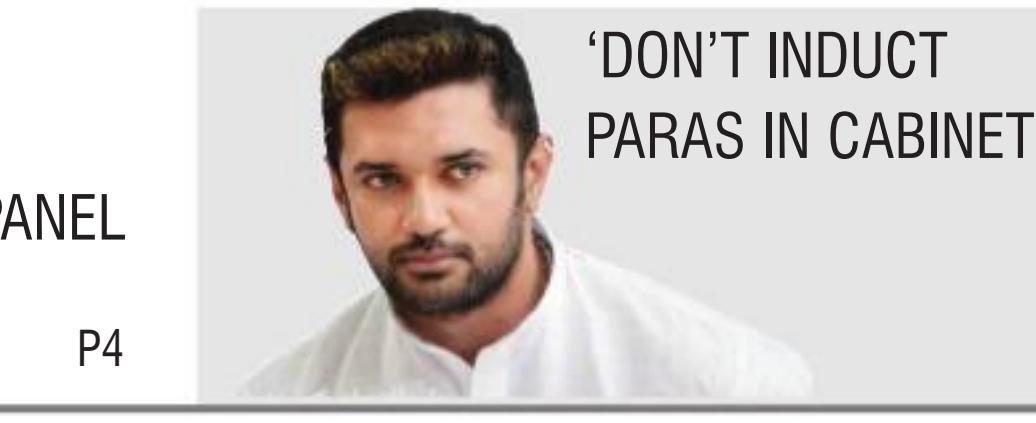


People from Faridabad demonstrating at the Jantar Mantar, in the Capital on Tuesday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

JEE Main exams: Education minister Ramesh Poshriyal has announced the exam schedule for JEE Main (April and May) sessions 2021 on Tuesday. The April session of JEE Main 2021 will be conducted from 20-25 July. The fourth and the last session of JEE Main 2021 will be conducted from 27 July to 2 August. Those who wish to apply for the April session can register from tonight till 8 July and the May session registrations will be open from 9-12 July. Candidates can also change their exam centres.

India, Pak PMs on 'press freedom predators' **List:** Press watchdog Reporters Without Borders has released a list of 37 heads of states who cracked down on press freedom. Pakistan PM Imran Khan, North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un and Hungarian PM Viktor Orban are among the "predators of press freedom". PM Narendra Modi, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina and Hong Kong's administrative chief Carrie Lam are also on the list.



'DON'T INDUCT
PARAS IN CABINET'

P4



NO SELF-ISOLATION FOR
CHILDREN, VACCINATED
AFTER COVID CONTACT

P10

twitter.com/TheStatesmanLtd

facebook.com/thestatesman1875



BRAZIL IN FINAL
AS PAQUETA
STRIKES AGAIN

P12

Modi 2.0: 'Major Cabinet shake-up' likely today

Ministerial probables arrive in Delhi; party organisation members may find berths

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

BJP leaders Sarbananda Sonowal, Jyotiraditya Scindia and Narayan Rane, ministerial contenders for Narendra Modi government, arrived in the national capital on Tuesday amid indications of reshuffle in Union Cabinet tomorrow.

JD(U) leader R C P Singh and LJP's Pushpash Kumar Paras, both expected to represent the BJP allies, also reached here from Bihar.

All of them observed stoic silence about their possibility of joining the government.

Rane told reporters that he had not received any call about his joining the government.

Leaders of the LJP faction headed by Paras said he had received a call from Union home minister Amit Shah on Monday but claimed it was related to the birth anniversary of party founder Ram Vilas Paswan.

Though there has been no official word on the Cabinet reshuffle, a series of meetings in the government and the BJP have fuelled the speculation.

Sources have indicated that it can happen anytime now.

Modi's review ministers' works, early next year Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Manipur and Punjab and the pandemic that has been a factor in the internal evaluation of the party's governance

and organisational works are likely to be factors in the expected reshuffle. Representation of BJP MPs from West Bengal and the northeast may go up.

The prime minister may go for new faces while also factoring in caste and regional balances.

The reshuffles undertaken by Modi so far, all in his first term, have also seen some ministers being dropped or removed from key portfolios on account of their performance.

The PM has also made surprise choices in the past by inducing apolitical persons like S Jaishankar and Hardeep Singh Puri as ministers.

A party source said it is likely to be a "big shake-up" and members of party organisation may find berths in the government.

Probables are Bhupender Yadav, Anil Baluni, Sudhanshu Trivedi including BJP MPs Sushil Modi, Ashwini Vaishnav and GVL Narasimha Rao.

BJP general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh met party president JP Nadda in the evening. Former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje also met Santhosh.

With Gehlot set to quit as an MP after becoming Governor, his departure will also leave the key post of the leader of the House in Rajya Sabha vacant.

It will leave one more position vacant in the BJP's Parliamentary Board, the party's apex body, where he is the only Dalit

leader.

Incidentally, top RSS brass, including its chief Mohan Bhagwat and joint general secretaries Krishnarao Gopal and Manmohan Vaidya, were also in the city for the last few days. BJP has often taken RSS feedback in its key decisions.

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"His appeals for bail and being sent home too were rejected. Thanks to the Bombay High Court's intervention he was admitted to a private hospital when his condition started deteriorating after he was infected with Covid. But it was too late to prevent his death in custody," they claimed in their letter.

Dr Ian D'souza, director, Holy Family Hospital, where Swamy was undergoing treatment, and tribal rights activists' lawyer Mihir Desai on Monday informed a bench of the Bombay HC of his death following cardiac arrest. In a tweet, Yechury demanded release all detainees "detained by misusing UAPA/Sedition etc, on politically motivated charges."

They have also alleged that he was denied treatment for his various ailments including the debilitating Parkinson's disease. "Only after a nationwide campaign was conducted that even a sipper to drink liquids was made available to him in jail. The numerous appeals to shift him out

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A senior law officer confirmed the news.

Petitions pending in the high court have challenged the new IT Rules intended to regulate social media firms like Facebook, Twitter as well as OTT players. Under the new rules, the social media firms will have to put in place the complaint redressal mechanism with an officer being based in the country to deal with online contents.

Modi govt creates new ministry of co-operation

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

In a historic move, a separate 'Ministry of Co-operation' has been created by the Narendra Modi government for realizing the vision of 'Sahakar Se Samridhi'.

The ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country and help deepen co-operatives as a true people-based movement reaching the grassroots.

In our country, a co-operative based economic development model is very relevant where each member works with a spirit of responsibility.

The ministry will aim to streamline processes for 'Ease of doing business' for co-operatives and enable development of Multi-State Co-operatives (MSCS).

Leader.

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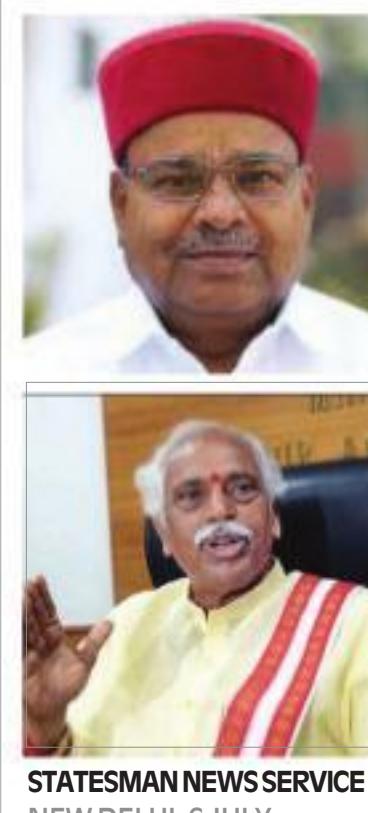
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Eight states get new Governors



New Govt's list

Thawarchand Gehlot (Karnataka); Hari Babu Kambhampati (Mizoram); Mangubhai Patel (Madhya Pradesh); Rajendran Arlekar (Himachal Pradesh); Bandaru Dattatreya (Haryana); PS Sreedharan Pillai (Goa); Satyadev Narayan Arya (Tripura); Ramesh Bais (Jharkhand)

Ramesh Bais, Governor of Tripura was transferred and appointed Governor of Jharkhand. He had served as a Union minister of state for Environment and Forests in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government.

Bandaru Dattatreya, Governor of Himachal Pradesh, a former Union labour minister, is transferred and appointed as Governor of Haryana.

Rajendran Arlekar, a former Speaker of Goa Assembly, has become Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

PS Sreedharan Pillai, Governor of Mizoram was transferred and appointed Governor of Goa; Satyadev Narayan Arya, Governor of Haryana, was transferred and appointed Governor of Tripura and Hari Babu Kambhampati has been appointed as Governor of Mizoram.

Lowest daily Covid deaths in three months

May roll back easing of restrictions, warns govt

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Union health ministry on Tuesday warned that gross violations of Covid-19 appropriate behaviour after lifting restrictions in various parts of the country can lead to a roll back of the decision.

During a briefing on the Covid situation, now on the stump, the ministry highlighted gross violation of Covid protocols.

Referring to the massive footfall of people in hill stations like Manali, Shimla, and Mussoorie, Joint Secretary, health, Lav Agarwal on Tuesday stated that people travelling to hill stations are not following Covid appropriate behaviour.

He also cited recent incidents of overcrowding at markets in Delhi and Mumbai. "We can nullify the ease in restrictions again if protocols are not complied with," he said.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 6 JULY

With 553 fresh fatalities, India recorded the lowest daily death toll in around 90 days while 34,703 new cases of were reported, the lowest in 111 days, the Union health ministry said on Tuesday.

With the fresh cases, the total caseload climbed to 3,06,19,932, while the death toll climbed to 4,03,281.

The active cases declined to 4,64,357, the lowest in 101 days.

The national recovery rate has improved to 97.17 per cent.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 2.11 per cent.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,97,52,294. Under Nationwide Vaccination Drive, 35,75 crore have been inoculated.

Delhi cases: Delhi today recorded 79 Covid cases with a positivity rate of 0.11 per cent, and 4 coronavirus-linked

fatalities, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. As many as 154 Covid patients in the city recovered in the last 24 hours, it said.

(SEE P2)

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
TUESDAY
06 JULY 2021

FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES
3,06,19,932

ACTIVE CASES
4,64,357

NEW CASES
34,703

NEW RECOVERIES
51,864

TOTAL DEATHS
4,03,281

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
TUESDAY
06 JULY 2021

Sonia Gandhi, other opposition leaders write to Kovind over Stan Swamy's death 'under custody'

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Leaders of 10 opposition parties including Congress chief Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind expressing "outrage" at the death of Father Stan Swamy "under custody", and seeking his intervention in holding accountable those responsible for "foisting false cases" on him, his continued detention and "inhuman treatment".

The signatories also include NCP chief Sharad Pawar, former prime minister and JDS leader H D Deve Gowda and NC leader Farooq Abdullah.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (TMC), Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin (DMK) and his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren (JMM) have also signed the letter.

ter, besides D Raja (CPI), Sitaram Yechury (CPI-M) and Tejaswi Yadav (RJD).

The 84-year-old priest-activist Stan Swamy, arrested under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the Elgar Parishad case, died at a Mumbai hospital on Monday while fighting for his bail on health grounds.

"We are writing to you in deep anguish expressing our intense grief and outrage at the death of Father Stan Swamy under custody," the opposition leaders



Let us heal this pandemic not by politics, but by connecting the strings of our heart

ANIT THAPA, LEADER, GORKHA JAN MUKTI MORCHA

ON THE SOCIAL WORK TO HELP COVID-AFFECTED PEOPLE HE HAS UNDERTAKEN IN THE HILLS

Delhi launches social security scheme for Covid victims' kin

CM asks officials not to find faults with such families' claims; launches scheme portal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY



Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday launched a social security scheme to provide financial assistance to the families who have lost their members due to Covid-19 in the city.

Under the scheme, called the "Mukhyamantri Covid-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojna",

there is a provision for an ex-gratia payment of Rs 50,000 for each Covid-linked death to the affected families and Rs 2,500 monthly to those families which have lost their breadwinners due to the pandemic.

Kejriwal said, "As a responsible and sensitive government, it is our duty to stand with the grieving families and provide them all kinds of assistance we can. Under the 'Mukhyamantri Covid-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojna', in the case of death of any patient who was Covid-19 positive, either in an institutional setting or at home, an amount of Rs 50,000 will be given as an ex-gratia pay-

ment to the family of the deceased. No questions would be asked."

Additionally, Rs 2,500 will be given monthly to those families which have lost their breadwinners because of Covid. To all those children who were orphaned because of Covid-19, Rs 2,500 will be given monthly till they become 25 years old, the CM said.

Explaining the application process, Kejriwal said, "We have tried to cover all sections of society and parameters. Today, we are launching the portal where these applications will have to be made. There are two options. First, these families can get registered on the portal themselves or, second, a Delhi government represen-

tative will visit the homes of the victim families. As a responsible and sensitive government, we will approach the affected families on our own."

Kejriwal asked the officials concerned not to "put the families under stress because of any missing papers". "It is our duty to help them in these tough times. We have to make sure that these families receive their dues swiftly. Reassure the families, be empathetic, tell them we have been personally sent by the CM," he told them.

Delhi social welfare minister Rajendra Pal Gautam, who was present on the occasion, said, "As you all are aware, during the last one and a half years of the pandemic has affected us all. We lost many of our family members and loved ones. We certainly cannot reduce the pain caused, but the Delhi government firmly stands with the people in such difficult times."

Elaborating on the scheme, he said, "Under the 'Mukhyamantri Covid-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojna', every child who has lost both parents and even if anyone of the parents died due to Covid-19, that child will be given Rs 2,500 per month till 25 years of age. Further, the Delhi government will provide Rs 50,000 to the families which have lost someone. Additionally, the government will also give Rs 2,500 per month to the families which have lost breadwinners."

DCW chief Swati Maliwal gets another three-year term

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday approved another term for Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal and her team for doing "excellent work".

The panel's term is for three years and this will be Maliwal's third stint, according to a DCW official.

"Delhi Commission for Women has been doing an excellent work. Their term comes to an end. I approved another one term for the present Commission today. Best wishes to Swati and her team. Keep doing good work," Kejriwal said in a tweet.

Maliwal said it is because of Kejriwal's constant support that DCW has successfully managed to transform the lives of lakhs of women and girls in Delhi. DCW team will continue serving the people of Delhi with utmost honesty."

Maliwal said the organisation has handled lakhs of cases in the past six years since its reconstitution.

"We have revolutionised the functioning of the Com-

mission and today the Commission is known for its good work across the country. We have successfully rescued thousands of girls from trafficking and prostitution rackets," she said, adding that DCW's intervention has helped rehabilitate hundreds of rape survivors.

"We have strengthened the 181 helpline to an extent that no call goes unheard," she added.

While thanking Kejriwal for giving them the opportunity to serve the people of Delhi, Maliwal assured him that "we will be taking the Commission to even greater heights in the next three years".

The first term of the newly-constituted DCW started from 2015 to 2018, followed by 2018 to 2021.

This is the second time she has been granted extension. In July 2018, she was also given extension before her term was about to end.

thank Hon'ble CM Arvind Kejriwal for giving us this opportunity. It is because of his constant support that DCW has successfully managed to transform the lives of lakhs of women and girls in Delhi. DCW team will continue serving the people of Delhi with utmost honesty."

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79 new corona cases, 4 fatalities in Capital

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY



Delhi today recorded 79 Covid cases with a positivity rate of 0.11 per cent, and 4 coronavirus-linked fatalities, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

As many as 154 Covid patients in the city recovered in the last 24 hours, it said.

Delhi has recorded a total of 14,34,687 coronavirus cases since the pandemic began last year. So far, over 14.08 lakh patients have recovered, the health bulletin said.

The city's Covid death toll climbed to 25,001, it stated.

There were 833 active Covid cases in the national capital today, the bulletin said. Yesterday, the number of active cases in the city was 912.

Today's figure of active cases is the lowest since April 9 last year when the number was 720.

There were currently 269 Covid patients under home isolation, down from 300 the previous day.

The number of containment zones in the city stood at 652, a decline from 701 the previous day, the bulletin said.

The fresh infections were detected out of 69,866 tests, including 46,110 RTPCR/CBNAAT/True-Nat tests.

Out of 14,548 available beds in hospitals meant for Covid patients in the

city, 476 were occupied while the rest were vacant.

As many as 80,841 people were vaccinated against Covid in the last 24 hours, including 29,113 who received the second dose.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 54 cases, the lowest since April 15 last year, and 2 deaths while the positivity rate had slumped to 0.09 per cent.

On Sunday, Delhi had recorded 94 cases with a positivity rate of 0.13 per cent, and 7 deaths. It was then also the first time that the number of active cases in the city had dropped below 1,000 since April last year.

The national capital had recorded 86 cases and five deaths on Saturday, while 93 cases and two deaths were recorded on Friday.

Max temperature settles at 40 degC in Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

The mercury in the national capital settled at 40 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, with low humidity in air.

The relative humidity was recorded at 34 per cent, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The mercury had risen by several notches in the morning with the minimum temperature settling at 32.8 degrees Celsius.

On Monday, the minimum temperature had stood at 28 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

The maximum temperature on Monday had settled at 39.5 degrees Celsius.

According to the IMD website, the maximum temperature in Delhi was record-



ed at 40 degrees Celsius in the evening.

