

XI'S PROLONGED
TENURE COULD SPELL
TROUBLE FOR CPC

P9



UK GOVT ACCUSED
OF HYPOCRISY AS
HANCOCK QUILTS

P10



'ERA OF SUPPRESSION
IN J&K MUST END'

P4



DEEPIKA
ON TARGET

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 40 and 27 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 90% Min: 44%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 38.8°C (+1) Min: 26.7°C (-1)
SUN RISES 05.27 hrs SUN SETS 19.23 hrs
MOON RISES 22.45 hrs MOON SETS 09.58 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Men throw nets into a waterbody for fishing. In Nadia district of Bengal on Sunday. IANS

BSP to contest UP, Utkhand 2022 polls alone: The BSP will not enter into any alliance for Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Assembly polls, party chief Mayawati said on Sunday. In a series of tweets in Hindi, the former chief minister categorically denied any tie-up with the AIMIM for the Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh due next year. The BSP has recently joined hands with the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab.

P5

Vaccination camp guidelines: Following the revelation of a vaccination scam in Kolkata, the state health department has issued a set of guidelines that requires all private vaccination camps to obtain prior permission from the department and appoint a nodal officer

Classified UK defence papers found at bus stop: Classified documents from the UK Defence Ministry containing secret information about a warship and the military were discovered at a bus stop in south-eastern England on Saturday. A member of public contacted the BBC on Tuesday morning when he realised the sensitive nature of the contents.

P10

50K new Covid cases, 1,258 deaths

PTI & SNS

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 27 JUNE

A single-day rise of 50,040 fresh Covid-19 infections took India's tally to 3,02,33,183, while the number of active cases dipped to 5,86,403, according to Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday morning.

The death toll climbed to 3,95,751 with 1,258 more people succumbing to the viral disease in a 24-hour period. Active cases now comprise 1.94 per cent of total infections.

The weekly case positivity rate has come down to 2.91 per cent, while the daily positivity rate is 2.82 per cent.

Kerala, currently the worst affected state, added 10,905 new Covid-19 cases and 62 deaths on Sunday. Maha-

rashtra reported 9,974 new cases and 143 fatalities, while Delhi saw 89 new cases and 4 fatalities.

The country administered 64.25 lakh vaccine doses in a day, taking the cumulative number of jabs given so far under the nationwide inoculation drive to 32.17 crore, according to data at 7 am. AIIMS director Dr Randeep Guleria said the data of phase two and three of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin on two to 18 years age group is expected by September.

Delhi cases: Delhi today reported 89 fresh Covid cases and 4 coronavirus-linked deaths while the positivity rate stood at 0.12 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The weekly case positivity rate has come down to 2.91 per cent, while the daily positivity rate is 2.82 per cent.

Kerala, currently the worst

affected state, added 10,905 new Covid-19 cases and 62 deaths on Sunday. Maha-



SEE P2

'Delta plus has more affinity for lung tissues than other strains'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

The Delta plus variant of Covid-19 has greater affinity for lung tissues as compared to other strains but it does not mean that it will cause severe disease or is more transmissible, head of coronavirus working group NTAGI Dr N K Arora said.

A new viral variant of the coronavirus, Delta Plus, was identified on 11 June. It was recently classified as a variant of concern. Till now, 51 cases of Delta Plus have been detected across 12 states, with Maharashtra reporting the maximum cases.

Talking about Delta plus, chairman of Covid-19 Working Group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) said, "Delta plus is having greater

affinity to mucosal lining in the lungs, higher compared to other variants, but if it causes damage or not is not clear yet. It also does not mean that this variant will cause more severe disease or it is more transmissible."

He said the impact of the Delta plus strain will become clear only as more cases are identified but it appears that the disease is generally mild in all those who have got either single or double dose of the vaccine. "We need to keep a very close watch and look at its spread so that it will give us transmission efficiency," he said.

Arora said the number of cases identified of Delta plus variant may be more as there may be many asymptomatic individuals also ~ those who do not have any Covid symptoms but are carrying the virus.

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday said he had never imagined that an ordinary village boy like him would have the honour of occupying the highest post in the country, and thanked the people of his birth place for this.

He was addressing a gathering at the Paraunkh village, which is his birthplace, in Kanpur Dehat district of Uttar Pradesh. The Rashtrapati Bhavan tweeted that in an emotional gesture, after landing at the helipad near his village, Kovind bowed and touched the soil to pay obeisance to the land of his birth.

This is the first time the president is visiting his village after taking over his present assignment. Though he desired to visit the place ear-

lier, plans could not materialise because of the pandemic, an official statement had earlier said.

"I had never imagined, even in my dreams, that an ordinary village boy like me would have the honour of occupying the highest post in

the country. But, our democratic system made this possible," Kovind said. "Wherever I have reached today, the credit goes to the soil of this village, this region, and to your love and blessings," he said. The president paid tributes to B R Ambedkar, mak-

ers of the Constitution and freedom fighters. He also visited Milan Kendra and Veerangana Jhalkari Bai Inter College and addressed a Jan Samabodhan Samarth.

"According to my family's sanskaar (values), the oldest woman in the village is given the status of mother and the oldest man is given the status of father, irrespective of caste or community. Today, I feel happy that this tradition of giving respect to the elders in our family is still continuing," Kovind said.

He said that the scent of soil and the memories of its people always remain etched in his heart. "For me Paraunkh is not only a village, it is my maatribhoomi from where I get inspiration to serve the country," Kovind said.

"This inspiration has made me reach from high court to the Supreme Court to the

Rajya Sabha. From the Rajya Sabha, I moved to the Raj Bhawan and from there to the Rashtrapati Bhavan," he said.

He said that as he was quite late in his visit this time and he will try not to delay so much next time.

The president said all people are from equal backgrounds. "There have been a number of prime ministers from UP, but this is the first time that the state has given a president to the country. Now, the path for the people of UP to become president has also opened up," he said.

The president said that an attempt is being made to promote fitness during the Covid period. "Get yourself vaccinated," he said.

Kovind on Sunday morning reached Paraunkh village where he was welcomed by UP Governor Anandiben Patel and CM Yogi Adityanath.

Twitter interim grievance officer for India quits

The microblogging platform's website no longer displays Dharmendra Chatur's name as required under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021

NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

Twitter's interim resident grievance officer for India has stepped down, leaving the micro-blogging site without a grievance official as mandated by the new IT rules to address complaints from Indian subscribers, according to a source.

Dharmendra Chatur, who was recently appointed as interim resident grievance officer for India by Twitter, has quit from the post.

The social media company's website no longer displays his name, as required under Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

Twitter declined any comment on the development.

The development comes at a time when the micro-blogging platform has been engaged in a tussle with the Indian government over the new social media rules. The government has slammed Twitter for deliberate defiance and failure to comply with the country's new IT rules.

The new rules which came into effect from 25 May mandate social media companies to establish a grievance redressal mechanism for resolving complaints from the users or victims.

All social media companies, with over 50 lakh user base shall appoint a grievance officer to deal with such complaints and share the details of such officers.

Delhi seeks 45L Covid jabs from Centre for July: Atishi

'This's needed to keep up vaccination pace'; 89 fresh virus cases, 4 deaths logged

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE



The Delhi government has informed the Centre that the city needs 45 lakh doses of Covid vaccines in July to keep up the current vaccination rate of 1.5 lakh jabs daily, AAP MLA Atishi said today.

"More than 45 lakh doses will be needed if the pace of vaccination increases," she said.

According to Delhi's vaccination bulletin, 25 per cent of the city's population in the 18-44 age group has received at least one dose of vaccine. Ninety-two lakh people in this age group are eligible for vaccination in the city.

Atishi said the national capital administered a record 2.07 lakh vaccine doses on Saturday, of which more than 1.5 lakh jabs were given to youths.

Delhi has 7.06 lakh vaccine doses available, including 5.4 lakh Covishield doses, at present. If the authorities continue

to vaccinate people at the current pace of 2 lakh shots daily, this stock will be over in three days, she said.

"We have written to the Centre that Delhi needs 45 lakh vaccine doses to keep vaccinating people at the rate of 1.5 lakh jabs per day," she said while presenting the vaccination bulletin.

"We have been asking the Centre to increase vaccine supplies for the 18-44 age group because youths are eager to get vaccinated. They don't come alone; they bring senior members of their families with them to vaccination centres," Atishi said.

Delhi has so far administered over 73 lakh doses since the inoculation exercise started on January 16. More than 17 lakh people in Delhi have received both doses.

Delhi today reported 89 fresh Covid cases and 4 coronavirus-linked deaths while the positivity rate stood at 0.12 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital has so far recorded 14,33,934 coronavirus cases. Of this, over 14.07 lakh patients have recovered while its current Covid death toll stood at 24,965, the bulletin stated.

According to the bulletin, 170 Covid cases from earlier weeks were added to the tally in the ICMR portal on Saturday by Central Jail Hospital, Tihar Prisons.

Delhi had yesterday reported 85 Covid cases — the lowest this year — with a positivity rate of 0.12 per cent and 9 deaths.

Delhi had reported 89 cases

and 11 deaths on 21 June. That was the first time that the daily count of cases in the city had gone below the 100-mark since 16 February, when 94 people were diagnosed with the disease.

The city had recorded 134 cases with a positivity rate of 0.20 per cent and 8 deaths on 22 June. It had registered 111 cases and 7 deaths on 23 June, when the positivity rate was 0.15 per cent, as per the official figures.

On 24 June, 109 cases and 8 deaths were recorded while on 25 June 115 cases and 4 deaths were logged.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of 74,198 tests, including 54,297 RT-PCR ones, the bulletin said.

The number of active cases decreased to 1,568 from yesterday's 1,598. The tally of Covid patients under home isolation in the city dipped to 478 from yesterday's 494 while the number of containment zones was 1,837, the bulletin added.

Delhi had reported 89 cases

Wedding industry heaves sigh of relief as Delhi unlocks

PTI

NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

For the wedding industry in the national capital, it is the permission to reopen rather than the hope to make some profit that has shown a sliver of hope after three months of no business.

The Delhi government on Saturday allowed weddings at banquet, marriage halls and hotels with 50 people in attendance, and reopening of gyms and yoga centres at 50 per cent capacity under the phased unlock process initiated with an improvement in the city's COVID-19 situation.

The relaxations will come into force from 5 am on Monday.

Wedding planners and banquet hall owners welcomed the Delhi government's decision. They, however, said they do not

hold any hopes for making profit this season.

"We are glad that we have been allowed to open at least. After paying the employees from our pockets and incurring losses, we will at least be able to make the ends meet," said Sunil Juneja of Precious Moments Banquets.

He said earlier booked weddings that had postponed will be given priority now, while new bookings have also started to come in.

In the last one year since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020, the wedding business was severely hit as episodic lockdowns in March-September last year and since April this year prevented any lavish marriages from taking place.

Wedding planner Jitesh Khanna of The Velvet Weddings noted that as Delhi main-

tained strict lockdown guidelines, disallowed weddings or any sort of congregation since April, most planned weddings were shifted out of the city.

"So now that 50 people are allowed, we are happy with the decision. And we are hoping soon 100 people will be allowed. It is any day better than no business," Yadav said.

However, he added, it would be difficult to maintain the budget as a wedding for 50 requires just as much preparation as a wedding of 200.

Shrawan Yadav of Shubh Muhurt Luxury Wedding Planners echoed Khanna's thoughts and said that "they were not looking at making profits, as reopening the business was more important for now".

The one year of pandemic has not been favourable to the industry, said Mohsin Khan of Vivah Luxury Wed-

dings, as he said several people postponed their weddings last November after revision of Covid guidelines.

"We had no business last year. This year too, the complete wedding season was lost due to the lockdown. Either people postponed their weddings or cancelled their bookings altogether," Khan said.

Over 50 per cent of the bookings got cancelled this year, he added.

Khan, who has been in this line of profession for over 10 years now, said that he is not thinking about profits, but it is some relief that the business has reopened at least.

"Now coronavirus is part of our life. We have to run our lives around it, according to it. At least, we have been allowed to reopen, if everything goes right, we will have larger weddings soon," he added.

A day will come soon when there will be no cadre left to open the door of the saffron brigade party offices in Asansol...

LAW AND JUDICIARY MINISTER MOLOY GHATAK

AFTER MORE THAN 3,000 BJP SUPPORTERS JOINED TMC IN ASANSOL

Capital

Delhi unlock: Gymnasiums gear up to open; many yoga institutes prefer to stay online for now

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

Apprehensive about a possible third Covid wave, owners of many yoga institutes in the national capital said they prefer to continue conducting their classes in the online mode for some more time despite the Delhi government allowing them to operate in-person from Monday.

Gymnasiums, on the other hand, have geared up to reopen with 50 per cent capacity with several of them starting the sanitization process at their facilities and even offering special discounts for customers vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Delhi government on Saturday allowed weddings at banquet, marriage halls and hotels with 50 people in attendance, and reopening of gyms and yoga centres at 50 per cent capacity under the phased unlock process initiated with an improvement in the city's COVID-19 situation.

Chirag Sethi, vice-president of Delhi Gym Association, said the industry has suffered huge losses as gyms were closed for almost eight months in the last one year.

"There was no income during this period but still the gym owners had to pay their rent in addition to the fixed electricity and water bills besides helping the staff. This industry has been going through a tough phase."

