

INDIAN-ORIGIN  
JOURNALIST WINS  
PULITZER PRIZE

P11

'CONGRESS COULD  
REVIEW ARTICLE  
370 REVOCATION'

P5



## PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

WHAT IS MAYAWATI'S  
FUTURE IN UTTAR  
PRADESH?THE SUB-PLOT  
SEHWAG IS  
SO KEEN ON

P7



P12

## WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Moderate rain/thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 35 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 77% Min: 50%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 35.0°C (-) Min: 28.0°C (O)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:23 hrs 19:20 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

08:28 hrs 21:56 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



A man showers water on children on a hot summer day. In New Delhi on Saturday. IANS

**IMA to hold countrywide protest on 18 June:** The Indian Medical Association will hold a protest on 18 June against assault on doctors, with the slogan of 'saviours'. The apex medical body asked all its state and local branches across the country to observe the protest by wearing black badges, masks, ribbons, shirts and running awareness campaign against violence targeting healthcare professionals. It termed "extremely disturbing" a series of violence against doctors in the last two weeks in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and other places. P5

**Krejickova wins French Open women's title:** Czech Barbora Krejickova claimed her maiden Grand Slam title when she beat Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-1 2-6 6-4 in the French Open final on Saturday. The 25-year-old is the first Czech to lift the Suzanne Lenglen Cup since Hana Mandlikova triumphed in 1981. When asked how she felt about winning, Krejickova thanked the Court crowd and said, "I can't believe what just happened." P12

**Target 20% cut in expenditure, ministries told**

**SAD, BSP tie up for 2022 polls with Sukhbir as CM-face**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 12 JUNE

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Saturday formed an alliance to contest the 2022 Assembly elections jointly "to free Punjab from the arrogant 'raja' (king) Captain Amarinder Singh and the corrupt scam ridden Congress govt".

An announcement in this regard was made jointly by SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal and BSP national general secretary Satish Chandra Mishra. Mishra said party president Mayawati had approved the alliance and both parties would strive to form the next government in the state under the leadership of Sukhbir Badal.

The BSP leader also appealed to the Dalit and disadvantaged sections of society to support the

alliance wholeheartedly.

He also visited five-time former chief minister and SAD patron Parkash Singh Badal along with the BSP Punjab coordinator Randhir Singh Beniwal and Punjab BSP president Jasbir Singh Garhi to take the for-

mer CM's blessings. The SAD chief announced that the BSP would contest twenty out of the 117 seats under its alliance with the SAD including eight seats in the Doaba region, seven in Malwa and five in Majha.

These seats are Kartarpur, Jalandhar West, Jalandhar North, Phagwara, Nawan-sheher, Hoshiarpur City, Tanda, Dasuya, Chamkaur Sahib, Bassi Pathana, Mehal Kalan, Ludhiana North, Sujanpur, Boha, Pathankot, Anandpur Sahib, Mohali, Amritsar North, Amritsar Central and Payal. He said a coordination committee of leaders from both parties would be formed soon to ensure seamless working in all the constituencies.

Terming the alliance as historic, Badal said it was not limited to the 2022 Assembly elections but would continue after the elections also. He said both

the SAD and the BSP had the same ideology and had always worked for the welfare of farmers, poor and khet mazdoor (farm workers).

Mishra, while terming the development as a red letter day for Punjab, said both parties had come together after 25 years, adding the last time both parties had contested an election jointly they had swept eleven out of thirteen seats in the Lok Sabha elections of 1996.

Mishra alleged the Congress government in Punjab was discriminating against Dalits by not releasing funds reserved for scheduled castes, deleting lakhs of Aata-Daal (subsidiised ration scheme) and pension cards, not filling SC and OBC scholarships, not releasing SC scholarship fee to students and not implementing the Shagun and houses for homeless schemes. (SEE PAGE 3)

The Dominica High Court has denied bail to fugitive diamantaire Mehl Choksi in the case of illegal entry into the island country after his mysterious disappearance from neighbouring Antigua and Barbuda where he is staying as a citizen since 2018 as a citizen after fleeing from India.

He was detained in the neighbouring island country of Dominica for illegal entry after a possible romantic escapade with his rumoured girlfriend.

Choksi's lawyers had filed a habeas corpus petition calling his arrest illegal and alleging that he was abducted, tortured and handed over to Dominica authority to deny him rights available to him in Antigua and Barbuda as a citizen.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the External Affairs Ministry have sought to impound the habeas corpus petition by filing two affidavits in the Dominica High Court.

The affidavits, if admitted, will pave way for noted lawyer Harish Salve to plead Indian case in Dominica, they said.

**Biotech to make Covaxin Ph-III trials data public**

HYDERABAD, 12 JUNE

Bharat Biotech, the manufacturer of the indigenous Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin has assured that it will soon make the data from both efficacy and safety follow-up of the phase III trial public, while claiming that within the span of a year as many as nine research studies on the vaccine have been published in five globally reputed peer-reviewed journals.

"Currently, data from both efficacy and safety follow-up of Covaxin's phase III trial is being analysed and compiled. The company will make Phase III trials data from the final analysis public soon," said Bharat Biotech today.

The firm had earlier said the data from Phase III trials will be available in July.

In a bid to assure people about its credibility in terms of data transparency, the company has said that it is the first and only Covid-19 vaccine manufacturer to have published any data from human clinical trials in India. It is also the first and only Covid vaccine to have efficacy data in Indian population, in an apparent dig at Serum Institute of India's Covishield developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca.

Details on Page 4

**LeT militants ambush police patrol; Two personnel, three civilians dead**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 12 JUNE

Troops forces in north Kashmir during the past few days.

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has warned: "Such despicable and cowardly act will not go unpunished".

"The perpetrators of violence are the enemies of humanity," he said, while condemning the attack on civilians and security personnel. He offered condolences to kin of those who were

killed in the terror attack. Several civilians were trapped in the crossfire and many of them took refuge in nearby shops in the area.

The injured were shifted to sub-district hospital Sopore for treatment where two cops and two civilians were declared dead on arrival. Three others critically injured, including two cops and a civilian, were shifted to Srinagar for treatment. Police sources said the cops were part of a patrol party that was on routine security duty. Army and CRPF have cordoned the area to nab the terrorists behind the attack.

Former CM & NC leader Omar Abdullah, Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone and other leaders took to Twitter to condemn the terror attack.

**Policy on declassification of war histories gets nod**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the policy on archiving, declassification and compilation of war histories by the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The policy envisages that each organisation under the MoD such as Services, Integrated Defence Staff, Assam Rifles and Indian Coast Guard, will transfer the records, including war diaries, letters of proceedings and operational record books, etc., to the History Division of ministry for proper upkeep, archival and writing the histories.

The responsibility for declassification of records rests with the respective organisations as specified in the Public Record Act 1993 and Public Record Rules 1997, as

**PRESERVING THE PAST**

The policy envisages that each organisation under the MoD such as Services, Integrated Defence Staff, Assam Rifles and Indian Coast Guard, will transfer the records, including war diaries, letters of proceedings and operational record books, etc., to the History Division of ministry for proper upkeep, archival and writing the histories.

amended from time to time, the MoD said today. According to the policy, records should ordinarily be declassified in 25 years.

Records older than 25 years should be appraised by archival experts and transferred to the National Archives of India once the war histories have been compiled. The History Division will be responsible for coordination with various departments while compiling, seeking approval and pub-

lishing of war histories.

The policy mandates the constitution of a committee headed by a Joint Secretary in the MoD and comprising representatives of the Services, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and other organisations and prominent military historians for compilation of war histories.

The policy also set clear timelines with regard to compilation and publication of war histories. The committee will have to be formed within two years of completion of war. Thereafter, collection of records and compilation should be completed in three years.

The requirement of having war histories written with clear cut policy on declassification of war records was recommended by the Kargil Review Committee, headed by K Subrahmanyam as well as the N N Vohra Committee in order to analyse lessons learnt and prevent future mistakes.

Post Kargil War, the Group of Ministers' (GoM) recommendations on national security also mentioned the desirability of authoritative war history. Timely publication of war histories is expected to give people accurate account of the events, provide authentic material for academic research and counter rumours.





In Darjeeling district, 4.5 lakh people have been vaccinated so far

GAUTAM DEB, CHAIRMAN, BOA, SILIGURI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

ON PLANS TO TAKE VACCINES TO THE ELDERLY AND DIFFERENTLY-ABLED PEOPLE IN THEIR LOCALITIES

# Delhi preparing on war-footing for 3rd Covid wave: Kejriwal

CM inaugurates 22 PSA oxygen plants in 9 hospitals; 17 more plants to start in the city by July

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today cautioned the people that the possibility of a third Covid wave in coming days is "quite real", even as he asserted that his government was preparing on a "war-footing" to combat such an eventuality.

The CM said that the indications of a third wave are coming from the UK where coronavirus cases are rising again despite 45 per cent of its population being vaccinated.

"So, we cannot afford to sit idle," Kejriwal told an online event held to inaugurate 22 new PSA oxygen plants at 9 Delhi government hospitals.

He said these plants have a total production capacity of 17.3 MT and they will strengthen the Delhi government's preparations to fight Covid. As many as 17 more oxygen plants with a production capacity of 25 MT will be started by July, he said.

The Delhi government is also procuring oxygen tankers to aid the fight against a third wave, Kejriwal said, adding that the previous wave, which in on the wane, was "very dangerous".



Expressing gratitude towards industries for their help in fighting the second wave, he also said the people of Delhi came together to combat it with struggle and discipline, and have "succeeded in controlling it".

He prayed that a third wave of Covid doesn't arrive. However, he cautioned that the chances of a third wave are "quite real", and "if it hap-

pens, Delhi has to again fight together".

The CM also underlined the need for expanding the vaccination drive to fight the Covid pandemic, saying "Our vaccination programme has been running successfully."

The shortage of vaccines is still a problem, but our 'Jahan Vote, Wahan Vaccination' (vaccination at polling booths) is a success".

Doctors, nurses, paramedic staff, sanitation workers, and others played a huge role in the fight against the virus, he said, adding, "I know many doctors who did not go home for days. I want to thank them on behalf of the people of Delhi."

The CM noted that Delhi faced a massive shortage of oxygen during the current Covid wave as Delhi is not an industrial state and does not have

its own source of oxygen production.

Delhi needs 150-200 MT of medical oxygen for non-Covid purposes, apart from some amount of industrial oxygen. This requirement rose to 700 MT during the current coronavirus wave, he said.

Delhi saw a massive crisis of medical oxygen supply during mid-April to early May period, when several city hospitals used to issue SOS for oxygen daily. Many deaths were attributed to the oxygen scarcity.

The Delhi government has formed a committee of experts to examine and ascertain if those fatalities were caused by the scarcity of the life-saving gas.

"We didn't have the means of production or even tankers to procure oxygen from states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh on the directions of the Central government. Now, we have to be fully prepared," Kejriwal said.

He pointed out that he had on Thursday inaugurated three oxygen storage tanks of 57 MT each.

A total of 27 PSA oxygen plants, including the 22 inaugurated today, have been made operational in Delhi. Apart from these, six plants have already been started by the Cen-

tral government and seven are going to begin soon, the CM said.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said that of the total PSA plants opened today, 17 have been given by HCL Technologies and 4 by Maruti Udyog. The HCL will be supplying five more plants soon, he said.

HCL Technologies chairman Roshni Nadar and the heads of various city government-run hospitals took part in the event.

The hospitals where these plants have been installed include Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital, and Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital.

All these hospitals have a capacity of 9,500 LPM (litres per minute). This means, 1,000 beds daily will be able to receive oxygen from within the hospital itself, Jain said. "This will let us be independent," he said, adding many plants are in the pipeline.

"We are working on a war-footing to equip ourselves for the third wave especially on the front of oxygen availability, which was a crisis that we faced in the second wave," Jain said.

## 2 ASIs assaulted at Singhu protest site: Delhi Police

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

but we are yet to find out who they were," the officer said.

Police said the nature of the job of the policemen posted with the Special Branch is different.

"They are regularly deployed to keep an eye on the situation as well as see the security arrangements in place and to report on the appropriate action taken by the local police," the officer said.

A case has been filed under IPC sections for assaulting a public servant while on duty, voluntarily causing grievous hurt and other relevant sections including the Delhi Disaster Management Act at Narela police station, police said.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at Delhi's borders since November-end last year in protest against the three central farm laws for more than six months, police officials claimed.

The two policemen duty

were in civil clothes and are ASIs posted with the Special Branch of Delhi Police, police said.

The incident took place on

10 June. The two policemen were deployed at the Delhi's Singhu border to oversee the security arrangements, they said.

The two cops were alleged-

ly found clicking pictures at the

protest site when they were

assaulted by the group, one of

the protesters said.

During the incident, one of

the policemen suffered a fracture

on his wrist while the other ASI

sustained severe injuries on his

leg. Both of them have been dis-

charged from a hospital after

treatment, a senior police offi-

cer said.

"They were beaten up by

people present at the spot.

Some of them involved in the

incident have been identified

by the police.

The Narendra Modi govern-

ment has denied these

charges and claimed that the

new laws are "pro-farmer".

The Samyukta Kisan Mor-

cha, an umbrella body of over

40 farmer unions spearhead-

ing the protest, has said they

will organise dharnas at gov-

ernor houses across the coun-

try on 26 June to mark the

completion of seven months

of their agitation. They will

show black flags during their

protest and send mem-

orandums to President Ram

Nath Kovind.

## Delhi max temp settles at 34.4 deg C

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

**The relative humidity was recorded at 50 per cent, according to the India Meteorological Department.**

istered a record low for June in 13 years.

On Friday, the minimum temperature had stood at 20.4 degrees Celsius, eight notches below the season's average, according to the IMD.

The maximum temperature had settled at 39 degrees

Celsius, a notch below the season's average.

According to the IMD website, the maximum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 34.4 degrees Celsius late evening.

The minimum temperature recorded at Safdarjung Observatory here, considered the official reading of the city, was 20.4 degrees Celsius in the morning, with a relative humidity of 67 per cent.

The weatherman had forecast easterly winds on Saturday.

The maximum temperature had settled at 39 degrees

## Water pressure to be low in parts of Delhi: DJB

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

ed are Civilines, Hindu Rao Hos-

pital and adjoining areas, Kamla

Nagar, Shakti Nagar and adjoin-

ing areas, Karol Bagh, Pahar Ganj

and NDMC areas, Old and New

Rajinder Nagar, Patel Nagar

(East and West), Baljeet Nagar,

Prem Nagar, Inderpuri and

adjoining areas, parts of Can-

tonment areas and South Delhi

etc," it said. People are advised

to make judicious use of water,

the DJB said, adding that "water

tankers shall be available on

demand".

## Delhi logs 213 new Covid cases, 28 deaths; positivity rate 0.30 pc

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

per cent, and 45 deaths, while the daily tally was 238 on Friday with 0.31 per cent positivity rate, and 24 deaths.

On 8 March, Delhi had recorded 239 new cases and on 9 March the daily tally was 320, according to official data. The city's Covid positivity rate had reached 36 percent in late April.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of 71,513 tests, including 50,766 RT-PCR tests and 20,747 rapid antigen tests, and the health bulletin stated.

The number of Delhi's cumulative tally now rose to 14,30,884. Over 14 lakh patients have recovered from the infection in the city so far, the bulletin said.

The number of active cases in the national capital decreased to 3,610 from yesterday's 3,922. The number of Covid patients under home isolation dropped to 1,123 from yesterday's 1,238 while the number of containment zones dropped to 7,062 from 8,032 the previous day, the bulletin added.

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WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

Kendriya Bhandar intends to fill up the following post:-  
ASSTT. MANAGER (SALES)-[01 POST]  
For details, please refer our website:-  
[www.kendriyabhandar.org](http://www.kendriyabhandar.org)  
OSD (Admn.)

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Five showrooms were damaged in a fire that broke out in a market area here on Saturday morning, officials said, adding no injuries were reported.

The incident took place in south Delhi's Lajpat Nagar Central Market area, they said.

According to the fire department, a call about the blaze was received around 10.20 am, following which 16 fire tenders were rushed to the spot.

"When fire tenders reached the spot, four showrooms were on fire and later [the blaze] spread to the fifth shop. It must have started early morning in one of the shops and then spread to the rest," Delhi Fire Service Director Atul Garg

said.

According to data shared by Delhi Police Additional PRO Anil Mittal, of the 1,260 challans issued on Friday, 1,068

were for face mask violations and 192 for not adhering to social distancing norms.

As many as 1,29,590 challans have been issued by police from April 19 to June 11, the data showed.

Police said, 1,09,075

challans were issued for mask violations, 18,790 for flouting social distancing norms, 1,532 for holding large public gath-

erings and congregations, 72 for spitting and 121 for consumption of liquor, pan and tobacco, it stated.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had last week announced various relaxations in the ongoing lockdown that was imposed on April 19, saying Covid situation was improving and the economy of the city needed to be revived.

The Delhi government allowed all stand-alone and neighbourhood shops to function, including liquor vends.

However, establishments like cinemas, theatres, restaurants (except home delivery and take away), bars, gyms, spas, barber shops, salons and beauty parlours remain closed till further orders.

The man then allegedly took away their mobile phones and a wallet, and fled the scene, the police said.

On Friday, 78,628 people

### Over 1,200 people fined in city for flouting Covid guidelines

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

More than 1,200 people have been fined in Delhi for violating COVID-19 guidelines, police said on Saturday.



No other civilised country in the world imposes tax on life-saving drugs except India

WEST BENGAL EDUCATION MINISTER BRATYA BASU  
SLAMMING THE DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE GST COUNCIL MEETING

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE 2021

03

# SAD-BSP alliance a secular, federal revolution: Sr Badal

Akali stalwart terms it 'the beginning of a secular, federal democratic revolution in the state and the country for a total socio-economic and political revamp of the polity'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 12 JUNE

The Akali stalwart and former Punjab chief minister, Sardar Parkash Singh Badal on Saturday termed the formation of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) alliance as "the beginning of a secular, federal democratic revolution in the state and the country for a total socio-economic and political revamp of the polity".