The minimum temperature recorded at Safdarjung Observatory here, considered the official reading of the city, was 32.8 degrees Celsius in the morning, with a relative humidity of 54 per cent.

The weatherman has forecast west-southwesterly winds for late Tuesday.

TENDER

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tendering Notice

Mr. Divisional Materials Manager, North Eastern Railway, Varanasi and on behalf of President of India, invites tender through E-Procurement system "Open Tender" for the supply of the following item. Complete description of the item and other terms and conditions are available on website www.irps.gov.in.

Mr. No.-1, E-Tender No.: 50215286, Due Date: 06-08-2021, Description: Supply, Installation and commissioning of SMPS based Integrated Power System for LC Gate as per RDSO Spec No.: RDOS/SPN/165/2012 ver 3.0 with latest amendment, with low maintenance secondary cell 200 AH as per specification no: 88/2004 & as per technical specification attached. Qty Required: 14 Nos., Earnest Money: ₹ 2,84,040/-

Note:- The Firms, who desire to participate in e-tender, are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to have a Class-III Digital signature Certificate Authority Licensed by CCA on India. Manual offers against e-tenders will not be considered.

Mr. Divisional Material Manager CPRO-S21 Varanasi About any passenger liability complaint SMS on Mob.: 09794845955 Never travel on roof and foot boards.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

Gist of e-tender

NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2021-22/64/e-tendering Dated:-05.07.21

On the behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders are invited from original equipment manufacturers or their authorized dealers/representatives or reputed and experienced firms for the below mentioned works:

Name of Work:- Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning Of MGPS Works with allied works at Govt. Chest Disease Hospital, Srinagar.

Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) :- 13.81

Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 1000

Time of completion (in Days) :- 07

AAAccorded Vide No: Mc/ Plan/COVID-19/2021-22 Dt:-21.05.2021

T.S No. :- 38 OF 07/21

1. Downloading of Bids:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 03.07.21(18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 03.07.21(18.00 hrs).

2. Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site 04.07.21 (18.00 hrs) to 14.07.21 (13:00hrs) in two (02) covers.

3. Opening of Bids :- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 15.07.2021 at 15.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar**

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) CONST. DIVN. NO. II, JAMMU

SHORT FRESH NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Short e-NIT No. 38/2021-2022/DIV-II Dated 03-07-21
For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, M&S, M&S and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works : -

S.No. 1 Name of Work :- Construction of Road From Kha Potra GREF Head Quarter to Samotra Mohallah Near House of Sh. Goru Shankar Ward No. 8 including 6.00 mtr Culvert. (L = 1.00 Km).

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Divn. No. II Jammu

Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs) :- 15.30, Cost of document (in Rs.) :- 600, Earnest Money :- Bid Security declaration on notarized affidavit, Time Allowed for completion :- 02 month, Time & date of opening of tender :- (1300 Hrs) on or after 13-07-2021, Class of Contractor :- A, B, & C

S.No. 2 Name of Work :- Construction of Road From Jindrah to Cee Gala by way of laying of WBM Gr-II, Hume Pipe Culvert and Allworks. (L = 2.25 Km).

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu

Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs) :- 9.75, Cost of document (in Rs.) :- 600, Earnest Money :- Bid Security declaration on notarized affidavit, Time Allowed for completion :- 02 month, Time & date of opening of tender :- (1300 Hrs) on or after 13-07-2021, Class of Contractor :- A, B, & C

S.No. 3 Name of Work :- Construction of Road From Raja Rani to Kathar by way of laying of 3.00 mtr RCC Culvert and allworks. (L = 1.00 Km).

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu

Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs) :- 6.00, Cost of document (in Rs.) :- 600, Earnest Money :- Bid Security declaration on notarized affidavit, Time Allowed for completion :- 02 month, Time & date of opening of tender :- (1300 Hrs) on or after 13-07-2021, Class of Contractor :- A, B, & C

S.No. 4 Name of Work :- Construction of Road From Jindrah to Peer Baba at Village Jindrah.

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu

Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs) :- 6.00, Cost of document (in Rs.) :- 600, Earnest Money :- Bid Security declaration on notarized affidavit, Time Allowed for completion :- 02 month, Time & date of opening of tender :- (1300 Hrs) on or after 13-07-2021, Class of Contractor :- A, B, & C

S.No. 5 Name of Work :- Construction of Road From Chopper to Sandrote Road. (Phase-1st) by way of laying of 6.00 mtr Span Culvert at Village Jathel Near Grave Yard in Km 1st.

Name of Division :- PWD (R&B) Const. Div. No. II Jammu

Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs) :- 27.05, Cost of document (in Rs.) :- 600, Earnest Money :- Bid Security declaration on notarized affidavit, Time Allowed for completion :- 02 month, Time & date of opening of tender :- (1300 Hrs) on or after 13-07-2021, Class of Contractor :- A, B, & C

S.No. 6 Name of Work :- Construction of 6.00 mtr Span Culvert at Village Jathel Near Grave Yard in Km



The TMC has also worked to have a consensus in national politics which is what my father was known for.

FORMER PRESIDENT PRANAB MUKHERJEE'S SON ABHIJIT MUKHERJEE
ASSERTING IT IS TIME TO TAKE A STAND FOR THE CONCEPT OF SECULAR INDIA

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 07 JULY 2021

03

Dalai Lama turns 86, highlights non-violence and compassion

The Tibetan spiritual leader expresses commitment to reviving ancient Indian knowledge & secular values

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 6 JULY

The Tibetan spiritual leader and Nobel peace laureate Dalai Lama turned 86 today. In a virtual address on the occasion, he vowed to revive ancient Indian knowledge and secular values of honesty, compassion and non-violence.

He thanked everyone for the birthday greetings that poured in from all corners of the globe and said since "I became a refugee and now settled in India, I have taken full advantage of India's freedom and religious harmony".

"I want to assure you that for the rest of my life I am committed to reviving ancient Indian knowledge."

"Really appreciate the Indian concept of secular values, not dependent on religion,



such as honesty, karuna (compassion) and ahimsa (non-violence).

So on my birthday, this is my gift. Please keep it in mind. I myself am committed to non-violence and compassion until my death," he said.

Dalai Lama pointed out that

he said. He also said that he wanted to express deep appreciation to all his friends who have really shown love, respect and trust.

"For myself, I can assure you that for the rest of my life I am committed to serving humanity and working to protect the climate," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Taiwanese PM Tsai Ing-Wen, US Ambassador to Nepal Randy Berry, Union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Dr Harsh Vardhan, HP CM Jai Ram Thakur, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, and Arunachal CM Pema Khandu were among the leaders who greeted Dalai Lama on his birthday.

Tibetans in Dharamshala and from across the world celebrated their spiritual leader's birthday while observing Covid norms and prayed for his long life.

Reserve 5 seats for Sikh community in J&K Assembly: SAD to Delimitation Commission

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 6 JULY

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Tuesday urged the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Union Territory Delimitation Commission to reserve five seats for members of the Sikh community in the Union Territory legislative assembly.

Party senior leader and former Member of Parliament, Prof Prem Singh Chandumajra handed over a letter written by SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal in this regard to Delimitation Commission Chairman Justice (retd) Ranjana Prakash Desai in Srinagar today.

The SAD has urged the Commission to favourably consider reserving three seats for the Sikh community in Jammu and two seats in Srinagar. The Commission assured to consider the demand sympathetically.

Badal in his communiqué to the Delimitation Commission said several times, including at the time of par-

tition of the country, promises were made to the Sikh population of J&K that counter checks would be created in the democratic process to ensure their social and economic well-being. "It was even proposed that a definite number of seats would be reserved for members of the Sikh community in the J&K legislature on the pattern of that done for the Anglo Indian community in Parliament and state assemblies. Sadly the then Congress government did not honour any of the promises made to the Sikh community post partition," he said.

Asking the Commission to right this historical wrong, Badal said reservation of seats for Sikhs in the J&K UT would ensure the voice of the community was taken into consideration while making executive decisions.

Meanwhile Prof Chandumajra while apprising the Commission members about the entire issue said J&K was at one time also part of the Sikh empire and a huge number

of Sikhs have been residing in the state for the last more than two hundred years.

He said the Sikh community formed an important part of the composite culture of J&K with social and trade links stretching back hundreds of years. "Despite many upheavals, including the partition of the country and horrendous events like the mass killing of members of the Sikh community in Singhpora, the community continues to remain an inseparable part of J&K", Prof Chandumajra briefed the Commission.

The SAD delegation informed the Commission that it had held discussions with the Sikh community of J&K and that the community also wanted a say in governance. It also told the Commission that more than 35,000 Sikhs had been killed when Pakistan-backed intruders had tried to take over the Kashmir valley in 1947. It also apprised the Commission that it managed 135 Gurdwaras in the Union Territory.

Uttarakhand ministers given charge of different districts

PTI
DEHRADUN, 6 JULY

The 11 cabinet ministers of Uttarakhand were on Tuesday given charge of different districts to monitor their development.

Satpal Maharaj has been appointed as the minister in charge of Rudraprayag and Chamoli districts, Harak Singh Rawat of Tehri, Bansidhar Bhagat of Dehradun, Yashpal Arya of Nainital, Bishan Singh Chuhal of Almora, Subodh Uniyal of Pauri, Arvind Pandey of Chamapata and Pithoragarh, Ganesh Joshi of Uttarkashi, Dhan Singh Rawat of Haridwar, Rekha Arya of Baghewar and Yatishwaranand the minister in charge of Udham Singh Nagar.

The order was issued by newly appointed Chief Secretary SS Sandhu. Pushkar Singh Dhami was sworn in as the 11th chief minister of Uttarakhand, along with an 11-member cabinet, in Dehradun on Sunday.

Ex-Cong councillor Ishrat Jahan seeks bail in Delhi riots case

PTI
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Former Congress Councillor Ishrat Jahan, arrested under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has moved a court here seeking bail in the north-east Delhi riots conspiracy case.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat will hear the arguments on the plea on July 12.

Advocate Pradeep Teotia along with lawyer and Ishrat's sister Sarver Jahan is representing her in the case.

She has been shown to be the leading female face of the protest. This is one of our grounds in the bail plea. We are fighting for justice and to

prove her innocence to the court as she has been falsely implicated, said Sarver Jahan.

In November last year, the court had denied interim bail to her considering the gravity of the offences including those lodged under UAPA, the stringent anti terror law.

She had sought bail citing the COVID-19 outbreak in Mandoli prison and other medical issues.

Earlier, Jahan was granted interim bail for 10 days to get married and was directed not to tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses. Jahan's marriage was fixed for June 12, 2020.

Besides Jahan, Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal

Tanha, JNU students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, former student leader Umar Khalid, Jamia Coordination Committee members Safoora Zargar, former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and several others have also been booked under the anti-terror law in the case.

Notably they are accused of being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 violence, which had left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

The Delhi High Court had recently granted bail to Tanha, Narwal, and Kalita in the case, saying the State blurred the line between the right to protest and terrorist activities in anxiety to suppress dissent.

The teachers were the nation builders and they did not let the studies of the students get affected by Covid pandemic by effectively running the 'Har Ghar Pathshala' programme.

"The teachers' have given their services in every sec-

tor during this testing time.

The state government is committed for their welfare

and they have been given various benefits from time to time," he added.

He assured them that all their genuine demands had been fulfilled and the go-

vernment was committed to redress their demands in the future as well.

PM fulfilled Mookerjee's dream by revoking J&K special status: Dhami

PTI
DEHRADUN, 6 JULY

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Tuesday said by abrogating Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has fulfilled Dr Mookerjee's dream, which was founded in 1980.

Paying tributes to Mookerjee on his birth anniversary by garlanding his statue at a park named after him here, Dhami described him as an academician and thinker who wanted total integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India and advocated the

abrogation of Article 370. "By abrogating Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has fulfilled Dr Mookerjee's dream," Dhami said in the presence of state BJP president Madan Kaushik, Cabinet Minister Ganesh Joshi and Dehradun Mayor Sunil Uniyal Gama.

Earlier, the chief minister also garlanded a picture of Mookerjee at the Bijapur Safe House.

Haryana Right to Service panel asks govt to notify HSVP's 53 services as 'essential'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 6 JULY

this time frame dates back to the era when services were provided manually. But now that services are being provided online, they should also be made practical.

Giving the example of acceptance of the building plan, Gupta said 30 days time limit has been notified for approval of the building plan but in the case of residential buildings only three days time limit is shown on the HSVP website.

The chief commissioner said the Commission would work to ensure that the services provided by various departments under the Right to Service Act are available to the general public within the stipulated time frame. Also, this time frame is made practical, he added.

Gupta said the number of services being provided under the Act will also be increased. Referring to the ambitious target of the Commission, he said that the number of services being provided under the Act will be increased from 551 to 1000 by the end of this year. The Commission would not only ensure timely service delivery but also make the public aware of the services so that they could know their rights and demands, said Gupta.

Pb Police arrest 2 Army personnel for spying, leaking info to Pak ISI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 6 JULY

70 grams heroin on 24 May, 2021.

He said that, during interrogation, Ranvir disclosed he got these documents from Sepoy Harpreet Singh, who was his friend, as they both belong to the same village.

"Ranvir motivated and lured Sepoy Harpreet Singh with financial benefits for sharing defence related classified documents, following which the latter induced his friend Sepoy Gurbhej into such anti-national spying activities," said the DGP.

Those arrested have been identified as Sepoy Harpreet Singh (23), who hails from village Cheechan in Amritsar and was posted in Anantnag. He joined the Indian Army in 2017 and belongs to 19 Rashtriya Rifles. Sepoy Gurbhej Singh (23), a native of village Punian in Tarn Taran, belongs to 18 Sikh Light Infantry and was working as a clerk in Kargil. He had joined the Indian Army in 2015.

Sharing details, Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Dinkar Gupta, said Jalandhar Rural Police led by SSP Navneet Singh, while investigating a drug case, recovered confidential and secret documents related to the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan.

Gupta said both the accused Army personnel had already shared photos of over 900 classified documents pertaining to defence of the country and national security to Ranvir Singh over a period of four months between February and May 2021 who had further passed them on to Pakistani Intelligence Officers.

The DGP revealed Ranvir further used to send these classified documents to either the Pakistan ISI operatives directly or via Gopi, who has been identified as the main drug smuggler from village Dauke in Amritsar having links with Pakistan based drug-smuggling syndicates and ISI officials, who invariably work in tandem with each other.

Following Ranvir's disclosures, the Police have also arrested Gopi, who has confessed to having transferred classified documents to Pakistan-based drug smuggler, one of whom has been identified as Kothar and an alleged Pak ISI operative identified as Sikander in lieu of supply of heroin and financial benefits, Gupta said adding that all these photographs were transmitted over encrypted Apps.

According to preliminary investigations, DGP Dinkar Gupta said that Harpreet Singh and Gurbhej Singh got monetary inducements for sharing confidential information. He said that Ranvir Singh gave money to Harpreet Singh, who further used to transfer it to Gurbhej's account.

BJP forced to change U'khand CM twice due to curse of priests: Temple body

PTI
UTTAKASHI, 6 JULY

The BJP had to replace its chief minister in Uttarakhand twice due to a "curse" of priests as it failed to dissolve the Devasthanam Board, said the Gangotri Mandir Samiti on Tuesday.

The joint secretary of the temple body, Rajesh Semwal, said the BJP won't be able to return to power in the state next year if it did not dissolve the board.

Constituted during the chief ministership of Triveni

asthanam Board soon, the curse of priests will not let the party form government in 2022," Semwal told reporters here. Earlier, soon after taking over, former chief minister Tirath Singh Rawat had announced during the Kumbh Mela that the temples will be removed from the board's control and the decision to create the panel will also be reconsidered.

But Rawat had to step down last week before he could keep his word. He was replaced by Pushkar Singh Dhami.

reviewed in the meeting. He said it has come to the notice of the Commission that at present 16 services have been notified by the HSVP. However, 53 services are shown on its website. The commission has recommended the government to notify all these 53 services.

Gupta said there is also a need to rationalise the time limit notified for services as

rage, powerhouse, surge shaft and 220 KV transmission line.

He stated that the project will further accelerate the union government's commitment of providing round the clock (RTC) energy to the nation and will also lead to the achievement of the shared vision of SJVN of becoming a 25,000 MW company by 2040.

"Timely completion of the project as well as the welfare of the employees is the hallmark of SJVN's commitment," he added.

He encouraged the employees to work with dedicated hard work and keep up the pace for completing the project within scheduled time and urged them

to strictly follow safety protocols and Covid appropriate behaviour.

He added that SJVN was constructing its own Transmission Line of about 37 kms for transmission of electricity generated from the project which was targeted to be completed by April 2022.

"Commissioning of the Project will benefit the area and particularly project affected families as they will be provided an amount equivalent to the cost of 100 units of electricity per month for 10 years." SJVN is also taking up various development works in the vicinity of the project under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)," he added.

SJVN completes Naitwar Mori project's tunnel excavation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 6 JULY

Satluj Jal Vidyal Nigam (SJVN) on Tuesday completed the excavation of 4.3-kilometer-long head race tunnel of 60 MW Naitwar Mori hydro power project in Uttarakhand.

Informing about this, SJVN chairman and managing director N L Sharma said the power project had the potential to generate 265.5 million units of electricity every year and Uttarakhand will get 12 per cent free power as royalty.