"The gym owners do not have any financial support and there is hardly any government scheme. These frequent lockdowns have had a negative impact on the industry. Many gyms have already shut and many are contemplating whether they should continue in the industry," Sethi, who owns three gyms in the city, said.

Survival becomes tough if gyms are closed for months every year, he said, adding there is a huge burden on the owners currently.

As he gears up to begin operations at his gyms from Monday, he said, "Sanitisation process has begun, machines are being checked. We have reduced 20 per cent



A worker sanitizes a treadmill at a gymnasium in the Capital on Sunday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

they are gearing up to open their facilities from Monday.

Neelam Kal, who runs Yogsarthi at Lajpat Nagar said she prefers to continue with her online yoga sessions for some more time till the situation gets back to normal.

"I am planning to continue with my online yoga sessions for now. Business loss is part of life and amid the second wave, I had stopped talking physical classes at my centre. Instead I resumed with online classes. Many who were uncomfortable with online mode chose to discontinue."

"But we still do not know how the third wave might hit us so I will wait and see how the situation pans out. Depending on the situation, I would take a call on whether to restart the classes in-person at the centre. But for now I have not got any calls asking for it as many of the customers seem quite satisfied with the online yoga sessions," she said.

On the other hand, gymnasium owners said although they have suffered losses,

staff and only vaccinated staff have been given preference. Vaccinated members can also avail special discount offers on their new packages."

"He said he got at least 25 calls since morning from members enquiring if gyms will re-open from tomorrow. "We have got a positive response from people. This shows they are interested in getting back," he said.

Sunil Kumar Taank, president of Indian Gym's Welfare Federation, however, was not much hopeful as he was apprehensive about delta plus variant of coronavirus and possibility of a third wave.

"Gyms are restarting but we don't have much faith on whether we will be able to carry out business like before with these frequent lockdowns. Now again, we read about delta plus variant and then a possible third wave."

"Business has been crushed completely. There is no guarantee that customers would walk-in like before. We have begun the sanitisation process and are ready for opening tomorrow with 50 per cent capacity keeping in mind all the Covid protocol," he said.

Classified

LOST & FOUND

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HC grants interim custody of married woman to father considering her mental state

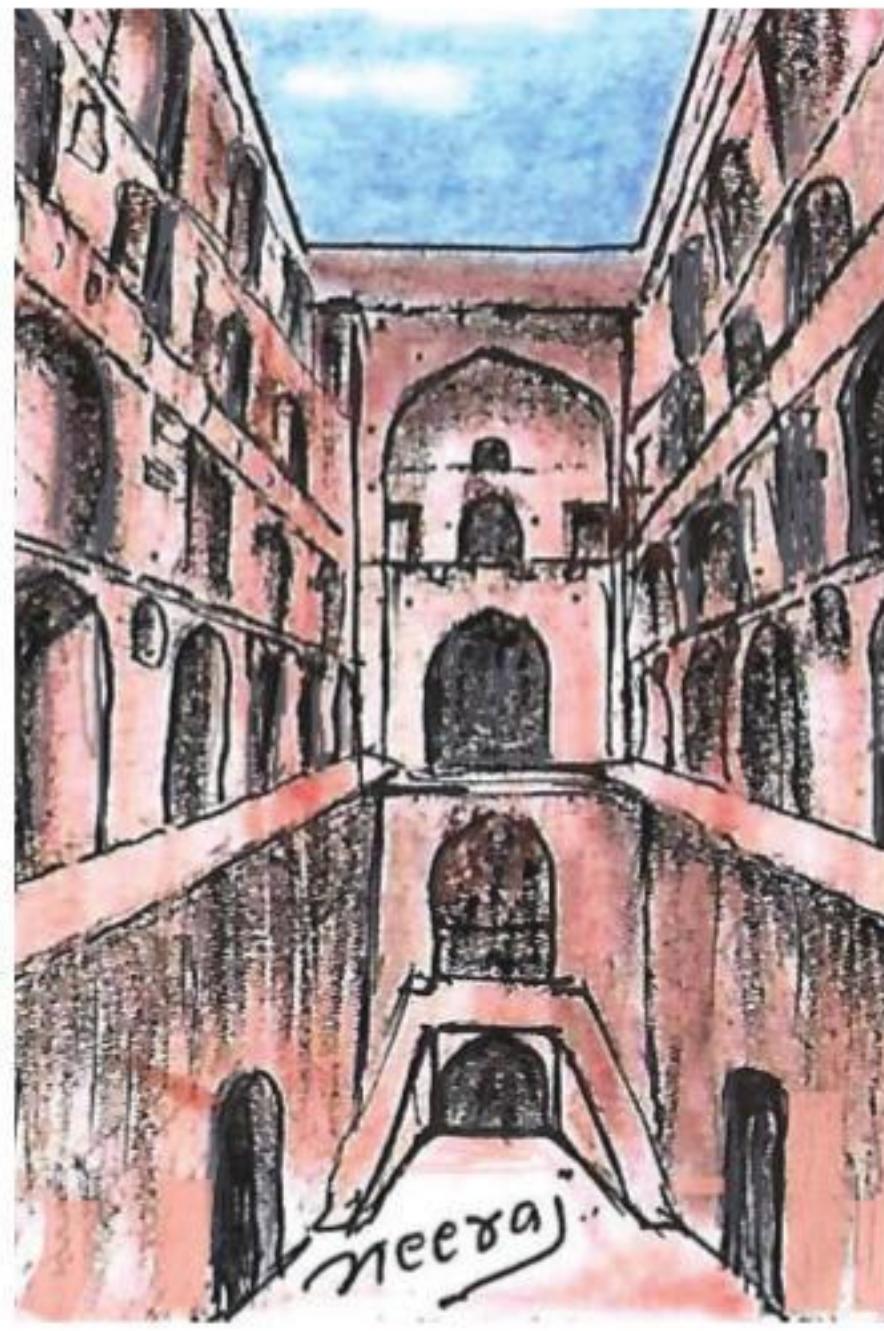
PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

The Delhi High Court has granted the interim custody of a married woman, whose mental condition does not appear to be normal, to her father on the allegation that she has suffered severe mental trauma at the hands of her husband and parents-in-law, resulting in a partial loss of her memory and speech.

The court said first and foremost it was concerned about the state of mental health and physical well-being of the woman and directed that she be examined by a doctor specialising in mental trauma and illnesses at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) here.

A vacation bench of justices Anup Jairam Bhamhani and Jasmeet Singh said the court is of the view that it would be in the fitness of things that at least for the present and until the next date of hearing, the custody of the woman and her three-and-a-half-year-old daughter be given to the petitioner (her father) with whom they would reside for the time being and who would be responsible for their safety and well-being.

AGRASEN KI BAOLI



One of the peculiarities of living in a big city, and that too the national capital, is that one is ignorant about some of the lesser known but remarkably magnificent sites on offer. Jawaharlal Nehru had observed that every stone of Delhi has a history. Tucked away between Connaught Circus and Hailey Road, and camouflaged by the surrounding high rise buildings, is the Agrasen ki Baoli which most of the denizens of New Delhi might not have even heard about, much less seen it. Indeed, Delhi has two faces—one which we see everyday and another that is hidden. Agrasen ki Baoli, whose antiquity dates back to the Mahabharata era, is an ornate rectangular step well 60 metres long and 15 metres wide, built by the legendary Raja Agrasen in rubble masonry of rocks and stones, to serve as a water reservoir. It was rebuilt by the Agarwal community, which claimed to be descendants of Raja Agrasen, during the rule of the Tughlaq dynasty in the 14th century. One of the

oldest monuments of Delhi, this heritage site is an example of exquisite architecture and ancient engineering skills. It spreads over three visible levels each of which is adorned with symmetrically arched niches lined on both sides. Noteworthy is the fact that a single flight of 108 steps takes one down to the water level. There is also a circular well 8 metres in diameter to the north of the step well and a small mosque at the South West corner complete with a triple arched entrance. Legend has it that Agrasen ki Baoli, now a protected monument of the ASI, is the most haunted monument in Delhi. It's believed that the black mystical waters hypnotically enticed people to jump to their death but this has not prevented 'Bollywood' from featuring the Baoli in a couple of hit films like PK, Sultan and Mom. And lovers find the place congenial for a few moments of togetherness, far away from prying eyes. So let Agrasen ki Baoli be on your bucket list once the pandemic gets over!

PENS TAKE WINGS!

It is common knowledge that pens have a habit of "walking off". People, particularly in offices, casually pick up the nearest pen when they have to jot down or write something and forget to return it. Often, in places dealing with the public, like banks and government offices, where one

has to sign a document or fill forms, there are invariably a few people, who find themselves without a pen and so borrow from the official at the counter or another client or visitor. Sadly, the borrowed pen often walks off with the borrower! The other day, a young man at a major city post office was done with filling up a form when a woman

ignorance how the masks were to be worn, or what civil behaviour was meant to be. Never before could one conceive controlling a medical emergency would involve the police as much as health professionals. The long arm of the police was fully deployed to enforce a social behaviour needed to suppress the spread of the deadly disease. The health experts have for more than a year shared their concerns

with people and told them that the virus spread through human hosts and citizens must cooperate by keeping social distance and wearing masks. But it has now become a full-time job of the law enforcing agencies invoking the disaster management and epidemic diseases laws to punish the violators. The police were already in the Covid-19 picture to provide security to doctors and health professionals, after they

came under attack by relatives of patients at various health establishments. Unbelievable it might have seemed a few years ago, Delhi Police has announced formation of district and thana level committees for public health care management. Their principal responsibility will be to ensure that people observe the Covid-appropriate behaviour! Is it not something expected voluntarily from citizens of a

major city like Delhi? Dr. AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria clarified the situation, particularly for them, when he said if the crowds in public places continued at the present level, the third phase of the pandemic could be expected in six-eight weeks. Considering the seriousness of the matter, the involvement of police in the maintenance of Covid-appropriate behaviour does not appear uncalled for!

TAILPIECE

'Why do our politicians ignore the Corona guidelines even as the general public is advised to strictly follow them?" wondered a fel-

low journalist while watching a leading politician addressing a gathering without wearing a mask or caring about social distancing.

Contributed by: Deepak Razdan, Bhaskar Roy, Asha Ramachandran and Ashok Tuteja

India

After SP-ASP clash, HP to train cops to be calm

HP DGP has asked Police Training College to include mock exercises, drills and simulations on crisis management in courses in order to train cops to maintain poise in crisis situation or under duress

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 JUNE

Days after an Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) posted with the Himachal Pradesh CM security team and the SP of Kullu district came to blows in front of Union minister of road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari and HP chief minister Jai Ram Thakur, the HP Police has now decided to train cops on maintaining poise while handling crises or under duress.

The directions for including mock exercises, drills and simulations on crisis management in training courses at the Police Training College (PTC) had been issued by the HP Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu.

Kundu said the image of the



FILE PHOTO

HP Police had taken a beating after the recent incident of an ugly spat between senior police officers in front of dignitaries at Kullu.

"The incident has undone the cumulative good work by the HP Police during the last one year. The incident has

not only become viral on social media but it has also elicited a negative and highly uncharitable public response," he said.

The DGP pointed out that it was unprofessional to the point of dereliction of duty and also raises issues of compro-

mises in the VVIP security. He instructed police officers to always remain calm and poised no matter what the provocation is, adding that they must always remain polite and courteous whether dealing with fellow officers or the general public.

"An officer's sense of duty must always precede their sense of entitlement and they need to ensure high standards of professionalism and graceful conduct," Kundu said while urging them to identify shortcomings in their personalities and address them.

He asserted that all police officers need to learn and maintain proper interpersonal relationships and inculcate an 'esprit de corps'.

All police officers need to learn to apply tact and not be unduly technical about guide-

lines as when they respond to crises and situations, they have to think fast and be innovative. The general idea is to solve a problem and not to aggravate it, Kundu said.

He said that from now on, it should be ensured by principal PTC that we include in our training curriculum, mock exercises, drills and simulations to train officers for temperance and poise when under duress.

"Officers should not be misled or misguided by the 'halo effect' as power is always attached to a position and never a person so they should always be mindful of this gospel," he said.

The DGP urged them to strive as a cohesive team to re-establish state police's image and also to ensure that such incidents never happen in the future.

HP seeks to become a medicinal plants hub

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 JUNE

The Himachal Pradesh government is making efforts to make the state a hub of medicinal plants and financial assistance is being provided to farmers for cultivation of medicinal plants under the National Ayush Mission, a state government official said on Sunday.

The official said the recent upsurge of preference for natural products, there had been a revival of interest in medicinal plants in the international market and besides, these form the major resource base of our indigenous health care traditions.

"The outreach and acceptability of Ayush systems, both nationally as well as globally, are dependent on uninterrupted availability of quality medicinal plants based raw material due to which their trade is growing in volume."

Andas Himachal is bestowed with rich biological diversity, a state Medicinal Plants Board has been constituted under the



egis of Ayush department for the promotion of medicinal plants and related activities in the hill state," he said.

He stated that the focus under the drive was to make easy availability of medicinal plants for the manufacture of Ayurvedic medicines.

The state government had introduced policies to promote the conservation of medicinal plants and encourage farmers to cultivate them and supplement their incomes.