The process of justice and equality for the poor, the down-trodden and the minorities will also get a boost with this development, he said, adding that "in Punjab the wheels of progress, prosperity and social welfare which had been brought to a grinding halt in 2017 will start moving again with added momentum".

Badal, a five-time Punjab



CM said, "The new development will ensure welfare of all Punjabis, especially the down-trodden and exploited segments of society including the farmers, the farm labour, the Dalits, the unemployed youth, small and medium traders, entrepreneurs etc." After the announcement of the SAD-BSP alliance for the

2022 Punjab Assembly elections, BSP leader and Member of Parliament (MP) Satish Mishra called on Badal along with SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal "to seek his blessings" at his official residence in Chandigarh. The senior Badal congratulated the BSP supremo Mayawati over the phone and invited her to con-

test from Punjab.

The Akali stalwart said that peace and communal harmony will continue to be top priority for the alliance. "The alliance is a tribute to the composite vision of Guru Nanak Dev ji, Guru Ravidas ji and Bhagwan Balmiki ji and great saints and seers. That makes today the

happiest day of my long political career as it marks the triumph of the concept of sarb saanjhivalta, saman te smajikinsaf (fraternity, equality and dignity) based on the ideal of sarbat da bhala (welfare of all)."

Badal recalled how in the governments he headed, special attention was paid to the fulfilment of the dream of social justice with the introduction of "pathbreaking schemes for justice and social welfare".

"I urge both SAD and BSP leaders to work tirelessly and selflessly to begin a new era in Punjab and eventually in the country in which every citizen has access to basic necessities and comforts of life and creates conditions in which every citizen can live in dignity and honour," said the Akali stalwart, who is one of the most senior leaders in the country, in his statement.

## Probe ordered into allegations of fake Covid test reports during Kumbh Mela

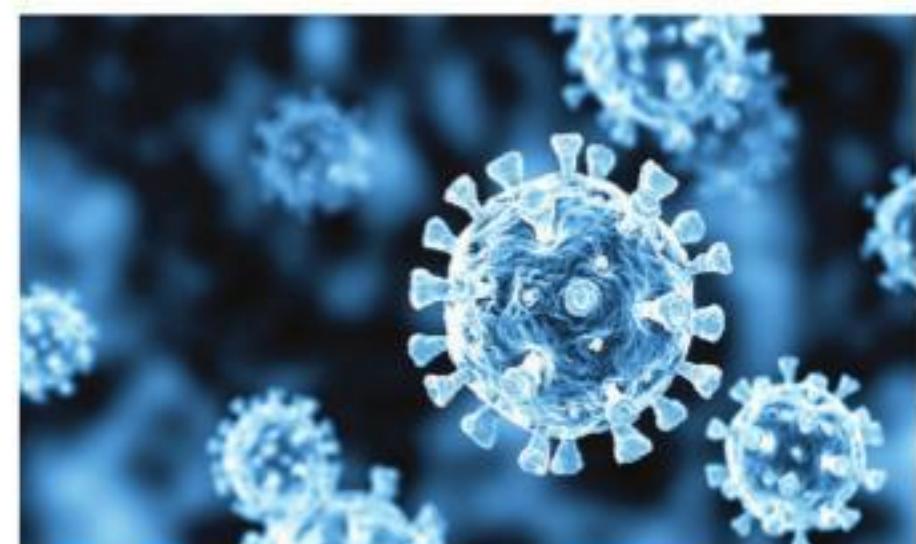
PTI  
DEHRADUN, 12 JUNE

The Haridwar district administration has ordered a probe into allegations that fake Covid reports were issued by private laboratories engaged by the Uttarakhand government to conduct tests during the Kumbh Mela.

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

A committee headed by Chief Development Officer Saurabh Gaharwar has been constituted to look into the allegations and submit a report within 15 days, Haridwar District Magistrate C Ravishankar said on Saturday.

Payment to all labs which had been assigned the responsibility of conducting tests - RT-PCR and rapid antigen - during the Kumbh has been withheld for the time being due to the ongoing investigation, he said. A detailed probe was ordered by the Haridwar administration after prelim-



The labs apparently did so to meet the daily testing quota of 50,000 tests set by the Uttarakhand High Court during the Kumbh, the sources said.

Twenty-two private labs had been hired for the purpose by the district health department to conduct testing during the festival. When contacted Haridwar's Chief Medical Officer, SK Jha, said, "Kumbh area extends up to Rishikesh. Until the probe ordered by the district administration is complete it is difficult to say at what level the alleged irregularities were committed."

## HP Police warns against spreading rumours on Virbhadr's health

PTI

SHIMLA, 12 JUNE



The Himachal Pradesh Police on Saturday warned people against spreading rumours regarding former CM Virbhadr Singh's health on social media. The move came a day after former minister and Solan BJP leader Mohinder Nath Sofat and some other people posted on Facebook regarding Virbhadr Singh's "death", just hours after the ex-CM tested positive for coronavirus and was admitted to Indira Gandhi Medical College Hospital here for treatment.

Hospital Senior Medical Superintendent Dr Janak Raj told PTI that his condition is stable. The former CM on his Facebook account said he is healthy and being looked after by doctors.

After realising his mistake,

ment and Information Technology Acts. Therefore, the state police advise such elements to stop it immediately," police said in the statement.

Police said such rumours result in unnecessary sensationalism all over the state and well-wishers of the ex-CM started making frequent calls to police and other government offices for information.

Such rumours disturb peaceful atmosphere in the state, it added.

Virbhadr Singh tested positive for COVID-19 for the second time in two months on Friday. The nine-time MLA and five-time MP, the veteran Congress leader had earlier tested positive for the disease on April 12.

The 86-year-old Congress leader is currently an MLA from Arki in Solan district.

## AAP calls SAD-BSP alliance 'unholy and anti-Punjab'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 12 JUNE



The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s Punjab unit on Saturday called the alliance of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) for the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections "anti-Punjab and unholy".

The AAP's Punjab affairs co-incharge and legislator from Delhi, Raghav Chadha, charged that this SAD-BSP alliance has been formed on the "directions" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "obstruct the way of the Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab".

Addressing a Press conference, Chadha said the "anti-Punjab parties" were appalled by the love shown by the people to the AAP in Punjab, adding that such an

alliance has been formed "therefore to prevent the AAP from forming a government in the forthcoming Assembly elections".

"There were now two types of alliances, formal and informal, by the parties that were looting and harassing Punjab. The first formal alliance was in the form of alliance of SAD Badal and BSP while the second informal alliance was of the Captain Amarinder Singh-led Congress, SAD Badal, BSP and BJP," he added.

The AAP leader alleged that the SAD and the BSP were "puppet parties" of

Prime Minister Modi while Captain Amarinder considered Modi as "his boss".

He said the BSP claims to be a party led by Dalits, but was working closely with the Akali Dal that "perpetrated atrocities" on Dalits, which, he added, was "highly reprehensible".

The AAP alleged that by forming an alliance with the Akali Dal, the BSP had "snuffed out the ideology of Babu Kanshi Ram and Baba Sahib Bhim Rao Ambedkar".

"It was the Akali Dal, which had burnt copies of the Constitution written by Baba Sahib Bhim Rao Ambedkar and staged protests against Baba Sahib and today the BSP is preparing to contest the

## NGT directs Aditya Birla group firm to expedite wastewater recycling work



PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

The National Green Tribunal has directed Aditya Birla Group's flagship Indian Rayon in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district to expedite the work related to recycling of waste water.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel accepted the report filed by a committee comprising officials from the Central Pollution Control Board, state pollution control board and others, and directed that its recommendations be implemented.

"We accept the report and direct that recommendations in the report be acted upon by the Project Proponent-Indian Rayon (A unit of Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd), Junagadh - Veraval, District Gir Somnath, Gujarat which may be overseen by the concerned statutory regulators.

clean periodically with awareness among the citizens, the committee recommended.

The green panel had earlier formed a committee to submit a report on a plea alleging discharge of chemicals by Aditya Birla Group's flagship Indian Rayon in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district. The committee also comprised officials from the Gujarat Coastal Zone Management Act, nomi-

natee of National Institute of Oceanography, Goa and District Magistrate of Gir Somnath.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by the Protection of Environment and Public Service Committee alleging violation of environmental norms by Indian Rayon.

According to the applicant, the damage is done to Deveka River at Gir Som-

nath and the company was discharging hazardous chemicals into the sea as well as the river.

The unit was generating electricity for which environmental clearance was granted on June 22, 2015, in spite of opposition from local residents, it said. There is dumping of fly ash at public places and there is also air pollution, the plea claimed.

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

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- PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chak.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

7 DAYS OPEN

**TENDER**

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY SERVICES LIMITED**  
(A JV of PSUs of Ministry of Power, Govt. of India)  
Eastern Regional Cluster Office

Tenancy of Unit A1, 10F, Sector-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091  
(North 24 PGS) of BEIPL(Haldia Petrochemical Building).

**NOTICE**

NIT No.: EESL/KRO/2021-22 Date : 09.06.2021

Name of the Work : Tender for hiring vehicle for office purpose.

Start Date for submission of Documents : 14.06.2021(Monday)

End Date for Submission of Documents : 23.06.2021(Wednesday)  
5:00 PM

Contact E-mail: dhansda@eesl.co.in, amodkumar@eesl.co.in, Tel. 033-46022679, Bidders are advised to refer the Tender Section of the EESL official website ([www.eeslindia.org](http://www.eeslindia.org)) to download EOI Documents (will be available from 14.06.2021) and visit frequently to get further information/updates and submit all necessary documents as mentioned in the EOI Document at EESL Eastern Regional Cluster Office: Tenancy of Unit A1, 10F, Sector-V, Salt Lake, Kolkata-700091 (North 24 PGS) of BEIPL(Haldia Petrochemical Building).

Creating an Energy Efficient India .....

**Government of Haryana**

**The people of Haryana Salute  
Maharana Pratap Ji  
on his Birth Anniversary**

**13th June, 2021**

**“**Maharana Pratap Ji was an eternal patriot, symbol of valor and courage who died for the motherland. He was a great warrior and ruler who sacrificed his life to protect his homeland. The strength and bravery of Maharana Pratap Ji will inspire generations to come.”  
**- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana**

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana [www.prharyana.gov.in](http://www.prharyana.gov.in) @Cmohry @DiprHaryana



*He simply retreated and waited for the worst to pass. The prime minister of India has behaved like a coward. He has let our country down*

CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA  
IN A STATEMENT POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

i  
ndia

## THUMBNAILS



Delhi BJP President along with MP Manoj Tiwari, LOP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri other leaders and Party workers stage a dharna against the Delhi government demanding implementation of "One Nation One Ration Card" Scheme in Delhi at Shahnar Chowk of East Delhi, in the capital on Saturday.

# 'No evidence that kids will be hit harder in Covid 3rd wave'

Kids with Covid tend to be asymptomatic, among those symptomatic, most have mild infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE



There appears to be no substantial evidence to suggest that children will be more affected or have greater illness severity due to Covid-19 in the anticipated third wave, according to a new report.

The Lancet Covid-19 Commission India Task Force prepared the report after convening an experts group comprising leading paediatricians from the country to examine the issue of paediatric Covid-19 in India.

It said the infection's symptomatology in children in India appears to be globally comparable.

"Most children with Covid-19 are asymptomatic, and amongst those symptomatic mild infections are predominant. Most children have fever with respiratory symptoms, and often present with gastrointestinal symptoms (such as diarrhea, vomiting, pain in abdomen) and atypical manifestation compared

to adults. The proportion of symptomatic children increases as age increases as does the severity in such age groups," the report stated.

In the absence of a national database on clinical presentation and outcomes of infected children during the two surges noted thus far, the data of approximately 2,600 hospitalised children, below the age of 10 years was collected and

analysed.

According to the data, mortality rates amongst these surveyed hospitalised Covid-19 positive children below the age of 10 years was 2.4 per cent and about 40 per cent of the children who died had comorbidities.

"Nine per cent of all hospitalised Covid-19 positive children presented with severe illness, under 10 years of age. The above observations were similar during the two surges of Covid-19 infections India has experienced," the Lancet document said.

Three doctors from AIIMS, namely Sheffali Gulati, Sushil K Kabra and Rakesh Lodha, contributed to the study.

Kabra said less than 5 per cent children will require hospital admission in Covid-19 and out of them the mortality is of 2 per cent.

"Say out of 1 lakh, 500 children get hospitalised and 2 per cent of deaths are reported among them. So in one lakh, mortality of just one or two children is seen. In children, as such the disease is less severe. Very low proportion requires hospitalisation and very small proportion of mortality is reported. The mortality is also contributed by underlying diseases in the form of comorbidities like diabetes, cancer, anaemia or severe malnutrition. In normal children, mortality is extremely rare," he told PTI.

The data was also evaluated separately for the time periods corresponding to the two surges, March 2020-December 2020 and January 2021-April 2021. Comparable observations were recorded in a multicentric study which examined 402 children hospitalised in Indian hospitals, of which 90 per cent were asymptomatic to mildly symptomatic, and of 318 cases wherein 44 per cent had underlying co-morbidities, it said.

"Based on the data available, there appears to be no substantial evidence to suggest that children would be more affected or would have greater illness severity due to Covid-19 infection in the anticipated third wave. Studies also indicate that children have milder disease, better prognosis, and low mortality in comparison to adults," it said. On multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) in children, the report said, risk factors for this condition include obesity, asthma, compromised breathing, developmental disorders, cardiac disease, cancers or immunocompromised children as well as those who have undergone surgeries.

published any data from human clinical trials in India. It is also the first and only COVID-19 vaccine to have efficacy data in Indian population. The vaccine manufacturer's dig was at Serum Institute of India's Covishield developed by Oxford-AstraZeneca.

The studies on Covaxin phase I which is done to assess the vaccine's safety, immune response and to determine right dosage was published by the peer reviewed journal, "The Lancet- Infectious Diseases" and so were the studies for phase II clinical trials. Phase II trials are aimed at assessing the safety and ability of the vaccine to generate an immune response. The full data from studies on Covaxin's neutralization of variants as well as the study on the neutralization of Beta and Delta variants and that on B1.1.28 variant have been published in similar peer reviewed journals. So were the studies on B.1.617 and Alpha variants, claimed Bharat Biotech. The company further claimed that the published studies have been widely cited for the rigour and breadth.

"Currently, data from both efficacy and safety follow-up of Covaxin's phase III trial is being analysed and compiled. Upholding its uncompromising commitment to integrity, the company will make Phase III trials data from the final analysis public soon," said Bharat Biotech in a statement released today. The firm had earlier said the data from Phase III trials will be available in July leading experts to wonder about the delay.

In bid to assure people about its credibility in terms of data transparency the company has said that it is the first and only COVID-19 to have

## Covaxin Ph-3 trial data to be public soon: Bharat Biotech

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 12 JUNE

Bharat Biotech, the manufacturer of the indigenous COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin has assured it will soon make the data from both efficacy and safety follow-up of the phase III trial public while claiming that within the span of a year as many as nine research studies on the vaccine have been published in five globally reputed peer reviewed journals.

"Currently, data from both efficacy and safety follow-up of Covaxin's phase III trial is being analysed and compiled. Upholding its uncompromising commitment to integrity, the company will make Phase III trials data from the final analysis public soon," said Bharat Biotech in a statement released today. The firm had earlier said the data from Phase III trials will be available in July leading experts to wonder about the delay.

In bid to assure people about its credibility in terms of data transparency the company has said that it is the first and only COVID-19 to have

## Gujarat parties gear up for Assembly polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, 12 JUNE

Though the next assembly elections in Gujarat are more than a year away, political activities in the state are gradually beginning to gear up.

Even as the state Congress is still struggling to find a new face to lead the party to the polls, the ruling BJP has started the process of consultations with its legislators to chalkout a strategy that can neutralize the recent setbacks to its image.

Despite being in power for quarter of a century, the ruling BJP in Gujarat has faced several embarrassments recently over a series of issues ranging from its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, hospital fires and school fees.

The defeat in West Bengal having robbed the BJP of its 'invincible' tag, the party leaders here have started a damage control exercise in Gujarat where it had faced a bad press for last several months.

## Allies should get respectable share in Union government: JD-U

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PATNA, 12 JUNE

the Centre.

Singh had succeeded Kumar as the JD(U) national president after the chief minister relinquished the top party post much ahead of the expiry of his tenure earlier this year. "We are a part of the NDA... all constituents deserve a respectable share in the Narendra Modi government", Singh told journalists in reply to a query.

Asked whether the JD(U), which has 16 MPs in the Lok Sabha, would "demand" a

respectable share for itself in the expected expansion of the union cabinet, Singh, the party leader in the Rajya Sabha, quipped "where is the question of demanding? It is a matter of understanding. It has to be natural".

The JD(U) chief's statement comes amid speculations of a reshuffle in the union cabinet. The party, after the exit of 18 MP-strong Shiv Sena, has become the largest of BJP's allies in Parliament. The JD(U) has five MPs in Rajya Sabha.

## College girl raped in Meerut

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MEERUT, 12 JUNE

A student of Meerut College has charged her friend's brother of rape. A case of rape has been registered in Lalkurti police station here on Friday.

Though the incident was reported on June 2, the complaint has been registered by the girl on June 11. The victim girl originally hails from Bulandshahr district and is staying here in a hostel as she is pursuing Bachelors in Arts in a city college.

SP (city) Vineet Bhatnagar said that a case of rape has been registered against Dheeraj in Lalkurti police station on the complaint of the girl. Dheeraj is brother of victim's friend. Police has started the investigation in the case, the SP said.