He also inspected project sites and reviewed various components of the project which included head race tunnel, bar-



paper.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS



BJP MP Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur takes part in a cleanliness drive on the birth anniversary of Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, in Bhopal, on Tuesday. ■ AGENCY

Left MPs' Lakshadweep entry permit plea denied: The Lakshadweep administration has rejected the application of eight Left MPs seeking entry permit to the islands, citing their visit will "certainly disturb" the calm and peaceful atmosphere there. ■ PTI

Reptiles: Sightings of reptiles have increased in the past couple of days in the human habitation in Agra and Mathura districts. A 5 foot-long Indian Rat snake, a Cobra and a monitor lizard, have been rescued in past one week from these districts. Experts accounts excessive heat as a major reason of these sightings in human habitations. ■ SNS



PDP, ANC to boycott Delimitation panel

All other J&K parties, civil society groups have accepted invitation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 6 JULY

Except the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) led by Mehbooba Mufti and the Awami National Conference (ANC), all other Kashmir-based political parties and civil society groups have accepted the invite of the Delimitation Commission headed by Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to meet the commission that is visiting Jammu and Kashmir for four days.

Interestingly, the National Conference whose president Farooq Abdullah has led the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) has decided to meet the commission whereas the PDP and the ANC that are constituents of the PAGD have announced boycott of the commission.

The PAGD had on Monday expressed disappointment at the Centre for not, so far, initiating any confidence-building measures in the Valley after the all-party meeting of J&K leaders chaired by PM Narendra Modi. The commission would recommend fresh constituencies in J&K.

The PDP on Tuesday wrote to Justice Desai informing her that the party would not

take part in the delimitation process as "there are apprehensions that the outcome is pre-planned, it will further result in political disempowerment of J&K's people and is aimed at realising the political vision of a particular party and was bound to further hurt interests of our people".

The exercise being undertaken by the commission was just a "formality", the PDP said and questioned its validity. The NC has set up a five-member team of Abdul Rahim Rather, Mohammad Shahi, Mian Altaf Ahmad, Nasir Aslam Wani and Sakina Ittoo, to meet the panel and put forth the party's viewpoint.

Sajad Lone-led People's Conference has nominated four party leaders, Altaf Bukhari's J&K Apni party has listed 5 leaders, BJP 4 and the Congress named 6 partymen to meet the commission in Srinagar. Leaders of the BSP, CPI and the CPI(M) will also meet delimitation panel.

The commission will hold a series of meetings with political parties, district election officers and other stakeholders during their visit beginning on Wednesday.

The Panthers Party has announced that its president Bhim Singh will lead the party delegation in Jammu. Another 5-member committee has been nominated for meeting the commission. The party will demand equal number of Assembly seats in the Jammu and Kashmir region.

Congress leaders Raman Bhatia, Yogen Sawhney, Ravinder Sharma and others have questioned delimitation on ten year-old census of 2011 and sought consideration of the existing population.

According to J&K Reorganisation Act, the Union Territory will add seven constituencies to the existing strength of 83 members in the Assembly before the elections are held.

Besides Justice Desai, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra and the J&K Election Commissioner are members of the commission. MPs of the National Conference and BJP are special invitees.

The NC had boycotted the first meeting of the commission in Delhi saying it had challenged the J&K Reorganisation Act before the Supreme Court.

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The Congress has always been taking the leading role in tackling the challenges posed before the country...

CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA
ADDRESSING A TWO-DAY TRAINING PROGRAMME OF PARTY WORKERS

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 07 JULY 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Security personnel stand guard as members of Delimitation Commission arrive to meet leaders of political parties, in Srinagar, Tuesday. ■ AGENCEZ

Delhi riots: Former Congress councillor Isha Jahan, arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has moved a court in New Delhi seeking bail in the north-east Delhi riots conspiracy case. The arguments on the plea will be heard on 12 July. She had sought bail citing Covid-19 outbreak in Mandoli prison and other medical issues. ■ PTI

Patole's phone-tapping allegation: Maharashtra home minister Dilip Walse Patil on Tuesday announced a high-level inquiry into the allegation of Congress MLA and state party president Nana Patole that his phone was tapped during the previous BJP-led state government. ■ PTI

Amarnath online services: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday launched various online services of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board to provide a personal experience to the devotees. The online 'prasad' booking service was also extended to the devotees through this initiative, a spokesman of the board added. ■ PTI

Caste certificate plea: The Gujarat High Court has issued summons to BJP MLA Nirmisa Suthar and the Election Commission of India on a petition filed by Congress's Suresh Katara who lost to Suthar, challenging her caste certificate submitted for the bypoll to Morva Hadaf constituency, which is reserved for the Scheduled Tribe candidates. ■ PTI

Over 3,000 affected by Black Fungus in TN: Minister

CHENNAI, 6 JULY

Tamil Nadu has reported 3,300 black fungus cases and 122 related deaths so far, state minister for medical and family welfare Ma Subramanian said on Tuesday and appealed to the people to seek medical advice on time for early treatment. Owing to the increase in the cases across the state, the government has established special wards to treat those infected with black fungus, also known as Mucormycosis, at the government medical college hospitals and district headquarters hospitals. The drugs required to treat the patients in private hospitals would be provided directly to them, like in the case of supply of the anti-viral drug Remdesivir, he added.

"We have established special wards with a total bed strength of 7,000, including 500 each in Chennai and Madurai. I appeal to the people to seek medical advice in the initial stage and get treated early," he said. ■ PTI

Chirag urges PM not to induct Paras in Cabinet as LJP member

Says if an expelled leader is included in the Union Cabinet from LJP quota, then he will move court

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 6 JULY



Mid reports of his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras getting an invite to join Prime Minister Narendra Modi Cabinet, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) MP Chirag Paswan today threatened to move the court if the former was made a minister from the LJP quota. He claimed Paras is no longer with the LJP and that he is the "legitimate" president of the party.

"Paras is no longer with the LJP since he has been expelled for anti-party activities. And, if an expelled leader is included in the Union cabinet from the LJP quota, then I will move the court. I am the national president of the LJP and it will be unfair to induct anyone as a minister from the LJP quota without my consent," Chirag told a Press conference here today.

He said he would have no objections if his uncle is made a minister as an independent or from the JD-U. He said Paras had already been expelled for his anti-party activities and his primary membership cancelled too. The Election Commission as well the PM Modi

party's national president by his uncle in a sudden coup last month.

Currently a bitter power tussle is going on between the two family members to claim as the real heir of late Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan with eyes on significant Paswan voters. Significantly, the LS speaker too

returned to New Delhi.

Scindia was scheduled to tour Indore, Ujjain and Dewas districts today but he cancelled his visit to Dewas. Instead, Scindia went from Indore to the Mahakal Temple at Ujjain to pay obeisance.

Scindia has been pitching for a Union Cabinet berth ever since he joined the BJP on 11 March 2020 after quitting the Congress along with 22 of his supporter Congress MLAs in Madhya Pradesh.

That had resulted in the fall of the 16-month-old Kamal Nath-led Congress government in MP on 20 March, paving the way for

party's national president by his uncle in a sudden coup last month.

Currently a bitter power tussle is going on between the two family members to claim as the real heir of late Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan with eyes on significant Paswan voters. Significantly, the LS speaker too

has recognised Paras as the LJP leader in the parliament.

PTI adds: Accusing Bihar CM Nitish Kumar of breaking his party, Chirag said: "During the Bihar elections, even before that, there was a constant attempt by Kumar to break our party.

Kumar made similar attempts even when my father was hospitalised.

leader Paras.

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RIGHT CALL



Nurses demonstrate during their indefinite strike demanding a hike in their salaries at Government Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal on Tuesday. ■ AGENCEZ

Ensure people in mental health homes are tested for Covid: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

who still need treatment. The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Gaurav Bansal that around 10,000 people who are fit to be discharged are forced to live in different mental hospitals across the country due to social stigma.

During the hearing, Additional Solicitor General Madhavi Divan, appearing for the Centre, said that there were some discrepancies in the data provided by states and they have pointed it out to them. She said the ministry is holding a virtual meet on 12 July and they would ensure compliance of an earlier order of the court for submitting a plan for rehabilitation of people who have been cured for mental illness but are still staying in the hospitals or mental asylums.

The top court also directed all states and Union Territories to extend all cooperation and participate in the meeting of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to be held on 12 July.

It asked states/UTs to remove the discrepancies in figures submitted about the people who have been cured but are still languishing in mental health institutions or

activist, particularly on the rights of indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups. While in Mumbai's Taloja Central Jail, his health deteriorated and he reportedly contracted Covid-19. His repeated applications for bail were rejected. He died as the Bombay High Court was considering an appeal against the rejection of his bail application, the statement noted.

It said High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and the UN's independent experts have repeatedly raised the cases of Father Stan and 15 other human rights defenders associated with the same events with India over the past three years and urged their release from pre-trial detention.

In light of the continued, severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is even

He was a long-standing

regulator of a number of countries during the vaccination of the population, including Argentina, Serbia, Bahrain, Hungary, Mexico and others, demonstrates that Sputnik V is one of the safest and most effective vaccines against coronavirus.

Sputnik V is based on a proven and well-studied platform of human adenoviral vectors and uses two different vectors for the two shots in a course of vaccination, providing immunity with a longer duration than vaccines using the same delivery mechanism for both shots.

As the pandemic is yet far from over and new, more dangerous variants of coronavirus are being detected in various regions of the world, RDIF is increasing capacities

for production of Sputnik V in India, one of the key hubs.

Agreement with Morepen Laboratories provides for a larger amount of Sputnik V to be available both for India and our partners globally to speed up the vaccination with one of the best vaccines in the world," Mr Kirill Dmitriev, CEO of the RDIF, said today in a press statement.

"We are delighted to partner with RDIF for the prestigious project of Sputnik V production in India. This would be our privilege to work jointly on expanding the production base in India. We take this partnership as starting point for long term relationship with RDIF and its partner companies as we look forward for many more areas of common interest. Morepen's commitment towards this project is step forward towards entry into biosimilars and other biological," said Sushil Suri, chairman cum managing director of the Morepen said in a press release issued today.

tions of family and kinship under law should recognise communities of people who may vary in their personal identities but live together in a shared experience of queerness and love to not participate in the compulsory heteronormative family.

The petition states that a marriage like that of Petitioners Nos. 1 and 2 (the couple), being validly registered under US law, must necessarily meet the requirements of the term 'registered' under Section 7A(1)(d) of the Citizenship Act.

It is asserted that concep-

Morepen labs in Himachal starts production of Sputnik V test batch

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 6 JULY



Delhi-based Morepen Laboratories, a leading pharma giant in the country, along with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) today announced the production of the test batch of the Russian Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine in an exclusive facility in Himachal Pradesh. The first batch will be shipped to the Gamaleya Research Institute under Russian health ministry for the quality control. RDIF and Morepen Laboratories signed a cooperation agreement in June 2021 and are actively implementing the technology transfer.

Sputnik V was granted an emergency use authorization in India on 12 April 2021. India is the leading production hub for Sputnik V. To date, Sputnik V has been registered in 67 countries globally with a total population of over 3.5 billion people. The data obtained by

regulators of a number of countries during the vaccination of the population, including Argentina, Serbia, Bahrain, Hungary, Mexico and others, demonstrates that Sputnik V is one of the safest and most effective vaccines against coronavirus.

Sputnik V is based on a proven and well-studied platform of human adenoviral vectors and uses two different vectors for the two shots in a course of vaccination, providing immunity with a longer duration than vaccines using the same delivery mechanism for both shots.

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MLAs suspended, BJP holds 'parallel session' outside Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 6 JULY

Legislators of the ruling alliance in Maharashtra objected to the BJP's move to organise a 'parallel session' and use loudspeakers in the state Legislative premises here on Tuesday, a day after 12 MLAs of the Opposition party were suspended for alleged misbehaviour.

Members of the Legislative Council asked how some former legislators could enter the Vidhan Bhavan premises amid Covid-related restrictions and sought a report on the mat-

ter. Later, security officials stopped the BJP members from using loudspeakers even as they shouted slogans against the state government. The 12 BJP MLAs were on Monday suspended from the Assembly for one year after the state government accused them of "misbehaving" with presiding officer Bhaskar Jadhav in the Speaker's chamber.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis termed the allegation as false and said Jadhav's account of the incident was "one-sided".

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

JNU invites application for MBA programme for the Academic session 2021-22 interested candidates may visit JNU website www.jnu.ac.in for details.

davp 21284/11/0002/2122

Proposal for Cloud based small enterprise accounting and pay roll management information system at IRCS.

Sealed quotations are invited on behalf of the Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi for "Cloud based small enterprise accounting and pay roll management information system at IRCS". Only the firms with relevant experience of providing such services should submit their quotes. The quotations addressed to Secretary General, Indian Red Cross Society at 1-Red Cross Road, New Delhi should be submitted in sealed cover by 27th July, 2021 up to 3.00 p.m. The Terms of Reference is available at <https://indianredcross.org/ircs/tenders>.

davp 17185/11/0002/2122

SEARCH FOR MISSING

Ankur
General public is hereby informed that a male namely Ankur, S/o: Anil Kumar, R/o: H.No. 2950, Gali No. 01, Dharmpura, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi has been missing from above mentioned address from 02.07.2021 since 06:45 AM. In this regard DD No. 19A dated 02.07.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Gandhi Nagar, Delhi. The description of missing man is as under:
Name: Ankur, Age: 29 Years (Approx), Height: 5'6" (Approx), Face: Oval, Built: Thin, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: White T-shirt, Black Half Pant and Sleepers, ID Mark: Burn Mark over right side of forehead.
If anyone has any information about this missing man please inform P.S. Gandhi Nagar, Delhi.
Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639
Police Station, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi
DP/488/SHD/2021 Ph: 011-22072761, 7065036024

LAW CENTRE-II
FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Advertisement for the multiple positions (Research Associate (1), Research Assistant (1) and project assistants (3))

Applications are invited for recruitment on following positions to work on the Research Project titled "Traditional wisdom and indigenous communities: A research study of Traditional Knowledge of tribal groups: A Special Focus on Aspirational Districts of Meghalaya, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand" sponsored by Ministry of Tribal Affairs (Supporting Projects of All-India or Inter-State nature), Govt. of India. The appointment will be purely on temporary basis initially for a period of one year. The appointment can be further extended based on the performance of the candidate. The appointment is co-terminus with the tenure of the project.

How to Apply
Interested candidates may apply through the following link before 21st July, 2021, 11:59. <https://forms.gle/kLJsUgjKUFjEBj16>

Note: Interviews of the shortlisted candidates will be held through online mode. Selection of the candidates will be held as per university rules through a project appointment committee.

Dr. Ashutosh Mishra (Project Investigator)

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DELHI (DRT 3)

4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993

In the matter of OA 452/2020
Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd.

Versus
Applicants
Defendants

To, 1- Mr. Dhan Singh & Others, D/W/S/O- Sh. Phool Singh, R/o H.No. 50, Govind Vihar, Phase-2, Govind Puram, NDRF Camp Road, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001, Also at: M/s Shiva Batteries, 134 A, Govind Vihar, Govind Puram, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001

2- Ms. Manju Singh W/o Mr. Dhan Singh, R/o H.No. 50, Govind Vihar, Phase-2, Govind Puram, NDRF Camp Road, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001, Also at: M/s Shiva Batteries, 134 A, Govind Vihar, Govind Puram, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001

3- Mrs. Shakuntala Rani W/o Dharmvir Singh, G 507, Govind Puram, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs.48,71,514.90/- (Rupees Forty Eight Lacs Seventy One Thousand Five Hundred Fourteen and Ninety Paise Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefor, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Lt. Registrar on 27.09.2021 at 10:30 AM.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-(a) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/ software. (b) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by registrar/Recovery Officer/I-and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in under the Public Notice Head. (c) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748469 Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on the 30th day of June, 2021.

By Order of this Tribunal,
Sd/- & Seal For Registrar

HC seeks Centre's response on plea to allow foreign-origin spouse to apply

Dealing with dissent

That the self-avowed 'party with a difference' no longer lives up to its moniker is a fact even BJP veterans concede. The so-called Congressisation of the BJP now appears, at least optically, to be complete. Insiders argue that this is an unfair characterisation of a political party which has its roots in a meritorious organisational framework despite the South Asian penchant for promoting kith and kin having surfaced in some measure within the fold but not, they underline, at the apex. This is, perhaps, a plausible argument to explain away the dissidence buffeting the BJP on an almost-daily basis in states going to the polls in 2022 and its implications for the party's prospects in the 2024 General Election; it is, however, not a sufficient one. A third chief minister in Uttarakhand in four months, and infighting in major states such as Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Punjab are clear signs of the irreconcilable ambitions of the many who have flocked to the BJP in recent years. But it would be unthinking for observers to put the dissent down only to recent entrants. The sense of entitlement which has crept into party loyalists who feel they should be rewarded for sticking with the party in its years in the wilderness has also surfaced across states. Even in relatively smaller states where elections are scheduled next year such as Goa, Manipur and Himachal Pradesh, party managers are having a tough time dousing the flames of dissidence to try and prevent, or limit, electoral setbacks. In fact, the systemic nature of the dissident problem for the BJP is evident from the fact that its troubles are not limited to poll-bound states. Karnataka, Assam, and Tripura too are on the boil. The first sign that the cumulative impact of these fissures is having a national impact ~ where, it should be iterated, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership remains unchallenged ~ would be if senior leaders thinking past 2024 dig their heels in against any move to pass the baton on to a favourite.