He further stated that various farmer clusters had been prepared for this purpose and to get the benefit of financial assistance, a farmer cluster must have at least two hectares of land.

"A cluster can comprise

three adjoining villages in a 15 kilometre radius and even mortgaged land can be used for the cultivation of these medicinal plants," he said, adding 318 farmers had availed the benefits since January 2018 onwards.

The official said the National Ayush Mission (NAM) in the year 2019-20 had provided financial assistance of about Rs 1.28 crore for medicinal plants component in the state. The state government had also established herbal gardens in Jodhpur in Mandi, Neri in district Hamirpur, Rohru in Shimla and Jungle Jhalera in Bilaspur to promote production of medicinal plants in the state.

"Different types of medicinal plants catering to different agro-climatic zones are being grown in these herbal gardens which are used to prepare different types of medicines for various ailments."

In addition, a Regional cum-Facilitation Centre of Northern Region at the Research Institute in Indian Systems of Medicine, Jodhpur in Mandi district has been setup.

H'yana extends lockdown till 5 July with relaxations

PTI
CHANDIGARH, 27 JUNE

The Haryana government Sunday extended the coronavirus lockdown by another week till July 5, while allowing university campuses to open for research scholars and practical classes in laboratories. "The Mahamari Alert-Surak-

shit Haryana (Epidemic Alert-Safe Haryana)".

University campuses are allowed to open for research scholars, laboratory practicals, remedial and doubt classes by adopting requisite social distancing norms, regular sanitisation and Covid-appropriate behaviour, according to the order.

Anganwadi centres and

shires under Women and Child Development Department shall continue to remain closed. These places will remain shut till July 31 in the state. The state's Department of Women and Child Welfare will release the methodology for implementation of various women and child wel-

fare programmes in the state, the order said.

The relaxations on reopening of shops, malls, restaurants, religious places, corporate offices, gatherings in weddings, funerals, open spaces etc will continue as currently in place.

According to earlier relaxations all shops are allowed

to open from 9 am to 8 pm, malls from 10 am to 8 pm, restaurants and bars, including in hotels and malls, from 10 am to 10 pm with 50 per cent seating capacity. Swimming pools and spas will continue to remain closed.

"Now, after duly considering the fact that although the Covid positivity rate and

the number of new Covid positive cases have declined, so as to continue the preventive and precautionary measures to contain the Covid pandemic the 'Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana' is extended for another week," the order said.

The number of daily COVID-19 cases, which had

crossed the 15,000-mark last month, have now come down to nearly 100 while the Covid fatalities have also registered a sharp fall.

The Haryana government had imposed the lockdown in the state on May 3 in view of the prevailing Covid situation. It has now been extended for the eighth time.

THUMBNAILS



BJP national president JP Nadda sipping a plant in New Delhi on Sunday.

AGENCIES

Chh'garh murder case: Police have cracked a 10-year-old murder case after an accused during a casual conversation with a friend told him that he had killed a man in Raipur in 2011, an official said on Sunday. After getting the lead, the police on Friday arrested the main accused, identified as Santosh Yadav alias Chanshyam (30), and his associate Lokesh Yadav. PTI

Coa Assembly sessions: The Goa Forward Party on Sunday said the BJP government in the state wants to hold the Assembly session starting from 28 July. For just three days. GFP chief Vijai Sardesai said his party would oppose this move as it would be unfair on the citizens because elected representatives will not get enough time to raise important issues. PTI

Train robbery: The Railway Police in Maharashtra's Thane have arrested two persons for allegedly robbing two train passengers near Parsik Tunnel, an official said on Sunday. The incident of robbery took place on Thursday, in which the accused duo robbed a woman passenger and her brother of their belongings collectively worth Rs 43,000. PTI

Mahakaleshwar temple to reopen today: The famous Mahakaleshwar temple at Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh will reopen for devotees on Monday at 6 a.m. after a gap of 80 days, a member said. The entry to the temple's sanctum sanctorum will not be allowed. PTI

Tejashwi reaches out to Chirag, tells him to join Bihar Opposition

Says LJP leader can take forward father's legacy only by joining the fight against Golwalkar's ideas



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

Amid signs of chill in LJP leader Chirag Paswan's ties with the BJP-led NDA, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday reached out to him for aligning with the Opposition, saying he can carry forward his father Ram Vilas Paswan's legacy only by joining the "existential fight" against RSS ideologue M S Golwalkar's thoughts.

With Chirag going public with his disappointment with the BJP's silence over his bitter feud with his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras for control of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), Tejashwi Yadav alleged that the BJP has "disposed of" and "abandoned" most of its old allies after coming to power and gaining maximum from them.

In an interview, Yadav said his party has always stood by Ram Vilas Paswan and recounted that when the LJP

did not even have a single MLA and Paswan lost the election in 2009, it was Lalu Prasad Yadav who sent him to Rajya Sabha from the Rashtriya Janata Dal quota. Has anybody done or sacrificed so much for any other leader or party in the country, he asked. "Our party has decided to celebrate Dalit messiah, Ram Vilas Ji's birth anniversary to commemorate his contribution to the state, I think this itself is self-explanatory," Yadav said.

Significantly, Chirag has also announced an "aashirvaad yatra" from 5 July, the birth anniversary of his father and party founder Ram Vilas Paswan, from Hajipur in Bihar.

Asked about his call last week urging Chirag to quit the NDA, Yadav said the country is at a juncture where pro-Constitution, pro-democracy, pro-farmers and pro-people forces are on one side and those anti-thetical to this ideology are on the other side.

"Late Ram Vilas Paswan Ji

was a socialist and a firm

Cong should be fulcrum of any national coalition against NDA, says RJD leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

The Congress is a national party with a pan-India presence and it is quite natural that it should be the fulcrum of any national coalition against the BJP-led NDA, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said on Sunday.

He also said that the Congress is in a direct fight with the BJP on more than 200 Lok Sabha seats and should focus on them while allowing regional parties to be in the driver's seat in the other constituencies.

Asked about the meeting

believer in the idea of social justice throughout his life. He fought caste supremacy, poverty and inequality during his political journey," the 31-year-old leader said.

"The real tribute to him would be carrying forward his values and legacy and that is possible only when Chiragji joins this existential fight against Golwalkar's 'bunch of thoughts,'" the former Bihar deputy chief minister said, in a play on the title of one of RSS ideologue Golwalkar's books.

On Chirag's remarks in an apparent reference to PM Narendra Modi that it was not right for 'Ram to remain silent when 'Hanuman' is being killed, Yadav alleged that the BJP "lures" parties and leaders by promising them "the moon but the moment their system realises they are no longer of utility, they are dumped in a similar manner as a fly is thrown out of milk".

Asked about the political tussle between the LJP factions of Chirag and his paternal

bachega (this election will decide whether the country will remain or be divided)', and I think most of the parties and citizens of our country have realised this today like never before," Yadav said.

However, the former Bihar deputy CM asserted that definitely all like-minded parties should come together with a common minimum programme to defeat "this most oppressive, divisive, authoritarian and fascist government".

"Our leader Lalu Ji had forewarned in the run up to 2014 election - "Ye chunaw tay karega ki desh tootegaya

On the Congress not having a presence at the meeting and whether the grand old party should be part of a national alliance to take on the BJP, he said the Congress is a national party with a pan-India presence and quite naturally it "should be the fulcrum of any national coalition against the BJP-led NDA".

Deshmukh was asked to depose before the investigating officer at the ED's office in Mumbai on Saturday in the money laundering case related to an alleged multi-crore bribery-cum-extortion racket, that led to his resignation from the post of home minister in April. However, the NCP leader, whose party shares power with the Shiv Sena and Congress in Maharashtra, sought a fresh date for appearance before the agency.

Talking to reporters, Raut also said Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik's letter to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, saying those who have engineered this split were vengeful against Chirag as he fought against them in last assembly elections.

"Late Ram Vilas Ji made Chirag Ji his heir apparent by appointing him as the party's national president and the parliamentary leader in Lok Sabha and it is up to him now as to how he carries forward his father's legacy," Yadav said.

Targeting of individuals by Central agencies harmful for federal structure: Raut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 27 JUNE

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday said the deliberate targeting of leaders in the ruling MVA alliance in Maharashtra by central agencies was harmful for the country's federal structure.

Raut was responding to a query by reporters on the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoning former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in a money laundering case.

"He was in power for five years, but nothing happened. Whether in power or not, efforts must be taken to resolve issues of the deprived sections of society," the Rajya Sabha member said. Raut said the issue of reservation is for ensuring social equality.

"Please don't politicise a social issue. Whether you are in government or opposition, a responsible leader should strive to resolve the issue which the MVA leaders are trying," Raut said.

Asked about protests by the BJP and the Congress in different parts of the state on the OBC quota issue, Raut said leaders, in government as well as from the opposition, are expected to behave appropriately at the time of the pandemic. Police took action against NCP functionaries for Covid-19 norm violations during an event, Raut said.

SEASON'S BOUNTY



A worker plucks pear fruit from a farm near Bhuntar in Kullu district on Sunday.

Another BJP leader criticises Covid-19 handling in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALLIA (UP), 27 JUNE

Criticising the handling of the Covid-19 crisis in Uttar Pradesh, a ruling party leader has claimed that at least 10 people died in every village during the second wave as no lessons were learnt from the first one.

State BJP working committee member Ram Iqbal Singh, who made the remarks on Saturday, is the latest among the party's leaders who have questioned the management of the coronavirus infection in the state.

Singh rued that the Health Department did not learn any lesson from the first wave

of Covid-19 which led to a large number of deaths in the second wave. "At least 10 people died from every village in the state during the second wave of pandemic", he alleged.

The BJP leader also demanded that Rs 10 lakh be given to the kin of those who succumbed to the infection. He lamented that after 75 years of freedom, this district with a population of 34 lakh, has "no doctors or medicines".

On being reminded that during his visit to Ballia, CM Yogi Adityanath had expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made by the Health Department, Singh said the officials had misled the CM. He also urged the BJP govt

to send back patients for 'referrals' from the district hospital.

Earlier in May, BJP's Sitanpur MLA Rakesh Rathore expressed resentment over the alleged Covid-19 mismanagement in the state and saying that he feared a charge for speaking up.

"What standing do MLAs have? If we speak too much, treason and sedition charges will be slapped on us as well, Rakesh Rathore had told, according to a video clip.

On 9 May, Union Labour minister Santosh Gangwar had complained to the chief minister about the situation in his Bareilly constituency, saying officials don't take calls and government health centres

send back patients for 'referrals' from the district hospital.

In a letter to Adityanath, he had also complained about the big shortage of empty oxygen cylinders and the high prices of medical equipment in Bareilly. A day later, BJP MLA from Jasran in Firozabad Ramgopal Lodhi claimed that his coronavirus positive wife was not admitted to an Agra hospital for over three hours, with officials saying that beds were not available.

In April, a 'confidential' letter written by UP Law Minister Brajesh Pathak surfaced on social media. Pathak had lashed out at his state's health authorities, complaining that beds for patients were falling short.

Restore statehood before polls: J&K Cong to Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, 27 JUNE

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee on Sunday demanded that the Centre make the delimitation process in the union territory a transparent and time-bound exercise followed by restoration of statehood before holding assembly elections.

"The home minister during the all-party meet said that the government of India wanted to complete the delimitation process followed by holding of elections. He said government was committed to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir at an appropriate time," PCC chief G M Mir told.

"Congress party presented its agenda which includes completing the delimitation process in a transparent manner followed by restoration of statehood and then holding election," he said.

Mir said the Union government has promised to involve general public in the process of delimitation at the

Era of suppression in J&K must end to make PM's dialogue process credible: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

PPD chief Mehbooba Mufti said on Sunday that the dialogue process initiated by PM Narendra Modi with Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream leadership can gain credibility by ending what she called an "era of oppression and suppression" in the union territory and understanding that a dissenting voice is not a criminal act.

"Give the people right to breathe and rest will follow later," the former CM said, as she termed the prime minister's meeting with a 14-member delegation from J&K here on Thursday as a way forward to end the "sufferings" of people in the erstwhile state now under Central rule.

Mehbooba, who was part of the delegation, made it clear that the onus was on the Centre to make the dialogue process credible, and said it should initiate confidence building measures and allow "people to breathe" and also

ensure protection of jobs and land for the people.

"When I say allow people to breathe, I mean that today any dissenting note from any side has to cool his or her heels in the prison. Recently, a man was jailed for expressing his sentiments that he had lots of hope from a Kashmiri advisor. The concerned Deputy Commissioner ensured that he was in jail for a few days despite being granted bail by the court," Mehbooba told.

So, when the prime minister says that he wants to eradicate "Dil ki doori", such kind of suppression has to come to an end immediately, she added. At the landmark meeting, PM Modi had said he wants to remove "Dilli ki

door" (distance from Delhi) as well as "Dil ki doori" (distance between hearts) in an effort to bring Delhi closer to the people of J&K.

"Dil ki doori has to be decreased with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and for that all the draconian orders passed have to stop. The jobs and land rights have to be protected," the PDP president said.

"First and foremost, the era of suppression and oppression has to come to an end and the government has to understand that a dissenting voice is not a criminal act. The entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, and I will refer to it only as a state, has become a jail," she said.