# GURU GOBIND SINGH INDRAPRASTHA UNIVERSITY

(Established by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi)

DIP/Shabdharth/D/0024/21-22

## ADMISSION WINDOW OPEN

[www.ipu.ac.in](http://www.ipu.ac.in)

ONLINE APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR ADMISSIONS TO THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMMES

### NATIONAL LEVEL TEST PROGRAMMES

- ★ B.Tech (Computer Science, IT, ECE, etc.) through JEE Main
- ★ BALLB/ BBA LLB through CLAT UG 2021
- ★ LLM through CLAT PG 2021
- ★ PG AYURVEDA through AIA PGET 2021
- ★ MBA (General, Financial Analysis, Financial Management, International Business) through CAT-2020 / CMAT-2021 and CET 2021
- ★ M.TECH through GATE/ CET
- ★ Bachelor of Design through UCEED/NID
- ★ MBBS, BHMS, BAMS & B.Sc (Hons) Nursing through neet ug 2021
- ★ MCA through the NIMCET and CET
- ★ B.Arch through NATA

### CET PROGRAMMES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ★ B.Com (Hons)  | ★ B.Ed. & B.Ed. (Special Education)   |
| ★ B.A. - English Hons./ Economics Hons. / Journalism & Mass Communication   | ★ BCA   |
| ★ MBA   | ★ BHMCT   |
| ★ BBA   |   |
| ★ M.Ed.   | ★ MCA / MCA (LE)  |
| ★ MBA (IT)  | ★ B.Tech. (Bio Tech)  |
| ★ B.Sc. Nursing (Post Basic / B.Sc Yoga   | ★ BPT/ BPO/ B.Sc. (MLT)/ BASLP BOT (Paramedical) / B.Pharma   |
| ★ M.Sc. (Env. Mgmt. / NRM / Forensic Science / Nursing / Yoga / Medicinal Chemistry & Drug Design/ Bio. & Cons / Packaging Technology   | ★ MA - English/ Mass Communication / Economics  |
| ★ MPT/ MOT (Neuro)/ MPO   | ★ Lateral Entry to B.Tech. (Diploma and B.Sc. Graduates)  |
| ★ M.Tech. (Tool Engineering / Robotics & Automation /IT / CSE / Chemical Engg./ ECE / Bio-Tech / VLSI Design  | ★ P.G. Diploma (Security Mgt./ Victimology & Victim Assitance / Cyber Crime & Law) and Advanced Diploma in Child Guidance & Counselling |
| ★ M.PHIL (English/ Clinical Psychology/ Psychiatric Social Work)<br>Ph.D. (Education/Electronics & Comm. Engg. / Environmental Sciences / Mechanical & Automation / Chemistry / Management / Mathematics / English / Chemical Technology / Bio Technology / Physics / Law & Legal Studies / Mass Communication / Pharmaceutical Chemistry / Disaster Management / Economics / Architecture / IT / CSE |   |

### NON-CET (MERIT-BASED) PROGRAMMES

- ★ MBA - (Weekend)
- ★ LLM - (Weekend)
- ★ M. Tech. (CSE) / (ECE - Weekend) Nano Science & Technology / Engg. Physics
- ★ MBA - Disaster Management - Weekend
- ★ M.Arch (Urban Design)
- ★ M.Plan (Urban & Regional Planning)
- ★ PG Diploma in Yoga Therapy
- ★ PG Diploma in Disaster Management
- ★ PG Diploma in Healthcare Management - (Weekend)
- ★ All courses of Foreign Students
- ★ PG Diploma in Entrepreneurship and Start Up
- ★ PG Diploma in Equity Research
- ★ PG Diploma in Data Analytics
- ★ PG Diploma in Fire & Life Safety Audit

New Programmes of East Delhi Campus - B.Tech (Artificial Intelligence & Data Science, Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning, Industrial Internet of Things, Automation & Robotics) through JEE Main, Bachelor of Design through UCEED/NID

Note: The Admission Brochures and other related details in this regard are available on the University website [www.ipu.ac.in](http://www.ipu.ac.in)

THE LAST DATE OF MANDATORY ONLINE REGISTRATION IS 15TH JULY 2021.

Registrar



*There is a need to form a wider alliance of political parties against the BJP ahead of the next general elections*

NCP LEADER AND MAHARASHTRA MINISTER NAWAB MALIK  
AFTER A MEETING BETWEEN PRASANT KISHOR AND SHARAD PAWAR

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE 2021

05



A Medic administers Vaccine against Corona Virus, at Press Club of India, in the capital on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

**TV channel barred:** The Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry has prohibited the broadcast of Hope TV, a Christian lifestyle channel, for 30 days for alleged violation of policy guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of private satellite channels in the country.

**Goa Covid curfew:** The Goa government on Saturday announced extension of the coronavirus-induced "curfew" in the state till June 21 with some more relaxations. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the curfew will be extended upto 7 am on June 21.

**Myanmar insurgents:** Five activists of Myanmar based Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) were arrested with arms and ammunition in a joint operation by the Assam Rifles and the Mizoram police from a border village in southern Lawngtlai district on Saturday, an Assam Rifles official said.

**Ex-BSF man kills self:** Swapan Kumar Biswas, 54 a former BSF jawan suffering deep depression, shot himself dead with his licensed pipe gun on Friday. The resident of Balihata village in Pandua was a father of two daughters. On Saturday his wife Anjana said: "My husband retired 12 years back and was working in a private company in Kolkata as a security officer."

## Indian Coast Guard inducts HAL's ALH MK-III helicopters

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE



Three Advanced Light Helicopters manufactured by the defence public sector unit, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, were inducted into the Indian Coast Guard by Dr Ajay Kumar, defence secretary, today.

According to an HAL release, these helicopters which are part of ALH Mk III programme will be positioned in Bhubaneswar, Porbandar, Chennai and Kochi, becoming a part of the different Coast Guard Aviation squadrons.

The helicopters are equipped with surveillance radar, electro optic pod, medical intensive care unit, high intensity search light, loud hailer coupled with a machine gun. HAL's Helicopter MRO division was introduced in the Indian aviation sector and would

increase its operational and maintenance efficiency.

K Natarajan, on his part, said the ICG was a torch-bearer in promoting and inducting indigenous products. The induction of ALH MKIII was a testimony to its commitment towards "Atma Nirbar Bharat".

HAL, he added, was a trusted partner in the growth of the ICG's aviation fleet, delivering multi role and highly capable platforms. The helicopters would usher a paradigm shift in ship-borne operations and enhance coastal surveillance.

Mr R Madhavan, HAL CMD, said HAL was embarking on a new journey of Performance Based Logistics (PBL) which would assure desired levels of availability of the ALH MKIII fleet for six and half years. This was a unique feature of the contract and a first of its kind in HAL.

Meanwhile, the screenshot shared by Manjul showed Twitter as saying: "In the interest of transparency, we are writing to inform you that Twitter has received a request from Indian law enforcement regarding your Twitter account @MANJULtoons, that claims the ... content violates the law(s) of India."

Twitter further informed the account holders that while the platform is unable to provide legal advice, "we want you to have an opportunity to evaluate the request and, if you wish, take appropriate action to protect your interests".

"This may include seeking legal counsel and challenging the request in court, con-

## Delhi unlock: Salons, weekly markets likely to reopen

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

**Phased reopening of Delhi had started with allowing construction and manufacturing activities from May 31, in view of declining numbers of coronavirus cases and positivity rate.**

also under consideration," a source claimed.

Phased reopening of Delhi had started with allowing construction and manufacturing activities from May 31, in view of declining numbers of coronavirus cases and positivity rate.

The Covid situation has improved significantly since then with less number of infections and deaths reported by the Delhi government.

tagged political posts of several leaders of the ruling party BJP as "manipulated media".

Twitter has also been facing heat for delay in complying with the IT rules that mandate large digital platforms to undertake greater due diligence and make them more accountable and responsible for the content hosted by them. Social media companies will have to take down flagged content within 36 hours, and remove within 24 hours content that is flagged for issues such as nudity and pornography under the new rules.

Under the rules, significant social media intermediaries -- those with over 50 lakh users -- are required to appoint a grievance officer, a nodal officer and a chief compliance officer. These personnel have to be residents in India.

## THE DAILY ROUND



People riding bicycles to reach their working place, at Howrah bridge in Kolkata on Saturday. SNS

## ADP aims to ensure all-round devp: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

In a tweet Modi said, "India's Aspirational Districts Programme aims to ensure inclusive & all-round development in areas across our nation. Under this programme, many districts have witnessed holistic transformation. Glad to see the @UNDP report highlighting its salient features."

Thanking Modi for acknowledging the UNDP appraisal report, Shoko Noda, its resident representative in India, said effective policies are key to ending poverty and to leaving no one behind.

"ADP is a imp initiative to improve lives & we will continue to work closely with @NITIAYoG to build forward better," she said.

The prime minister replied to her tweet, saying collective efforts are important towards achieving sustainable and inclusive growth.

## TMC slams retention of GST on ambulances, Covid-related items

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 12 JUNE

on ambulances which are used for ferrying Covid and other critically ill patients."

Mr Basu said no other civilised country in the world imposes tax on life-saving drugs except India.

He said, "Our chief minister was the first chief minister to write to the Prime Minister to waive the GST."

Mr Roy said the Centre cannot waive GST on Covid-related drugs, oxygen and ambulance but spends Rs 8,000 crore for buying aeroplane for Prime Minister's personal use and spend Rs 20,000 crore to set up Central Vista and Prime Minister's residential building.

## HOME CARE BY SOCIO

সারা ভাৰতবৰ্ষে যে কোনও পাতে ঘৰেৱ কাজেৱ জনা, বাচা দেখাশোনাৰ জন, প্ৰেণ্ট / শ্যাশ্বাসীয় মানুষ দেখাশোনাৰ জন্য আবাৰ পাওয়া যাব। যোগাযোগ কৰন :-  
7439831379  
8777243545  
9903147317

## SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo), Namely: Vishaal, S/o: Gyan Chand, R/o: H.No. 89, Near Shir Mandir, Dheerpur, Delhi, Aged: 18 years 5 months, has been missing since 01.06.2021 from his house. In this regard a case vide DD No. 76A, Dated 02.06.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Mukharjee Nagar, Delhi. His physical description is as under:



Vishaal

Height: 5'6" Feet, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Medium, Clothing: Pink Colour T-Shirt, Black Colour Pajama and Chappal in feet. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing boy, may inform SHO, Mukharjee Nagar, Delhi at E-mail: ctc@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>. Tel No.: 011-24368638 or 24368641

P.S. Mukharjee Nagar, Delhi  
Ph.: 011-27654675, 27654668

## Twitter sends notices to cartoonist Manjul, others on law enforcement agencies' request

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Unnamed law enforcement agencies have asked Twitter to take down certain tweets of popular cartoonist Manjul, fact-checking website Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair and others, over alleged violation of law. Sources said the Ministry of Electronics and IT was not involved in making the requests to Twitter.



Meanwhile, the screenshot shared by Manjul showed Twitter as saying: "In the interest of transparency, we are writing to inform you that Twitter has received a request from Indian law enforcement regarding your Twitter account @MANJULtoons, that claims the ... content violates the law(s) of India."

Twitter further informed the account holders that while the platform is unable to provide legal advice, "we want you to have an opportunity to evaluate the request and, if you wish, take appropriate action to protect your interests".

"This may include seeking legal counsel and challenging the request in court, con-

tacting relevant civil society organisations, voluntarily deleting the content (if applicable), or finding some other resolution," Twitter added.

Mohammed Zubair and Surya Pratap Singh also shared screenshots with similarly worded notices from Twitter on their own accounts. These three users each have lakhs of followers on the platform.

Twitter has had several faceoffs with the Indian government over the past months, including during the farmers' protest and later when it

## Choreographed Charter

History will in a sense be reconstructed during President Biden's first official overseas trip, beginning with the United Kingdom. More dramatic than his warning to Russia - that it faces "robust and meaningful" consequences if it engages in "harmful activities" - is the scheduled agreement that he and the Prime Minister of Britain, Boris Johnson, will sign on what they call a new Atlantic Charter, 80 years after it was concluded in 1941 at the height of World War II (1939-45). Mr Biden has been explicit on his intention to strengthen ties with US allies, following strained relations under the Trump administration. The original Atlantic Charter, a watershed document, had shaped the narrative of the United Nations for as long as it did. The new pact will be a modern version of the one agreed to by the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill and US President Franklin Roosevelt in 1941, with a focus on challenges including climate change and security. Biden and Johnson will very probably be riveted to the contemporary issue of the pandemic that has afflicted the world in the wider canvas. Indeed, the world has not been the same again since the summer of 2020. Biden and Johnson are aiming to refresh a vital relationship, after the turbulence of the Trump years and the pressures of the pandemic. As President, Donald Trump had caused a flutter in the roost when he referred to the UN as an "anachronism". In recent years, it is the world body's impotence and dithering that has dominated its response to the ferment almost anywhere in the world, and palpably so in Libya and Syria. It has been prevaricating no less in its dealings with embattled Myanmar.

During a packed eight-day European visit, Mr Biden will meet the Queen at Windsor Castle, will attend a G7 leaders' meeting, and will be a participant at his first Nato summit as President. Above all, he and Mr Johnson will initiate an essay towards reconstructing world history by redefining the contours of the Atlantic Charter, verily a landmark document in world history in the early 1940s.

While the two leaders have disagreed on critical issues, on Thursday they stressed the enduring strength of the wartime Charter. The proposed updated document has been greeted as a "profound statement of purpose", one that echoes the 80-year-old Charter by underscoring the original declaration. Specifically, the "democratic world is right and just the best" one for confronting the world's challenges. The Charter did not envision a new Cold War between great powers, nor a world whose problems - climate change, the pandemic, technological warfare and economic competition - are increasingly complex. Mr Biden's remark is at the core of the conundrums - "The US and its allies are engaged in an existential struggle between democracy and autocracy".

## Trends in Germany

A regional election in Germany would not have been of much moment had it not served as a barometer for the crucial national election in September. Chancellor Angela Merkel's centre-right bloc claimed momentum on Monday for the September election that will choose Germany's next leader after a larger-than-expected win in the last regional ballot before the nation votes. But the victory in a sparsely populated eastern state where it faced a challenge from the far right was mostly a triumph for the popular state Governor. Merkel's Christian Democratic Union won Sunday's election in Saxony-Anhalt with 37.1 per cent of the vote, far ahead of the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, with 20.8 per cent.

Yet, the psephological reality is in favour of Merkel not the least because pre-election polls had pointed to a much narrower outcome. Elections in Germany's 16 states are often influenced by local issues, but are also seen as important indicators of the national mood. The success in Saxony-Anhalt, which has 2.2 million people, gives the CDU leader, Armin Laschet - the party's candidate to succeed four-term Chancellor Merkel in the national vote - a reason to celebrate after a jerky start that included two defeats in state votes in March. "Of course this gives the federal party tailwind," Laschet said after a meeting of CDU leaders. "It shows that it isn't moods and polls that decide elections, but voters." The results were disappointing for the other two parties competing for the Chancellery in the national election on September 26.

The centre-left Social Democrats took 8.4 per cent of the vote, dropping into single digits for the first time in Saxony-Anhalt. The environmentalist Greens scored 5.9 per cent, making only minimal gains despite their impressive performance in the previous elections to the Bundestag. Both mentioned the role played by Saxony-Anhalt's popular Governor, Reiner Haseloff, who appeared to have won over centrist voters worried about a possible AfD win. Laschet acknowledged that Haseloff "and no one else" won the election.

The subtext of the outcome must be the boost for Merkel's party and its success in countering Germany's far-right. Haseloff and Laschet have both insisted that there can be no coalition or cooperation with the far-right party, which has in recent years exploited the anger over Merkel's welcome for a large number of migrants in 2015; more recently, it has championed its opposition to coronavirus restrictions. It's the last test of German public opinion before September's national election, and of the popularity of the far right. The AfD frontrunner, Oliver Kirchner, has expressed the hope that Sunday's result will be what he calls "trend-setting" for the national election. Merkel, who has been in power since 2005, is stepping down after the federal election. Senior CDU officials concede that it will be tough to retain their party's appeal to voters after she takes the bow.

# 100-year journey ~ I

Interestingly, in the 21st century, the publication of two books strongly advocating the need for liberal arts and humanities studies as essential curriculum in university courses, was a crusading call



**A** hundred years ago, in 1921, Rabindranath Tagore founded Visva Bharati University at Santiniketan, Bolpur, in undivided Bengal. Visva Bharati is often regarded as the first international university in modern India. Initially, the poet himself was the donor, fund-raiser and ombudsman of this unique institution where visiting scholars from many parts of the world worked as lecturers, instructors, researchers and performers. At that time Visva Bharati perhaps was the only university that ran courses in fine arts and performing arts.

This year, 2021, marks the centenary of Tagore's dream project of setting up a university at Bolpur, with the primary objective of emphasizing the supreme importance of holistic learning.

In his inimitable way, the poet translated his fond dream into reality. As far as I know, no other poet has ever set up a university which was largely self-funded. Tagore perceived that aid from the establishment, at that time, the British raj, would lead to interventions of all sorts, from administrative to political.

A lot of water has flown down Bolpur's river Khowai in the last ten decades. Intellectual discourse has swayed between timeless Tagore and dated Tagore. While many regard Tagore as a messiah of universal humanism, there are also those who feel threatened by his advocacy of a fearless mind, free knowledge without boundaries and complete creative freedom.

Though Tagore would have agreed that knowledge is power, he would have been vocal against controlled knowledge disseminated by repressive regulatory bodies for consolidating profit as power and use of pedagogical platitudes for enforcing mindless surrender of creative and critical thinking.

The inclusive motto of the Visva Bharati University was this Vedic statement - "Yatra visvam bhavatyekanidam" (where the world makes a home in a single nest). On 23 December 1921, Visva-Bharati became a registered public body which adopted a constitution of its own. As stated in its prospectus, the aims and objects as set forth on the occasion have since then remained the objectives of Visva-Bharati, till date, as far as I know. Furthermore, "Hindu philosophy, medieval mysticism, Islamic culture, Zoroastrian philosophy, Bengali literature and history, Hindustani literature, Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Persian, Arabic, German, Latin and Hindi formed its areas of study and research. Vidyabhavana was the manifestation of the ideal of the proposed centre of comprehensive studies in the cultures of the East and the West. The centre

was viewed principally as a community of scholars, Indian as well as foreign, who would be engaged in creation and dissemination of systematized and philanthropic reasoning. The concern was epistemological.

Also, the 1929 prospectus of Visva Bharati university stated, "College students are expected to become familiar with the working of existing institutions and new movements inaugurated in the different countries of the world for the amelioration of the social condition of the masses. They are also required to undertake a study of international organizations so that their outlook may become better adjusted to the needs of peace".