What is giving the BJP breathing space is the shambles the main opposition party finds itself in. It is proving to be tough for the Congress to balance the need to prevent dissidents from wrecking the party with ensuring Nehru-Gandhi family loyalists are rewarded. Ideological commitment is, of course, far more marked by its absence in the Congress than it is in the BJP; the power tussle in the Congress' Punjab unit serves to illustrate the point. The move to manage dissidence by accommodating leaders of the Group of 23 who have demanded organisational reform ~ possible Rajya Sabha berths for Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad and Mr Mukul Wasnik, and talk of either Mr Manish Tiwari or Mr Shashi Tharoor replacing Mr Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as party leader in the Lok Sabha ~ is further evidence of the party's willingness to hand out carrots to quell rebellion. The problem is the Congress, unlike the BJP, has no stick to wield when required.

Afghan scenario

Developments in Afghanistan once the withdrawal of US-Nato ground forces from the country is complete would need to be monitored in a granular manner by all stakeholders in the region. The portents do not look promising. While optimists in the strategic community feel it is not inconceivable that the structures which prop up the existing political dispensation could be preserved to a significant extent, such a scenario coming to pass requires a power-sharing deal sans excessive bloodshed between the Taliban and the government coming to fruition. It is, therefore, far more likely that a protracted and increasingly fragmented civil war is on the horizon. Indeed, various stakeholders have already begun factoring in possible Taliban gains on the ground and in political negotiations in their forecasts. The emerging consensus is that fighting will intensify as the last US troops leave Afghanistan, with the Taliban expected to mount a military offensive between late 2021 and early 2022; the more territory and resources it ends up controlling, the stronger its position would be in negotiations. The role of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) is, in this context, crucial ~ if it manages to retain the loyalty of its reasonably well-trained personnel and causes enough damage to the Taliban to give it pause for thought, serious intra-Afghan negotiations on power-sharing could begin sooner rather than later. It would also be the basis on which the continuation of the existing Afghan Constitution, which prescribes competitive elections and offers a Constitutional commitment to human, minority, and women's rights, could be negotiated from a position of relative strength. To enable this, however, there needs to be an element of cold-blooded tactical thinking by the Afghan government and the regional powers supporting it such as Russia, India, and, at a pinch, even China. Militarily, the priority for Kabul has to be to ensure that even when Western troops leave, the government retains services of military contractors operating in the country who have, like it or not, proven to be a bulwark against the Taliban. The nature of the arrangement between the regime and the contractors so that the latter stay on in the country need not be advertised. But Washington should be willing to facilitate such an arrangement and Afghanistan's key neighbours (sans Pakistan) equally willing to look the other way for it to work. Iran too ought to be on board ideally, but the newly-elected hardliner President Ebrahim Raisi will need to be worked on given Tehran's traditional antipathy towards accepting Western forces of any description in Muslim countries. Afghanistan's allies will also have to find the courage to ignore the hand-wringing and hysteria such a move will surely engender, if only in the interest of protecting core rights of the Afghan people. All this may sound rather distasteful and faintly medieval but that is precisely what dealing with the Taliban and its cohorts entails.

Problem of Plenty

Surging reserves can be a double-edged sword as there is a cost to holding them. High reserves will obviously lead to appreciation of the currency and rise in inflation, because capital inflows that result in high reserves are used to buy domestic currency, thereby expanding the domestic monetary base without a corresponding increase in production, and this causes a rise in inflation

For the week ended June 25, the Reserve Bank of India reported that India's foreign exchange reserves had surged to an all-time high of \$609 billion. The rise was caused by an increase in foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of forex reserves that include capital inflows, FDIs and external commercial borrowings, which rose to \$566 billion. The reserves also include gold (\$36 billion) and IMF's Special Drawing Rights or SDRs (\$1.5 billion), besides India's quota of contribution to the IMF (\$5 billion).

It was reported that the RBI was likely to engage external financial consultants to manage part of this reserve for improving yields at a time when global interest rates had hit a record low, with four major consulting firms reaching out to the RBI. The reserves, now grown to a fifth of the country's GDP, are equivalent to 18 months of imports. The crisis of 1991 with our reserves of \$1.2 billion worth only three weeks of imports is now history. The reserves now are the world's fourth largest, after China, Japan and Switzerland and just ahead of Russia's.

Our reserves to GDP ratio now is about 23 per cent, with 64 per cent of the reserves being held as treasury bills abroad, mainly the US; 28 per cent are deposited in foreign central banks and the rest are in foreign commercial banks. With interest rates in the USA and Eurozone falling to almost zero, the returns are hardly 1 per cent. Safeguarding reserves and using them to maximise returns is important for any central bank, and there is nothing unusual about appointing long-term asset managers for managing the FCAs.

Financial liberalisation attracts foreign capital and our reserves have been rising sharply ever since the rate of corporate taxation was reduced in September 2019, buttressed by a fall in crude price and reduction in our import bill. Buoyed by expectation of an economic turnaround soon, foreign investors have been acquiring stakes in Indian companies and Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) are investing in the Indian stock market in a big way, though these are highly volatile funds and can disappear as fast. Forex management includes intervention in the currency market to manage stability of the exchange rate and also to limit external vulnerabilities since liquidity of foreign currency can absorb shocks during times of crisis. High reserves provide market confidence about the country's ability to meet external liabilities. Reserves indeed provide a great cushion in crisis times. They had helped the RBI to deal with the 2008 meltdown, while inadequate market intervention before the 2013 taper tantrum had resulted in current account deficit soaring to nearly 7 per cent of the GDP.

Given the possibility of the US FED raising the interest rate to contain inflation in the near future, it might be the same situation as in 2013, which may trigger capital outflow from emerging economies, leading in turn to depreciation of their currencies as happened between May and September 2013, when the rupee had fallen sharply from Rs 56.5 to



Rs 62.8 a dollar.

Surging reserves can be a double-edged sword as there is a cost to holding them. High reserves will obviously lead to appreciation of the currency and rise in inflation, because capital inflows that result in high reserves are used to buy domestic currency, thereby expanding the domestic monetary base without a corresponding increase in production, and this causes a rise in inflation. The crisis of 1991 with our reserves of \$1.2 billion worth only three weeks of imports is now history. The reserves now are the world's fourth largest, after China, Japan and Switzerland and just ahead of Russia's.

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To determine the optimum level of reserves, economists use several indicators, but the most common is to use trade-based indicators in terms of number of months of essential imports. A cap of 12 months was suggested by the Argentine Finance Minister Pablo Guidotti, known as the Guidotti Rule widely appreciated by central bankers. Switzerland, Japan, Russia and China hold much higher reserves, equivalent respectively to import covers of 39 months, 22 months, 20 months and 16 months, as against India's 18 months.

A modified Guidotti-Gree-

nspan rule requires that a country's reserves should equal short-term external debt ~ enough to absorb any massive withdrawal of short-term foreign capital. While the short-term debt constituted 17.7 per cent of India's external debt, its ratio to forex reserves was only 17.5 per cent. Hence India has nearly five times the limit suggested by the Guidotti-Greenspan rule, and apparently nothing to worry. But studies show that the ratio of reserves to external debt is a predictor of external crisis. With India's external debt being equivalent to 94 per cent of its reserves, the situation is far from comfortable. Given our high reserves and steady macroeconomic fundamentals, India should try to attract more equity funds rather than debt funds from abroad.

To deal with the cost of high reserves and to curtail inflows, central banks often undertake "sterilisation" of capital flows by squeezing the excess liquidity out of the market through open market operations ~ i.e. by selling treasury bills and government bonds, or by encouraging private investments abroad, or by allowing foreigners to borrow from the domestic market. But sterilisation may also raise the domestic interest rates and thus stimulate even greater capital inflows, as experienced by China which has the largest forex reserves in the world exceeding \$3 trillion, about 60 per cent of which are in US dollar assets like treasury bills, etc.

Open market operations also have a fiscal cost leading to increase in debt and debt-servicing charges. The other options are capital controls, which the RBI used in 2013, forward exchange market interventions or levying interest equalization taxes on inflow or outflow of foreign capital in order to equalise the yields of domestic and foreign securities. Often countries use a combination of these strategies. Capital controls are generally

considered ineffective, and forward exchange market interventions require a developed forward exchange facility which we lack.

For utilising our reserves productively, one option is infrastructure financing which again carries the risk of inflation. Importing capital goods or technology for long-term capacity building in strategic sectors is a much better option for future growth. China has been using its reserves for financing the BRI projects abroad to extend its sphere of influence. India does not have that option, but it can always invest its reserves in Sovereign Wealth Funds through which assets can be acquired and managed abroad to generate wealth, given India's net international investment position ~ i.e. the excess of assets over liabilities owed to foreigners ~ is minus 12.9 per cent of GDP. One way to acquire productive foreign assets is through Sovereign Wealth Funds. Singapore's Temasek provides an interesting model for this, but it needs independent management, with the government kept at arm's length which is doubtful in the heavily bureaucratised system of Indian governance.

Excessive intervention in the currency market, even to check volatility of the currency, has its risks ~ only in April 2021, the US treasury department had put India on a watch-list of currency manipulators, the second time since the start of the pandemic. It is to be noted that among all the major dollar holding countries like China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Japan, only India has a current account deficit (despite a small surplus in FY21), which is being offset by an equivalent amount of capital inflow through FDIs and FPIs. There is a huge liquidity now available in the global banking system, and given India's macroeconomic stability, the continuous inflow of foreign capital is hardly surprising. Despite RBI's intervention, the rupee has already appreciated, and further appreciation may affect India's export competitiveness, which though does not depend solely on the exchange rate. Any excessive intervention in the currency market by the RBI also carries the risk of speculation and hence more volatility.

One unintended consequence of high reserves could be the dilution of the central bank's independence. With large reserves, the RBI's balance sheet which is measured in rupees gets inflated whenever the rupee falls, forcing it to pass on the surplus as dividend to the government. This could be a potential for friction between the government and the RBI as happened in the recent past, raising questions about the RBI's independence. It is imperative that the RBI has to work with the government, while maintaining a fine balance between its monetary policy independence and aligning its reserve management with the government's objectives of growth and fiscal policies. Reserve adequacy is to be determined in a nuanced manner, keeping in mind the risks in a world of heightened uncertainty, caused by intense fluctuations in the interest and exchange rates due to the large-scale flow of international capital which poses higher risks for reserve management.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Transparent agriculture

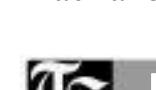
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Lê Minh Hoan talks to the Government Portal about the consumption of lychee and other agricultural products during the pandemic. The participation of ministries and sectors in the programme 'Promoting agricultural product consumption ~ sharing love to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic' has helped many agricultural products be consumed during the pandemic. What does this experience tell us about agricultural product consumption in the future? The example of promoting the consumption of Ba'c Giang lychee is a suggestion for us to think about the direction of development and consumption of agricultural products in the future. Promoting lychee consumption in Ba'c Giang is not a matter of how many tonnes of lychee can be consumed, but the important thing is what can be learned and what model brings sustainable value in the consumption of agricultural products. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will work with ministries, sectors, associations and organisations to review the programme, considering it a scenario for us to regularly respond to fluctuations in the market. Even if there is no market volatility, from this model, we will create a consumption smoothness with a new idea to activate a whole system to connect information and data from the supply sources to the consumers. Once there is transparent data information and multi-dimensional analysis information, with the participation of the producers in localities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the central system of distribution

Viet Nam News

of agricultural products, we will have a more transparent picture for producers to understand the market's needs in terms of output, standards and how to distribute and circulate products. Once consumers know the origin of agricultural products and trade centres know the raw material areas, we will not have to wait until harvest time to think about distribution. Such things can be prepared in advance.

Another thing is that we need to recalculate the seasonal calendar so as not to coincide with the countries we export to. There needs to be an information system map that can deal with seasonal calendars and provide farmers with production, output and supply information. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has also considered the problem of transforming the growth model in agriculture towards a circular economy adapted to climate change. Can you provide more information on this issue? Our agriculture is a high-yield, high-priced agriculture, but the cost is also very high. In doing business, we can't just depend on output or revenue, but must calculate profit.

Therefore, we must create new thinking by activating the whole system through the connection of supply and demand information. When we are connected and have transparent and multi-dimensional data, from domestic producers and distributors to management units, we will have a more transparent picture. It is necessary to shift the mindset from agricultural production to an agricultural economy. Current agricultural production value often grows due to increased productivity, which proves our production capacity is currently very good. However, does an increase in output mean an increase in value? Will farmers still have enough energy to reinvest and reproduce in the current increasing input situation? For example, the price of winter-spring rice is good, but in May, the price of rice tends to decrease.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Suffering of the unorganised

SIR, This is in response to your report, 'SC terms as unpardonable Centre's apathy over NDUW'. People working in the unorganized sector have constantly been ignored and neglected since pre-independence days. Maximum hypocrisy in this regard has been committed by the Left which ironically has claimed itself as a champion of labour class.

The Congress as the ruling party at the Centre for more than 60 years failed to amend labour laws and added to the agony of the labour class, particularly the unorganized sector. The Left though now irrelevant in West Bengal never fails to observe May Day and November Revolution to show solidarity

with the labour class. But these hypocrites during their 34 years' misrule in West Bengal never forgot to call monthly bandhs particularly on Fridays or Mondays so that the organized sector could be given an extended weekend. The mandarins of Alimuddin Street never spared a thou-

ght for the hawkers, small scale businessmen, self employed, employees of private sector, the rickshawallas, cobblers and other poor unorganized sector workers. On the other hand, Left cadres forcibly obstructed those who ventured out ignoring their bandh call. I have myself seen how these

cadres would deflate tyres. Even rickshaws were not spared. The same tradition continues today. The unorganized sector employees have no pay commissions, no fixed working hours, no timely salary, even no free ration during the pandemic unless they have ruling party affiliation. It is quite natural that



WELCOME STEP

SIR, While disposing of the petition filed by one Reepak Kansal seeking Rs 4 lakh ex-gratia in every Covid-19 case, the Supreme Court had delivered a well-balanced judgement by reiterating its earlier stand that the government was bound to pay ex-gratia to the next of kin of all those who died of Covid-19. The apex court had turned down the Centre's plea to declare Section 12 of the National Disaster Management Act as non-mandatory and absolve the government of any duty to pay ex-gratia to kin of Covid-19 victims. The apex Court was prudent enough to leave the quantum to be decided as per fresh guidelines to be framed by the authority formed under the Act. What is more praiseworthy is the fact that the apex court talked about maintaining a grievance redress mechanism to correct mistakes in death certificates. There should not be any ambiguity in mentioning the reason of death so as to ensure that the victim is not denied ex-gratia payment.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 1 July.

tor employees are getting salary either working from home or enjoying uninterrupted leave, the government has no idea how these workers of the unorganized sector are battling the pandemic every day.

Yours, etc., Purushottam Chatterjee, Kolkata, 30 June.



As I transition into the new role, I am looking forward to collaborating with the teams across various divisions to take the company to newer heights.

KOJI WADA
MANAGING DIRECTOR, FUJIFILM INDIA

THUMBNAILS

Info Edge purchase: Info Edge (India) on Tuesday said it will acquire Axilly Labs for about Rs 21 crore, a move that will help the Naukri.com parent company further consolidate its position in the online recruitment solutions segment. "... the board of directors of the company at its meeting held on 5 July 2021, approved acquisition of 100 per cent of the share capital on a fully diluted basis of Axilly Labs Pvt Ltd for an aggregate cash consideration of about Rs 21 crore," Info Edge (India) said.

PTI

Streak ropes in SRK: Streak, hair colour brand by Hygienic Research Institute, has partnered with actor Shah Rukh Khan to launch a new video campaign. Expressing his excitement about roping in SRK for the music video, Ashish K Chhabra, joint MD of the company, said: "At Streak, we are energised about our partnership and strive to deliver modern and quality hair solutions."

SNS

Investment in gold: Gilded, a new wealth-tech app offering fractional investment in certified Swiss gold, was launched on Tuesday. Gilded makes it easier for users to start small by purchasing as little as 1 gram of gold through the app. Gilded will offer its Indian customers savings of up to 7-10 per cent when compared to published Indian gold prices, by cutting out the middlemen and sourcing gold directly from Swiss refiners and storing it in Swiss vaults, said a Press release.

SNS

Haier refrigerators: Home appliances and consumer electronics maker Haier has unveiled 17 new variants of big top mounted refrigerators in the 3-star range. The new additions come with the all-new magic convertible feature that allows temperature to be controlled between a wide range of +7 C to -24 C to cater to the unique requirements of different food items, said the company.

SNS

GTP KCBPL: GTP Hathway's largest joint venture - GTP KCBPL, a leading cable & broadband services provider, has aired its first ever TVC with actor Boman Irani. GTP KCBPL has made its first TVC debut featuring brand ambassador Boman Irani, according to a Press release.

SNS

PNB Housing Finance-Carlyle: The Securities Appellate Tribunal will hear the case related to the PNB Housing Finance-Carlyle deal next Monday. The order in the matter was expected on 5 July. However, it was adjourned for 12 July. PNB Housing had filed an appeal before the SAT against the letter issued by markets regulator Sebi last month, requesting it not to go ahead with the proposal until due diligence was done.