Mehbooba, who was the last CM of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir before abrogation of its special status on 5 August, 2019, emphasised that among other measures required as confidence building measures were providing relief to the tourism and trading community of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions.

Homeless for 70 yrs, Assam's Mising community people stare at uncertainty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DIBRUGARH, 27 JUNE

About 12,000 people of the Mising community residing at Laika and Dadhia villages inside Dibrugarh National Park of Assam, after they were rendered homeless some 70 years ago, does not have access to basic facilities like electricity, drinking water and roads even now.

"It is a tale of negligence, apathy, and suffering due to inaction of the government machinery," they said. Aranya Kasari, a quadagenarian from Laika, said, Our children trek for miles and cross a river to reach school.

There is no provision of minimum healthcare or drinking water supply, Kasari said. "We want to move out of here, the sooner the better. We have lived for generations here. I don't want the next generation to go through the same ordeal. Can you imagine a life without even the basic amenities? Electricity or a motorable road in the core area of a park is unthinkable. We don't even have basic human rights. We are cut off from the rest of the world," Pranjal Kasari, a Dadhia villager told.

The plight of a small group of Mising people, the second largest ethnic community of Assam, dates back to 1950

when a change in course of the Brahmaputra river took place after the great earthquake, rendering 75 households of Murkongselek along the Arunachal border homeless. The story repeated itself in 1957 with a total of 90 households in the Aukland area of Rahmari revenue circle in Dibrugarh district becoming homeless due to river erosion and forced to move out and take shelter in the then Dibrugarh Reserve Forest.

However, problem began in 1999 when the forest was declared as Dibrugarh-Saikhowa National Park making human habitation inside the protected area illegal. Since then, different dispensations such as the AGP,

Congress, and the BJP, have ruled the northeastern state but no concrete step has been initiated to rehabilitate them.

Narrating their plight, Sewali Pegu from Laika said, the villages remain submerged for months during monsoon when the people depend entirely on government relief measures. Humans and pigs share the same shelter when the area is flooded," she added.

Meanwhile, an AGP MLA

Need to redesign welfare system to meet challenge of pandemic: Abhijit Banerjee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JODHPUR, 27 JUNE

The Covid pandemic has paved the way for learning many lessons with regard to the country's health situation and preparedness in general as well as highlighting the need to redesign welfare systems. Noble laureate and economist Abhijit Banerjee said on Sunday.

While addressing a webinar organised by the city-based National Institute for Implementation Research on Non-Communicable Diseases, Banerjee focused on the economic aspect of the country's health situation, welfare and healthcare systems.

On the economic aspect of the health situation, he said that India has a large population afflicted with lifestyle diseases, which are non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

"Many young people died in the second and first wave of the pandemic, but their conditions were not detected. Causalities among the young has caught us without any clue," the economist said, terming awareness about NCDs a key challenge.

Banerjee also said that the welfare system of the country has not been designed for a pandemic and stressed on the need for redesigning the welfare mechanism to deal with such situations in the future.

Speaking on different

aspects of the healthcare system of the country, the noble laureate highlighted multiple consequences of medical practitioners without any qualification (quacks) and indiscriminate and spontaneous use of steroids and their availability.

Citing a study, he said, In West Bengal, underweight women frequently take steroids to put on weight for marriage and these steroids are easily available at a local grocer.

Terming the practice by quacks in rural areas a fully open phenomena, Banerjee said that there was no enforcement to address this issue and this has triggered a general culture of abusive medicine. "Our healthcare system is being handled by those who are left out of the healthcare system", he said.

The noble laureate also highlighted the issue of over-prescribing of medicines for very normal ailments.

While talking about the public healthcare system, he claimed that sub-centres are empty and nurses are mostly not available, which pushes people to visit quacks.

While an average time given by an MBBS doctor to patient is about two minutes,



WHILE ANNOUNCING IT WILL CONTEST 100 SEATS IN UP ASSEMBLY POLLS IN 2022

THUMBNAILS



Tourists enjoy rafting in the Beas after authorities eased relaxation in Covid-19 lockdown, near Manali, on Sunday.

AGENCIES

Rivers rise: The water level of Mahananda, Kankani, and Parman rivers are flowing above the danger level at various places like Purnea and Araria districts due to continuous rain for last one week, and villages located on the bank of rivers are under threat. IANS

Lakha Sidhana booked: A day after tens of thousands of protesting farmers entered Chandigarh after breaking barricades and facing water cannons, local police on Sunday booked gangster-turned-activist Lakhvir Singh, alias Lakha Sidhana, and Rajinder Singh Deep Singh Wala, vice-president of the Kirti Kisan Union. IANS

TN shadow agri budget: The PMK on Sunday released Tamil Nadu's shadow agricultural budget for the year 2021-22. IANS

Jagan govt under Opp fire over job vacancy claims

CM said 6,03,756 jobs were created in different govt departments in last 2 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMARAVATI, 27 JUNE

V-P Venkaiah Naidu bats for people's movement to preserve, enrich languages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM, 27 JUNE

The Andhra Pradesh government has come under severe criticism from the Opposition for its claims of having filled up more than six lakh job vacancies in different government departments, in the last two years.

Political parties, including the TDP, have also accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led dispensation of 'cheating' unemployed youth in the state by releasing an employment calendar to fill just 10,000 positions, after making tall promises to give lakhs of jobs before coming to power.

On 18 June, Jagan had released the 'job calendar,' fixing the schedule for recruitment of 10,143 posts over the next nine months. During the event, the CM claimed 6,03,756 jobs were created by his government in the last two years. Also, he said 51,387 posts in the newly created Public Transport Department were filled while it was nothing but absorption of State

Road Transport Corporation employees into the government. Through the AP Public Service Commission, 2,475 regular posts were filled but the process began during the previous TDP regime in 2017-18.

TDP MP Kinjarapu Ramamohan Naidu attacked the chief minister for "backstabbing" the youth in the name of the job calendar. "As Opposition leader, Jagan promised to fill 2.30 lakh vacancies and also give 26,000 teacher posts. But now he released a

other languages and cultures. He underscored the need for primary education to be in one's mother tongue, as envisaged by National Educational Policy, 2020.

He noted that persons presently occupying the highest constitutional offices of the country, including the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of India all had primary education in their mother tongue. "People should not have the false impression that one cannot succeed and grow in life if they learn in their mother tongue. We have many past and present exemplars to disprove that."

Samakhyā conference, he suggested Telugu people should come together as one for the cause of Telugu language and the revitalisation of our local traditions.

Noting that neglecting a language will lead to its decline, Naidu said it is the duty of each individual to preserve and promote one's mother tongue, without belittling

jingle calendar for filling just 10,000 posts. It's nothing but leaving the hapless youth in the lurch," he said.

State BJP chief Somu Veeraju sought to know what happened to the 2.40 lakh jobs that Jagan promised before coming to power. "This government has not issued a single job notification through APPSC but is resorting to false propaganda that it has filled 6.03 lakh vacancies. This is nothing but cheating the unemployed youth," he slammed.

Jana Sena Political Affairs Committee chairman Nadendla Manohar demanded that a white paper be published with details of department-wise vacancies and a firm recruitment schedule.

CPI state secretary K Ramakrishna demanded a fresh job calendar be issued notifying vacant government posts. Congress state working president N Tulasi Reddy demanded 10 per cent reservation for economically-backward among upper castes in govt jobs.

19-yr-old girl abandoned with baby becomes SI

SNS
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 27 JUNE

A girl, who was abandoned by her 'life-partner' and family when she was just 19 with her 6-month-old baby has become a police sub-inspector now

The story of Anie Siva shows how she overcame the challenges she faced by will power and confidence. Anie Siva, a native of Kanjiramkulam in Thiruvananthapuram district, was a first year degree student at Kanjiramkulam KNM Government College, when she started living with her boyfriend against the will of her family. However, after she gave birth to a baby, the man left her.

Though she returned home after being abandoned, the family did not accept her back. She started living with her son in the backyard of her grandmother's house.

Annie recalled how she made money to make a living. "I started selling curry powder and soap first. Later, I became an insurance agent.

Another Uttar Pradesh BJP leader claimed the exercise to balance social equations in the state will be completed in next couple of months.

The saffron camp believes it will clear the air about the false narrative that the BJP is ignoring some communities or favouring some

always tries to create a false narrative that a particular caste or community is neglected or ignored in current rule, which is not true. To dispel such false narrative, we are reaching these communities in coming days," a Uttar Pradesh BJP leader.

As per plan the BJP has decided to give prominence to leaders of these communities and castes in the party, who will reach out to their respective communities.

"Leaders of communities and castes in the party will be asked to start dialogue and establish connections with people to dispel the false narrative and explain BJP is committed for inclusive growth and never ignore or sidelined anyone," a party insider said.

Another Uttar Pradesh BJP leader claimed the exercise to balance social equations in the state will be completed in next couple of months.

The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh is working on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Satth, Sabka Vikas,' but our political rival

Sikim University announces admission to Certificate, Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG), M.Phil. and Ph.D programmes for the Academic Session 2021-22 in the following departments:

1. Anthropology (MA/M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D)
2. Bhutia (MA, Ph.D)
3. Botany (M.Sc., Ph.D)
4. Chemistry (MSc,M.Phil,Ph.D)
5. Chinese (Certificate, BA, MA, Ph.D)
6. Commerce (M.Com, Ph.D.)
7. Computer Applications (MCA, Ph.D)
8. Economics (MA, Ph.D)
9. Education (MA, M.Ed, Ph.D)
10. English (MA, Ph.D)
11. Geography (MA/M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D)
12. Geology (M.Sc, Ph.D and M.Sc in Environmental Science)
13. Hindi (MA, M.Phil, Ph.D)
14. History (MA, M.Phil, Ph.D)
15. Horticulture (M.Sc, Ph.D)
16. International Relations (MA, M.Phil, Ph.D)
17. Law (LLM, M.Phil, Ph.D)
18. Lepcha (MA, Ph.D)
19. Limbu (MA, Ph.D)
20. Management (MBA, Ph.D)
21. Mass Communication (MA, Ph.D)
22. Mathematics (M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D)
23. Microbiology (M.Sc, Ph.D)
24. Music (BPA, MPA, M.Phil, Ph.D)
25. Nepali (MA, Ph.D)
26. Peace and Conflict Studies and Management (MA, M.Phil, Ph.D)
27. Physics (M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D)
28. Political Science (MA, Ph.D)
29. Psychology (BA/B.Sc, MA/M.Sc)
30. Sociology (MA, Ph.D)
31. Tourism (MTTM, Ph.D)
32. Zoology (M.Sc, Ph.D)

The course details and admission procedures to be followed will be available on University website at <https://www.cus.ac.in> on 01-07-2021. Last date for submission of online application form is 31-07-2021 (till mid night).

Sd/-
REGISTRAR (I/C)

davp 21318/11/0003/2122

AIMIM PRESIDENT ASADUDDIN OWAISI

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, MONDAY 28 JUNE 2021

05

5 ministers inducted in Rangasamy-led NDA Cabinet in Puducherry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUDUCHERRY/NEW DELHI,
27 JUNE

Ending the more than a month-long suspense over Cabinet formation, five ministers, including two from the BJP, were inducted in the chief minister N Rangasamy-led NDA Cabinet on Sunday.

A Namassivayam, K Lakshminarayanan, C Djecoumar, Chandira Priyanga and AK Sai Sarvana Kumar were sworn in as ministers by Lt-Governor Tamilisai Soundaranjan in front of the Raj Niwas.

All the ministers took oath in the name of God. Chief minister Rangasamy, among others, was present on the occasion.

The portfolios of the ministers were not revealed.

Lakshminarayanan, Djecoumar and Priyanga represent lead partner AIINRC, while Namassivayam and Saravana Kumar are from its ally BJP.

This is the first time the saffron party is part of a ministry in the Union Territory.

The exercise also saw a woman member become a minister after a 41-year gap, with Chandira Priyanga being sworn in.

Late Congress leader Renuka Appadurai was the last woman minister from the UT during 1980-83 and handled the education portfolio in the MDR Ramachandran (DMK)-led coalition ministry.

The House has a total of 33 MLAs, including the three nominated ones.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday extended his best wishes to the ministers in the Puducherry government who took oath earlier in the day. He tweeted: "... May this team work with determination and fulfil the aspirations of the wonderful people of Puducherry."

BSP to contest UP, U'khand Assembly polls alone: Mayawati



LUCKNOW, 27 JUNE

The BSP will not enter into any alliance for Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Assembly polls, party chief Mayawati said on Sunday.

In a series of tweets in Hindi, the former chief minister denied any tie-up with the AIMIM for the Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh said on Sunday.

"A news channel is broadcasting news since yesterday that in the upcoming UP Assembly elections, BSP will contest along with (Asaduddin) Owaisi's party AIMIM. This news is completely wrong, misleading and devoid of any fact. There is not even an iota of truth in this. The BSP

emerged victorious from 10 segments out of the 16 seats it contested in the hustings and heads the NDA here. The BJP annexed six of the nine seats it contested. The NDA enjoys the support of three nominated members belonging to the BJP."

The House has a total of 33 MLAs, including the three nominated ones.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi on Sunday extended his best wishes to the ministers in the Puducherry government who took oath earlier in the day. He tweeted: "... May this team work with determination and fulfil the aspirations of the wonderful people of Puducherry."