In the era of globalization, in 2021, how many of our universities have included in their prospectus such a paragraph on social outreach, global politics and the crucial importance of peace, as we find in the prospectus of Rabindranath Tagore's Visva Bharati University almost 90 years ago, in colonial British administered India?

Significantly, the recent emphasis on skill development, entrepreneurship, start-ups, eliciting the need for engagement in humanities and social sciences that enable breaking free from shibboleths and stereotypes, may not have found favour with Tagore who abhorred bondage of any sort, including mind-control, as manifest for example in his plays *Raktakarabi* (The Red Oleanders), *Tasher Desh* (The Land of Cards) and *Muktadhara* (The Waterfall).

Interestingly, in the 21st century, the publication of two books strongly advocating the need for liberal arts and humanities studies as essential curriculum in university courses, was a crusading call.

Both the internationally acclaimed thinkers, writers and public intellectuals Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak and Martha Nussbaum referred to the educational transformations that Tagore introduced and referred to his fictional narratives as illustrative texts.

In her book *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Nussbaum stated that a crisis was silently and steadily enveloping the institutionalized knowledge systems of the world. Describing this silent crisis as carcinogenic, she stated that there is an increasing systemic policy swing away from humanities and social science courses at universities. She pointed out that job-oriented education, universities and industries being clubbed together

as joint ventures primarily discourage critical thinking and freedom of configuring ideas and interfere with creative freedom.

So, in unequivocal terms, Nussbaum observes, "Thirsty for national profit, nations and their systems of education, are heedlessly discarding skills that are needed to keep democracies alive. If this trend continues, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens, who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements."

Nussbaum's caveat about fragmented education with the objective of economic gain, is what more than a century ago Tagore had repeatedly warned about in his numerous essays on the subject. However, the poet did not just sensitize people about the destructive objectives of fixed syllabi that encouraged rote learning. Tagore painstakingly raised funds for his dream project, setting up a unique model school and a university system that attracted attention of intellectuals and creative thinkers of the world. Tagore's school system Patna Bhawan and eventually the founding of Visva Bharati University, were a unique paradigm shift, unprecedented in colonial Bengal.

The question therefore arises, is education producing nuts and bolts to keep the wheels of profit turning, or can education have a holistic objective that recognizes the multiple intersections of race, class, colour, caste, creed, religion, gender and sexuality that can construct a complete human being rather than an automaton? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 had clearly outlined the targets of holistic education by stating,

"Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups."

Tagore's educational goals for school students and university students were a phenomenal game changer. Sadly, however, despite such progressive formulations about generating an education free from indoctrination and the physical claustrophobia created by classrooms, tables, benches, chalks and dusters, Tagore's roadmap, so clearly outlined, was considered impractical by government-funded educational institutions both in colonial India and

post-independence India.

Tagore's path-breaking emphasis on "critical thinking and empathetic imagining" was ignored and instead of an interdisciplinary liberal arts model, the traditional European model of single-subject specialization was preferred. Further, Nussbaum comments categorically, "Socratic active learning and exploration through the arts have been rejected in favour of a pedagogy of force-feeding for standardized national education."

In a more direct awareness campaign regarding the absolute necessity of literature studies as an essential component of education, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak refers to Gramsci's essay "University without Conditions", and thereafter refers to the therapeutic benefits of education and the comparatist's skills of critiquing perspectives and contexts. She refers to the concepts of world literature configured by both Goethe and Marx, though their horizons were limited to Europe, rather than including epistemological and empirical representations in literature, beyond Europe.

In her Introduction to *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* Spivak stated characteristically, "A disinterested episteme can allow and withstand the interruption of the ethical. Study humanism, said Gramsci, in somewhat the same spirit as some of us say deep language learning and literary textuality train the ethical reflex." Spivak further elaborates the essential need for rootedness in ethics and aesthetics represented in literary texts that span the elite and the subalterns, explores and exposes the multiple divides that separates human civilizations, cultures and people.

From the excerpts above, the emphases of Nussbaum and Spivak regarding the crucial need for incorporating humanities and social sciences courses, as complementary texts and contexts would immediately link itself to well-known educationists such as Rousseau, Nunn, Pestalozzi, John Dewey, Maria Montessori and their much discussed and sometimes implemented discourse on the objectives of chainless education. They highlighted that the relationship between the texts and their recipients should not be coercive, but should entice a willing suspension of disbelief, thereby activating a complete state of meditative immersion in the style and content of the literary text.

Tagore regarded the traditional institutionalized formal education of his times as ensuring the dissemination of fragmented knowledge. Tagore steadfastly believed that rote learning had a destructive impact on the intellectual curiosity and creative imagination of a young receptive mind.

(To be concluded)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Foolish to fudge numbers

SIR, I refer to your report 'Bihar Covid toll jumps by 72%'. This is the outcome of fudging figures to make matters appear rosier than they are. One expert has defined it as "the quality of preferring concepts or facts one wishes to be true, rather than concepts or facts known to be true."

For long it was suspected that the figures furnished by various authorities were not truly reflective of the incidence of the disease and its death toll. If a state like Bihar can jump by an unprecedented 72 per cent after recount one can only guess at the staggering num-

bers on a national recount if done. The quality of Indian statistical data had long been considered as reliable by the global community,



but that stands compromised in recent times. Scientists and medical researchers were pleading with the Union government to share

the data on the patterns and severity of the Covid-19 infections in its possession but the authorities seemed reluctant to share it.

Massaging and fudging numbers has serious implications.

Under reporting does make things look bet-

ter, but then it induces a false sense of well-being. The risk is that it leads authorities to make misleading decisions about lock-downs, reopening and other day-to-day matters. They are left with the impression that the virus is under better

control than it actually is with serious health and economic implications.

When such data, if accurate, is analysed for patterns, it enables us to make faster, more accurate decisions for better and improved outcomes. Data integrity is very important in the healthcare sector as it impacts the health and lives of millions of Indian citizens. This is all the more vital when a pandemic is affecting citizens' health and the nation's economy. Accurate data helps us in tracking the disease to change things for the better. It helps us gain valuable insights, avoid preventable complications and future pandemics.

Yours, etc., Chinmayee Beura Cuttack, 11 June.

## MENTAL HEALTH

SIR, I am writing to you to highlight the issue of mental illness and draw the attention of authorities and the general public towards it. As the country fights the pandemic, due attention has not been given to mentally ill patients and there is a considerable surge in the numbers of these patients.

Due to lockdown protocols and lack of availability of psychological counselling centres in many cities as well as lack of mental health support groups, these patients are facing a lot of problems. The role of family members and neighbours is also important. In some cases their behaviour worsens the patient's condition.

Yours, etc., Chinmayee Beura Cuttack, 11 June.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Left out yet again

**T**he controversial coco levy fund was born out of a scam perpetrated during the Marcos dictatorship. That long-festered injustice was supposed to be resolved with the passage of the Coconut Farmers and Industry Trust Act in February this year. Farmers' groups fear, however, that yet another rip-off is in the making as the draft implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 11524 that took effect in March have left out the coconut farmers from the crucial discussions on how the consolidated coconut levy collections of at least P76 billion will be used.

In the proposed IRR, the management of the trust fund will be left to the Trust Fund Management Committee composed of the Departments of Finance, Budget and Management, and Justice. The Committee will have the power to, among others, privatize or dispose of the coco levy assets, and set investment priorities and trust fund management expenses. Once again left out and shunted aside are the beneficial owners of the coconut levy funds, which the Supreme Court declared in its 2012 decision as "held in trust by the government for the exclusive benefit of the coconut farmers and the industry."

"Provisions on the privatization of coco levy assets should be subject to democratic consultation with farmers," protested Omi Royandoyan, convenor of Centro Saka. "We strongly recommend the participation of farmers in handling and managing the trust fund." The Federation of Free Farmers, Confederation of Coconut Farmers Organizations of the Philippines (Confed), and KILUS Magniniy Organiza-

tions of the Philippines likewise called out the seemingly "undue haste" in the issuance of the IRR, which will come in the form of a joint circular from the three departments. "For desperately poor producers, will genuine public hearings and consultations on the fund's implementing rules be undertaken? How will the Executive satisfy the demand for public transparency and protecting the interests of the Fund's beneficial owners—the country's 3.5 million coconut farmers and farm workers?" the groups asked.

Among their key concerns is the lack of report on the trust fund interest earnings since 2015 from the P69.5 billion in proceeds from the sale of the San Miguel Corp. preferred shares that had appreciated to P76 billion. From 2015, the groups contend, there has been no accounting of interest earned, and the lack of transparency is feared to extend to the handling of the trust fund under the new law.

The farmers' groups are proposing that to ensure transparency and accountability, the DOF as fund manager and the Bureau of the Treasury as fund custodian should regularly provide a fund status report showing the movements of the fund, the fund balance, proceeds of monetization of the levy assets, disbursement and earnings of the fund, etc.

They also called for the formation of a farmers' consultative group, composed of members of recognized national organizations of small coconut farmers, to have a say in the overall management of the trust fund. "The trust fund committee owes it to us to make us understand and inform us how the coco levy fund and assets are being disposed and going to be disposed," said Confed executive director Charlie Avila.

That the coconut farmers are still being made to endure an agonizing wait for their rightful due represents another broken campaign promise by President Duterte. In March 2016, then candidate Rodrigo Duterte vowed to return the coco levy fund to the farmers "sa laong madalog panahon." With barely a year left in his term, that has yet to happen.

ABHIROOP CHOWDHURY AND ARMIN ROSENCRANZ

Cyclone 'Yaas' devastated vast tracts of the Indian Sundarbans on 26 May 2021, breaking the vulnerable earthen dams along the river-banks and flooding the islands with salt water. The devastation amounted to an estimated Rs 15,000 crore in the state of West Bengal, according to government sources. 'Yaas' has also impacted the wildlife of the Sundarbans as much as it has disrupted human lives.

The Sundarbans region is also home to 96 mangrove tigers. The region is protected by the Tiger Project, the nearby National Park and the largest Ramsar wetland conservation site of India.

Tigers have five sub-species living within eastern and south-east Asia. These are the Royal Bengal Tiger, the Indochinese Tiger, the Siberian (Amur) Tiger, the South China Tiger and the Sumatran Tiger. The Royal Bengal Tiger has the largest wild population amongst all these sub-species.

Sundarban tigers have unique behavioral and adaptation traits, unlike tigers of other parts of south-east Asia. Tigers are territorial. Male tigers mark spaces with pheromones and violently guard their territory from rivals. The Sundarbans have diurnal tidal regimes where the mangrove forested islands are washed by tidal waters at least twice a day. This makes marking of territories difficult.

Tigers of the Sundarbans can augment their diet with fish and crabs. They can swim with an estimated speed of 13 km/hr. Sundarban tigers can climb trees, drink salty water, hunt in daylight and prey upon humans. These preying behaviours are different from other members of this species. A scientific study indicates that these tigers have smaller, lighter frames than others because of their ability to swim and climb trees. There is a dearth of fresh water in these islands and tidal waters contain around 1.5 per cent salt. Drinking salty water makes the tigers suffer from liver and kidney problems. This also makes them more irritable and aggressive.

Human-tiger conflict is a reality in the Sundarbans. These deltaic islands are unsuitable for human habitation. This discouraged the colonization of these islands by humans until the 18th century. During the British colonial empire, large tracts

# Of cyclones and the tigers of Sundarbans



of mangrove forest were cleared for agriculture. Eventually, 54 out of 102 islands became inhabited by humans.

Governmental sources report around 10 tiger attacks on humans each year. Villagers claim that at least 10 people die due to tiger attacks each month. Reports indicate that between 1985 and 2009, approximately 789 persons were attacked by tigers. Twenty per cent of these attacks occur in the pre-monsoon month of April. This situation gets more dire during flooding or cyclones, when tigers can easily swim up to the villages inundated by water.

One of the main reasons behind the under-reporting of tiger attacks is the tiger migration into the forest

without the knowledge of forest authorities. According to Joint Forest Management plans, villagers around the Sundarban reserve forests can apply and get passes to collect non-timber forest products. Even fishing vehicles operating around the reserved forests require passes for their entry. The majority of the local people depend on fishing and honey collection. Both of these trades risk tiger attacks. There are villages dotted across the Sundarbans housing 'tiger widows.' They are the women who lost their husbands to tiger attacks.

To prevent tiger migration into the villages, the forests are separated with nylon nets. This acts as a psychological barrier to the tiger, reduc-

ing tiger sightings in the nearby villages. In spite of the nets, old tigers or pregnant tigresses do enter villages to access easy prey. Face masks are worn on the back of the head by the villagers entering tiger-occupied forests. These masks confuse the tigers as they are behaviorally tuned to attack unsuspecting prey.

Tigers are well known for their camouflaged hunting which makes them almost invisible. Their padded feet muffle all sounds, their claws stay retracted inside their paws until required for hunting and their black stripes amongst yellow coat colour makes them virtually invisible amidst straw-colored mangrove palms.

Conflict scenarios add to the fear surrounding tigers in the Sundarbans.

Natural disasters always result in more human-tiger conflicts in this region. After super-cyclone Amphan on 20 May, 2020, eight tiger attacks were reported. 'Yaas' has just hit the islands, which may result in similar tiger attacks.

Tiger conservation is impossible without the support of the local population. Authorities must take special care to limit post disaster tiger-human interaction, minimizing the chances of human-tiger conflicts. Understanding the unique behaviour of the Sunderban tigers is crucial in managing such conflicts.

The writers are, respectively, Associate Professor and Dean at the Jindal School of Environment and Sustainability, O P Jindal Global University, Sonepat.

**POLITICAL DIARY | KALYANI SHANKAR**

## What is Mayawati's future in UP?

The BSP supremo and four-time Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati might have lost her political glamour but the game is not over. She was once dreaming of becoming the prime minister but her party's gradual slide makes one question whether she will be relevant in U.P.?

Mayawati is coming into focus because of the Assembly polls in early 2022. There are doubts about Mayawati's politics because she has gone into a shell since the 2019 polls and has not come out of her bungalow. The other parties like the BJP, SP, and even Congress have begun their poll preparations but the BSP's future is not known.

Rumours are afloat that Mayawati is yet to make up her mind whether she wants to reclaim her position in the opposition turf. With the gradual slide of the BSP, the other political parties in the state are eyeing the Dalit space opening up before the 2022 polls. Moreover, the BSP has not been visible in the controversial mass movements like the anti-CAA protests, vaccine controversy or farmers' protests, etc.

Her famous social engineering of the Dalits, Muslims and Brahmin in 2007 is not there anymore because in the last few years a substantial chunk of Dalits, particularly the Jatavs (Mayawati's caste) have shifted to BJP. The Priyanka Gandhi-led Congress in UP is also eyeing the Dalits. Muslims have been divided between the Samajwadi Party, the BSP and the Congress. Brahmins are back with the BJP. So unless she manages to get



back her core support she will not succeed. In the recent Panchayat polls, the SP did well, followed by the BJP and the BSP came a distant third.

Mayawati has kept her cards close to her chest. With the latest expulsions, the number of BSP MLAs has been reduced to 11 from 19. She has also announced that her party will go it alone in the 2022 polls. "While our votes are easily transferred to the alliance partners, the latter's votes are not...we have suffered from electoral alliances in the past...we have therefore decided to go it alone in the next year's UP

Assembly polls," the BSP supremo declared recently.

The BSP's slide in the past decade has been gradual. In the 2012 UP Assembly election, the party secured nearly 26 per cent vote share, down from 30 per cent in 2007. But in the 2017 polls, this fell to 22 per cent and dropped further to 19.3 per cent in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. The party won 20 Lok Sabha seats in 2009, nil in 2014 and 10 in 2019. Significantly a month after the results were declared, Mayawati had called off the alliance with the SP.

Since then, in many political

positions she appears to favour the ruling BJP at the Centre and the state resulting in the opposition calling her party the BJP's B team. The question is whether Mayawati will support the BJP, overtly or covertly. After all, the BSP has had a long history of political alliances — both pre-poll and post-poll — with the Congress, BJP, and SP.

Mayawati needs to understand the changing world since the outbreak of Covid and change her strategy according to the new situation. Her challenges are many. The first is whether she could take advantage of the disenchantment of Brahmins with

the BJP. The BSP had managed to get 30 per cent of the Brahmin vote in the 2007 Assembly polls.

Secondly, with social media gaining ground in communication, she must strengthen the party's profile on the social media platform.

Thirdly, there is the emergence of new players like Chandrashekhar Azad who are eyeing Dalit votes. Azad, the Dalit youth leader, is already claiming to be the future leader of the Dalit-Bahujan movement in Uttar Pradesh. His Bhim Army is posing a threat to the BSP in Western U.P. Azad will face his first test in the 2022 polls. For the BSP, splintering the Dalit votes is not a solution.

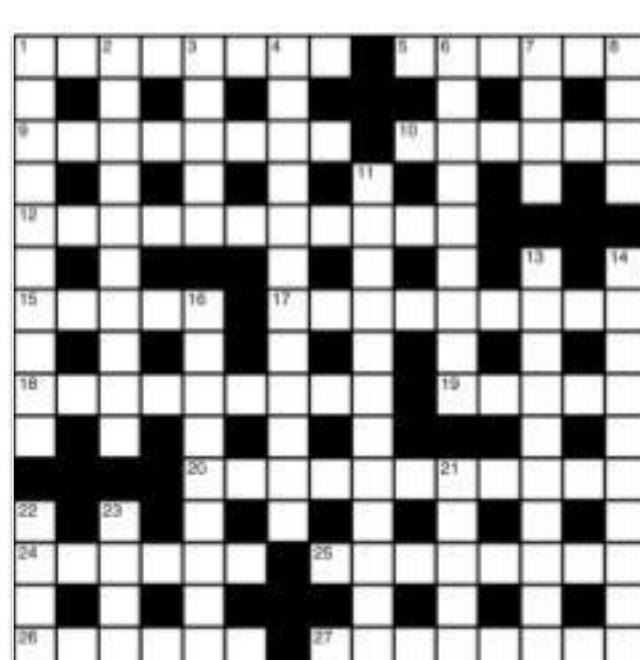
Fourthly, the BSP has lost almost all the leaders groomed by party founder Kanshiram. Some are dead and others have been shunted out. The result is that there are no popular, second-rung leaders today. Many prominent faces of the BSP have also joined the rival Samajwadi Party and more shifts are expected.