PTI

Sumitomo to buy Fullerton Credit in \$2.5-billion deal

The former inks agreement with Singapore's Fullerton Financial Services to acquire the company

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 6 JULY

Diversified Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group today inked an agreement with Singapore-based Fullerton Financial Services Holdings to acquire its non-banking arm Fullerton India Credit Company in a reported \$2.5-billion deal.

Fullerton Financial Services is a fully-owned subsidiary of Singaporean investment giant Temasek Holdings.

The Japanese acquirer did not disclose the deal value in the public statement, but market sources said that Sumitomo will pay around \$2 billion for the 74.9 per cent stake it is buying in the first leg of the two-legged deal, and another \$500 million-plus for the remaining stake to take the ownership to 100 per cent.

At the current exchange rate, the deal value is about Rs 18,550 crore.

Fullerton India Credit Company is a non-banking lender



"We expect the deal to help strengthen our medium-term objective of widening our digital reach in Asia as envisaged in our three-year business plan beginning FY2020."

JUN OHTA
PRESIDENT & GROUP CEO
SUMITOMO MITSUI FINANCIAL GROUP

and is wholly owned by Fullerton Holdings.

It started India operations in 2007 and has since grown across 600 towns and over 58,000 villages with 629 branches and employs over 13,000 and serves 2.3 million retail and small business borrowers.

The two-legged deal involves Sumitomo buying 74.9 per cent in the Mumbai-based Fullerton India Credit Company - subject to regulatory approvals - and later the remaining stake, Sumitomo will eventually acquire

100 per cent of Fullerton Credit, the Japanese giant and Singaporean owners said in the statement.

This investment brings together our Asian push towards consumer and MSME lending with Fullerton's expertise in serving mass-market consumers and MSME customers in India.

"We expect the deal to help strengthen our medium-term objective of widening our digital reach in Asia as envisaged in our three-year business plan beginning FY2020," Jun Ohta, president & group chief executive of Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, was quoted as saying in the statement.

Currently, Sumitomo has a subsidiary in Indonesia and the Fullerton deal will help it widen the same into India and then the rest of Asia, which means that the company is on the lookout for more organic opportunities elsewhere in the continent.

Fullerton Financial Holdings, fully owned by Temasek, has 3.85 per cent of Fullerton Credit, while Angelica Investments, a fully-owned arm of

Fullerton Holding, owns the remaining 96.1 per cent.

Transaction reaffirms the strength of Fullerton's platform underpinned by high corporate governance, risk management, prudent liquidity management, and advanced analytics. Sumitomo and Fullerton will work together on the next leg of growth of Fullerton Credit, Ohta said. Post-deal, Fullerton India Home Finance, the housing finance arm, will continue to be wholly-owned by Fullerton Credit.

"With this deal, we intend to leverage our expertise in Japan as well as our capabilities in our franchises across key emerging Asian markets."

India is one of our focus markets due to its high growth potential and we want to build a deeper presence in the third-largest Asian economy. As a long-term investor, we believe Fullerton's innate strengths of multi-product focus, pan-India distribution, and strong management will enable us to build a comprehensive financial service offering in India, said Ohta.

Govt to get about ₹3,700 cr from NMDC stake sale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

over 10.55 crore shares on offer for institutional investors, they put in bids for over 22.55 crore shares or 2.14 times.

At the indicative price of Rs 166.46 a share, the bids put in by institutional investors is valued at over Rs 3,753 crore, as per NSE data.

"Offer for sale of govt shares in NMDC got great response on day one. Issue subscribed 2.13 times of base size at a clearing price above the floor price by non-retail investors. Govt has decided to exercise the green shoe option," department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) said.

The 7.49 per cent stake includes 4 per cent base issue size with an option to retain an additional subscription of 3.49 per cent.

In a regulatory filing, NMDC said it has decided to exercise the green-shoe option and retain the over-subscription.

The two-day OFS will open for subscription by retail investors on Wednesday. Over 2.19 crore shares would be offered to retail investors at a floor price of Rs 165 a piece.

On Tuesday, as against

The ministry added, the GST collection for June 2021 is related to the business transactions made during May 2021. During May 2021, most of the states/Union Territories were under either complete or partial lockdown due to Covid. The e-way bill data for the month of May 2021 showed that during the month, 3.99 crore e-way bills were generated as compared to 5.88 crore in the month of April 2021, down by more than 30 per cent.

However, with reduction in caseload and easing of lockdowns, the e-way bills generated for the month of June 2021 have risen to 5.5 crore which indicates recovery of trade and business.

"It is expected that while the GST revenues have dipped during the month of June, the revenues will see an increase again from July 2021 onwards," said the finance ministry.

Sebi defines 'same line of biz' under delisting rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

The Securities and Exchange Board of India today put in place a standard operating procedure for subsidiary companies planning to get delisted through a "scheme of arrangement" wherein the listed holding companies and the listed subsidiaries are in the same line of business.

In addition, at least 50 per cent of the net tangible assets of the listed holding company and the listed subsidiary must be invested in the same line of business. Further, principal economic activities of both firms need to be under the same group as per the National Industrial Classification (NIC) Code.

In case of change of name of the listed entities within the last one year, at least 50 per cent of the revenue, calculated on a restated and consolidated basis, for the preceding one full year has to be earned by it from the activity indicated by its new name.

The listed holding company and the listed subsidiary have to provide self-certification with respect to both the companies being in the same line of business.

Further, these need to be certified by the statutory auditor and Sebi-registered merchant banker.

With regard to eligibility, the regulator said shares of both companies (holding and subsidiary) will have to be listed for at least three years.

Sebi had in June notified the Delisting Regulations 2021 which provide for exemption from the reverse book building process for delisting of equity shares of a listed subsidiary (of a listed holding company), pursuant to a National Company Law Tribunal approved scheme of arrangement.

GST mop-up falls below ₹1 lakh cr

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

The goods and service tax (GST) collections for the month of June 2021 stood at Rs 92,849 crore. The collections fell below Rs 1 lakh crore mark for the first time in eight months.

The last time the collections slipped below Rs 1 lakh crore was in September last year, when the GST mop-up was Rs 95,480 crore.

The finance ministry, however, said GST revenues for the month of June 2021 are 2 per cent higher than Rs 90,917 crore collected in June 2020.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of June 2021 is Rs 92,849 crore of which CGST is Rs 16,424 crore, SGST is Rs 20,397, IGST is Rs 49,079 crore (including Rs. 25,762 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is Rs 6,949 crore (including Rs 809 crore collected on import of



goods)," reads the data released by the finance ministry.

The above figure, the ministry informed, includes GST collection from domestic transactions between 5 June and 5 July 2021 since taxpayers were given various relief measures in the form of waiver/reduction in interest on delayed return filing for 15 days for the

Rupee falls 24 paise to 74.55 vs US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 6 JULY

The Indian rupee weakened by 24 paise to close at 74.55 against the US dollar today as firmer American currency and rising crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 74.28 per dollar. It hovered in the range of 74.25 to 74.62 during the day before ending at 74.55 against the greenback.

The rupee depreciated against the US dollar today, amid importer demand for dollars following a sharp spike in crude oil prices, according to Sriram Iyer, senior research analyst at Reliance Securities.

The increase in oil prices could raise inflation expectations and widen India's

Pradhan chairs meeting on SAIL's mining expansion plan

NEW DELHI, 6 JULY

Union steel minister Dharmendra Pradhan today chaired a meeting on mining expansion plans of state-owned SAIL which looks to more than double its steel making capacity to 50 MTpa by 2030.

Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL), under the ministry of steel, is the country's largest steel making company with an annual capacity of over 21 million tons (MT). Expanding capacity would require an additional amount of raw materials.

"HSM@pradhanbjp along with Hon. MoS @fskulaste held a meeting with senior officials of @SteelMinIndia and @SAILsteel on the mining expansion plan of SAIL," ministry of steel said in a tweet.

This will also enhance availability of raw material in the open market and will have a positive bearing on raw material prices, the ministry said in another tweet. The officials have been advised to prepare a detailed road map on significantly ramping up production, evacuation and sale of dump and fines, it said.

In a separate tweet, the ministry of steel said: "HSM directed that @SAILsteel must leave no stone unturned to leverage this opportunity offered by mining policy reforms to sell dump and fines in the open market for its monetisation."

As per available information, during financial year 2019-20, the company's captive mines produced about 29.28 MT of iron ore - a key raw material used in production of steel. The steel maker has five integrated steel plants and over 20 captive mines spread across Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

Domestic air traffic back on growth trajectory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 6 JULY

Domestic air passenger traffic was back on the growth trajectory in June amid the falling number of Covid-19 cases in the country with around three million passengers flying on local routes in the previous month as against around two million in May, a report said.

Though there is some recovery observed in June, stress on demand continues, driven largely by the second wave of the pandemic, limiting travel to only necessary travel, credit rating agency Icra said in its report.

On a sequential basis, domestic passenger traffic was up 41.42 per cent in June

over May. The domestic passenger volume, however, rose by 51 per cent on a year-on-year basis, it stated.

June 2020 was the full month of operations after domestic commercial flights were recommenced on 25 May following a nearly two-month ban amid the nationwide lockdown in late-March last year.

It has now permitted increasing the capacity to 65 per cent with effect from 5 July which will remain applicable up to 31 July.

For June 2021, domestic passenger traffic stood at around 29.30 lakh, implying a sequential growth of around 41.42 per cent as compared with around 19.8 lakh in May 2021, Icra said in the report.



The airlines' capacity deployment in June, which was reduced to 50 per cent from 80 per cent earlier following a government order, was around 46 per cent higher at around 31,700 departures, than 21,696 departures in June 2020, it stated.

On a sequential basis, the number of departures in June were higher by around 14-15 per cent, as coronavirus infections demonstrated a downward trajectory, Icra added.

"For June 2021, the average daily departures were at around 1,100, significantly

higher than average daily departures of around 700 in June 2020, and higher than around 900 in May 2021, though remains significantly lower than around 2,000 in April 2021," said Kinjal Shah, vice-president and co-group head at Icra.

She added that the average number of passengers per flight during June 2021 was 94, higher as against an average of 77 passengers per flight in May, the ratings agency noted.

Though there was some recovery observed in June, there exists continued stress on demand, driven largely by the second wave of the pandemic, limiting travel to only necessary travel, she added.

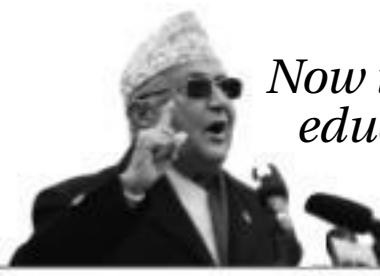
Shah, however, added that

both leisure and business travels have been curtailed due to various state-wide restrictions, despite the decline in infections, she added.

According to Icra, the government's recent announcement of a scheme providing financial support in the form of working capital/personal loans to around 10,700 recognised regional-level tourist guides is expected to provide the much-needed liquidity support to tourism and travel stakeholders (TTS).

This is a right step towards a demand push for the airlines sector, primarily directed at in-bound international travel.

However, the impact of the same is expected to be realised only once scheduled international operations are permitted by the government on a regular basis and the global fear psychosis related to travel to India subsides, Icra said.



Now increase the use of electricity, nationwide electrification, education and promote green development of Nepal.

NEPAL PRIME MINISTER KP SHARMA OLI

INAUGURATING UPPER TAMAKOSHI HYDROPOWER PROJECT

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 07 JULY 2021

09

Iran accuses Israel of June attack on civilian nuclear site

This comes days after the election victory of the country's hard-line judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, 6 JULY

Iran accused Israel on Tuesday of mounting a sabotage attack on a nuclear facility near Tehran last month, the country's state-run news agency reported as authorities acknowledged for the first time that the mysterious assault had caused structural damage to the site.

Authorities announced in late June that they had prevented saboteurs from attacking a site located in Karaj, a city about 40 km (25 miles) northwest of the Iranian capital. They gave no details about what the targeted building belonging to the Iran's Atomic Energy Agency contained, or how it was targeted.

The sudden admission came just days after the election victory of the country's hard-line judiciary chief,



Ebrahim Raisi, and followed a series of other attacks on Iran's nuclear programme, including the killing of a top nuclear scientist.

to explain a satellite image of the site widely circulated online that appeared to show the roof's abrupt removal following the reported attack.

Damage to equipment was not remarkable," Rabiei added, without elaborating.

The allegedly foiled attack last month came amid a flurry of diplomatic activity, as diplomats in Vienna struggle to resurrect Tehran's now-tattered 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which put curbs on its enrichment activities in return for relief

from US sanctions. Former President Donald Trump withdrew America from the landmark accord three years ago.

That prompted Iran to gradually abandon the deal's limits on uranium enrichment, setting off a series of tense incidents in the Mideast. To exert pressure on the West for sanctions relief, Iran is now enriching uranium to 60%, its highest ever levels, although still short of weapons grade 90%. Rabiei on Tuesday accused Israeli saboteurs of seeking to derail the nuclear negotiations in Vienna.

The Zionist regime carried out these actions to signal it can stop Iran and to say that there is no need to talk with Iran, he said. But whenever sabotage has happened, our strength has increased.

There was no immediate comment on the accusation from Israel, which has not claimed responsibility for any of the alleged attacks on Iran's

nuclear programme in recent months.

Little is known about the reported assault in Karaj, located near various industrial sites, including pharmaceutical production facilities where Iran has manufactured its domestic coronavirus vaccine. Social media in Iran had crackled with unconfirmed reports that an unmanned aerial drone had targeted the facility.

But the latest attack came at a sensitive time for Iran, in the midst of a political transition and on the precipice of a return to the historic nuclear deal.

The country has, meanwhile, struggled to stem what it describes as an Israeli-led campaign sabotage against its nuclear program. Earlier this year, Iran's underground Natanz nuclear facility experienced a mysterious blackout that damaged some of its centrifuges.

Taliban wins close consulates; Tajikistan



ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL, 6 JULY

strengthen its border with Afghanistan.

A surge of Taliban wins in northern Afghanistan has caused some countries to close their north Afghan consulates, while across the border in Tajikistan reservists are being called up to reinforce its southern border, according to officials and reports on Tuesday.

Nearly 1,000 Afghan soldiers have fled the Taliban advances by crossing the border into Tajikistan, according to reports from Tajikistan.

A statement on Monday from the Tajik government said President Emomali Rahmon has ordered the mobilization of 20,000 military reservists to

capital has been relatively peaceful.

The consulates of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, India and Pakistan have reduced their services, Balkh provincial governor's spokesman Munir Farhad said Tuesday. He said Turkey and Russia had closed their consulates and their diplomats had left the city.

The Tajik government said Afghan troops were being allowed to cross on humanitarian grounds but the border posts on the Tajik side were in control of Tajik forces and there was no fighting with Taliban from the Tajik side.

Moscow also weighed in on Monday with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying there is heightened concern over the fighting but Russia has no plans to send troops to assist its former republic.

The Taliban have made relentless territorial wins since mid-April, when President Joe Biden announced the last 2,500-3,500 U.S. soldiers and 7,000 allied NATO soldiers would leave Afghanistan.

Pak: 5 suspected militants shot in raid on hideout

QUETTA, 6 JULY

Security forces shot five suspected militants to death Monday during a raid on their hideout near Pakistan's southwestern city of Quetta, a spokesman for a counter-terrorism department said.

In a brief statement, it further said that there was an exchange of gunfire during the raid and officers seized weapons from the militant hideout after the successful operation.

The Pakistani Taliban also have a presence there. **PTI**

Six students among nine arrested in alleged Hong Kong bomb plot

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG, 6 JULY

down on dissent in the former British colony that has long enjoyed freedoms not seen on the Chinese mainland.

Hong Kong authorities have used the law, enacted in response to anti-government protests that rocked the city in 2019, to arrest many of the city's prominent activists. Others have fled abroad as a result.

Police said they were detained on suspicion of engaging in terrorist activity under a harsh national security law that Beijing imposed a year ago as part of a crack-

down on dissent in the former British colony that has long enjoyed freedoms not seen on the Chinese mainland.

Hong Kong authorities have used the law, enacted in response to anti-government protests that rocked the city in 2019, to arrest many of the city's prominent activists. Others have fled abroad as a result.

Police accused the group of planning to use the explosive to bomb courts, cross-harbor tunnels, railways and trash cans on the street to maximize damage caused to the society. Since the 2019 protests, Hong Kong police have held several people over bomb plots.

Myanmar military, police declare war on medics

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YANGON, 6 JULY

The clandestine clinic was under fire, and the medics inside were in tears. Hidden away in a Myanmar monastery, this safe haven had sprung up for those injured while protesting the military's overthrow of the government. But now security forces had discovered its location.

A bullet struck a young man in the throat as he defended the door, and the medical staff tried frantically to stop the hemorrhaging. The floor was slick with blood. In Myanmar, the military has declared war on health care and on doc-



tors themselves, who were early and fierce opponents of the takeover in February. Security forces are arresting, attacking and killing medical workers, dubbing them enemies of the state. With medics driven underground amid a global pandemic, the country's already fragile health-care system is crumbling.

relentless. Security forces have killed at least 890 people, including a 6-year-old girl they shot in the stomach, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which monitors arrests and deaths in Myanmar.