The BSP has recently joined hands with the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab.

The party had tied up with Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party and RLD in UP for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Govt. of Haryana

Heartiest Greetings on the selection of 30 players from Haryana for Tokyo Olympics

Haryana's Players will write the golden history of success again

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

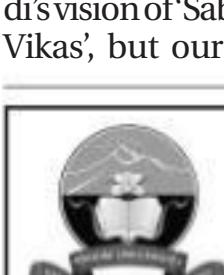
Prize money by Haryana Government to Olympic medal winners will be

- Gold Rs. 6 Crore**
- Silver Rs. 4 Crore**
- Bronze Rs. 2.5 Crore**

Advance amount of Rs. 5 lakh per player for the preparation of Olympic Games

Illustrations of athletes in various sports: Shooting, Boxing, Wrestling, Hockey, Athletics, etc.

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ADMISSION NOTICE

Sikkim University announces admission to Certificate, Under Graduate (UG), Post Graduate (PG), M.Phil. and Ph.D programmes for the Academic Session 2021-22 in the following departments:

1. Anthropology (MA/M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D)
2. Bhutia (MA, Ph.D)
3. Botany (M.Sc., Ph.D)
4. Chemistry (MSc,M.Phil,Ph.D)
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6. Commerce (M.Com, Ph.D.)
7. Computer Applications (MCA, Ph.D)
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10. English (MA, Ph.D)
11. Geography (MA/M.Sc, M.Phil, Ph.D)
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31. Tourism (MTTM, Ph.D)
32. Zoology (M.Sc, Ph.D)

The course details and admission procedures to be followed will be available on University website at <https://www.cus.ac.in> on 01-07-2021. Last date for submission of online application form is 31-07-2021 (till mid night).

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Killed for dowry

Sixty years after Parliament enacted the Dowry Prohibition Act and 16 years after the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act came into force, dowry deaths continue to proliferate. In fact, India has the highest dowry-related deaths in the world with Uttar Pradesh leading the states, according to the National Crime Record Bureau. NV Ramana, Chief Justice of India, has described dowry deaths as a "pestiferous" crime where women are subjected to cruelty by covetous husbands and in-laws. The week that has just ended witnessed at least one dowry death a day in Kerala, socially one of the most advanced states in India. The week began with the tragic death of a 23-year-old final year BAMS student, married to an assistant motor vehicle inspector two months ago. According to the bride's father, the groom had demanded a plot of land valued at Rs 2 crore, 100 sovereigns and a luxury car to tie the nuptial knot. He was not satisfied with the Toyota Corolla presented to him. The woman was reportedly tortured to death within weeks of marriage. A twenty-four-year-old nursing graduate was found burnt to death in the residence of her in-laws in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday night. She was being tormented by her husband for not bringing a dowry of Rs 3 lakh. On Tuesday a woman who got married to an Uttarakhand government employee on 21 March was found hanging in her husband's house. On Wednesday, another woman was found dead in her house in Thiruvananthapuram following an alleged assault by her husband, the son of a late Malayalam film artist. The list is endless.

According to the Kerala State Crime Record Bureau, 65 brides were found dead/murdered under mysterious circumstances during 2020-21. Kerala men set a new trend last May when a 25-year-old was found dead in her marital home. Investigations revealed that her husband got her bitten by a deadly cobra soon after the honeymoon was over to get rid of her. There are enough laws, women's commissions and relevant sections in the Indian Penal Code to tackle the menace of 'pestiferous' crimes against women, but their implementation is tardy. Women's commissions prefer to play the role of mediators and try to save marriages, rather than bring culprits to book. In the case of the BAMS student, parents of the victim had been persuaded to withdraw the police case filed by them. Prof VT Rema, activist and former principal of the Government Arts College, says investigating agencies do not pursue dowry-related deaths with diligence because of lethargy and inherent weaknesses. The heart-rending events of last week prove beyond doubt that law enforcing agencies must be more vigilant to make Kerala a safer place for women. Former Chief Minister Oomen Chandy of the United Democratic Front government led by the Congress wanted government employees to sign an affidavit stating that they would neither accept nor give dowry. Any violation should attract instant dismissal from service. Before it could be put into effect, the government changed in Thiruvananthapuram and the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front took over with Pinarayi Vijayan as Chief Minister.

Final flip

If Anil Kumble weren't heading the global panel keeping an eye peeled on cricket's technical nitty-gritty, and pointing at the way forward, much of the predominantly Indian griping about the World Test Championship would have been bottled up so no one up top was rubbed up the wrong way. It had less to do with our customary regional one-upmanship than conflicting personal ambitions, which were inevitable in the country bankrolling the game so lavishly. But India, the team, performed so very underwhelmingly in the rain-affected, stop-and-start final, losing by eight wickets to New Zealand at Southampton, that India, the country, could be said to be too numb to find fault with others in the wake of it. It was, after all, the third match in the tournament between the two teams, with India finishing on the losing side on each occasion. Captain Virat Kohli was reduced to Kyle Jamieson's bunny, with the New Zealand seamer, Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane looked composed while they lasted, but were outplayed when set. And the opener Shubman Gill, after so much noise made by some of India's best-known icons of yesteryear, fell far short of the popular expectations stirred by the stellar magniloquence in the media. Maybe, as the anatomy of the defeat is placed under further, closer scrutiny later on, people might also ask each other why, in dire need of what nowadays is called out-of-the-box thinking, Ravichandran Ashwin, who took both the wickets in the New Zealand second innings and topped the competition's wicket-takers' list, was given only 10 overs? Would a double-spin attack right from the beginning on a sixth-day track have helped? Remember, too, that despite India boasting a supposedly lethal pace attack, the first wicket in both essays fell to Ashwin. Did dropped catches, precisely when India couldn't afford them, hint at inadequate preparation or the recurrence of an old problem? As Kohli finds himself obliged to haul the assorted baggage now into the Test series against England, he must wonder where his team will find the skills to counter Anderson and Co. Kumble, in the ICC, was saddled with the task of pushing a square peg into a round hole. He was up against Covid-19. Kohli, who had been the reason why Kumble had to relinquish his role as India's chief coach, was only leading his team in a final. He says there should have been two more matches in the final but no one is sure India would have won them.

The Great Disrupter

Thanks to vaccinations and the lifting of social restrictions, the handshake is making a comeback though 'pressing the flesh' still faces an uncertain future. In the recent summit that US President Joe Biden had with Russian President Vladimir Putin, their fulsome handshake could send a message that the old way of greeting may make a comeback



It has been more than a year since an outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan, China. Declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020, it has now infected more than 179.3 million people in 223 countries and with 3.9 million deaths as of 23 June. More will perish in the coming days/months despite the vaccine drive in full swing in many countries. India too has lost close to 400,000 of its people as the second wave was particularly severe. Though Covid-19 appropriate behaviour by people is being advised, there are always violators. If this trend does not change, a third wave could be more devastating.

This commentary shall address two issues: the drive to vaccinate as many people as possible to combat the virus, and how Covid-19 has emerged as the biggest disrupter in human lives and how lifestyles have changed almost overnight.

First, like other countries, India too has launched a massive vaccination drive and aims to inoculate all of its 1.1 billion adults by the end of the year. So far, it has vaccinated only four per cent of its people compared to New Zealand, which has inoculated all its citizens.

Two domestic manufacturers are already on the job. India has also roped in a Russian company to get the Sputnik 5 vaccine. Imports have started and domestic production in collaboration with Dr. Reddy's Lab in Hyderabad is in the news. The government is coordinating on issues such as pricing, sourcing, storing, supplying and other related issues in cooperation with the states.

On 21 June, International

Yoga Day, muted this time by the virus, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the "protective" properties of yoga against the virus. The worrying fact is that the vaccination drive significantly slowed at a time when the second wave was causing havoc due to a shortage of jabs and hesitancy. The sudden surge in the April/May period overwhelmed the health care system in many places.

There is also a segment of people who still do not have confidence in the vaccines providing full protection. This is another bother. There are reports that even medical doctors who had taken both the jabs have fallen victim to the virus and people are doubting the vaccine's efficacy and developing cold feet. In Marxist jargon, Covid-19 can be explained as a "socialist" virus that does not distinguish between race, religion, caste, nationality, status, etc.

While attacking. While it could take some time for doubters to come on board, in the Philippines President Duterte has threatened that those who refuse to take the jab shall be put in jail with a view to enforcing compliance.

With less than a month away to go for the Olympic Games to begin in Tokyo, Japan is also on an overdrive with its vaccination programme. Though there still remain good reasons to cancel the Games, Japan and the IOC have decided to take the risk to go ahead as sane counsel for cancellation did not merit much

consideration. This is a gamble that is not worth taking, as protecting human lives should have got precedence over hosting the Games for assumed glory for Japan. The less said on this the better.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has also accelerated the vaccination efforts and aims to complete the vaccination programme by November 2021. Japanese universities and companies have also begun their own drives for on-site inoculations. The initial target is to inoculate the under-65s. As an aging society, the onus lies on Suga to protect the elderly citizens. There are already over 65,000 centenarians in Japan and the number is increasing. This is a challenge for Suga.

The second issue to be addressed is how Covid-19 has been the biggest disrupter in daily lives. The common practice of greeting people with a handshake

has lost its lustre as people are refraining from touching another person's hand for fear of contracting the virus. On the contrary, other forms of greeting such as fist-bumping have emerged as increasingly popular.

However, thanks to vaccinations and the lifting of social restrictions as the virus has started to ebb, the handshake is making a comeback though "pressing the flesh" faces an uncertain future. In the recent summit that US President Joe Biden had with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva, their fulsome handshake in front of the world's cameras could

send a message that the old practice of greeting can be adopted. This was a rare moment of physical human contact. It was a dramatic turnaround from the experience at the G-7 summit in Cornwall where the leaders were seen elbow-bumping and maintaining a six feet distance at outdoor events.

Though the virus is still there, the US has lifted most Covid-19 restrictions. Vaccinated citizens have been told they do not need masks. Social distancing has become a thing of the past and domestic travel is back in full swing. But the fear still remains in minds of the people. Friends greet each other with a brief wave and handshakes are still frowned upon.

Hugging, generally a common practice in many countries including India, is out of bounds. Prime Minister Modi's "hug diplomacy" is unlikely to make a comeback. Kissing to greet someone, never common in the US but very common in Australia and in Europe, is almost unimaginable for most.

However, this has unlikely deterred younger lovers. On such occasions, virus fears just disappear. Also, the fear of transmission of the virus does not seem to have prevented molestations and rapes, though the numbers of cases have either fallen or are being underreported.

While the handshake is unlikely to make a comeback any time soon, other forms of greeting such as fist-bumping, brief waves, or alternatives such as an Indian-style "Namaste" could become more popular. The pandemic has upended many things about everyday life and therefore has become the biggest disrupter of human living style. Willy-nilly mankind needs to be prepared to accept new rituals.

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

ASIAN VOICES
Were people the missing link in Covid response?

Incidentally, a few days after the Juneteenth mark end of slavery, a Webinar hosted by International Antiviral Society (IAS) USA had put spotlight on "Nothing Without Us: Civil Society Solutions to the Covid-19 Pandemic". Inequities and social injustices that have plagued most of our population, has only allowed tiny number of rich elites to amass enormous wealth and power. When the public health emergency ensued with the spread of the corona virus, these very inequities and social injustices not only got exposed but were dangerously pronounced thereby crippling the response.

Jim Pickett, co-founder of International Rectal Microbicides Advocates and Senior Director of Prevention Advocacy at the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, who was moderating the session, said that biomedical strategies to diagnose, prevent, and treat Covid-19 are urgently needed, and efforts to rapidly develop these tools are underway worldwide. Accelerated research enhances the need for civil society input to ensure ethical development and access to these tools worldwide to ensure social justice. In this context, community engagement necessitates innovative structures, mechanisms, and actions, said Jim while explaining the key role for the Covid Advocates Advisory Board (CAAB) which currently connects over 125 people worldwide. CAAB's efforts are directed towards the achievement of social justice, health equity and the defense of human rights, said Jim. Social and racial injustices and inequities that Covid has brought to

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the forefront has also resulted in the grim reality that many racial and ethnic communities are at heightened risk of getting sick and dying from Covid, such as people of colour. These social determinants of health have historically prevented them from having fair opportunities for economic, physical, and emotional health.

Rob Newells, Director of National Programmes for Black AIDS Institute, said that they rose to the challenge early in the pandemic. Interventions like delivering groceries to the people in need, and more importantly, getting the right information to the communities also became a priority. "Each one, teach one! It boils down to empowering others to tell the stories," Rob said, who is doing his best to ensure that people themselves become the messenger and harbinger of right information that empowers them and their fellow beings.

Rob also commented on vaccine hesitancy or medical mistrust that affects the response to Covid. "Our role is to honestly answer every single question so that people are informed enough to make the right decision" he said. "People will listen to folks they trust."

Second, the vaccine drive has threatened to come to a standstill due to a shortage of jabs and hesitancy. In the April/May period overwhelmed the health care system in many places.