Fifthly, Mayawati is perceived to be soft on the BJP. She now considers the SP as her main rival. She has declared recently that she would go to any length to defeat the SP even if it meant supporting the BJP. However, when eyebrows were raised she quickly amended this statement and clarified she would rather retire than support the BJP.

U.P. elections are important as it is the biggest state. A divided opposition will result in a multi-cornered fight. This will be beneficial to the BJP. Mayawati needs a new narrative. But it is too early to predict as elections are eight months away. Mayawati can keep her options open for the post-poll scenario provided she keeps her flock together and adds more voters.

**NO 28941**

**CROSSWORD**



### SOLUTION FOR 06 JUNE

#### ACROSS

- Piece of tin object in the distance (8)
- Fish-eater laying egg by small quarry (6)
- Died by backing into landowner's Beetle (8)
- Bring over shrimp or tuna sandwiches (6)
- Before flight pester poorly filer (4,7)
- Cable carrier left bitten by heartless snake (5)
- Parent circles pub, beginning to enter drunk (8)

#### DOWN

- Writer handled upset resident of 27 (4-5,3)
- Smooth Conservative reclines in front of harbour (5-6)
- Stockings worn by old Sugar (6)
- Deplorable failing in aim to access credit line (8)
- Rug from East Estonia is most dull (6)
- Around noon, yawners slipped home for a bevy (8)
- Writer handled upset resident of 27 (4-5,3)
- Smooth Conservative reclines in front of harbour (5-6)
- The homeless lout really making a turnaround (5)
- Author's poster of a French region (6,6)
- Mark stops wee horse running to another place (9)
- See 22
- Beast in range they say is still on top of ice (4)
- Copies princess reportedly penned for her brother (6,6)
- Agreed plan working on new vaccine (10)
- Time on island in March with good reason (10)
- Bulletins broadcast caws filling roosts (9)
- Kind of sound intermittently faint (5)
- Tom in Paris maybe set up secure online space (4,4)
- King mislaid crown before midday inspection (4)

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

**NOW AND AGAIN**

## Back to the cycle

BUDDHADEV NANDI

Learning how to ride a bicycle is not simple for an adult. However, nearly every adult can learn to ride a bicycle if he or she possesses qualities such as patience, persistence, dedication and course enthusiasm for the task.

I have heard from many people who learnt to drive buses, trains, trucks etc. that learning how to ride a bicycle is harder. It is perhaps the only vehicle, though seemingly very humble to look at, that requires body balance on the part of the rider.

I know many people who can drive motorbikes without riding bicycles ever. Many of them confess candidly that they are afraid of riding bicycles lest they fall down. It is generally said if one knows how to ride a bicycle, one will learn to drive a motorbike easily but not vice versa.

I learnt to ride after my graduation. Unlike early learners, I had to skip the half-pedal stage, an important step that enables one to possess control. Naturally, getting off and getting down from a running bicycle seemed too formidable a challenge. The challenge proved too much for me because of my short height.

After few days I gained confidence and became adept in coordinating the handle, brake levers, pedals and even the bell of the bicycle reflexively.

Balancing the body only on the left leg in a running bicycle slightly inclined on the right is the most difficult part of riding. Like most other late learners, I sat on the saddle while the bicycle was stationary.

I learnt how to ride a bicycle on the sprawling ground of Mission High School. I would circle the ground several times triumphantly. I was confident that I had possessed sufficient control over my bicycle. What was more serendipitous was that I did not get hurt while learning.

Then came the final stage. I took out my bicycle one morning to ride on the road. To my utter surprise, my hands were trembling when I had to apply my power of anticipation to ride through a crowd or a pack of pariah dogs.

But I was bewildered and horrified, when my speeding bicycle slid on a curve covered with red gravel. I badly bruised my entire left side, including my limbs and even my unattractive countenance. My pain doubled when a group of teenage boys laughed out seeing my inability to control the bicycle. One of them came forward and advised me that I should have applied brakes to cut the speed before turning. The lesson proved useful in my life.

The price of petrol per litre in our town has almost touched the summit of Rs. 100. Therefore, after a long gap, with my full conviction to the popular saying that if one learns to swim or ride a bicycle once, he will never forget, I wrestled out my old bicycle from under the staircase. It needed extensive repair and had to be admitted to the nearest bicycle repairing centre named "Cycle Hospital" a few yards from my house.

To my utter astonishment, the mechanic made my bicycle quite fit for riding as before except for its complexion. Now I do the best part of my outdoor chores on my bicycle instead of my motorbike. Besides the savings, it gives me the opportunity to exercise regularly.

### 100 YEARS AGO

#### THE HIDE TRADE

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - A few days ago there was a letter in The Statesman saying the Germans were trying to get the monopoly of the hide trade. As long as the Germans did the hide trade it was a flourishing business, but since the English firms in Calcutta are pretending to buy hides, the hide trade is ruined. There are lakhs of hides stacked in the Calcutta market and no buyers and all are ruined stock now and Government has also dealt the trade a crushing blow by imposing a 15 per cent tax on all exports. The result is that no foreign buyers come. Formerly America, France and Italy used all to buy but from the time of the 15 per cent tax none of these foreign buyers comes. Thus the English Calcutta firms are getting very careful to keep the monopoly of the hides. A walk to the hide market will show the state it is in.

A HIDE DEALER.  
Purneah.

#### AMPHILL COMMITTEE & BENGAL COUNCIL

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - Your article in this morning's Statesman deprecating the formation of the Emergency Committee in England has an illuminating commentary in the action of the Bengal Council within the last few days in cutting down the grant for the Police, and in upsetting the arrangements in progress for partitioning of the Mymensingh and Midnapur districts, showing the absence of all sense of responsibility for law and order and efficient administration. It was, of course, to be expected and it would be unwise at present to say much about it. We have to trust our Governor to take the necessary steps to preserve sanity and good sense in his Government. But surely it is a relief to know that there are some men who know the truth and are trying to instill it into the ignorant public at home. It is wiser always to face unpleasant truths than to ignore them and let things drift.

SENEX.  
Calcutta.



The increase in subsidy under FAME II will usher in a new era of electric mobility in India.

NAVEEN MUNJAL  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, HERO ELECTRIC

## THUMBNAILS

**BEML subsidiary:** BEML Ltd on Saturday said Dipam and Niti Aayog have agreed to the proposal of incorporation of a wholly-owned arm for demerger of surplus land and asset as part of BEML's strategic disinvestment process. "Ministry of defence...conveyed that department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) and Niti Aayog have concurred to the proposal of incorporation of wholly-owned subsidiary of BEML for demerger of surplus land and asset as part of BEML's strategic disinvestment process undertaken by Government of India," BEML said. PTI

**CG Power capex:** CG Power Industrial Power Solutions Ltd has planned a capex of Rs 135 crore this fiscal, the company said. The capex to be funded out of internal accruals will be on balancing, debottlenecking and modernising the facilities at the plants for productivity improvement. CG Power also said barring four wholly-owned overseas operating subsidiary companies in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and the US, rest of the subsidiaries are being closed or in the process of being wound up. IANS

**LIC warning:** Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has issued a public warning over the unauthorised use or misuse of its iconic logo by anybody. According to its Twitter handle, the LIC has barred any websites, publishing houses or digital entities from publishing its logo without the prior permission. LIC, which is soon going for its IPO, has warned stringent legal or civil action against any person found misusing its official logo. IANS

**Vivo phone:** Smartphone maker Vivo has announced the launch of Vivo Y73 in India. Priced at Rs 20,990 for 8GB+128GB storage (expandable up to 1TB), Y73 offers 3GB extended RAM where users can run up to 20 apps at the same time without a hitch, said a Press release. SNS

# Subsidy hike under FAME II to be game-changer: EV makers

The government has made a partial modification of the scheme for FAME India Phase II

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

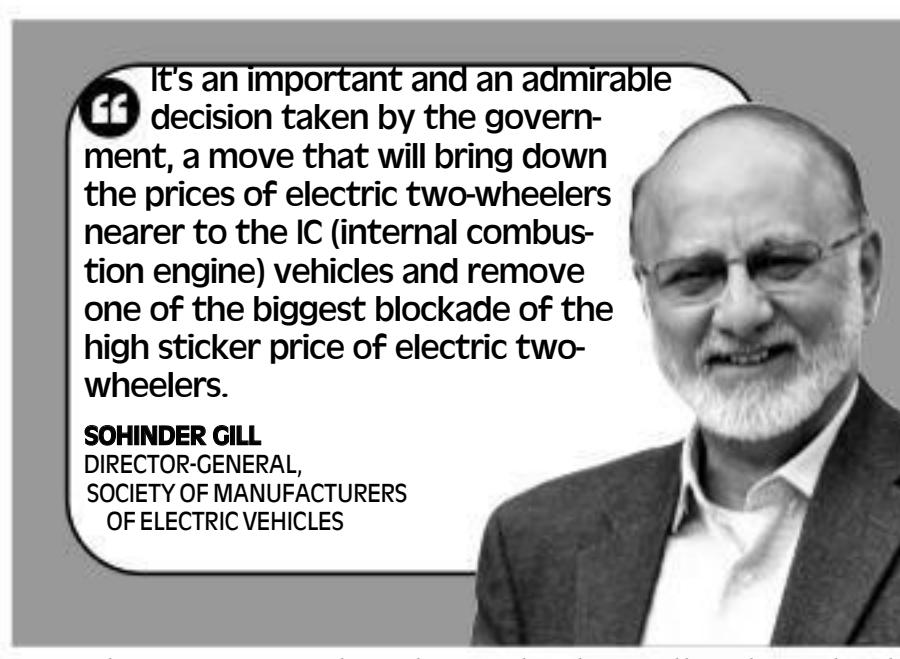
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

**E**lectric two-wheeler makers today termed it as "a phenomenal move" by the government to increase subsidy for such vehicles by 50 per cent under the FAME II scheme, saying it would be a game-changer in the adoption of eco-friendly vehicles.

The government had on Friday made a partial modification of the scheme for Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II), including increasing the demand incentive for electric two-wheeler to Rs 15,000 per kWh from the earlier uniform subsidy of Rs 10,000 per kWh for all EVs, including plug-in hybrids and strong hybrids except busses.

In the latest modification, the department of heavy industries also capped incentives for electric two-wheeler at 40 per cent of the cost of vehicles, up from 20 per cent earlier.

"The revision in the FAME



(II) policy, increasing the subsidy by 50 per cent per kWh, is a phenomenal move. Sales of electric two-wheeler have grown despite the pandemic and with this additional subsidy, we expect electric two-wheeler sales to disrupt the market, and clock 6 million-plus units by 2025," Athar Energy CEO and co-founder Tarun Mehta said in a statement.

The government's continued support to drive adoption of EVs, with a keen focus on locally built electric two-

wheeler will make India the manufacturing hub of EVs, he added.

Expressing similar views, Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) director-general Sohinder Gill said: "It's an important and an admirable decision taken by the government, a move that will bring down the prices of electric two-wheeler nearer to the IC (internal combustion engine) vehicles and remove one of the biggest blockade of the high sticker price of electric two-wheeler."

Likewise, Revolt Motors founder Rahul Sharma said the "modification in the FAME India Phase 2 scheme will prove to be a game changer".

The increase in financial incentive will further help in

Elaborating further, he said a "city speed electric scooter" with a range of 100km/charge will now cost less than Rs 60,000 and a high-speed scooter with a range of 80 km will come nearer to the price tag of Rs 1 lakh.

"Together with the other important factors like extremely low running cost, low maintenance and zero emission, such price levels will surely spur a substantial demand for electric two-wheeler," Gill said.

He further said: "We believe the time has come for mass adoption of electric two-wheeler and such initiatives coupled with a mass awareness campaign by the government and easy terms financing by public sector banks will bring us closer to the target of 30 per cent of the two-wheeler market becoming electric in five years."

Likewise, Revolt Motors founder Rahul Sharma said the "modification in the FAME India Phase 2 scheme will prove to be a game changer".

The increase in financial incentive will further help in

boosting adoption of products in the category and is a reinforcement of the government's commitment and intent for the EV industry," he added.

Welcoming the step, Okinawa Autotech managing director & founder Jeetender Sharma said: "The government of India's revisions to FAME II subsidies is a welcome step that will only add zeal to the adoption of electric vehicles."

Lowering the prices of electric scooters in the country will really help to persuade more riders to switch from a combustion-engined model to an electric one, he added.

Stressing that the industry has always emphasised on the importance of creating an ecosystem for electric mobility, Sharma said: "This new revision to the FAME II scheme is an important step in that direction."

Mehta said Athar Energy already has plans to expand distribution to 30 cities in the next six months and "this increased subsidy will help accelerate consumer demand, immensely".

# CAIT asks Goyal to direct CCI probe into Amazon, Flipkart

TRADE BODY'S PROPOSALS



» Direct the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to immediately initiate investigation proceedings against Amazon and Flipkart without any further ado.

» Immediately issue a fresh Press Note replacing Press Note 2 of the FDI policy with a monitoring mechanism to ensure that law of the land prevails and no one dares to violate the pol-

icy, law or the rules

» Bring greater transparency in e-commerce business.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

A day after Karnataka High Court judgement dismissing the petition of Amazon & Flipkart, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) today sent a communication to Union commerce minister Piyush Goyal urging him to direct the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to immediately initiate investigation proceedings against Amazon and Flipkart without any further ado.

The CAIT has also urged Goyal to immediately issue a fresh Press Note replacing Press Note 2 of the FDI policy with a monitoring mechanism to ensure that law of the land prevails and no one dares to violate the policy, law or the rules. The CAIT has also proposed that to bring greater transparency in e-commerce business, every company indulging into any e-commerce activity through any type of electronic mode should have to take a registration number from the DPIT.

CAIT declared that traders across the country will observe forthcoming week beginning 14 June to 21 June as "E Commerce Purification Week" under which thousands of trade associations of the country, on forthcoming 16 June, will handover a memorandum in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to their respective district collectors urging the Union government to take immediate steps to stop continued violations of the policy and rules by Amazon, Flipkart and other similar foreign funded e-commerce companies.

The traders delegation will

meet chief minister and finance minister of their respective state and will call upon that small traders must not face any backlash from e-commerce companies. The trade associations across the country will send memorandums to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union commerce minister Piyush Goyal to protect the business community from the onslaught of e-commerce companies.

CAIT said these e-commerce companies have left no stone unturned in passing deaf ears to the repeated statements made by Goyal several times and have indulged in unethical & illegal activities by flouting the mandatory provisions of the FDI Policy in both letter & spirit. This fact has been corroborated by Delhi High Court in January 2021 in the matter of Amazon v/s Future Retail that Amazon is indulging into mal-practices and yesterday when Karnataka High Court stated in its order that "It is expected that an order directing investigation be supported by "some reasoning", which the commission has fulfilled".

This observation of the Court has substantiated the fact that everything is not going well and therefore, the investigation should continue. Both the trade leaders complimented CCI for arguing the case well and stood firmly with its observations and actions.

CAIT said that the misunderstanding of the e-commerce companies that India's laws are weak and can be manipulated either way as per the convenience must be washed away with immediate credible actions.

## Policybazaar gets permit for insurance broking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Leading web aggregator Policybazaar said it has got approval from regulator Irdai to undertake insurance broking, a development that will help the company augment business and expand bouquet of services.

With this development, the company will surrender its web aggregator licence to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) and undertake business, including insurance aggregation under the broking umbrella.

"We received our licence to be a broker for which we have been in touch with the regulator for the last three years," PolicyBazaar.com chief executive officer Yashish Dahiya said.

The broking licence will

allow the company to venture into segments which it could not do in the past like claims assistance, offline services, and establish points of presence network.

From a revenue perspective, he said, "as a web aggregator we were not paid for life insurance renewals." As a broker, he said, the company will be entitled for commission as well as fee for web aggregation.

With the help of broking licence, he said: "We will be able to do claims settlement and many other things and we will use this opportunity very wisely."

Policybazaar has a market share of 25 per cent in the life insurance segment while 10 per cent in health insurance.

The parent company PB Fintech also promotes Paisabazaar.com, which is an online credit comparison portal.

## ONGC to support art, handicraft projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Oil PSUs led by ONGC will take up 75 projects to support various art and crafts in the country in an attempt to encourage local artisans.

In line with the government's commemoration of 75 years of Indian Independence ~ Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, petroleum secretary Tarun Kapoor inaugurated an initiative by oil PSUs to support various art and crafts in the country and launched the bamboo craft project of Madhya Pradesh supported by ONGC, the company said in a statement.

"As part of a larger initiative, Central public enterprises under the ministry of petroleum and natural gas will take up 75 projects in different districts across the country. ONGC has launched the initiative to revive the struggling handicraft projects and empower the local artisans. ONGC will take up 15 of the 75 projects," it said.

ONGC, in association with local NGOs and forums, will initially undertake five projects across the country to support the handicraft sector, with an outlay of around Rs 1.3 crore.

The five projects supported by ONGC include supporting the bamboo craft of artisans of Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, helping artisans of ancient metal casting craft Dhokra in Odisha's Dhenkanal, reviving Lac culture in Khunthi and Ghumla districts of Jharkhand, promote traditional craft of wool dyeing in Uttarakhand, and facilitating handloom weavers of Sivasagar district in Upper Assam.

Company chairman Subhash Kumar said oil PSUs have always stood with the community wherever they have an operational presence.

ONGC director (HR) Alka Mittal said that the handicraft industry of India generates over Rs 13,000 crore in export earnings and is a source of livelihood for over 6 million craftsmen.

## Sona Comstar raises ₹2,498 cr ahead of IPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Auto component maker Sona BLW Precision Forgings (Sona Comstar) has garnered Rs 2,498 crore from anchor investors ahead of its initial share sale, which opens on Monday.

The company has allocated a total of 8.6 crore equity shares to 42 anchor investors at Rs 291 apiece, which is the upper end of the price band, according to a BSE circular uploaded late night on Friday.