Around 5,100 people are in detention and thousands have been forcibly disappeared. The military, known as the Tatmadaw, and police have returned mutilated corpses to families as tools of terror. The military's attacks on medics have sparked particular outrage. It is now one of the most dangerous places on earth for healthcare workers, with 240 attacks this year.

Astronauts at China's new space station conducts first spacewalk

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
BEIJING, 6 JULY

Two Chinese astronauts have for the first time worked outside of the country's space station to install tools, the media reported. This is China's second spacewalk in the history of its space programme.

Liu Boming was first to exit the space station's Tianhe ("Harmony of the Heavens") core module, followed by Tang Hongbo about three hours later.

They worked for six-hour and 46-minute extravehicular activity (EVA) to install tools needed to support future activities at the space sta-

As Tokyo Olympics approach, virus worries rise in Japan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, 6 JULY

by the discovery of infections among the newly arrived team from Uganda, with positive tests for the highly contagious delta variant.

As cases grow in Tokyo, so have fears that the games will spread the virus. "We must stay on high alert," Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told reporters on July 1. Noting the rising caseloads, he said "having no spectators is a possibility." Seiko Hashimoto, president of the Tokyo organizing committee, agreed.

"It's not that we are determined to have spectators regardless of the situation," Hashimoto said Friday.

Organizers, the International Olympic Committee

and others are expected to meet this week to announce new restrictions because of the fast-changing coronavirus situation.

Amid the criticism, Suga went to Tokyo's Haneda international airport June 28 to inspect virus testing for arrivals. He vowed to ensure appropriate border controls as a

advisers, experts warned of the possibility of infections exploding during the games, projecting daily caseloads exceeding 1,000. They said that would severely strain health care systems. In a worst-case scenario, there could be thousands of infections a day, causing hospitals to overflow, they said.

Ryuji Wakita, director-general of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases and the head of a government Covid-19 advisory board, urged tighter border controls to detect and isolate infected arrivals at airports to prevent infections from spreading from Tokyo to the suburbs.

In a case that has shocked many in Japan, a member of

the Ugandan team tested positive upon arrival June 19 at Narita International Airport and was quarantined there.

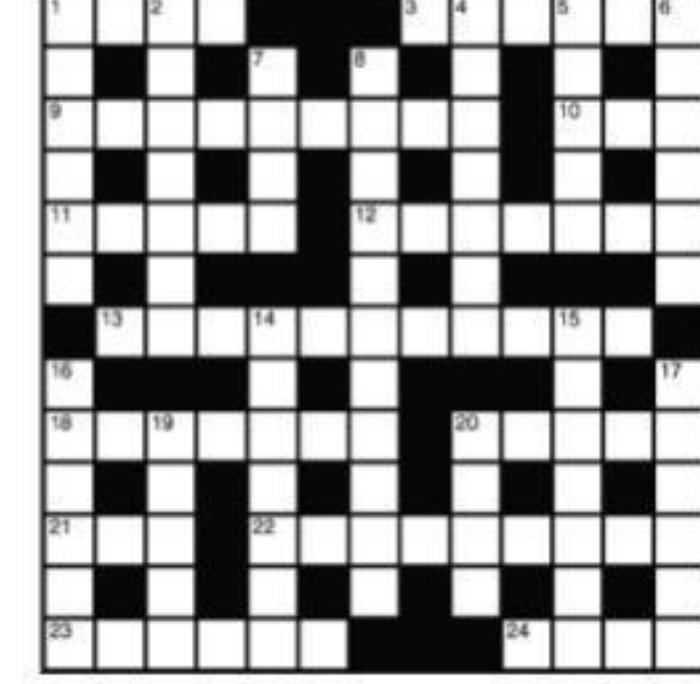
The rest of the nine-member team was allowed to travel more than 500 kilometers (300 miles) on a chartered bus to their pre-Olympics camp in the western prefecture of Osaka.

Days later, a second member of the team from East Africa tested positive for the virus, forcing seven town officials and drivers who had close contact with them to self-isolate.

The team itself is isolating at a hotel. Health officials said both infected Ugandans had the delta variant.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

CROSS	DOWN
1. Remain (4)	1. Char (6)
3. Contradict (6)	2. Item (7)
9. Bone-manipulator (9)	4. Level of command (7)
10. Colorant (3)	5. Alphabetical list (5)
11. Overconfident (5)	6. Stable (6)
12. At ease (7)	7. Snug (4)
13. Acceptable currency (5,6)	8. Coiffeur (11)
18. Unbeliever (7)	14. Belly (7)
20. Strong coffee (5)	15. Bewitch (7)
21. Pouch (3)	16. Fuel (6)
22. Wrongdoer (9)	17. Horse's gait (6)
23. Not manifest (6)	19. Aspect (5)
24. Agitate (4)	20. Additional (4)

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

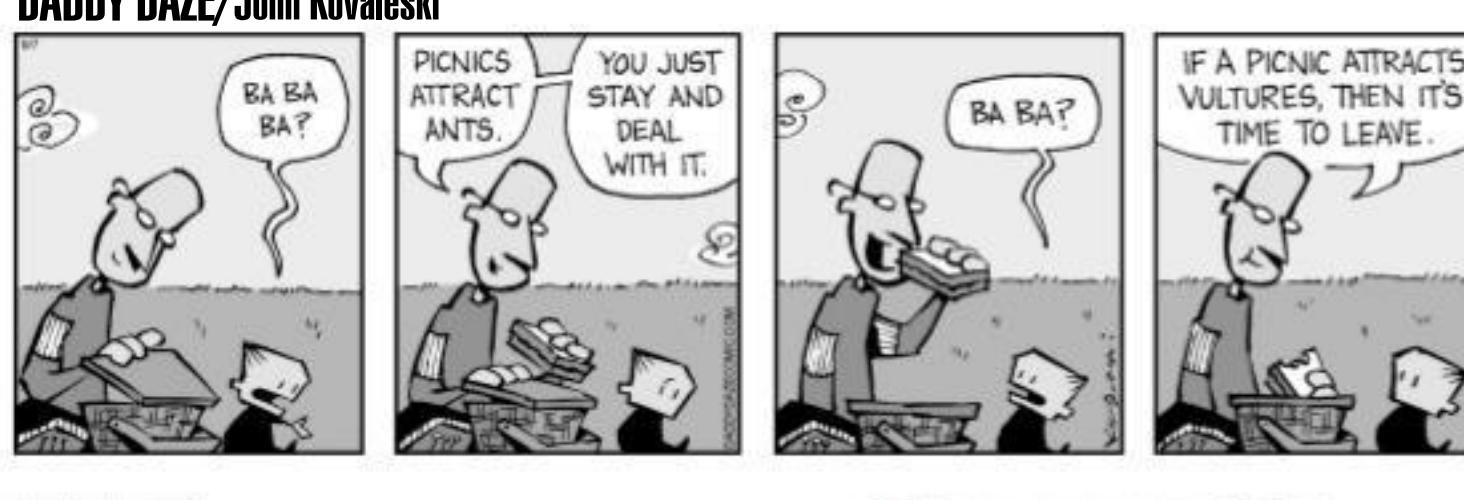
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi

City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383333,

tre 09910383333, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

port 011-25671580; Terminal I

23860626

Rajasthan Roadways

23864470

U.P. Roadways 23868709

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 018001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi

City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383333,

tre 09910383333, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

port 011-25671580; Terminal I

23860626

JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 018001803838



After Covid, UK government will focus on jobs, investment and innovation

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON

ON ENGLAND'S COVID-19 LOCKDOWN EASING ANNOUNCEMENT

World

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	30°C	28°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	17°C	9°C H
DUBAI	31°C	27°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C C H
NEW YORK	16°C	08°C C H
MOSCOW	15°C	05°C H

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

THUMBNAILS



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador hands the nation's flag to diving athlete Rommel Pacheco at a ceremony with Mexico's Olympic team in Mexico City on Monday. AP

Thailand seizes 315 kg heroin: Customs officials in Thailand made their biggest seizure of heroin this year, about 315 kilograms (700 pounds) worth up to 944 million baht (\$29 million), bringing the total confiscated so far this year to two tons, officials said Thursday. AP

Twitter restricts account of China mocker: A New Zealand academic says Twitter temporarily restricted her account after she mocked Chinese President Xi Jinping. University of Canterbury Professor Anne-Marie Brady is an expert on China's attempts to exert political influence around the world and has been an outspoken critic of its ruling Communist Party. AP

Stabbing at German Airport: Police in Germany said one person was injured during a stabbing at Duesseldorf Airport on Tuesday and officers were looking for the assailant, police said. The stabbing happened in or outside the departures area. The assailant fled. AP

Austria's ex-vice chancellor on trial for corruption charges

VIENNA, 6 JULY

The former Austrian vice chancellor and ex-leader of Austria's right-wing Freedom Party went on trial Tuesday for corruption charges at a Vienna court.

Heinz-Christian Strache is accused of trying to change laws in order to favour a private hospital in exchange for donations.

Prosecutors allege that Strache accepted a 10,000-euro (\$11,850) donation for his party in exchange for a legal amendment that would have benefitted the donor's private hospital by bringing it under a public funding umbrella.

The trial, which opened Tuesday, is expected to last for four days.

If convicted, Strache he could face a prison sentence ranging from 6 months to 5 years.

Strache's legal team announced that neither Strache nor his lawyers will give any public statements during the trial, local media reported.

Strache was involved in the fall of the previous Austrian government, a coalition of Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's conservative Austrian People's Party and the Freedom Party.

In May 2019, a video showing then-Freedom Party leader Strache offering favours to a purported Russian investor prompted Kurz to pull the plug on the national government.

Strache, who denied any wrongdoing, was later kicked out of the Freedom Party. AP

UK: No self-isolation for children, vaccinated after Covid contact

From 16th of August people in contact of a positive case will no longer have to self-isolate if fully vaccinated

AGENCIES

LONDON, 6 JULY

People who have been fully vaccinated and children will from 16 August no longer have to self-isolate after close contact with someone who tests positive for Covid-19, health minister Sajid Javid said on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson set out plans on Monday to end social and economic Covid-19 restrictions in England on 19 July, a test of whether a rapid vaccine rollout offers enough protection from the more infectious Delta variant. Javid said the success of the vaccine programme meant it was possible to go further in easing self-isolation rules for those who have received both shots.

"From the 16th of August ... anyone who's a close contact of a positive case will no longer have to self-isolate."



Commuters cross the London Bridge, amid the spread of COVID-19 at London in Britain on Tuesday. ■ AGENCIES

they have been fully vaccinated," Javid told parliament. "In line with the approach for adults, anyone under the age of 18 who is a close contact of a positive case will no longer have to self-isolate."

Only those contacts who themselves test positive will be required to self-isolate, he said.

Javid is betting that the vaccination programme, which has weakened the link

between infections and hospital admissions, can prevent the health service being overwhelmed by a new wave of Covid-19.

Javid, appointed late last month after Matt Hancock quit

as health minister, has underlined the importance other health issues, economic problems and education challenges that have built up during the pandemic.

"We can't live in a world where the only thing that we are thinking about is Covid - and not about all the other health problems, our economic problems, our education challenges," Javid told Sky News. "We have to make use of a vaccine that is thankfully working."

Critics say Javid and Javid have abandoned a pledge to take a cautious approach to lifting restrictions.

Javid said that by the time restrictions are lifted on July 19, there could be 50,000 Covid-19 cases a day—double current rates—and that cases "could go as high as 1,00,000."

Britain reported 27,334 new cases on Monday, and 64 per cent of the population have now had both vaccine doses.

European watchdog warns Hungary over possible rights abuses

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, 6 JULY

Recent laws introduced in Hungary regulating marriage and gender identity risk discriminating against LGBT people and should have been put to citizens for public consultation before they were passed, Europe's top human rights watchdog said Tuesday.

Among other things, the changes to the Hungarian Constitution in December 2020 altered the definition of families to exclude transgender and other LGBT individuals, defining the basis of the family as marriage and the parent-child relationship. It declared that the mother is a woman and the father is a man.

The commission said that clear criteria should be established to limit the new discretionary power of the minister to provide or refuse consent for adoptions by single parents.

This, it said, would help ensure the principle of non-discrimination, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Council of Europe isn't part of the European Union, but the opinions of the Venice Commission are taken into account by the EU's executive branch when it weighs whether to take action against any of bloc's 27 member countries over possible democratic backsliding.

The European Commission and the EU's parliament have already launched rule of law action against Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government. If four-fifths of Hungary's 26 EU partners agree there is a clear risk of a serious breach of the bloc's values, Budapest could lose its voting rights.

The EU's treaty says the bloc is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

CLIMATE ACTIVISTS



Climate activists wearing giant heads depicting EU leaders, from left to right, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, Dutch PM Mark Rutte and French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel demonstrate in front of the European Council building in Brussels on Tuesday. ■ AP

New US rules to protect animal farmers expected this week

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OMAHA (US), 6 JULY

The Biden administration plans to issue a new rule to protect the rights of farmers who raise cows, chickens and hogs against the country's largest meat processors as part of a plan to encourage more competition in the agriculture sector.

The new rule that will make it easier for farmers to sue companies they contract with over unfair, discriminatory or deceptive practices is one of several steps that the White House plans to announce in the next few days.

The US Department of Agriculture is also expected

to tighten the definition of what it means for meat to be labelled a Product of USA to exclude when animals are raised in other countries and simply processed in the United States.

Some farmer advocacy groups have pressed for these changes for several years but Congress and the meat processing industry have resisted the changes in the past.

A USDA official familiar with the White House's plan said an executive order is expected to be announced later this week that will clear the way for the new rules.

The regulation that will make it easier for farmers to bring complaints under the Packers and Stockyards Act is

similar to one the Trump administration killed four years ago. That rule was first proposed in 2010.

Currently, several court rulings have interpreted federal law as saying a farmer must prove a company's actions harm competition in the entire industry before a lawsuit can move forward. The new rule would ease that high burden of proof.

Chicken and pork producers, for example, must often enter long-term contracts with companies like Tyson Foods and Pilgrim's Pride that farmers allege lock them into deals that fix their compensation at unprofitably low levels and forces them deeply into debt.

Currently, companies are allowed to use that label any time meat is processed in the US.

Parts of missing Russian plane found; 28 aboard feared dead



The Antonov An-26 plane was on approach for a landing in bad weather when it missed a scheduled communication and disappeared from radar

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, 6 JULY

Wreckage from a plane carrying 28 people that went missing Tuesday was found a few miles from the airport in Russia's Far East where it was supposed to land, officials said, and everyone aboard was feared dead.

The Antonov An-26 plane was on approach for a landing in bad weather when it missed a scheduled communication and disappeared from radar.

The head of the local government in Palana, Olga Mokhireva, was among them, spokespeople of the Kamchatka government said.

However, no bodies have been found yet and there was no official confirmation of the reports.

A criminal investigation has been opened, as is typical.

A search and rescue mission is underway in the Palana area, but the work is hindered in a complex mountain terrain.

In 2012, an Antonov An-28 plane belonging to Kamchatka Aviation Enterprise crashed into a mountain while flying the same route as Tuesday's flight. A total of 14 people were on board and 10 of them were killed. Both pilots, who were among the dead, were found to have alcohol in their blood, Tass reported.

Belarus' presidential hopeful gets prison sentence: The highest court in Belarus convicted an aspiring rival to the nation's authoritarian president on corruption charges that he rejected as politically motivated and sentenced him Tuesday to 14 years in prison. Viktor Babariko, the head of a commercial bank owned by Russian natural gas company Gazprom, had hoped to challenge President Alexander Lukashenko last year, but he was arrested before the country's August 2020. On Tuesday, Belarus' Supreme Court convicted Babariko on charges of taking a bribe and money laundering and fined about \$57,000. AP

Tropical Storm Elsa gaining strength, lashing Florida Keys

ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT LAUDERDALE, 6 JULY

The weather was getting worse in southern Florida early Tuesday as Tropical Storm Elsa began lashing the Florida Keys, complicating the search for survivors in the condo collapse and prompting a hurricane watch for the peninsula's upper Gulf Coast.

In addition to damaging winds and heavy rains, the Miami-based National Hurricane Center warned of life-threatening storm surges, flooding and isolated tornadoes. A hurricane watch was issued for a long stretch of coastline, from Egmont Key at the mouth of Tampa Bay to the Steinhatchee River in Florida's Big Bend area.

Bands of rain were expected to reach Surfside on Florida's Atlantic coast, soaking the rubble of the Champlain Towers South, which collapsed June 24, killing at least 28 people and leaving 117 people missing. Search and rescue crews have worked through rain, but must pause when lightning threatens, and a garage area in the pancaked debris already filled with water on Monday, officials said.

Elsa's maximum sustained winds strengthened to 60 mph (95 kph) early Tuesday. A slow strengthening is forecast through Tuesday night and Elsa could be near hurricane strength before it makes landfall in Florida. Its core was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southwest of Key West, Florida, and

rain, but lightning from unrelated thunderstorms have forced them to pause at times, and a garage area in the rubble has filled with water, officials said.

The delays frustrated rescue crews, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said.

"Truly they live to save lives, and they've pushed ahead no matter what is thrown in their way," she said at an evening news conference. Still, crews got a big boost when the unstable remaining portion of the Champlain Towers South building came down Sunday.