Third, the vaccination programme has been slow in the northern states. Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha have been slow to start the vaccination drive. The government has been criticised for not doing enough to encourage people to get vaccinated.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Sundarbans fate & Kolkata

SIR, Sujit Choudhury's article, 'If the Sundarbans fall, Kolkata will be next' (*The Statesman*, 24 June 2021) reminded me a relevant observation of Ashwika Kapur, India's Youngest Green Oscar winner, 'The Sundarbans is our first and greatest wall of defence against nature's fury. Without a healthy Sundarbans, there will no Calcutta.'

So there has never been a better time to salute its role in our survival.' Indeed, history tells that the edge of the Sundarbans used to be much closer to the city (Calcutta) proper.

In 1756, when Siraj-

ud-Daulah recaptured the Calcutta city from the British, today's Salt Lake area, historians say, used to be the main city and the Lower South Circular Road, that's Chowringhee now, used to be city's southern border, beyond which were the Sundarbans forests.

P Greenough, referring to WW Hunter's account, mentioned that the downed world of former Sundarbans of the present (1875) and wondered if 'the site of an earlier Kolkata had slid beneath 30 feet of silt and saltwater, who can say it would not happen again? The worry then was that 'sec-

ond city of the Empire' was at risk from the 'liquid mass' of a delta that is wont to repeatedly bulge into the sea. That threat still prevails.

Yours, etc., Jaydev Jana,

Kolkata, 24 June.

NAIVE

SIR, Chirag Paswan is extremely naive to expect the BJP to come rushing to his aid and quell the rebellion in the Lok Janshakti Party. Political parties will always put self interest first and unless the BJP finds some benefit in helping Chirag out, there is no way it will do anything to help him.

Events in the LJP have shown that Chirag is a

mere babe in the wood in the world of politics. He has been completely outfoxed and can now do little except weep at the manner he is becoming irrelevant in Bihar politics.

Yours, etc., Anthony Henriques,
Mumbai, 23 June.

RIGHT STEP

SIR, A few days back the Tamil Nadu Government decided to use the words "Union Government" instead of Central government.

This has led to a new disagreement among political parties. But it is an important step towards keeping the spirit of the Constitution alive.

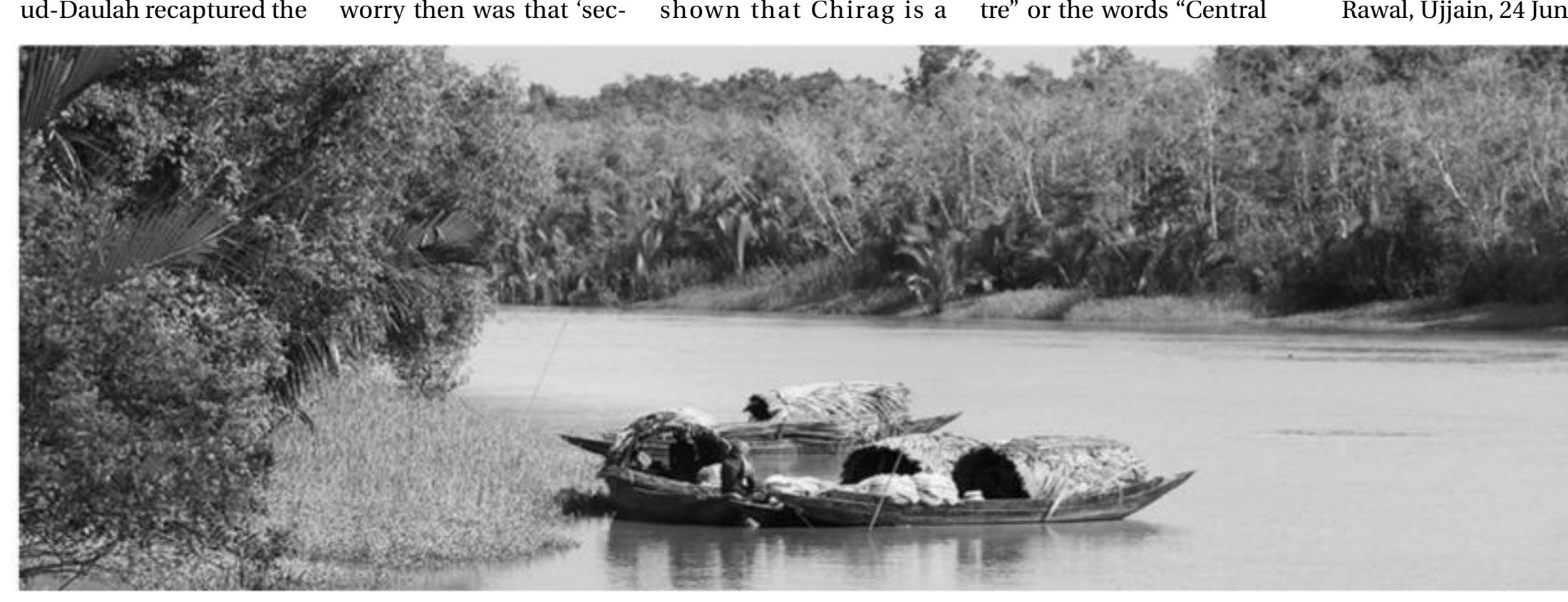
The founding fathers never used the word "Centre" or the words "Central

Government" in the Constitution. Even the lists of division of powers, under the seventh schedule, are named as the Union list, State list and Concurrent list. "Union government" is a justified term because it is used in the Constitution.

The Tamil Nadu government is respecting the essence of the supreme law of the land and this is an example of constitutional morality.

As the late Nani Palkhivala said, "The survival of our democracy and the unity and integrity of the nation depend upon the realisation that constitutional morality is no less essential than constitutional legality."

Yours, etc., Mohit Rawal, Ujjain, 24 June.



WORTHY WINNERS

SIR, New Zealand's cricket team have created history by winning the maiden World Test Championship mace, defeating the mighty Indian team by 8 wickets at Southampton. The match provided much thrill and excitement to cricket lovers who want to see the longest format of this beautiful game survive.

The Kiwi captain Kane Williamson stamped his authority over this most fascinating version of the game with his superb batting skills and commendable leadership. After winning the toss, he took all the right decisions. But the player who stole the show was Kyle Jamieson who not only stunned the fancy Indian batting line-up by taking 8 wickets in the match but also scored a crucial 21 runs in the first innings.

All in all, the Kiwis deserved to win this much-awaited final as they played superb cricket. From the Indian point of view, the way they lost a match they could have easily drawn will cause disappointment. The performances of their key players like Jasprit Bumrah and Cheteshwar Pujara proved costly for their team. India also played outstanding cricket to reach the final and deserve praise. Hopefully, India will learn from their mistakes.

Yours, etc., Iftekhar Ahmed,
Kolkata, 24 June.

Tracking the 2004 tsunami

ELIZABETH FRANKENBERG,
CECIL SUMANTRI AND
DUNCAN THOMAS

On 26 December 2004, waves triggered by a massive earthquake slammed into the coastlines of countries ringing the Indian Ocean. The death toll was enormous. Worldwide, it is estimated that about 230,000 people died that day. Aceh province, on the northern end of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, was hit hardest. There, more than 160,000 people – nearly 5 per cent of the local population – were killed. In the worst hit areas, survivors lost their homes and livelihoods and saw their communities reduced to rubble.

Over the months that followed, governments, religious organisations, NGOs and individual people delivered substantial support for humanitarian assistance and rebuilding. Multi-year reconstruction projects began and Indonesia committed to building back better. Much of what has been learned from that disaster is relevant when considering how the world will recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

In the immediate aftermath of an event like the 2004 tsunami, the path forward is not clear. So how have those from affected regions fared since the day the waves crashed ashore? Over the last 16 years, we have followed people and their families who were living along the coasts of Aceh and Northern Sumatra, the two most northerly provinces in Sumatra, as part of the Study of the Tsunami Aftermath and Recovery (STAR).

Experiences of the disaster and its aftermath, and the meaning people take from them, have varied.

One young man we spoke to lost his wife, child, and 27 other family members in the disaster, but has since remarried. He says that the time since the tsunami has taught him that life sometimes brings happiness and sometimes not, but that affection is critically important.

Another young man who lost a wife and child has also remarried. But he told us that the time since the tsunami has not brought any positive changes in his life, though he is deeply committed to earning the money to support the education of the two young children he now has.

Our data covers the population before the disaster and measures exposure to the disaster in terms of impacts on both places and people. We have been able to measure the disaster's various impacts on well-being

ing and shed light on some of the key drivers for recovery.

Death is the most extreme consequence of exposure to a disaster. Some deaths are immediate, but others may occur over the years as sustained exposure to stress takes its toll. Teasing out how disasters affect mortality risks is complicated, but can provide clues about what will happen when disasters strike in the future.

We have found that the groups least likely to survive the tsunami were older adults and young children. Among adults, women were less likely to survive than men.

Tracking mortality among survivors in the years after the tsunami provides direct evidence on people's resilience. We see resilience as the ability to minimise the negative impacts of difficult situations and move forward effectively afterwards. The devastation caused by the tsunami has the potential to "scar" people, resulting in their premature death. But equally, the survivors may have protective traits that are associated with better health and longevity.

We examined mortality for survivors at five years and ten years after the tsunami. We found that among adults, both these factors are in play and that they operate differently for men and women.

Five years after the tsunami, there is clear evidence that for male survivors who were aged 50 and above when the disaster took place, those from heavily affected areas were more likely to still be alive than those from relatively unaffected areas. This shows that over this period, certain protective traits of survivors (perhaps general fitness) appear to exert a stronger effect on longevity than any "scarring" elements of the event.

But for women over 50, the reverse was true: we found that survivors from heavily damaged areas were at higher risk of dying over the next five years than women from unaffected areas.

These basic patterns were still apparent ten years after the disaster. But by this point, the evidence shows that in particular, post-traumatic stress for older men or the loss of a spouse for older women decreased the likelihood them still being alive. Although the two events are of course extremely different, these results should encourage us to reflect on what the long-term health effects of the COVID pandemic might be.

We've also been looking at the evidence for how the extraordinary stresses of the tsunami affected sur-

vivors' health and wellbeing. A large fraction of the people in our study reported high levels of post traumatic stress symptoms; for some, these resolved quickly but for others, they persisted for several years.

Our evidence shows that 13 years after the tsunami, adults who directly experienced the tsunami had thicker waists, were more likely to have elevated inflammation levels (indicating infection or illness), and more likely to have difficulties regulating glucose levels.

These patterns point to a long-term scarring that gets under the skin and will likely affect disease progression and mortality in the years to come. Specifically, several established biological markers indicate that some survivors who directly experienced the tsunami are at higher risk of chronic illnesses such as heart disease and diabetes. Again, this raises questions as to how the stresses of the Covid-19 pandemic will affect long-term health.

For very young children, we found that exposure to the tsunami could leave its mark on growth. Child height is a powerful predictor of health, mortality and socio-economic status in adulthood. It is largely determined in the first few years of life. We document that children who were in utero at the time of the tsunami were small at birth and significantly shorter at age three.

For many of the children, these deficits were made up in subsequent years and they eventually attained the same height (given age and gender) as peers not yet conceived when the tsunami took place. This suggests that, at least in this dimension of wellbeing, resilience is high, although we cannot rule out longer term consequences of rapid catch-up growth that may be linked to elevated risks of poor health in adulthood.

We have focused here on differences in the evolution of health by level of exposure to the tsunami and the stress it caused. But efforts to help affected populations meet basic needs and recover after the disaster changed the environment, possibly in ways that positively affected people. Indeed, the results for children's nutritional status are likely attributable, at least in part, to improvements brought about by humanitarian assistance and reconstruction.

In addition to providing immediate help for things like water, food, clothing and shelter, over time assistance programmes provided work opportunities as well as funds and materials to rebuild houses, schools, health facilities, community centres,



This offset some of the population losses from people dying in the tsunami or moving away from the damage shortly afterwards.

Understanding how people and populations are affected by events outside their control and evaluating the effectiveness of policies and programmes is critical in responses to disasters, pandemics and other threats to population health and wellbeing. The implications of these events are complex and continuously evolving, and patterns vary with age, sex and other socio-economic and demographic characteristics. It is difficult to overstate the diversity of experiences and outcomes in the years following the tsunami and it is critically important that we understand the factors that drive this diversity.

Our research highlights the importance of policies that mitigate post-traumatic stress, help people get back into stable housing, and provide opportunities for paid work. They have important benefits for physical and for psychosocial health, as well as for economic wellbeing. As the world continues to struggle with Covid and attempts to restart economic progress, safety nets that address health, stable housing and economic opportunity are likely to pay off.

The writers are, respectively, Cary S Boshier Distinguished Professor of Sociology, University of North Carolina, Director of Capacity Building, SurveyMETER and Norb F. Schaefer Professor of International Studies, Duke University. This article was published on www.theconversation.com



streets, avoiding vendors for whose wares none of us had money, rapt in our talk about imagined people, their joys and miseries, and the fanciful events that intertwined their lives. We talked so earnestly that people overhearing us might believe that we were discussing real people who made a great difference in our lives. In a sense, it made a great difference in our life indeed, for we were not only gaining an insight into great literature, we were also exploring, through each other's eyes, life itself.

I so loved and cherished our walks that I often came back home and told my mother of our chat and what new things I had discovered. When Raj came next to our home, mother would narrate my pleasure of discovery while serving him tea and biscuits. Raj endeared himself by invariably saying modestly that he had just read an interesting book and briefly commented on it, while I was the person that had gleaned the real message of the book. That was Raj's style, an easy modesty coupled with a pleasant way of passing the credit to another.