At this price, the company has raised Rs 2,498 crore, which is 45 percent of the total IPO size of Rs 5,550 crore.

The 42 anchor investors participated in the anchor book, included 24 foreign portfolio investors, 11 domestic mutual funds, 5 life insurance companies and 2 alternative investment funds (AIFs).

## After petrol, diesel now breaches ₹100 mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Diesel price today breached the Rs 100-per-litre mark in Rajasthan after yet another increase in fuel rates, which also led to Karnataka becoming the 7th state to record Rs 100 a litre petrol.

Petrol price was hiked by 27 paise per litre and diesel by 23 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The hike ~23rd since 4 May ~ pushed fuel prices across the country to new historic highs.

In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 96.12 a litre, while diesel is now priced at Rs 86.98 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. And because of this petrol retails at over Rs 100 per litre mark in six states and Union Terri-

tories ~ Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Ladakh.

Karnataka got added to that list with many places in the state, including Bidar, Bellary, Koppal, Davanagere, Shimoga and Chikmagalur, recording over Rs 100 a litre petrol.

Petrol in the state capital Bengaluru is priced at Rs 99.39 per litre and a litre of diesel comes for Rs 92.27.

Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan near the India-Pakistan border was the first place in the country to see petrol hit Rs 100 a litre mark in mid-February and on Saturday it also earned the distinction of diesel crossing that psychological mark.

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Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan near the India-Pakistan border was the first place in the country to see petrol hit Rs 100 a litre mark in mid-February and on Saturday it also earned the distinction of diesel crossing that psychological mark.

Petrol in the city is sold at Rs 107.22 a litre ~ the highest rate in the country, and diesel comes for Rs 100.05.

Karnataka became the seventh state to record Rs 100 a litre petrol after Saturday's fuel price hike.

### COSTLIER FUEL

» Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan near the India-Pakistan border was the first place in the country to see petrol hit Rs 100 a litre mark in mid-February and on Saturday it also earned the distinction of diesel crossing that psychological mark.

» Petrol in the city is sold at Rs 107.22 a litre ~ the highest rate in the country, and diesel comes for Rs 100.05.

» Karnataka became the seventh state to record Rs 100 a litre petrol after Saturday's fuel price hike.

the town sells for Rs 110.50 a litre and same grade diesel at Rs 103.72.

Rajasthan levies the highest VAT on petrol and diesel in the country where petrol was being sold at over Rs 100 a litre.

Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Mumbai on 29 May became the first metro in the country where petrol was being sold at over Rs 100 a litre.

Petrol now costs Rs 102.30 a litre in the city and diesel comes for Rs 94.39.

After Leh, Srinagar too is witnessing near Rs 100 a litre petrol (Rs 99.27). Hyderabad

too is in the same league with petrol costing Rs 99.96.

Petrol sells for Rs 101.73 a litre in Leh and diesel costs Rs 93.66.

The hike today was the 23rd increase in prices since 4 May, when state-owned oil firms ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

In 23 increases, petrol price has risen by Rs 5.72 per litre and diesel by Rs 6.25 a litre.

Oil companies revise rates of petrol and diesel daily based on the average price of benchmark fuel in the international market in the preceding 15 days, and foreign exchange rates.

International oil prices have firmed up in recent weeks in anticipation of demand recovery following the roll-out of vaccination programme by various countries.

## PM addresses the World Environment Day event

Target of achieving 20 percent ethanol blending in petrol has been preponed to 2025; PM: Government has identified 11 sectors

# Rapid decline in Covid cases in Odisha

TPR 7.22 per cent, 4,852 new positive cases, 47 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

Maintaining the downward trend of virus infection, Odisha on Saturday logged below 5,000 COVID-19 positive cases for the first time after 53 days gap while the state recorded the highest ever single fatality of 47 deaths pushing the overall total to 3,257.

Today's daily positive cases (4,852) were the lowest since 21 April, when the state had reported 4,851 daily infections.

Explaining the rise in fatalities, Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) Prof C B K Mohanty said the figures relate to deaths that have occurred during the peak period as each death is properly audited at the institution, district and state level. The process takes

time. Hence the figure of 47 deaths given today is actually cases that have occurred maybe 10 days ago.

The overall COVID-19 situation in the state is showing signs of stabilizing with steady drop in positive cases and positivity rate in June after the consistent clocking of 10,000 and above cases almost throughout May.

There has been a positive turnaround underlining the flattening of contagion's curve in the state.

The Test Positivity Rate (TPR) which hovered around 15 to 23 percent earlier last month has dropped below ten percent since past week.

A total of 67,122 samples were tested in the last 24 hours at 7.22% TPR.

The number of active cases which crossed one lakh mark in May has climbed down to 62,515 as of now. Sim-

ilarly the recovery rate has jumped to 91.75 percent with the daily recoveries surpassing the 24 hours' COVID infections.

On 15 May, Odisha's case-load had crossed the six lakh mark. On 1 May this year, the State had recorded over 10,000 fresh cases for the first time on a day since the beginning of the pandemic in March last year.

The disease graph is descending although the fatality rate is yet to recede. The public health experts are hopeful of end and to the second wave by July.

As many as 41,219 COVID-19 positive cases were reported in the last 8 days at a daily average of 5,277 cases in the State while 305 have succumbed to the infections during the period with daily average death of 38.

The State's recovery rate

currently stands at 92.23% with as many as 7,81,488 cured of the disease so far.

Odisha currently has 62,515 active cases.

With the current phase of lockdown till 17 June, speculations are on whether Odisha government will lift the restrictions or not.

Indications from official quarters including the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been that districts which have turned green or have less than 5 per cent TPR will witness easing of the curbs while the ones with more than 10 per cent TPR will continue with the shut down.

The other view is with regards to phases – night curfew, restrictions at malls, market places, bars and restaurants need to continue while other activity could be permitted from 18 June onwards.

**28 Odisha doctors succumbed to COVID in 2nd wave**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

As many as 28 doctors in Odisha have succumbed to COVID-19 infections during the second wave of the pandemic, according to the state chapter of Indian Medical Association (IMA).

Seeking martyr tag for doctors who died of COVID, IMA-Odisha chapter president Samrat Kar said "a doctor should be accorded martyr status if he/she dies on the line of work like what is being accorded to a soldier".

While 719 doctors lost their lives due to Covid-19 in the ongoing second wave, Odisha accounted for 28 deaths. The fatality ratio of Odisha however stands at 4 per cent in comparison to overall deaths recorded countrywide, he said.

ment is not taken care of, he added.

Mr Vishal Kumar Dev, Principal Secretary, Sports and Youth Services and Tourism, Government of Odisha said that the government is aware of the concerns faced by the tourism and hospitality sector.

Addressing a virtual roundtable on 'Covid: Impact on State Tourism Sector' organized by FICCI, the state Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi and principal secretary Vishal Kumar Dev spoke of the road map being prepared to boost tourism in the state.

Mr Panigrahi said the

Chief Minister wants to take Odisha tourism to the global level. He is expected to soon announce financial packages for the tourism sector. The need is to work towards sustainable tourism, and we cannot have a situation where risk manage-

preparing master plan for each destination. A priority destination list has been identified consisting of 70 circuits and the government will invest in a big way. Our infrastructure development budget for this year has been doubled," he added.

Odisha will have the largest river cruise operator to start catamarans and by early next year the state will be on the luxury river cruise map of the country, Mr Dev said.

Ms Monica Nayyar Patnaik, Chair, FICCI Odisha State Council noted that the FICCI Odisha State Council, Mr JK Mohanty, Co-Chair, FICCI Tourism National Committee, Mr SK Dash, Director, Trip Process Pvt Ltd; Mr Vishal Kamat, CEO, Kamat Group of Hotels; Mr Sanjib Kumar Rout, FICCI Member and CV Raman Global University, among others participated.

# Odisha govt to announce package for tourism sector

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

Odisha government will soon announce a detailed support package for the tourism sector which will include the hotels, restaurants, tour operators to help it to bounce back and flourish.

Addressing a virtual roundtable on 'Covid: Impact on State Tourism Sector' organized by FICCI, the state Tourism Minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi and principal secretary Vishal Kumar Dev spoke of the road map being prepared to boost tourism in the state.

Mr Panigrahi said the

Chief Minister wants to take

Odisha tourism to the global level. He is expected to

soon announce financial packages for the tourism sector. The need is to work towards sustainable tourism, and we cannot have a situation where risk management

## Odisha opts for live stream virtual teaching for students

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

With Odisha still in the midst of the pandemic, the state government has decided to live stream virtual teaching sessions for all classes on YouTube from 21 June in a bid to connect the school students with

The state school and mass education department has skipped the WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom and Skype mode of online learning to go for the live stream virtual teaching session in at least 13 of the 30 districts.

"The classes will be streamed from Monday to Friday from 10.45 am to 1 pm from 21 June with 4 periods of 30 minutes duration each. There will be no class on Saturday so as to enable teachers for preparation of lessons and other related works", said officials of Odisha School Education Programme Authority (OSEPA) on Saturday.

The schools in the districts that will be covered

under live-streaming classes, according to officials are Khordha, Balangir, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Ganjam, Koraput Puri, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Nayagarh, Bhadrak, Balasore and Sambalpur.

The District Education Officers have been directed to prepare basic YouTube Live Streaming studios by improvising classrooms and arranging minimum equipment for YouTube Live Streaming classes.

The OSEPA will communicate the YouTube Live Streaming credentials to the district. The classes will be conducted as per a common routine/timetable and scheme of lessons prepared by the Directorate of Secondary Education, Odisha.

The lessons of Class X will be delivered from the textbooks as per the revised syllabus of the last academic session while the lessons of Class IX will be based on UTKARSH Books. The teachers at school will develop subjectwise/class wise worksheets/assessment sheets on each chapter and

these will be sent to children's homes through WhatsApp.

Despite the government's initiative, questions are being raised on the success of live streaming mode of virtual teaching keeping in view the fact that students in majority of areas are bereft of access to smartphones and laptop sets.

With classroom teaching coming to a grinding halt following the outbreak of pandemic, the government during the first wave outbreak of COVID-19 last year had taken recourse to online classes to make up for the students' loss of study. WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom and Skype were adopted for online learning.

The teachers shared the study materials on WhatsApp for students of Class II to X.

The online classes had however failed to yield the desired results as around 70 percent students have no access to virtual classes either due to lack of smartphone or internet connectivity.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

The Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) in coordination with the Odisha health department will conduct the fourth phase of Serological Surveillance for Covid 19 in three districts of the state

"The serosurvey will begin in two phases in June in Ganjam, Rayagada and Koraput districts to measure the rate of exposure to the Sars-Cov-2 virus, which causes Covid-19. It will also unfold the

prevalence of antibodies against COVID-19. For the first time in the State, the children above 6 years will be covered under the serological survey", Director Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Bhubaneswar, Dr Sanghamitra Pati.

The survey will be conducted from June 16-17 and from June 21-22 in two phases. There will be random sample collection from different groups including high-risk groups, community members besides kids, she said.

## OPCC decries slowdown in vaccination drive

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

Vaccination has slowed down considerably in the state alleged OPCC working president and former MP Pradip Majhi while lambasting the centre and the state for the vaccine procurement mess that has led to suffering and anxiety among people.

Addressing a media con-

fiasco.

Reports state that the centre has placed orders for 74 crore doses only on 8 June. It means that till the current month the central government had not placed orders, he noted.

He demanded that Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik should provide funds from the CMRF to the needy poor Covid patients who require to go to

Kolkata or Chennai for advanced treatment. There are few cases of shifting patients by air ambulances, but what about the rest, he asked.

Sudarshan Das, OPCC leader who was also present at the media conference said the Odisha government must provide Rs 4 lakh ex gratia to families of Covid victims. It has been done in Bihar, he claimed.

## Local industries seek govt help to curb iron ore price

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAIPUR, 12 JUNE

of iron ore produced in Odisha, approximately 65 million tonnes is produced from captive mines of Tata Steel, SAIL, JSW Steel, Arcelor Mittal and JSPL.

Most of the auctioned merchant iron ore mines such as Serajuddin, Fomeni, Tarana, Vishal LPG etc have not started production or have not achieved minimum production threshold.

Due to this, the merchant supply of iron ore has shrunk to only 44 million tonnes. OMC produced approx. 13 million tonnes, Rungta Mines 10 million tonnes, Essel Mining

6 million tonne sand DR Patnaik 4 million tonnes.

The short supply of has

resulted in iron & steel plants

from West Bengal and Chhattisgarh participate aggressively at the recent auction held by Odisha Mining Corporation on 2 June wherein 61,900 MT of iron ore was

on offer.

The average price of iron ore was Rs.11, 612 per MT which was an increase of approx. Rs.4, 000 per MT compared to the last tender.

Several companies like

Rungta Mines, JSPL, TATA

Steel who have iron ore mines

also participated in the tender.

The unprecedented rise in rate of iron ore has put several smaller units in trouble.

Industries like MESCO,

Aadhunik, Concast, NINL

have shut down.

Many other end user

industries in Odisha are now suffering harshly and are having to close their operations in Odisha, leading to retrenchment of man power.

Industry bodies like OSIMA

and KNIA have already taken

up the matter with the chief minister and secretary steel and mines in the state.

They have called for rea-

sonable rates to enable the

units in Odisha to survive.

## Cannabis seizure reaches a new high in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 JUNE

The Odisha police have registered a record seizure of over 1,615 quintals of cannabis valued at over Rs 100 crore in the past 17 months, said a senior police official on Saturday.

Industry bodies like OSIMA

and KNIA have already taken

up the matter with the chief

minister and secretary steel

and mines in the state.

They have called for rea-

sonable rates to enable the

units in Odisha to survive.

ary to May this year. The cumulative seizure made in the past 17 months was to the tune of 1,615 quintals. This is the highest ever seizure made by Odisha police.

While in 2017, 304 quintals of cannabis locally called ganja were seized, 2018 year saw the seizure of 523 quintals. There was a seizure of 618 quintals in 2019, while 1,549 quintals were seized from drug peddlers in 2020, officials said.

The ganja routed through

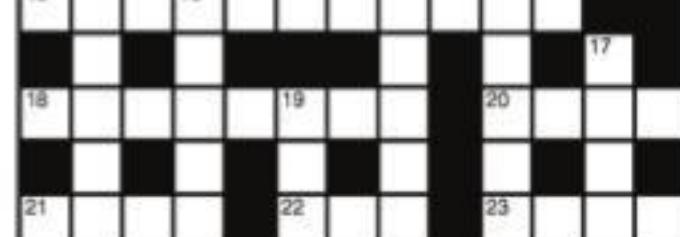
Odisha by organized drug

syndicates is much in demand in other States because its price

is on the lower side.

### LEISURE

#### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker**

I'M TEXTING SARGE THAT WE'RE LOST  
WHY NOT JUST USE THE RADIO?  
BECAUSE HE TAKES FOREVER TO LOOK AT HIS TEXTS

SEW, SEW, SEW! I SPEND HALF MY TIME SEWING!  
FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GET SO MANY HOLES IN YOUR VEST!

LET ME



*Russia was the first country to deploy a coronavirus vaccine, 18 million Russians have received the vaccine ~ about 12 % of the population*

**RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN**

AS MOSCOW ORDERS NEW RESTRICTIONS WITH COVID-19 INFECTIONS SOARING

**THUMBNAILS**

The head from a statue of Egerton Ryerson, considered one of the architects of Canada's residential school system in Caledonia, Ontario.

AP

**Ship on fire at Manila port:** A fire and a powerful blast ripped through a small cargo ship docked to refuel in the Philippine capital of Manila on Saturday, injuring at least six people and igniting a blaze in a nearby riverside slum that gutted dozens of shanties, officials said. The fire raged for about seven hours aboard the MV Titan 8 and forced its crew to jump in panic into the Pasig River.

AP

**Daughter of Mexican drug lord sentenced in US:** A daughter of alleged Mexican drug lord Nemesio Oseguera has been sentenced in the US to two-and-a-half years in prison for her role in Mexican companies designated under the 'Kingpin' act, the US Justice Department said on Saturday.

AP

**Toxic gas leak kills 8:** At least eight people died and three others fell sick after inhaling toxic gas at a chemical company in China's Guizhou Province on Saturday. Based on a preliminary investigation, authorities said methyl formate leaked from a van while company workers were unloading chemicals from it. PTI

**13 hurt in Austin shooting; suspect not in custody**

**Two of the injured people were in critical condition and no one had died, interim Austin Police Chief Joseph Chacon said.**

AUSTIN (US), 12 JUNE

A shooting in a busy entertainment district in downtown Austin, Texas injured 13 people early Saturday, and police said the suspected shooter was not in custody.

Two of the injured people were in critical condition but as of the news conference at 4 am local time, no one had died, interim Austin Police Chief Joseph Chacon said.

Gunfire erupted just before 1:30 am along 6th Street, a popular area filled with bars and restaurants. The street was barricaded to keep out vehicle traffic at the time of the shooting, Chacon said. It was unclear what sparked the shooting.

Eleven of the injured people were taken to one local hospital, another person was taken to a different hospital, and the other person went to an urgent care facility with gunshot wounds, Chacon said.

Our officers responded very quickly, the interim chief said. They were able to immediately begin life-saving measures for many of these patients, including applications of tourniquets; applications of chest seals. Chacon also said some officers transported patients to hospitals in their police cruisers due to the nature of the scene, where it was hard to contain the crowd and get ambulances to those who were injured.

The shooter was not immediately arrested. Chacon said the description that police had of the suspect was not very detailed, but said the person was believed to be a man. Investigators were reviewing surveillance video and other evidence from the area, Chacon said. He asked anyone with information on the shooting to contact police.

# Biden urges leaders to unite against China

US to push democratic allies to publicly call out China for forced labour practices as the Group of Seven leaders gather at G-7 summit

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
CARBIS BAY (ENGLAND) 12 JUNE

The United States plans to push democratic allies on Saturday to publicly call out China for forced labour practices as the Group of Seven leaders gather at a summit where they will also unveil an infrastructure plan meant to compete with Beijing's efforts in the developing world.