Elsa's maximum sustained winds strengthened to 60 mph (95 kph) early Tuesday. A slow strengthening is forecast through Tuesday night and Elsa could be near hurricane strength before it makes landfall in Florida. Its core was about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southwest of Key West, Florida, and

South Florida Tuesday morning and across the upper peninsula later in the day.

Gov. Ron DeSantis expanded a state of emergency to cover a dozen counties where Elsa was expected to make a swift passage on Wednesday, and President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for the state ahead of the storm.

Forecasters predicted Elsa would hit coastal Georgia and South Carolina after Florida. Georgia's coast was under a tropical storm watch, as was the South Carolina coast from the Mouth of St. Marys River to South Santee River. Forecasters said tornadoes could strike in the eastern Carolinas and Virginia as Elsa moves north. The storm surge could reach five feet over normally dry land in the Tampa Bay area if Elsa passes at high tide, forecasters said. Commander Col. Ben Jonsson said only essential personnel were being allowed Tuesday morning on MacDill Air Force Base, which is located along the bay on the South Tampa peninsula. It made landfall in Cuba near Cienega de Zapata, a natural park with few inhabitants, and crossed the island just east of Havana.

270 miles (435 kilometers) south of Tampa. Three to 5 inches of rainfall with localized totals of up to 8 inches of rain are expected through Wednesday across the Keys and into southwest and western portions of the Florida Peninsula. The forecast included the possibility of tornadoes across

AGENCIES

PARIS, 6 JULY

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has published a gallery of grim portraits, those of 37 heads of state or government who crack down massively on press freedom. Some of these "predators of press freedom" have been operating for more than two decades while others have just joined the blacklist, which for the first time includes two women and a German predator.

Nineteen of these predators rule countries that are coloured red on the RSF's press freedom map, meaning their situation is classified as "bad" for journalism, and 16 rule countries coloured black, meaning the situation is "very bad."

"There are now 37 leaders from around the world in RSF's predators of press freedom gallery and no one could say this list is exhaustive," RSF secretary-general Christophe Deloire said. "Each of these predators has their own style. Some impose a reign of terror by issuing irrational and paranoid orders. Others adopt a carefully constructed strategy based on draconian laws. A major challenge now is for these predators to pay the highest possible price for their

oppressive behaviour. We must not let their methods become the new normal."

The most notable of the list's new entrants is undoubtedly Saudi Arabia's 35-year-old crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, who is the center of power in his hands. His repressive methods include spying and threats that have sometimes led to abduction, torture.

The first two women predators are both from Asia. One is Carrie Lam, who heads a government that was still democratic when she took over. The chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region since 2017, Lam has proved to be the puppet of Chinese President Xi Jinping, and now openly supports his predatory policies towards the media. They led to the closure of Hong Kong's leading independent newspaper, Apple Daily, on 24 June and the jailing of its founder, Jimmy Lai.

The other woman predator is Sheikh Hasina, the prime minister of Bangladesh since 2009. Her predatory exploits include the adoption of a digital security law in 2018 that has led to more than 70 journalists and bloggers being prosecuted.

Cases of brazen censorship are legion since Pakistan's Imran Khan became PM. Newspaper distribution has been interrupted, media outlets have been threatened with the withdrawal of advertising and TV channel signals have been jammed. Journalists who cross the red lines have been threatened, abducted and tortured.

Korea's Kim constantly tramples the media to impinge content that praises the party, the military and himself. As a result of the regime's desire for complete isolation from the world, journalists have been arrested, deported, sent to forced labour

Slowing down aging

A current piece of research examines afresh the question of choosing a short and healthy life over a longer one with health issues



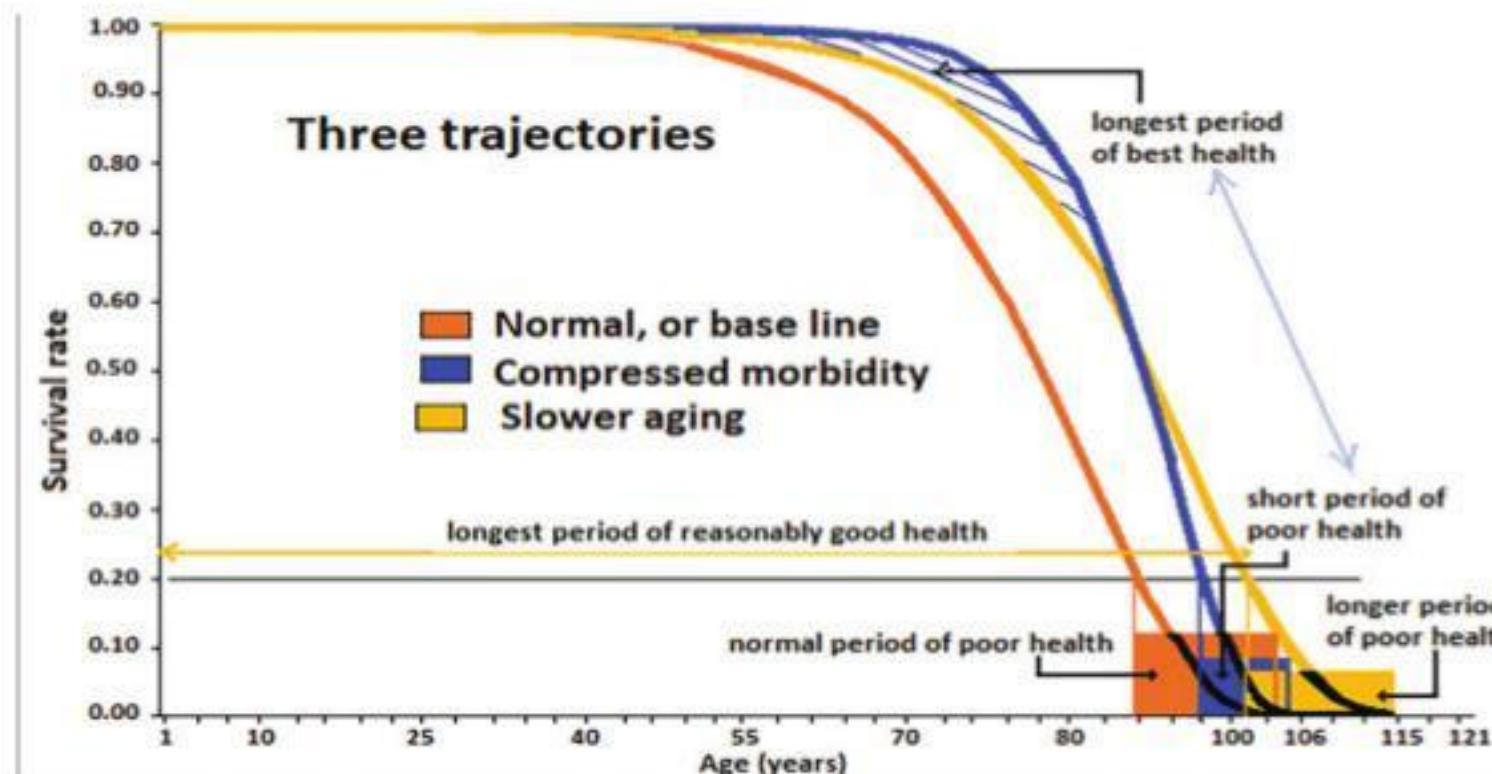
S ANANTHANARAYAN

The question of whether life has become more onerous in modern times is often raised. Has our capacity to perform declined since the time of our grandparents? What has been the price of the general increase of life expectancy that we have now?

Andrew J Scott, Martin Ellison and David A Sinclair, from the departments of economics at London Business School and the University of Oxford, and the Harvard Medical School, in a paper in the journal, *Nature Aging*, step away from subjective assessments to answer the question. Instead, they develop measures of the economic value of being alive and examine which public health strategy may be the best investment for society to make. The approach cuts through impressions of current crises, environment, personal stress, and simply estimates the total of the value that every individual places on life itself.

The question, in fact, of choosing a short and healthy life, over a longer one with health issues, has been examined many times in the past. The paper, in the course of presenting its results, draws on paradigms in literature and cinema, and uses them to represent alternative approaches to aging and mortality.

The first of these were the people of Luggnagg, called the Struldbrugg, in Jonathan Swift's satire *Gulliver's Travels*. The Struldbrugg grew old like the rest of us, but they could never die. As they would grow frailer with time, they were treated as legally dead when they were 80 years old and were not allowed to own property or participate in civic life. The second is Oscar Wilde's character, Dorian Gray, who was mortal, but did not age. In the novel, Dorian Gray had a portrait painted of himself as a young man, and it was the portrait that would age, and die, while the subject of the painting stayed young, till he died. The third case is Peter Pan, in J M Barrie's story of a boy who never grew old, and lived in Neverland, where time did not pass. And the fourth case is of Wolverine, the Marvel Comics superhero, who could regain youth by regenerating his



organs.

The context is the dramatic increase in life expectancy (LE), thanks to better nutrition and medical services, over the last 150 years. The paper, however, cites *The Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study*, 2019, which covered 204 countries, and finds that despite the increase in LE, the proportion of the lifetime spent in good health has not increased. While the years of poor health have increased, the paper notes, they were affected by chronic non-communicable diseases, which were the cause of 73.2 per cent of the deaths in the United States in 2016. Hence the emerging body of research that emphasises the idea of "healthy aging", the paper says.

What should be the way forward? Should the time of illness be compressed towards the end of life? How would it help to target aging itself, which could make life both healthier and longer? Or should the emphasis be on treating specific diseases? To find answers, the paper uses a technique, "the value of statistical life" methodology, which puts monetary value to the gains from longer life, better health and changes in the rate at which we age.

Long life or a healthy one?

"During the 20th century, life expectancy at birth for a representative American increased by roughly 30 years. In 1900, nearly 18 per cent of males born in the US died before their first birthday; today, cumulative mortality does not reach 18 per cent until age 62" – Kevin Murphy and Robert Topel

The change since 1900 may be similar in most countries. But raising life expectancy alone may not be the best way to promote well-being. Are the additional years spent in good health?

The methodology consists of estimating what a person may be "willing to pay (WTP)" for a year's increase in LE, at any stage of life. The WTP is related to the individual's lifetime expected utility. Increase of the lifetime implies

more time to enjoy goods, or the levels of consumption, and leisure that are available. And improvement in the quality of life would increase the utility of given amounts of goods and leisure.

The computations used are of the American population and levels of consumption and manner of living, which would certainly not hold for other parts of the world. The paper itself states that even for the American case, the assumptions of values could be questioned and modified. The objective, however, is not monetary evaluation, but a comparison of the value of different forms of health service interventions. In respect of the relative costs and benefits of alternatives, the differences in the values of inputs considered would affect each choice in the same way. The conclusions would hence continue to be valid.

The first case considered is of just extending life while health keeps failing as before. It is like the Struldbruggs, where the ratio of the "healthy LE" to the LE rapidly falls, a case of increasing population of the very old, all on life support. The next case is where morbidity, or serious illness is compressed to the last years, with LE unchanged. Here, the ratio of "healthy LE" to LE increases, and it would correspond to Dorian Gray. In the graph shown, this case is the blue line.

The next case is where aging itself is slowed down, with improvement in health as well as mortality. As aging can be considered a result of accumulating biological damage, deterioration of both health and mortality would be slowed down. The extreme is where aging totally stops, as in the case of Peter Pan. But even in a less extreme situation, unlike Struldbruggs or Dorian Gray, there is two-fold gain of utility, in health as well as in LE.

Calculations of the WTP, or the lifetime utility, over the lifetime, show that the value increases with age. This makes sense, as older persons have larger investments to enjoy and the value of a one-year increase in the LE would be more valuable to an older person. And in the case where aging has been slowed, higher the LE, greater that value of increase in health, and better the health, higher the value of increase in LE.

In the fourth case, Wolverine, it is considered that aging is as usual till some age, say 65, where there is a restoration of youth. Here, the WTP stays lower than Peter Pan till the restoration event. There is some progress in the regeneration of tissue, its effect on longevity is not clear, and it would increase WTP, but is still not a course of intervention to consider.

The next question examined is how does the WTP for slowing down aging compare with that of reduction of specific diseases. Here the paper looks at the benefits from a drug, metformin, prescribed for type 2 diabetes, and is said to protect against "several age-related diseases". Insofar as such protection (as also "education", which has wide, general health benefit) amounts to retarding aging, the study shows substantial benefits, "often matching or exceeding those from the complete eradication of cancer, dementia or cardiovascular diseases," the paper says.

"Delaying aging creates a virtuous circle, where slowing aging begets demand for further slowing of aging... this provides a distinctive dynamic to targeting aging compared to treatments aimed at specific diseases," the paper concludes. The conclusion could lead to economics-based public health policy.

We are now seeing much disparity in the health budgets of states, and large deficits in many developing countries. A formal assessment of what facilities need to be created for the greatest public health returns would optimise the use of scarce funds.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Go organic



Children who eat organically produced food have been linked with better cognitive development, a study has shown. Researchers in Spain examined levels of children's "fluid intelligence", which is the ability to solve reasoning problems and use "working memory" – the ability to retain new information while it is needed in the short term.

The team said their findings suggested healthier diets could have a direct impact on the development of children's brains. Lead author Jordi Júlvez, who worked alongside academics at Barcelona's Institute for Global Health, said, "Organic diets are richer than fast food diets in nutrients necessary for the brain, such as fatty acids, vitamins and antioxidants, which together may enhance cognitive function in childhood."

Scientists also said factors such as eating junk food, living in overcrowded houses and exposure to domestic tobacco smoke were associated with reduced levels of fluid intelligence. In addition, exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) indoors was associated with lower working memory scores.

The research team used data from 1,298 children aged six-11 years from six European countries – the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Greece, Lithuania and Norway. They examined 87 environmental factors the children were exposed to in utero, including air pollution, traffic, noise, various chemicals and lifestyle factors, and another 122 factors they were exposed to during childhood.

They said their aim was to analyse the influence these factors could have on the development and maturation of the human brain. "During childhood the brain is not yet fully developed for efficient defence against environmental chemicals and is particularly sensitive to toxicity, even at low levels that do not necessarily pose a risk to a healthy mature brain," the researchers said.

The authors said the research was unique as their method took into account the totality of exposures rather than focusing on a single one. They said this provided a better understanding of the complexity of multiple environmental exposures and their simultaneous effect on children's brain development.

They noted that there has previously been little research on the relationship between diet and cognitive function, but fast food intake has been associated with lower academic development success and some previous studies have also reported positive associations between organic diets and executive function scores. "In our study we found better scores in fluid intelligence and working memory with higher organic food intake and lower fast food intake," said Júlvez.

In contrast, exposure to tobacco smoke and indoor PM2.5 during childhood may negatively affect cognitive function by enhancing pro-inflammatory reactions in the brain, the researchers suggested. But Júlvez, cautioned that "the number of people living together in a home is often an indicator of the family's economic status, and that contexts of poverty favour less healthy lifestyles, which in turn may affect children's cognitive test scores".

The research is published in the journal *Environmental International*.

– The independent

Dinosaur decline

Dinosaurs may have been in decline millions of years before the meteor strike often attributed to their extinction, according to research published recently examining the role played by a changing climate.

The Chicxulub meteor, which slammed into what is now Mexico's Yucatan peninsula around 66 million years ago, is thought to have led to the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction event that killed off three-quarters of life on Earth – dinosaurs included.

Now new research suggests that a number of species of the terrible lizards may have been declining up to 10 million years before the meteor strike. Research published in the journal *Nature* examined data from 1,600 dinosaur remains found across the planet to model how common certain species of carnivorous and herbivorous dinosaurs were in the late Cretaceous.

The team found that species decline began around 76 million years ago.

– The straits times/ann

NOVEL SOLUTION

The mass testing challenge of Covid-19 could be addressed by a new tool that detects positive samples from waste

ANDY WARD & SIDDHARTH TALLUR

Since the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Health Organisation has said that testing, tracking and tracing is key to controlling and stopping outbreaks of the disease.

While populous, developing countries like India have made tremendous progress in increasing the number of diagnostic tests conducted daily (close to 1.9 million), the availability of testing infrastructure and scalable tools for early identification of disease outbreak is essential. An ability to monitor the spread of the virus and identify emerging hotspots is critical to stopping the disease from spiralling out of control.

Early detection facilitates actions such as localised containment zones and screening and quarantining of infected individuals without having to impose large-scale lockdowns, thus avoiding the negative economic impact and burden on the healthcare infrastructure.

What our waste can tell us

In India, therefore, there is a need for new, novel technologies that can bridge the gap between mass-human diagnostic testing and the required level of public health surveillance to detect and stop outbreaks of the virus.

One idea to bridge this gap is the monitoring of wastewater for the presence of nucleic acid from the virus. If Sars-CoV-2 nucleic acid is found in wastewater, then it would point to the presence of Covid-19 in a community and help to target the more limited resources of human diagnostic testing in areas where there is a known prevalence of the virus.

In other words, a single water sample could represent thousands of people, and through targeting would make each of the 1.9 million diagnostic tests count more.

There are other benefits too. For example,



inform downstream actions, such as laboratory-based analysis of the samples for Ribonucleic acid, or RNA, concentration or sequencing for detection of variants.

Importantly, the electrochemical sensor development was started using limited resources that were available within India, during the lockdown in May 2020. For example, the sensor is based upon the ubiquitous printed circuits used in the electronics industry, and a commonly available dye called "methylene blue".