After college our paths diverged, for he went to another town. Occasionally we talked on the phone, before I went abroad and became enmeshed in overseas travel.

When I went to pick him up at the airport, we had not met for decades.

We had some difficulty identifying each other but we gladly

embraced, and I took him home. I felt genuinely thrilled to have been rediscovered by an old friend, who had traveled far to see me.

I was happy to see him trim and sprightly, looking younger than his age. He spoke of his happiness to see his daughter and his admiration for the charm of Boston. He had clearly retained an active and receptive mind, however quiet was his demeanor. His placidity was almost reassuring, for it meant that in some fundamental way he had retained something of his old self. I poured some tea for us both. Our conversation was warm and hearty.

Then, at last, after we had gone over our recent history, we talked about our families and exchanged news of old friends, I came to what had initially bound us together. I had been looking forward to hearing what he has been reading and what new ideas he could surprise me with.

I asked, "Raj, you were such an avid reader. Always exploring new authors and ideas. Tell me, what have you been reading recently?"

Came the stunning reply, "I just read the day's newspaper. I don't have the time for books."

Indeed, people do change.

The writer is a Washington-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com

NO 28956

IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

How people change



Raj called to say he would see me on Saturday.

He lived in New Delhi but was visiting his daughter in Boston and planned to come to Washington for a tour.

He arrived at the Dulles Airport and I picked him up from the airport lounge since I lived close by. We spent a leisurely morning over coffee and cookies.

Raj was in college with me in Kolkata. He was a short, quiet person, usually by himself. I saw him in the students' lounge, mulling something on a chessboard, and asked if I could join him for a match. We

played two or three times. He sat with a fiercely resolute look and beat me easily each time. When I complimented him on his skill, he brushed it aside, saying he had got it from his brother, who was the true master.

We lived in an ample apartment close to the college and my parents encouraged me to bring friends home. Possibly they wanted to know the kind of friends I was spending time with. I invited both Raj and his brother. When they came, Raj was his usual reticent self, but his brother spoke a lot, mostly about chess, both to mother, serving tea, and me. But we both liked Raj more, his diffident

playfulness and quiet way of acknowledging hospitality.

Raj took an inordinate interest in my father's library. That pleased me because books were an important part of my life. Unlike many of my friends, who read books only because they had to or were told to, I read books for fun. They represented a world of imagination and adventure.

Raj and I found a wide area of discussion. We talked about books we had read, endlessly and with enthusiasm. When he mentioned a book he was reading, I started reading the same book so that we could discuss it in depth. It turned out to be a very good idea, for I discovered that Raj had a very different perspective from mine. For instance, when we both undertook to read The Brothers Karamazov, my interest focused on the fiery Dmitri and the gentle Alexei, the eldest and youngest brothers, while Raj obsessed about Ivan and his struggle to reconcile unjust suffering with a benign God. Later, we both read Nabokov's classic Lolita, and while I was quite swept by Humbert's lust for a nymphet, Raj wondered a lot about Dolores's reaction and Quilty's quick, crazy intervention.

I felt I learned quite a bit from Raj because I realized that literature, like life, can be seen from different angles. All the angles may not all be equally valid, but they tell us how rich the tapestry of life is.

We would take long walks together, in Kolkata's serpentine

streets, avoiding vendors for whose wares none of us had money, rapt in our talk about imagined people, their joys and miseries, and the fanciful events that intertwined their lives. We talked so earnestly that people overhearing us might believe that we were discussing real people who made a great difference in our lives. In a sense, it made a great difference in our life indeed, for we were not only gaining an insight into great literature, we were also exploring, through each other's eyes, life itself.

I so loved and cherished our walks that I often came back home and told my mother of our chat and what new things I had discovered.

When Raj came next to our home, mother would narrate my pleasure of discovery while serving him tea and biscuits. Raj endeared himself by invariably saying modestly that he had just read an interesting book and briefly commented on it, while I was the person that had gleaned the real message of the book. That was Raj's style, an easy modesty coupled with a pleasant way of passing the credit to another.

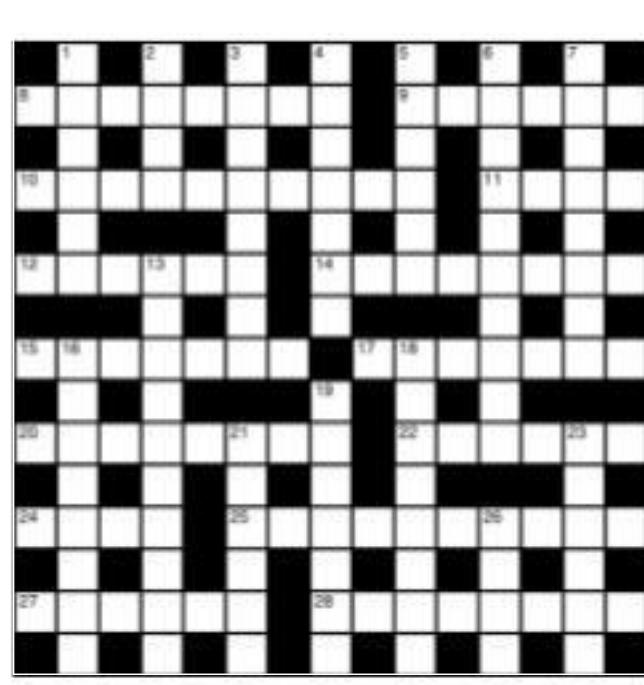
After college our paths diverged, for he went to another town. Occasionally we talked on the phone, before I went abroad and became enmeshed in overseas travel.

When I went to pick him up at the airport, we had not met for decades.

We had some difficulty identifying each other but we gladly

NO 28956

CROSSWORD



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

RETIREMENT OF INDIAN CIVIL SERVANTS

In the House of Commons Sir Charles Yate drew attention to what he described as the widespread desire of Civil Servants in India to take advantage of the proposals of the Government of India with regard to proportional pensions for those to whom service under the Reform Scheme was uncongenial. Mr. Montagu said that he and the India Council had for some time been giving attention to the whole question in consultation with the Government of India, and he hoped that the matter would be settled during the next week or so. He recognised that the matter was very urgent, and he was doing his best to expedite things.

NEWS ITEMS

CHARGE OF CHEATING & BREACH OF TRUST

The police yesterday submitted a challan before the Third Presidency Magistrate against J.S. Craddock, a European charging him with cheating and criminal breach of trust. It is alleged that accused represented himself to Mr. L. Mackenzie, of the Imperial Bank, as the nephew of Sir Reginald Craddock, Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, and thereby induced him to give him a letter of introduction to the Manager of the Central Bank. On this he obtained a loan of Rs 6,000. Thereafter, accused is alleged to have taken the loan on a certain day and pledged it with Karnani Bank with a view to repaying the money he borrowed from the Central Bank. Accused was lying ill in hospital and the case was adjourned.

COST OF NEW KIDDERPORE BRIDGE

Regarding the apportionment of the cost of construction and the maintenance of the new Kidderpore Bridge, the Works Special Committee of the Calcutta Corporation have resolved to affirm their previous resolution that the contribution by the Corporation of 20.1 per cent of the net cost should be on the condition that the reconstruction of other bridges in Calcutta is undertaken by Government, when necessary, on the same terms, viz.; that Government should bear the cost of the reconstruction of a bridge of the same type and dimensions as the existing bridge. They agree, however, that the proportion of the contributions of the various local authorities concerned should be settled in each individual case, when a bridge on the boundary of Calcutta is concerned.

CUTTING UP LOWER CIRCULAR ROAD

The draft reply to the Government in connection with the application of the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation for an alteration in their licence regarding the period of option to purchase the undertaking is down for consideration on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting of the Calcutta Corporation. The draft letter was published in The Statesman on Thursday last. The action of the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation in cutting up Lower Circular Road shortly after it was asphalted has also come under the notice of the General Committee, who have directed that enquiries should be made of the Bombay Corporation and other municipalities as to their experiences and difficulties, and whether they would be prepared to take joint action for securing the amendment of the Indian Electricity Act.

RETIREMENT OF INDIAN CIVIL SERVANTS

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The new number just issued of the "Journal of Indian Industries and Labour" shows that this publication cannot fail to be of great interest and value to all interested in the industrial development of the country. Sir Thomas Holland contributes an article on the principles governing the grant of mineral concessions in India, and amongst other subjects dealt with are those of the Rajputana salt industry, the hydro-electric survey of India, factory children and education, leather trades and shoe manufacture, chemical research for the development of industries, technical and industrial education in Bengal, and other matters. If the industrial development of India is in its infancy, it is certainly being well nursed; and it is not very easy to suggest anything more than is already being done by the provision of expert research and advice, the work of boards of industries, and other means of official or unofficial assistance. Those who have converted the word "bureaucratic" into a term of reproach probably have not the least idea of the amount of beneficial work that is done for the country through bureaucratic channels. One of the most interesting of the papers in the new issue of the "Journal" is Mr. J.W. Meares' review of the hydro-electric survey. "At the present time," writes Mr. Meares, "as a direct result of the war, the whole world is examining its waterpower resources while endeavouring to conserve its fuel resources.



In the wake of such crisis, we had to move quickly and manage a near overnight transition to a virtual working model.

DEEPAK S PAREKH
HDFC LIFE CHAIRMAN

THUMBNAILS

Gaana expects to reach 500-mn subscriber: Music app Gaana is expecting to reach a 500-million subscriber base in the next three years with diversification on content in regional languages, independent music and traction overseas, a top official of the company said. The company is also expecting to start making profit in two years time. "Even though we have reached significant numbers, the potential to reach 500 million is very imminent in terms of listeners with Gaana. We are currently at 185 million monthly active users." PTI

Moneyboxx Finance:
TNBFC firm Moneyboxx Finance India Ltd (MBFL), which provides small-ticket loans in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, on Sunday said it aims to triple loan disbursement to Rs 180 crore during 2021-22 by expanding its operation to new geographies. With the assets under management of Rs 62 crore, the company had disbursed loans of Rs 55 crore during the financial year ended March 2021. The company plans to enter Uttar Pradesh by opening branches in the western part of the state, MBFL said in a statement. PTI

478 Infra projects: As many as 478 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns totalling more than Rs 4.4 lakh crore, according to a report. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above. Of the 1,768 such projects, 478 reported cost overruns and 525 were delayed. PTI

Nissan initiates production ramp-up: Japanese car-maker Nissan has initiated a gradual ramp-up of production at its Chennai plant as it looks to cater to the pent up demand for its models across domestic and international markets, according to a top company official. PTI

Cairn to target more firms to recover money due from govt

Cairn will bring lawsuits in several countries to make firms liable to pay the \$1.2 billion plus interest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

Air India, Britain's Cairn Energy PLC plans to target assets of state-owned firms and banks in countries from the US to Singapore as it looks to ramp up efforts to recover the amount due from the Indian government after winning an arbitration against levies of retrospective taxes.

A lawyer representing the company said Cairn will bring lawsuits in several countries to make state-owned firms liable to pay the \$1.2 billion plus interest and penalties that are due from the Indian government.

Last month, Cairn brought a lawsuit in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York pleading that Air India is controlled by the Indian government so much that they are 'alter egos' and the airline should be held liable for the arbitration award.

"There are a number of state enterprises which we are considering for enforcement action. Enforcement action will



be soon and it may not be in the US," Dennis Hranitzky, head of the sovereign litigation practice at Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, a law firm representing the company, said.

A three-member international arbitration tribunal that consisted of one judge appointed by India had unanimously in December overturned levy of taxes on Cairn retrospectively and ordered refund of shares sold, dividend confiscated and tax refunds withheld to recover such demand.

The government of India, despite participating in the arbitration proceeding over

he said.

He, however, refused to either name the companies that Cairn will target or the countries where lawsuits will be filed.

Cairn has already got the arbitration award registered and recognised in the US, the UK, Netherlands, France, Canada and Singapore.

In case of Air India, the national flag carrier has till mid-July to file a plea contesting Cairn lawsuit, sources aware of the matter said.

The airline, which is in the process of being privatised, is likely to argue that it is a separate entity and not the alter ego of the Indian government and cannot be forced to pay for any liability of the government, they said.

Cairn has identified \$70 billion of Indian assets overseas for potential seizure to collect award, which now totals to \$1.72 billion after including interest and penalties.

The assets identified range from Air India's planes to vessels belonging to the Shipping Corporation of India,

and properties owned by state banks to oil and gas cargoes of PSUs, the sources said.

Once a court recognises a state-owned firm or bank as the alter ego of Indian government, Cairn can seek attachment or seizure of its assets including bank accounts to recover the amount it was awarded by the arbitration tribunal.

The move is similar to a court in the British Virgin Islands ordering in December last year hotels in New York and Paris owned by Pakistan International Airlines to be used to settle a claim against Pakistan's government by a Canadian-Chilean copper company.

Crystalex International Corp had brought a similar lawsuit to attach property of Petroleos de Venezuela, S.A. (PDVSA), the state-owned oil company of Venezuela, in Delaware couple of years back after the Latin American country failed to pay the firm \$1.2 billion that an arbitration tribunal had ordered to pay in lieu of the 2011 seizing gold deposits held and developed by the firm.