The provocative proposal is part of President Joe Biden's escalating campaign to get fellow democratic leaders to present a more unified front to compete economically with China in the century ahead, according to two senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the plans for the seaside summit publicly.

China also loomed large over the meeting on the craggy coast of Cornwall. Biden's proposed critique of China's labour practices was to be raised as the allies unveil an infrastructure proposal dubbed Build Back Better for the World, a name that echoes the slogan of the American president's election campaign.

The plan calls for spending hundreds of millions of dollars in collaboration with the private sector. It's designed to compete with China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative, which has launched a network of projects and maritime lanes that already snake around large portions of the world, primarily Asia and Africa. Critics say the projects often create massive debt and expose nations to undue influence by Beijing.

Britain also wants the world's democracies to



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II talks with G7 leaders in Cornwall during the G7 summit. AP

become less reliant on economic giant China. The UK government says Saturday's discussions will tackle how we can shape the global system to deliver for our people in support of our values, including by diversifying supply chains that currently heavily depend on China.

Not every European power has viewed China in as harsh a light as Biden, who has painted the rivalry with the techno-security state as the defining competition for the 21st century. But there are signs that Europe is willing to put greater scrutiny on Beijing.

Weeks before Biden took office last year, the European Commission announced it had come to terms with Beijing on the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment, a

deal meant to provide Europe and China greater access to each other's markets. The Biden administration had hoped to have consultations on the pact.

But the deal has been put on hold, and the European Union in March announced sanctions targeting four Chinese officials involved with human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Beijing responded by imposing sanctions on several members of the European Parliament and other Europeans critical of the Chinese Communist Party.

Biden administration officials see the moment as an opportunity to take concrete action to speak out against China's reliance on forced labour as an affront to human dignity." While calling out

China in the communiqué wouldn't create any immediate penalties for Beijing, one senior administration official said the action was meant to send a message that the G-7 was serious about defending human rights and working together to eradicate the use of forced labor.

An estimated 1 million people or more most of them Uyghurs have been confined in reeducation camps in China's western Xinjiang region in recent years, according to researchers. Chinese authorities have been accused of imposing forced labour, systematic forced birth control, torture and separating children from incarcerated parents. Beijing rejects allegations that it is committing crimes.

## UK-EU Brexit spat over N Ireland clouds summit

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
LONDON, 12 JUNE

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson held meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday on the sidelines of a G-7 summit, as post-Brexit turbulence strains relations between Britain and the EU. After Britain's top diplomat accused the EU of taking a bloody-minded approach to relations, Johnson also met the bloc's leaders, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel, at the Carbis Bay resort where G-7 leaders are gathering.

The two sides are locked in an escalating diplomatic feud over Northern Ireland, the only part of the UK that has a land border with the bloc.

The EU is angry at British delay in implementing new checks on some goods coming into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK required under the terms of Britain's divorce from the bloc. Britain says the checks are imposing a big burden on

businesses and destabilizing Northern Ireland's hard-won peace. The spat has drawn in US President Joe Biden, who is concerned about the potential threat to Northern Ireland's peace accord. Von der Leyen tweeted after meeting Johnson that Northern Ireland peace was paramount, and the binding Brexit agreement protected it.

We want the best possible relations with the UK. Both sides must implement what we agreed on. There is common EU unity on this, she said. The EU is threatening legal action if the UK does not fully bring in the checks, which include a ban on chilled meats such as sausages from England, Scotland and Wales going to Northern Ireland starting next month.

It says Britain must fully implement the agreement, known as the Northern Ireland Protocol, that the two sides agreed and ratified.

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said that if the EU continued to take a bloody-minded and purist approach, Britain would have to act to protect the integrity of the UK.

## UK lockdown delay due to Delta variant

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
LONDON, 12 JUNE

The UK government is considering a delay of up to four weeks from the scheduled June 21 end to all lockdown restrictions amid a continuing rise in cases of the Delta variant of Covid, according to a media report on Saturday.

It comes as the country reported 8,125 new cases in a 24-hour period, another record daily high since the end of February, and Public Health England (PHE) found that infections from the Delta variant the B1.617.2 variant of concern (VOC) first identified in India rose by nearly 30,000 in a week to hit 42,323.

Downing Street sources told the BBC that no final decision has been made yet and that several options are being evaluated as the latest data is studied before UK Prime Minister Johnson makes a scheduled announcement regarding a lockdown on Monday.

The British Medical Association (BMA) is among some of the leading public health care groups and officials calling for a delay to the planned easing of all lockdown restrictions on 21 June, dubbed Freedom Day as it would see all legal limits on social contact removed.

Pushing the date back by a few weeks is intended to allow the country's vaccination programme to take greater effect, as the rollout moves through to younger age groups and the older age groups get covered with their second jabs.

"It's not just about the number of hospitalisations, but also the risk to the health of large numbers of younger people, who can suffer long-

## Thousands march in support of Muslim family killed in Canada

ONTARIO, 12 JUNE

Thousands of people marched on Friday in support of a Canadian Muslim family run over and killed by a man driving a pick-up truck last Sunday in an attack the police described as a hate crime.

The four victims, spanning three generations, were killed when Nathaniel Veltman, 20, ran into them while they were out for an evening walk near their home. A fifth family member, a 9-year-old boy, survived.

People in London, Ontario marched about 7 kilometres from the spot where the family was struck down to a nearby mosque, the site close to where Veltman was arrested by police.

Some carried placards with messages reading 'Hate has no home here', 'Love over hate.' Similar events were held in other cities in Ontario, Canada's most populous province.

After a moment of silence marking the time of the tragedy, representatives from several religions gave speeches denouncing hatred and saluting the outpouring of support for London's 30,000-strong Muslim community. "The best part was not just the numbers [...] but the diversity of the people coming from every single community in London, coming together for this cause," said 19-year-old college student Abdullah at the march.

It is tied to several criteria being met, including the vaccine rollout continues successfully; evidence shows vaccines effectively reduce hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated; and infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS and the assessment of risks is not fundamentally changed by new VOCs.

Of these four criteria, the one related to VOCs is the one tripping up the schedule as PHE's latest analysis this week found that the Delta VOC was about 60 per cent more transmissible than the Alpha VOC identified in the UK.

THE DAWN

## ACTION MODE



Climate activists from Oxfam, wearing giant heads depicting the leaders of the G7, sit on beach chairs as they participate in an action on Swanpool Beach in Falmouth, Cornwall on Saturday.

AP

## Last minute flip, Peru's Castillo close to victory as few votes remain to be counted

**AGENCIES**

LIMA, 12 JUNE

Peruvian socialist candidate Pedro Castillo was close to being named the Andean country's next president as the vote count neared an end, making a last-minute flip by right-wing rival Keiko Fujimori increasingly unlikely.

Castillo, an elementary school teacher raised in an impoverished village, was leading the count by 51,000 votes on Saturday morning, when only around 62,000 votes remained to be counted.

This week on unsubstantiated allegations of fraud, seeking to disqualify tens of thousands of votes. But even if Fujimori were to succeed, the number of votes still in play make it unlikely she would succeed in flipping the result.

The tense vote count is the culmination of a bitterly divisive election in Peru, where low-income citizens supported Castillo while wealthier ones voted for Fujimori.

On Saturday, Peru's electoral

jury tried to push back a deadline to allow Fujimori to submit requests to disqualify up to 200,000 votes cast in Peru's poorest regions, but said in the afternoon that it had backed off that plan, paving the way for a Castillo victory. In the end, Fujimori has only been able to challenge some 38,000 votes. "We call for the (electoral) jury to guarantee and support a clean and just electoral process," Castillo tweeted on Friday night. "The Peruvian people deserve it."

Fujimori, meanwhile, responded on Twitter that "the field was not level." She has so far declined to concede.

Fujimori first brought up allegations of fraud on Monday, and doubled down on Wednesday when she signed

she intended to seek the annulment of some 200,000 votes in rural areas of the country that support Castillo. One of the main arguments is that she had won no votes among voter groups in those regions that pool up to 300 people, which she said was a sign of fraudulent action.

Left-wing Castillo has spooked markets, largely because his party, Free Peru, is self-described as Marxist-Leninist. Castillo has recently sought to appeal to markets with a moderate-left platform, but it remains unclear if his administration will ultimately keep that tone or revert to the party's roots as a far-left organization. (Reporting by Marcelo Rochabrun Editing by Chizu Nomiyama)

## Indian-origin Covid response professionals in Queen's Birthday Honours list

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
LONDON, 12 JUNE

Indian-origin healthcare experts involved in the field of Covid vaccine trials and community support efforts are among those in the spotlight at the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The Queen's Birthday Honours List, unveiled on Friday evening, is released every year to coincide with Queen Elizabeth II's official birthday celebrations held during the second weekend of June. This time, it has a special focus on the extraordinary efforts made by individuals across the country during the pandemic.

Kolkata-born Divya Chadha Manek has been honoured with an Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to the government during the COVID-19 response for her



Britain's Queen Elizabeth II watches a ceremony to mark her official birthday at Windsor Castle on Saturday. ■ AP

## HARD WORK PAYS OFF

► Kolkata-born Divya Chadha Manek has been honoured with an Order of the British Empire for her involvement in the research and development of vaccines and the resulting clinical trials.

► Those honoured as Members of the British Empire include Devina Banerjee, from Vaccine Taskforce, Anoop Jivan Chauhan, professor of respiratory medicine and executive director of Research, Portsmouth Hospitals University NHS Trust and Dr Ananthakrishnan Raghuvaran, consultant physician, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

► Among the over 30 Indian-origin honours recipients for 2021 include OBEs for Jasvinder Singh Rai, founder and chairman of the Sikh Recovery Network and Jasjyot Singh of Lloyds Banking Group.

► Sad Professor of Vaccinology at the Jenner Institute, University of Oxford, and Kate Bingham, Chair of the Vaccine Taskforce, for services to the procurement, manufacture and distribution of vaccines.

Andrew Pollard, professor of Paediatric Infection, University of Oxford, receives knighthood for services to public health, particularly during Covid.

Among the over 30 Indian-origin honours recipients for 2021 include OBEs for Jasvinder Singh Rai, founder and chairman of the Sikh Recovery Network for services to the Sikh community during the pandemic, and Jasjyot Singh of Lloyds Banking Group for services to financial services during the pandemic.

Those honoured as Members of the British Empire (MBE) include Jagjit Singh Chadha, director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, for services to economics and economic policy;

Councillor, Ashton Waterloo, Tameside, for services to the community in Greater Manchester; Gurveer Dhami, senior private secretary to the Secretary of State for Education, and Amika George, Founder of #FreePeriods Campaign; Sumit Goyal, consultant oncoplastic surgeon, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, for services to breast cancer and Cardiff Breast Centre Charity; and Priya Guha, Venture Partner, Merian Ventures, and Member, Innovative UK Council, for services to international trade and women-led innovation.

Of the 1,129 recipient of an award this year, 567 are women which is 50 per cent of the total and 62 per cent of the recipients have undertaken outstanding work in their communities, either in a voluntary or paid capacity.



Iraq's oil sector is rebounding after a catastrophic year triggered by the pandemic, with key investment projects on the horizon

IRAQ OIL MINISTER IHSAN ABDUL-JABBAR ISMAIL  
IN AN INTERVIEW

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 13 JUNE 2021

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## THUMBNAILS



A Palestinian uses his phone as he sits amid the rubble of a house that was destroyed in Israeli air strikes in Gaza. AGENCEZ

**Mexico beach killing:** A US tourist was wounded in a shooting attack on Friday that killed two men at a beach in Mexico's Caribbean coast resort of Cancun. The prosecutor's office in the state of Quintana Roo, said the two men apparently died of bullet wounds at the scene, and added that a foreign woman had been wounded and was taken to a local hospital. AP

**Cargo damage claim:** Sri Lanka on Saturday made an interim damage claim of \$ 40 million from the owners of the Singapore-flagged cargo ship that caught fire near the outer area Colombo port on 20 May and caused the country's worst-ever marine ecological disaster. The vessel "MV X-PRESS PEARL" was carrying a consignment of chemicals. PTI

**Pak encounter:** Pakistani Police have killed one of the four robbers who allegedly gang-raped a 22-year-old bride on the first night of her wedding in Punjab province. Four robbers clad in police uniforms on 26 May barged into a house after a wedding ceremony in a village of Shujabad in Lahore, and held the family hostage. PTI

**Afghan blast:** Separate bombs hit two minivans in a mostly Shiite neighbourhood in the Afghan capital on Saturday, killing at least seven people and wounding six others, the Interior Ministry said. The explosions targeted minivans on the same road about 2 km apart in a neighbourhood in western Kabul. AP

## Protests in Nigeria over security crisis

ABUJA, 12 JUNE

Police fired teargas and detained several demonstrators in the Nigerian cities of Lagos and Abuja during protests over the country's worsening security situation.

Anger over mass kidnappings-for-ransom, a decade-long Islamist insurgency and a crackdown on protesters in Lagos last October has fuelled demands for the government of President Muhammadu Buhari to do more to tackle violence and insecurity.

There was a heavy police presence in the country's two major cities as several hundred people gathered to protest on Democracy Day. A witness saw police firing teargas into the crowds to disperse the demonstrators, who held placards and chanted 'Buhari must go.'

AGENCIES

# China, US diplomats spar over human rights, Covid-19 origin

Yang Jiechi & Blinken held a phone call that revealed wide divisions in a number of contentious areas

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BEIJING, 12 JUNE

**T**op US and Chinese diplomats appear to have had another sharply worded exchange, with Beijing saying it told the US to cease interfering in its internal affairs and accusing Washington of politicising the search for the origin of the pandemic.

Senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi and Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a phone call Friday that revealed wide divisions in a number of contentious areas, including the curtailing of freedoms in Hong Kong and the mass detention of Muslims in the northwestern Xinjiang region.

Calls for a more thorough investigation into the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19 are particularly sensitive for China because of suggestions that it might have escaped from a laboratory in the central city of Wuhan, where cases were first discovered.

Yang said China was gravely concerned over what he called absurd stories that the virus escaped from the Wuhan

lab. China firmly opposes any despicable acts that use the epidemic as an excuse to slander China and to shift blames," Yang was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency. Some people in the US have fabricated and peddled absurd stories claiming Wuhan lab leak, which China is gravely concerned about," Yang said. China urges the US to respect facts and science, refrain from politicizing

tigation into where the virus sprung from and how it initially spread. Equally contentious were the issues of Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Taiwan and accusations that China has arbitrarily detained two Canadian citizens in retaliation for Canada's arrest of an executive of Chinese communications technology giant Huawei, who is wanted by US law enforcement. The US has fabricated various lies about Xinjiang in an attempt to sabotage the stability and unity in Xinjiang, which confuse right and wrong and are extremely absurd. China is firmly opposed to such actions," Yang said.

Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs," and those found in violation of a sweeping national security law imposed on the former British colony must be punished," Yang said.

Blinken, on the other hand, underscored US concern over the deterioration of democratic norms in Hong Kong and the ongoing "genocide and crimes against humanity against predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang," the State Department

said.

He also urged Beijing to ease pressure against Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy China claims as its own territory, to be annexed by force if necessary. According to Xinhua, Yang said Taiwan involves China's core interests" and that Beijing firmly defends its national sovereignty and territorial integrity." The tone of the phone call seemed to echo contentious talks in March in Alaska, when the sides traded sharp and unusually public barbs over vastly different views of each other and the world in their first face-to-face meeting since President Joe Biden took office.

At that meeting, the US accused the Chinese delegation of grandstanding, while Beijing fired back, saying there was a strong smell of gunpowder and drama that was entirely the fault of the Americans. Relations between them have deteriorated to their lowest level in decades,

with the Biden administration showing no signs of deviating from the established US hardline against China over trade, technology, human rights and China's claim to the South China Sea.

# HK activist Chow released from jail

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HONG KONG, 12 JUNE

swelled to demand universal suffrage and an investigation into police abuses, becoming increasingly violent as demonstrators responded to harsh police tactics.

China fought back with the national security law, which has snuffed out dissent in the semi-autonomous territory.

Defenders say it intends to ensure those running the city are Chinese patriots committed to public order and economic development.

China also overhauled Hong Kong's Legislative Council to give pro-Beijing delegates an overwhelming majority. Hong Kong's media outlets are now almost completely dominated by pro-Beijing business groups and even independent booksellers have become

rewards.

The national security law has also given authorities broad powers to monitor speech online, making it difficult to organize opposition gatherings or even express views critical of the government or Beijing. An annual candlelight vigil for victims of the 1989 pro-democracy movement was canceled for the second time this year.

Hong Kong censors this week were also given the power to ban films that endanger national security.

## FOR MOTHERLAND



An Indigenous man wearing a protective face mask takes part in a protest against Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's proposals to allow mining on Indigenous lands, at the main entrance to the Chamber of Deputies in Brasilia. AP

## Algerians vote in parliamentary election

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ALGIERS, 12 JUNE



The early election is supposed to exemplify President Abdelmajid Tebboune's new Algeria, with an emphasis on young candidates and those outside the political elite. A huge number of candidates more than 20,000 are running for the 407-seat legislature, once dominated by a two-party alliance considered unlikely to maintain its grip on parliament. Islamist parties all offered candidates. It's the first legislative election since for-

mer President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was forced from office in 2019 after 20 years in power amid protests over corruption, joblessness and repression. Tebboune was elected eight months later.

The Constitutional Council announced Saturday that it would be 15 days before

results of the balloting are known because of the number of candidates and the need to ensure against fraud,

which marked past elections.

The threat of boycott by the main opposition parties and Hirak supporters means the turnout may be low.

Photos on social media showed images of some voting stations in the Kabylie region torn asunder with ballots strewn in streets. Kabylie, home of Berbers, is a traditional bastion of the opposition.

I call on Algerians to vote massively ... to deny the forecasts and catastrophic scenarios of the enemies of Algeria, Communications Minister Amar Belhimer said on Algerian television. Women make up half of candidates for the first time, among efforts to make a fresh start. But women have been largely invisible from the campaign their faces often blurred or concealed in campaign posters.

Independent candidates like Djamel Maafa, used social networks to spread his message for lack of access to the funds.