Sourcing locally was a necessity last year because access to reagents was limited as nations across the globe scrambled for access to resources from laboratory plastic to personal protective equipment. It also underlines, however, the robustness of our approach, and the ability to create Made-in-India solutions is important in terms of the cost and sustainability of the technology developed.

Cost-effective screening

Our contribution to this challenge has been the creation of a tool that can be used, in conjunction with "old-fashioned" polymerase chain reaction to rapidly detect the presence of Sars-CoV-2 in wastewater.

The system we developed uses an electrochemical sensor, in combination with a low-cost portable PCR machine, to identify the presence of positive samples without the need for complex laboratory infrastructure.

Because this system could be used at low cost, it has the potential to be used as a first-line screening tool for the identification of Sars-CoV-2 in wastewater and therefore, help to

The two-way exchange of knowledge from this collaboration enabled the technology to progress at an unprecedented pace. The team at the University of Strathclyde helped with providing hardware and on-boarding of research staff to accelerate the initial learning and development of sensor testing protocols.

While the workflow developed by Strathclyde could not be adopted at IIT-Bombay due to lack of access to necessary chemicals in the early stages of the project, regular discussions and reviews helped the team at IIT-Bombay to plan the project efficiently, and independently develop and implement novel solutions despite the constraints.

It has allowed us to develop low-cost sensor hardware and an uncomplicated workflow that allows the technologies to be implemented in other resource-constrained nations to deliver real impact that will help to end the current pandemic.

The modular nature of our solution also holds promise towards building systems that will help to ensure that sustainable surveillance systems are primed for the next global infectious disease outbreak.

Andy Ward is chancellor's fellow, civil and environmental engineering, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom; and Siddharth Tallur is associate professor, electrical engineering, IIT-Bombay



Kylian Mbappe (in photo, left) needs to leave Paris St Germain if he is to make an impact on the global stage like Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, Nicolas Anelka has said. Mbappe, who scored 42 goals for PSG last season, has a contract at the club until June 2022 but has been linked with a move to Real Madrid.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Anand's return: After nearly 15 months, Viswanathan Anand will play his first on-board game at the Croatia Grand Chess Tour Rapid and Blitz tournament in Zagreb. It will feature 10 elite Grandmasters competing over nine rounds of rapid and 18 rounds of blitz chess.

Odisha's wish: The Odisha government has recommended para-badminton player Pramod Bhagat for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award for 2021. The state also recommended the vice-captain of the Indian women's hockey team, Deep Grace Ekka, for the Arjuna Award.

Asian Cup: Next year's women's Asian Cup will be held in Mumbai and Pune after the Asian Football Confederation dropped Bhubaneswar and Ahmedabad to minimise the travelling time for participants and ensure an "optimum protective environment."

Athletics team: Javelin-thower Neeraj Chopra was prominent in a 26-member squad announced by the Athletics Federation of India for the Tokyo Olympics to be held from 23 July to 8 August. The squad are well-prepared, physically and emotionally, it was said.

Online training: The Karate Do Association of Bengal has claimed success in holding online tutorial sessions for its players and coaches through training webinars with world-class foreign exponents of the craft and their teachers also participating in these.

Neymar's optimistic: Brazil forward Neymar said he hoped Argentina would be their opponents in the Copa America final and had no doubts that the hosts would come out on top against their fierce rivals. Brazil beat Peru 1-0 in Monday's semi-final in Rio de Janeiro.

Kahn's confident: Bayern Munich can defend their 2020 Champions League title, said former German footballer Oliver Kahn after taking office as theirs chief executive officer on Monday. The 51-year-old successor of Karl-Heinz Rummenigge exuded optimism.

Sudhanshu Mittal re-elected as KKFI president: The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) was held on Monday here to elect the new Office Bearers of KKFI for the term 2021-2025. Incumbent president Sudhanshu Mittal was unanimously re-elected for a fresh tenure as per the election result announced by returning officer of the procedure Justice Rajesh Tandon, Former Judge. Mahender Singh Tyagi was re-elected as the general secretary while Surendra Kumar Bhutiani was elected as the treasurer.

Paqueta strike sends Brazil into final

AGENCIES

RIO DE JANEIRO, 6 JULY

A first-half strike from Lyon midfielder Lucas Paqueta (in photo) fired Brazil to a 1-0 win over Peru as the Copa America hosts booked a place in the final at the Maracana

Stadium. Just as he had done in Brazil's 1-0 defeat of Chile in the quarter-final, Paqueta showed predatory instincts by combining with Neymar to deadly effect on Monday.

The latter skipped around two defenders before squaring the ball for the former Flamengo playmaker, who coolly sent a first-time shot past Peru's goalkeeper Pedro Gallese.

"Paqueta is a great player and improving with every game for the national team," Neymar said after the match. "He had a great season for his club and now he's showing that he can be important for Brazil too." Peru enjoyed brief periods of dominance in the second half but were unable to break down a Brazil backline that has conceded just twice in six games this tournament.

The result at Rio's Olympic stadium means Brazil will meet either Argentina or Colombia -- who will clash in the other semi-final -- in the decider at Brazilian football's spiritual home on 10 July. Brazil are now unbeaten in their past 13 outings and will be favourites to lift their second Copa Amer-



ica trophy on home soil in three years.

Brazil midfielder Casemiro said a gruelling schedule was beginning to take its toll on the Selecao, who have played eight matches -- including two World Cup qualifiers -- in the past month. "We know that as footballers we are privileged but I haven't seen my family in around 35 days," the Real Madrid player said.

Messi praised

Argentina midfielder Rodrigo De Paul has gushed over Lionel Messi's "genius" as the Albiceleste seek their first major tro-

phy in almost three decades at the Copa America in Brazil. Messi has been the tournament's outstanding player, scoring four goals and providing four assists in Argentina's march to the semi-finals.

"(He is) one step ahead of all of us," De Paul told a virtual Press conference yesterday. "For the first goal against Ecuador (in the 3 July quarter-final), for example, he saw me alone and luckily, it helped us to win." Argentina's last major tournament triumph came at the 1993 Copa America in Ecuador, where Gabriel Batista fired them to a 2-1 win over Mexico in the final.

Argentina have come agonisingly close to ending the drought in the past decade, finishing runners-up at the 2014 World Cup and the 2015 and 2016 editions of the Copa America.

"We are motivated and we know how difficult the game against Colombia is going to be, but we feel prepared and very excited to face it," said De Paul. "This is a long road in which we must face great teams, but we are willing to fight until the last day to reach the final. We want nothing more than to bring joy to all Argentines," the Udinese player added.

Full-house crowds for Test matches

AGENCIES

LONDON, 6 JULY

The forthcoming Test series between India and England is set to be played in front of capacity crowds after the UK government announced the lifting of all Covid-19 restrictions on gatherings of people.

British prime minister Boris Johnson yesterday confirmed that all lockdown restrictions, including the mandatory wearing of face masks and the limits on crowds at indoor, outdoor and sports events, would end on 19 July. "We will remove all limits," Johnson was quoted as saying by Sky Sports. "We will allow all businesses to reopen, including nightclubs. We will lift the limits on the number of visitors to care homes and the number of people attending concerts, theatres and sport events," he said, adding: "We will move away from legal restrictions and allow people to make their own informed decisions about how to manage the virus." The five-Test series between India and England starts at Nottingham on 4 August. Currently, the Indian players are on a break and will reassemble on 14 July. The World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand was played at Southampton last month with the attendance limit put at 4,000.



Anderson landmark

England pace bowler James Anderson (in photo) reached 1,000 first-class wickets today as he picked up seven for 19 for Lancashire against Kent in a County Championship match. The 38-year-old, who has taken 617 Test wickets and is just three wickets short of surpassing Anil Kumble (619) and becoming the third highest wicket-taker in Tests behind Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Australian Shane Warne (708), helped his team bundle out Kent for 74 in 26.2 overs.

Last month, Anderson went past former England captain Alastair Cook as the most experienced Test cricketer for England. He has now played 162 Test matches. England will be relying on his experience in the Test series against India.

Positive tests

LONDON, 6 JULY

Three cricketers and four staff members have tested positive for the coronavirus, the England and Wales Cricket Board said today. The tests were carried out yesterday. The remaining members of the squad have been deemed close contacts and will isolate themselves apart from those who are infected, the ECB said. The development coincided with Pakistan preparing for their England tour, during which they would play three One-Day Internationals and as many Twenty20 internationals. "The ECB has confirmed the ODIs and the T20s against Pakistan will go ahead. Ben Stokes will return to England duties and captain the squad," it was said. ECB chief Tom Harrison said the board was aware that the emergence of the Delta variant, along with the move away from the stringent enforcement of bio-secure environments, could increase the chances of an outbreak.

"We made a strategic choice to try to adapt protocols, in order to support the overall well-being of our players and management staff," he said. AGENCIES

Laxman wants two pacemen, two spinners

AGENCIES

MUMBAI/COLOMBO, 6 JULY

VVS Laxman said he would suggest two pace bowlers and two spinners in the One-Day Internationals series India would play against Sri Lanka from 13 July in Colombo. Shikhar Dhawan's 20-member Indian squad are in the island nation to play three ODIs and an equal number of Twenty20s beginning 21 July.

"I will have two fast bowlers in Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Deepak Chahar and the two spinners will be Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal," said Laxman during a discussion on television. Laxman said that India should open with skipper Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw, while Suryakumar Yadav should be the No 3 batsman.

"It's a very detailed squad, a 20-man squad. But I will go with Shikhar Dhawan, Prithvi Shaw, the No 3 batsman would be Suryakumar Yadav. At No 4 will be Sanju Samson in ODIs, No 5 will be Manish Pandey, at No 6, I will go with Hardik Pandya, No 7 Krunal Pandya," said Laxman.

Ruturaj Gaikwad, Devdutt Padikkal, Nitish Rana and Ishan Kishan did not make Laxman's playing XI, though former all-rounder Irfan Pathan said he would pick Rana ahead of Krunal Pandya. "Only one change I would like, Hardik

Pandya is bowling, so I will have him as an all-rounder, one more batsman I will add -- Nitish Rana in place of Krunal. I will like to see Hardik Pandya bowl quite a few overs," said Pathan.

Ranatunga's motive

In Lahore, Danish Kaneria has said Sri Lankan great Arjuna Ranatunga's statement that India has insulted the island nation by sending their second-string team for a white-ball series is a ploy to hog the "limelight." The 1996 World Cup-winning captain said earlier this month that, "The Indian squad that visit Sri Lanka are not their best; they are a second-level team. Didn't our sports minister or cricket administrators know this? Sri Lanka (cricket) may have gone down, but as a cricketing nation we have an identity, we have dignity, we should not be sending our best to play an Indian B team." Kaneria said.

Ranatunga says India should not have sent their B team. I don't know what he is talking about. The 1996 World Cup-winning captain is a big name in the world cricket. I suppose he gave this statement to be in the limelight. India have about 50-60 cricketers who can make two international teams. India have sent the likes



of Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Shikhar Dhawan, Yuzvendra Chahal, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya and several others... they represent India consistently. Very sorry to hear Ranatunga give such a statement. I suppose he has been told by Sri Lanka Cricket not to issue such statements."

Intra-squad game

The Indian team, touring Sri Lanka, played an intra-squad T20 match in Colombo yesterday, with Bhuvneshwar Kumar's team beating Shikhar Dhawan's side.

Official banned

Sri Lanka's cricket reputation suffered a double blow yesterday when an official was banned for seven years for trying to bribe the country's sport minister, while a top player was fined for giving

interviews criticising the national board.

The International Cricket Council said it had banned former Sri Lanka Cricket performance analyst, Sanath Jayasundara, for offering money to sports minister Harin Fernando to influence an international match.

Jayasundara is the latest in a series of players and officials to be banned for corruption.

Jayasundara's attempt to bribe a minister is a grave transgression while the efforts to cover up his tracks and the lack of remorse are hugely disappointing," ICC anti-corruption chief Alex Marshall said in a statement. "We won't tolerate corrupt conduct in our sport and my team will be relentless in preventing such behaviour," he warned.

Jayasundara was found guilty of charges of offering a bribe "improperly" to influence the unnamed international game and of delaying the investigation into the incident. The bribe is reported to have been offered in 2018 when Fernando said that the ICC considered Sri Lanka to be the "worst country for cricket corruption." Earlier, T20 player Bhanuka Rajapaksa was fined \$5,000 and handed a suspended ban for giving interviews criticising the national board.

Once a Ranji player, Bhagat now sells 'dal puri' for survival

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
SILCHAR (ASSAM), 6 JULY



Prakash Bhagat (in photo), once a leading cricketer from the state who played in different national and state-level tournaments, now runs a food stall in southern Assam's Silchar to manage two square meals for his poverty-stricken family. The 34-years old left-arm slow bowler and right-handed batsman sells 'dal puri' at a roadside stall at Itkholia within the Silchar Municipal Board, for the survival of his six-member family.

Bhagat said that as a member of the Assam team, he had played Ranji Trophy matches in 2009/10 and 2010/11 against the Railways and Jammu and Kashmir teams. The former cricketer had also taken a month-long training in the Bengaluru-based National Cricket Academy (NCA) in 2003. "During my NCA train-

ing, I bowled to Sourav Ganguly as the New Zealand-bound Indian team was practicing in the academy. That time, I got a chance to meet Sachin Tendulkar, Zaheer Khan, Harbhajan Singh, Virender Sehwag and Sourav Ganguly," said Bhagat.

"Had to leave cricket in 2011 after my father (Gajadhar Bhagat) died following a massive cardiac attack at the age of 65.

"My father and elder brother, Deepak Bhagat, used to sell 'chaat food' in a hand-driven

cart. After my father's death, my elder brother also remains ill," Bhagat told IANS over phone.

Deepak is married and has two small children. Bhagat said that if the Assam Cricket Association (ACA), or any other organisation, supports him financially, he could resume his cricketing career. "After I left playing cricket to support my family, I joined a private mobile company but due to Covid-induced lockdown, lost my job last year," said Bhagat. Bhagat's cricketing career started in 1999 at the Silchar District Sports Association's Under-13 tournament. He played several tournaments in the Under-16, Under-19 and Under-23 categories at the state and national level. "My consistent performances in different lower-level matches helped me find a place in Assam's Ranji Trophy team. I was in the squad for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy as well," he added.

Not just another Manic Monday: Federer, Djokovic, Kerber win

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WIMBLEDON, 6 JULY

Excitement and adoration greeted every point claimed by Roger Federer (in photo) -- "aaahs" and applause for a sliced backhand return or a 94 mph sliding wide ace, an unreachable drop volley or a forehand flicked suddenly and ferociously.

It all got to be too much for his opponent at the All England Club, No 23 seed Lorenzo Sonego. So in the latter stages of this 7-5, 6-4, 6-2 loss to the eighth champion, Sonego would win a point and mark the occasion by waving his arms to ask the crowd for some love, as if to say, "Hey, I'm here, too, OK?"

The match was the last at Centre Court on what was Wimbledon's last Manic Monday. As of next year, no longer will all 16 women's and men's fourth-round singles matches be scheduled on one day, a tradition vanishing along with that of a Middle Sunday without any play. And yet, amid all



the chaos of a packed schedule, one could be forgiven for imagining Federer held the stage to himself.

He's coming off a pair of knee operations last season and he's participating in a Grand Slam tournament for the last time before turning 40. So who knows how many of these he has left? Even Federer himself didn't really know what he would be able to muster this fortnight.

"Well, I mean, I guess to some extent it's nice to see that the work I put in paid off, that I'm able to play at this level," said Federer, who only had played eight matches in 2021 before last week.

The raucous support he received created a more vibrant atmosphere than at other contests spread around the grounds, whether involving victories for past title winners Novak Djokovic and Angelique Kerber -- she ended 17-year-old American Coco Gauff's run -- or for one of the 11 players who earned a

debut trip to the quarterfinals at the grass-court major.

The main stadium's retractable roof was shut when rain arrived late in the first set, a delay of more than 20 minutes that, not incidentally, was followed by an immediate double-fault by Sonego on break point to fall behind 6-5.

Djokovic made it to his 12th quarterfinal at the All England Club while continuing his pursuit of a calendar-year Grand Slam, never troubled a bit while defeating No. 17 Cristian Garin 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

"It's not a secret that I am trying to win as many Slams as possible," said the top-seeded Djokovic, who needed to win three more matches this week to equal the men's record of 20 major singles titles currently shared by Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Next up for him is Hungary's Marton Fucsovics, one of five first-time men's quarterfinalists who advanced Monday, alongside Canada's Denis Shapovalov and Felix Auger-Aliassime, Italy's Matteo Berrettini, and Russia's Karen

Pliskova reaches into semis

It took Karolina Pliskova almost a decade of trying before she finally reached the Wimbledon semi-finals with a rapid-fire 6-2, 6-2 win over little-known Swiss Viktorija Golubic on Tuesday.

Neither player had even made it to the last eight of the grasscourt major before this week but it was Czech Pliskova, a former world number one, who made her greater big-stage experience count on a floodlit Court One. "Super happy to be through. It's my first semi-final. First time on this court this year. I had to work really hard to get to this court," said the 29-year-old, who can now look forward to a Centre Court date with either Tunisia's Ons Jabeur or Belarusian second seed Aryna Sabalenka. "I am going to enjoy this moment, because it has never happened for me." It was a very noisy affair on Court One, but not because the players were creating a racket.