## Myanmar Junta accuses ethnic armies over blasts

AGENCIES  
NAYPYITAW, 12 JUNE

Myanmar's junta on Saturday accused some of the country's two dozen ethnic armed groups of providing training to its opponents to carry out a wave of bombings that it said had targeted public buildings including schools.

Bomb attacks have become a daily occurrence as the army struggles to impose authority after seizing power from Aung San Suu Kyi in February.

At a news conference, junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun identified three ethnic armed groups he said had provided training to "terrorists": the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Karen National Union (KNU) and the The Karen National Progressive Party (KNPP) - which has an armed wing.

Bomb attacks have become a daily affair as the army struggles to impose authority after seizing power from Suu Kyi

Zaw Min Tun said the authorities' information that Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) were giving training came from people who had been arrested and equipment captured. "The explosive lessons they provided are being used in destroying public buildings," he said.

Some of the ethnic groups, which have been fighting for decades for greater autonomy, had been in a shaky ceasefire. But that has frayed since the coup with some of the groups openly backing anti-junta protesters.

Meanwhile, new armed groups have sprung up in parts of the country to oppose military rule.

## Woman with knife shot dead in West Bank

JERUSALEM, 12 JUNE

Israeli police say a private security guard at a checkpoint near Jerusalem shot and killed a woman on Saturday who allegedly planned to carry out a stabbing attack.

The police said in a statement that the guard at the Qalandia checkpoint north of Jerusalem saw the woman with a knife and shot her.

Several amateur videos captured by Palestinians at the crossing showed the woman lying on the ground at the Israeli side of the crossing. Police later said she was a 28-year-old Palestinian woman.

The checkpoint is operated by private security firms, but Israeli police deploy after violent incidents. The official Palestinian news agency, reported that Israeli forces closed the crossing point. AP

## Indian-origin scribe wins Pulitzer Prize for exposing China's vast infra for detaining Muslims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW YORK, 12 JUNE

Megha Rajagopalan, an Indian-origin journalist, along with two contributors has won the Pulitzer Prize for innovative investigative reports that exposed a vast infrastructure of prisons and mass internment camps secretly built by China for detaining hundreds of thousands of Muslims in its restive Xinjiang region.

Rajagopalan from BuzzFeed News is among two Indian-origin journalists who won the US' top journalism award on Friday.

Tampa Bay Times' Neil Bedi won for local reporting. Bedi along with Kathleen McGroarty has been awarded the prize for the series exposing a Sheriff's Office initiative

that used computer modelling to identify people believed to be future crime suspects. About 1,000 people were monitored under the programme, including children.

Bedi is an investigative reporter for the Tampa Bay Times. What Kathleen and I unearthed in Pasco County has had a profound impact on the community, said Mark Katches, Times executive editor. This is what the best investigative journalism can do and why it is so essential.

Rajagopalan's Xinjiang series won the Pulitzer Prize in the International Reporting category.

In 2017, not long after China began to detain thousands of Muslims in Xinjiang, Rajagopalan was the first to visit an internment camp at a time when China denied that such

places existed, BuzzFeed News said. In response, the government tried to silence her, revoking her visa and ejecting her from the country. BuzzFeed News wrote in its entry for the prize. It would go on to cut off access to the entire region for most Westerners and stymie journalists.

The release of basic facts about detainees slowed to a trickle. Working from London, and refusing to be silenced, Rajagopalan partnered with two contributors, Alison Killing, a licensed architect who specialises in forensic analysis of architecture and satellite images of buildings, and Christo Buschek, a programmer who builds tools tailored for data journalists.

The blazing Xinjiang stories shine desperately needed light on one of the worst

human rights abuses of our time, said Mark Schoofs, editor-in-chief of BuzzFeed News.

Minutes after she won, Rajagopalan told BuzzFeed News she wasn't even watching the ceremony live because she wasn't expecting to win. She only found out when Schoofs called to congratulate her on the victory. I'm in complete shock, I did not expect this, Rajagopalan said over the phone from London. She said

she was deeply grateful to the teams of people who worked with her on this, including her collaborators, Killing and Buschek, her editor Alex Campbell, BuzzFeed News' public relations team, and the organisations that funded their work, including the Pulitzer Center.

Rajagopalan also acknowledged the courage of the sources who spoke to them despite the risk and threat of retaliation against them and their families. I'm so grateful they stood up and were willing to talk to us, she said. It takes so much unbelievable courage to do that. The three of them set out to analyse thousands of satellite images of the Xinjiang region, an area bigger than Alaska, to try to answer a simple question: Where were Chi-

nese officials detaining as many as 1 million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslim minorities? For months, the trio compared censored Chinese images with uncensored mapping software. They began with an enormous dataset of 50,000 locations.

Buschek built a custom tool to sort through those images. Then, the team had to go through thousands of images one by one, verifying many of the sites against other available evidence, BuzzFeed News wrote in its prize entry.

The ground-breaking technological reporting was also accompanied by extensive old-fashioned shoe leather journalism.

Barred from China, Rajagopalan instead travelled to its neighbour Kazakhstan, where many Chinese Muslims have sought refuge.

There, Rajagopalan located more than two dozen people who had been prisoners in the Xinjiang camps, winning their trust and convincing them to share their nightmarish accounts with the world.

Pulitzer prizes are awarded yearly in twenty-one categories. In twenty of the categories, each winner receives a certificate and a USD 15,000 cash award. The winner in the public service category is awarded a gold medal.



### INCISIVE REPORTING

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For more updates

[www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)**THUMBNAILS**

Russell hit on helmet: West Indies all-rounder Andre Russell was on Friday taken to a hospital here in an ambulance after he was struck on the helmet by a bouncer in a Pakistan Super League (PSL) match. Russell was seen being stretchered out of the dressing room to an ambulance during the first over of the second innings.

**Shakib banned for 4 games:** Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan has been let off lightly with a four-match suspension from Dhaka T20 Premier League. Following his on-field meltdown during a match between Mohammedan Sporting and Abahani Limited.

**Shankar misses Olympic qualification:** Tejaswin Shankar, India's men's high jump national record holder, won silver by clearing with a height of 2.23 metres at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 Outdoor Track and Field Championships in USA.

**Holding criticises England:** West Indies great Michael Holding has criticised England cricket team's "moment of unity" gesture in the ongoing Test series against New Zealand, saying it was not supporting Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement but giving subtle meaning of "all lives matter".

**MAN OF HONOUR**

David Alexander Robertson (in photo, left), coach of Real Kashmir FC, has been given the British Empire Medal for his services to the valley community and strengthening UK-India relations, an accomplishment he dedicated to the people of Kashmir and the team he has been tutoring.

**AGENCIES**

PARIS, 12 JUNE:

Czech Barbora Krejčíková (in photo) claimed her maiden Grand Slam title when she beat Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-1 2-6 6-4 in the French Open final on Saturday. The 25-year-old is the first Czech to lift the Suzanne Lenglen Cup since Hana Mandlíková, who represented Czechoslovakia, triumphed in 1981. Krejčíková won six games in a row to take the opening set after dropping serve in the first, before Pavlyuchenkova gained the upper hand in the second set. The Russian had her left thigh taped at 5-2 but served it out to level at one-set-all before Krejčíková broke decisively for 4-3 in the decider to extend her winning streak on clay to 12 matches.

Asked to share her emotions, Krejčíková paused for a moment, thanked the Court Philippe Chatrier crowd and, after a follow-up question, said, "I can't believe what just happened."

Krejčíková, a five-time Grand Slam winner in doubles and mixed, last year won her first Grand Slam main-draw singles match and broke into the top 100 in singles for the first time. She had zero wins over top-10 players until last month.

Krejčíková, formerly coached by the late 1998 Wimbledon champion Jana Novotná, a fellow Czech, won a low-level clay tournament in Strasbourg, France, the day before the French Open began.

"When Jana was passing away [in 2017] I was most of the time with her," said Krejčíková, who received the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen from Czech-born legend Martina Navratilova.

"Pretty much her last words were just enjoy, just try to win a Grand Slam. I know from somewhere she is looking after me. I just really miss her."

In Paris, Krejčíková is 12-0 between singles and doubles. She'll play for another title with partner Katerina Siniaková on Sunday. In singles, she navigated a draw that was otherwise defined by missing stars. The world's top three players were

**Mancini is Italy's standout man at Euro 2020**

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ROME, 12 JUNE



For months, Italy's players have been repeating the same mantra: "Our strength is in the group. We don't have a single standout player." The Azzurri do have a standout coach, though, and Roberto Mancini's (in photo) impact in turning around a team that failed to qualify for the last World Cup into European Championship contenders is worthy of praise.

"We play soccer now, as the coach has asked us to, and that's the thing that has changed most over these last few years under Mancini," veteran defender Leonardo Bonucci said after Italy dazzled in the second half in a 3-0 win over Turkey in the Euro 2020 tournament opener. The victory extended the Azzurri's unbeaten streak to 28 matches - two shy of the team record set under Vittorio Pozzo nearly a century ago - and marked the first time in Italy's history at the European Championship (39 matches played) that it scored three goals.

**Kieffer Moore snatches a point at Euro**

"We're already well aware of what a good side we are. We're very relaxed," said fullback Leonardo Spinazzola, who stood out with his forays down the left flank. "The coach is able to transmit that day-in and day-out. "We have it all. Defence, a good midfield, and a quality attack. It's an incredible mix of qualities," Spinazzola added after Friday's match. "Some of us are quite technical; others really strong; some have it all. We really have a lot of variety in this squad." Mancini pulls it all together in a way that Italy coaches rarely have since Marcello Lippi led the Azzurri to their fourth World Cup title in 2006.

Wales earned a point with a 1-1 draw against Switzerland in their opening match of Euro at the Olympic Stadium in Azerbaijan.

Breel Embolo powered a header in from a set piece early in the second half, giving the Swiss a deserved lead before Kieffer Moore equalised with a Welsh fans into raptures.

In a scoreless first half, Yann Sommer made an excellent save to deny Moore, while Wales were perhaps lucky to not concede a penalty when Chris Mepham had a hold of Embolo's shirt.

Switzerland dominated for much of the match and Embolo's pace and power meant he was a constant thorn in Wales' side, and he teed up Kevin Mbabu moments after the opening goal - only for the full-back to tamely miss.

**Time for Brazil to forget troubles**

AGENCIES  
RIO, 12 JUNE



A Brazil team playing in the Copa America at home on the back of a seven-game winning streak would normally be hot favourites to triumph but this is no ordinary year and no ordinary Copa. Brazil's run of form is impressive - they are the only team in South America to have won six of their 2022 World Cup qualifiers and have done so by keeping clean sheets in five of them - but it comes amid turbulence off the field.

The players took the unusual step of publicly criticising the South American football confederation, Conmebol, on Wednesday, barely a week after Brazil had stepped in to host the tournament in place of Argentina, who pulled out after a surge in Covid-19 patients.

The players said their protest was not political and they pointedly sought to avoid the Left-Right polarisation that had beset the country in recent years and led to mass street protests. One of the big questions facing the Brazil team as they go into the Copa, which is due to kick off on Sunday when they face Venezuela in Group B, is whether the current controversy will bring them together or pull them apart. Brazil are the holders,

having won the 2019 tournament when it was also played in front of their own fans. They were without the injured Neymar (in photo) but his team-mates stepped up -- holding their nerve to beat Paraguay on penalties in the quarter-finals, overcoming arch-rivals Argentina 2-0 in the semis, and beating Peru 3-1 in the final.

As usual, they have an abundance of talent to choose from, with players such as Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson and striker Gabriel Jesus plus Liverpool pair Fabinho and Roberto Firmino all struggling to find a place in the starting XI. Coach Tite has expertly managed the egos and the tactics and will be confident of notching up Brazil's 10th Copa America title. They also face Colombia, Ecuador and Peru in Group B. In truth, though, this tournament is as much about preparing his side for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Wales came close themselves, with Ben Davies blazing over while Aaron Ramsey's delightful free kick was begging to be put in the back of the net before Moore's equaliser - and the Welsh survived a late VAR scare for good measure.

**NZ gain 85-run lead against England**

BIRMINGHAM, 12 JUNE

New Zealand took a crucial 85-run first-innings lead and then gained further control over England as they dismissed two of their batsmen cheaply in their second innings on the third day of the second and final Test here on Saturday.

At tea, England were 18 for two wickets in six overs. Pacer Matt Henry removed both openers, Rory Burns (0) and Dominic Sibley (8) with the total being 17.

Earlier, while Will Young (82), Devon Conway (80) and

Ross Taylor (80) were the main contributors for New Zealand, their lower order batsmen did not contribute much. But the last seven New Zealand batsmen, barring wicket-keeper Tom Blundell (34), did not add much to the first innings' total.

For England, fast bowler Stuart Broad bagged four wickets while Mark Wood and Olly Stone captured two each.

Brief scores: England: 303 and 18/2; New Zealand: 388 all out (Will Young 82, Devon Conway 80, Ross Taylor 80, Stuart Broad 4/48). IANS

**Proteas in full bloom**

GROS ISLET (ST LUCIA), 12 JUNE

The West Indies' batting faltered for the second time in as many days, keeping South Africa in a commanding position at stumps on the second day of the first cricket Test. After being dismissed for 97 on the first day, the West Indies slumped to 51-4 as they began their second innings 225 runs behind South Africa. Quinton de Kock's unbeaten 141 guided South Africa to 322 in the first innings and the tourists' bowlers again quickly ran through the West Indies' top order. A stubborn 31-run partnership for the fifth wicket between Roston Chase and Jerome Blackwood halted the slide and lifted the West Indies to 82-4 at stumps when the deficit was 143. Chase was 21 and Blackwood 10 at stumps and their partnership occupied the last 13 overs of the day. Rabada and Anrich Nortje shared the four wickets that fell in the last session. AP

**'Sharma-v-Boult will be a humdinger'**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Opener Rohit Sharma (in photo) facing Trent Boult's incoming deliveries will be a fascinating contest, something that Virender Sehwag will be looking forward to watching in the World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand starting in Southampton on 18 June. Sehwag says that Sharma's qualities and his recent form at the top of the order set him up for success during the six Test matches in England this summer.

"No doubt Trent Boult-Tim Southee combination will pose a lot of challenge for Indians. They can move the ball both ways and are brilliant while bowling in partnerships also," Sehwag told PTI.

"Boult vs Rohit Sharma will be a contest that I would be looking forward to. If Rohit gets set and sees off Boult's opening spell, it will be a treat to watch," feels one of India's greatest match winners in the longer format. While this would be Rohit's first shot at opening in English conditions, the experience of playing Tests in 2014 will certainly help him.

"Rohit is a fantastic batsman and he has played Test cricket in England earlier also (2014) so I think he can manage well as we have seen in recent times when he has opened the batting. I have no doubt that he will score runs in England this time."

"Obviously, as it is for any opener, he would have to be careful for the first 10 overs and see off that new ball to understand the conditions first. I am sure he will get a chance to show his range of strokes," said the man, who has scored more than 8000 Test runs. If there is one player apart from Rohit, who can be a maverick as Sehwag

was during his glory days, it is Rishabh Pant, who is going through a purple patch in his international career. Sehwag wants Pant to bat the way he knows and not get bogged down by too much analysis and dissection about technique and temperament needed to be successful in England.

"Rishabh Pant knows his batting better than anybody else and he should focus on what he can do best for the team rather than worried about what ex-cricketers, commentators and media is saying," Sehwag said about the keeper, who has already scored a hundred in English conditions during the tour of 2018.

"The focus for Rishabh should be one ball at a time. If the ball is there to be hit, he should hit it. I don't think he needs to change approach as he has got success with the same approach and Test matches are different ball game."

"Of late, he has understood his role in the team and he is a very critical player for India in Test matches coming in at No 6. If he gets set and starts scoring runs, he can change the game in a session and we have all seen that."

Once and for all, Sehwag also wants to put at rest the debate around Cheteshwar Pujara's "strike-rate" and "intent".

**Boult's hope**

Initially not expecting to feature in the ongoing second Test against England, New Zealand paceman Trent Boult hopes that

after the suspension of the Indian Premier League in May, was also set to sit out the second match. However, the pace spearhead was out of quarantine sooner than expected as the UK relaxed its rules.

**White-ball squad**

India's white-ball squad, led by Shikhar Dhawan, will quarantine in Mumbai from 14 June to 28 June and undergo six Covid-19 tests on alternate days before flying to Colombo for a six-match series against Sri Lanka starting on 13 July.

**Playing with coronavirus in a Qatar bio bubble**

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

When Anirudh Thapata tested positive for the coronavirus in Doha recently as India were getting ready for the World Cup - cum - Asian Cup qualifiers, the All-India Football Federation's taciturnity merely underscored what things would have been like if a national cricketer were similarly afflicted.

It seemed that the AIFF was anxious not to rub Qatar up the wrong way, coach Igor Stimac having earlier been made to express a guest's gratitude after alleging, in a newspaper interview, that the host had not really accommodated the Indi-

**SHORT POINT**

key people in Doha which swung the pre-tournament residential tune-up deal but the fact of the matter is that Qatar is not charity. India were paying guests in a country where lots of Indian workers denied the elementary amenities of life had died over the years. And Qatar does not offer dis-

sition of the World Cup and many other sport projects by it. It is but a small extension of the basic effort for it to claim a leading organisational position in the age of the pandemic to defy serious medical warnings and hold events, often with people attending them. Among the disciplines it has thus dabbled in, apart from football, are tennis, motorcycling, judo and beach volleyball. Doha had its bio-secure bubbles all right for each but breaches of them have been a pathetic commonplace.

Germany's Thomas Mueller tested positive ahead of the World Cup of football. Players were made to greet non-bubble notables. The Australian

Open's qualifying tournament in Doha saw American Denis Kudla fall a victim when 5-3 up in the second set against Moroccan Eliot Benchetrit. Argentine Francisco Cerundolo was left undone when yet to get into his first-round match versus Mario Viella Martinez of Spain. VIPs sat in player boxes at the Qatar Open. A beach volleyball bio bubble proved porous too.

Thapa and his peers were done no favours when herd into Qatar for practice even before the ignominy of playing in a country where their compatriots had died working on 2022 World Cup projects. But then, shame is hardly an emotion you would associate with the AIFF.



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