NITI Aayog on 24 June, sources said, adding the panel would after tying up all loose ends will send the names of the shortlisted PSU banks to AM for consideration. Headed by the cabinet secretary, the members of the panel include secretaries in the departments of Economic Affairs, Revenue, Expenditure, Corporate Affairs and Legal Affairs, as well as the secretary of administrative department. The panel also has the Department of Public Enterprises, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) secretary as its member.

According to sources, the panel also examined issues pertaining to protection of interests of workers of banks which are likely to be privatised. Following a clearance from AM, it will go to the Union Cabinet headed by the PM for the final nod.

Changes on the regulatory side to facilitate privatisation would start after the cabinet approval.

Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank are reported to be probable candidates for privatisation.

NTPC targets 60 GW renewable energy capacity by 2032



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

install 60 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032," it added.

The country's largest power producer is also aiming 10 per cent reduction in net energy intensity by 2032.

NTPC is among the few organisations globally to declare its energy compact goals.

Further, NTPC has declared that it will form at least 2 international alliances to facilitate clean energy research and

promote sustainability in energy value chain by 2025.

The targets were unveiled in the recently held Ministerial Thematic Forums for the HDLE event. The commitment from NTPC has been made public on UN's website as well. The United Nations is set to convene a high-level dialogue in September 2021 to promote the implementation of energy-related goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

NTPC has been taking various steps in increasing its green energy portfolio by adding significant capacities of RE sources.

Earlier, the company had planned to have a minimum of 32 gigawatt (GW) capacity through RE sources constituting nearly 25 per cent of its overall power generation capacity by 2032.

Petrol crosses ₹100 in Bihar after another round of price hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE



while diesel is now priced at Rs 88.90 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as value-added tax (VAT) and freight charges.

While petrol had crossed

Rs 100-a-litre mark in Bihar becoming the latest state to see petrol cross Rs 100-a-litre mark.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 35 paise per litre each on Saturday.

India's crude steel output grows in May: worldsteel

NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

India registered a 46.9 per cent year-on-year growth in its crude steel output at 9.2 million tonnes in May, according to worldsteel data.

The country had produced 5.8 MT steel in the same month a year ago.

"The production of the 64 countries reporting to the World Steel Association (worldsteel) was 174.4 MT in May 2021, a 16.5 per cent increase compared to May 2020," the global industry body said in its latest report.

According to the worldsteel data, China had produced 92.3 MT of steel in the same month last year. Last month, Japan's output increased to 8.4 MT from 5.9 MT in May 2020. The US produced 7.2 MT steel in the month under review.

MG Motor to drive in 2nd electric model in India in next two years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

EV in the country. When asked about the timeline for the product launch, Chaba said, "We are not defining the timelines now due to the Covid situation and shortages of essential materials, especially chips. So hopefully in two years, we can do it."

On expectations in terms of policies to drive the growth of the EV sector, he said that the government has already lowered the tax on electric vehicles and the only thing required now is the development of charging infrastructure.

"Both the government and industry are working on it. Hopefully, things would again pick up once Covid thing subsides," Chaba said.

The automaker is also looking to drive in a mid-sized SUV later this year in order to muster volumes and move ahead in the direction of fully utilising its Halol-based (Gujarat) manufac-

turing facility which has an installed capacity to roll out about one lakh cars per annum.

Chaba said the SUV launch got delayed by a few weeks due to the second wave of Covid-19 and is now expected to hit the market in the last quarter of this calendar year.

The company expects the SUV to be a volume generator for the company.

In 2020, the automaker had sold 28,162 units, as compared with 15,930 units in 2019 and aims to grow by around 70 per cent this year riding on the new launch and improved Covid situation.

India has seen a robust increase in SUV sales over the last few years. In 2015, the SUV segment contributed only 13.5 per cent to the overall passenger vehicle sales. This number became about 26 per cent in 2019 and rose to 29 per cent in 2020.

DLF sells 551 independent floors in Gurugram since October 2020 for over ₹1,200 cr on better demand



demic," he said.

Ohri said the housing sales picked up fast after the first quarter which was muted because of the nationwide coronavirus lockdown.

"People want to pick up good products from credible developers. They want better amenities and high quality of safety, security and services in residential complexes," he said.

"We have done phenomenally well in terms of sales. We sold over Rs 3,000 crore worth homes during 2020-21 fiscal despite the Covid pan-

elise several small land parcels, which it owned in Gurugram, through development of independent floors have paid off.

"We have launched and sold 551 apartments since October 2020," he said, adding that the company would continue to focus on the development of independent floors in DLF phase 1-5 and new Gurugram. The sales value of these 551 units is around Rs 1,230 crore.

Since October, DLF has launched these floors between Rs 11,000 per sq ft and Rs 15,000 per sq ft in DLF phase 1 to 5. The price range is Rs 3 crore to Rs 5.6 crore including the GST.

In DLF Gardencity, New Gurugram, independent floors have been launched at Rs 6,000-6,500 per sq ft. The ticket size is Rs 1.25-1.7 crore. DLF has started construction of these independent floors and will deliver them in the next two years.

Ohri noted that plots and independent floors continue to remain an attractive investment option due to lower investment cost and high returns.

"Based on the demand and learnings from last year, this year our focus is to scale up launches of new products, revamp our premium and mid-income housing offerings and continue to monetise our finished inventory across regions," Ohri said.

Some states concerned about e-commerce rules, fear loss of jobs



would be made to the Centre, which has invited suggestions till July 6, would be made after deliberating all the issues and after consulting all stakeholders.

The officials said formal suggestions on the draft rules

other business entities, who have either invested in various e-commerce platforms or are doing business with them, are also said to be wary of certain proposed rules, including on 'fall-back liability', flash sales, or deep

discounting and data sharing.

Their apprehensions include greater liabilities for online retailers for goods and services sold on their platforms, which could also impact the ability of e-commerce players to raise funds going forward and may prompt existing and prospective investors to put in place additional measures to safeguard their returns.

Major e-commerce players such as Amazon and Walmart/Flipkart, as also some industry bodies, are also likely to submit their views on these proposals soon.

A senior official of a big non-BJP-ruled state said there is a view that the proposed rules can disturb the state's business ecosystem, especially with regard to MSMEs and

small entrepreneurs and will also limit the choices for consumers, rather than safeguarding their interest.

He pointed out that MSMEs contribute almost two-thirds of the annual revenues generated on just two major platforms Amazon and Flipkart and that itself runs into thousands of crores of rupees, while there is a big chain involved comprising of businesses, self-employed individuals, warehouses, farmers etc and these platforms have created lakhs of jobs in the recent years.

Among various measures, the draft amendments propose banning of fraudulent flash sales and mis-selling of goods and services on e-commerce platforms.

CAIT urges govt not to dilute draft e-commerce rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 JUNE

pressure," CAIT said in a statement. The draft rules after examining the suggestions and objections should be notified without any further delay, it added.

It alleged that unethical and law violating business practices of foreign funded e-commerce companies has forced closure of a large number of shops in the country.

"Traders of India are not against e-commerce but are of the considered opinion that e-commerce is the most promising business avenue of the future, and traders should also adopt it as a stream of their business activities in their physical shops," it said.



It was a slip of the tongue. He (Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan) had clarified it.

PAKISTAN INFORMATION MINISTER FAWAD CHAUDHRY
ON KHAN DESCRIBING AL QAIDA LEADER OSAMA BIN LADEN AS A 'SHAHEED' (MARTYR)

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, MONDAY 28 JUNE 2021

09

Jinping's prolonged tenure could spell trouble for CPC

When succession looms, it can be very destabilising if process is not well defined, say analysts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 27 JUNE

As China's ruling Communist Party is set to celebrate its centenary on 1 July, experts warn that the potential of President Xi Jinping's continuation in power, unlike his predecessors, could potentially be "very destabilising" for it in the future in the absence of a successor.

Ironically, in its 100th year, the Communist Party of China (CPC), as it is officially called, relies on Xi just as it depended on its founder leader and principled ideologue 'Chairman' Mao Zedong, who held a vice-like grip on it until his death in 1976 after the party was established in 1921.

Mass mobilisation of labour to improve agricultural and industrial production but ended with a string of poor harvests resulting in famine, and the 1966 'Cultural Revolution', which resulted in the



deaths of over 1.5 million people, the party was revived by moderate paramount leader Deng Xiaoping.

Deng's political invention of collective leadership structure which kept the party intact accommodating all groups and sections of the 90 million-strong member CPC after his death in 1997 has gone back to one leader party with the emergence of Xi at the helm in 2012.

China in 2018 approved the removal of the two-term limit on the presidency, effectively allowing Xi, 68, to remain in power for life.

While Xi's supporters projected his leadership as the need of the hour for China which is facing global adversity, analysts warn that his continuation in power after two terms unlike predecessors is potentially destabilising.

It was normal practice that a successor to the General Secretary of the CPC is named during the second tenure of the party leadership.

With no clear successor in sight, observers expect Xi to

remain as a paramount leader during the reshuffle of the party's governing bodies as the twice-a-decade Party Congress next year will shed light on how he plans to tackle succession and avoid a crisis within the party. It could prove to be his biggest challenge and will shape the party for decades to come. Xi has said that one way to evaluate a political system is to see whether the leadership succession is law-abiding and orderly.

But unlike his predecessors, Xi did not endorse a successor at the end of his first term in 2017, and observers do not expect one to emerge in the new leadership line-up next year as well. That could spell trouble for the party, according to Steve Tsang.

When succession finally looms, it can potentially be very destabilising if the structure and/or process is not clear and well defined, Tsang told the Post. His view was echoed by Nis Gruenberg.

By abolishing term limits and succession norms Xi has bought himself more time to establish his vision of the party-state and his national project for China, Gruenberg said.

But he has also inserted enormous uncertainty into the leadership system again, which in the end could destabilise the leadership system as soon as Xi's unchallengeable power base has gone.

Bringing in new blood will be crucial to avoid a succession crisis, something that would have a wider impact, given China's economic heft, according to a joint report by the Centre for Strategic International Studies in the US and the Lowy Institute in Australia.

It is to paraphrase Napoleon declaration that the conditions are right for the previously slumbering lion to roar and he will see to it that it does, Tsang told at a press conference earlier.

Delta Covid variant likely driving huge infection surge in SAfrican province



ASSOCIATED PRESS
JOHANNESBURG, 27 JUNE

The Delta variant of Covid-19, identified in at least 85 countries and first detected in India, is likely responsible for the exponentially rising daily number of virus cases in South Africa's economic hub, Gauteng province, a leading epidemiologist has said here.

Official data would be released by the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) next week, but it is likely to show that there had been an increase in the transmission of the Delta variant, which is 60 per cent more transmissible than the Beta variant -- first identified in South Africa, Shabir Madhi,

director of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases Analytical Research Unit at Wits University, told news channel ENCA.

Madhi's comments came as hospitals reported a shortage of beds and burial organisations in Gauteng, especially affecting the Indian community.

"The only way to explain what we are currently seeing is the seeding of a new variant coupled with the waning of immunity."

"Those individuals that have been infected (in the first two waves) are still susceptible to being re-infected, especially when there is a new variant that evolves that is relatively resistant, but they still remain protected against

severe infection," Madhi said on Saturday.

The NICD on Friday said nationally there had been 18,762 new Covid-19 infections and 215 Covid-19 related deaths overnight, with 63 per cent of cases in Gauteng province.

Madhi said the current third wave, which is causing more infections and deaths than the previous waves, had surprised him and many others.

"All indications are that we are probably dealing with a spread of a new variant, the Delta variant in particular."

"The magnitude of this is completely unexpected and the worst part is that this is not yet the peak of these hospitalisations. In all likelihood, the peak of the hospitalisations will only occur in the next 23 weeks, including the number of people that are dying. That number is going to continue increasing, which is really concerning," he said.

Madhi called for a ban on all mass gatherings as the most important way to reduce the number of infections.

Riots in Lebanon over economy injure 10 soldiers, protesters

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIRUT, 27 JUNE

Lebanese troops deployed in the northern city of Tripoli early Sunday taking positions around major state institutions after a night of protests and riots against worsening living conditions left several protesters and 10 soldiers injured.

Sporadic protests were reported throughout Lebanon on Saturday as the country's 20-month economic crisis worsened. The World Bank described the crisis as one of the worst the world has wit-



nessed in 150 years. It is coupled with a political deadlock that has left Lebanon without a government since August.

The largest protests were in the southern port city of Sidon and in Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city and most impoverished. Sporadic

protests and road closures took place in the capital Beirut.

Lebanon has been suffering severe shortages of vital products including fuel, medicine and medical products, angering the public. Its currency hit a record low Saturday, reaching 18,000 pounds to the US dollar. The pound has lost more than 90% of its value since the crisis began.

In October 2019 protesters called for the removal of the political class that has blamed for corruption and mismanagement that has ruined the country's economy.

At least 46 Taliban militants killed in Afghanistan clashes

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
KABUL, 27 JUNE

At least 46 Taliban militants were killed and 25 others injured in fierce clashes with security forces in Afghanistan's Takhar province, the Ministry of Defence said.

The clashes occurred on Saturday when the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) backed by local Public Uprising Forces and supported by the Air Force targeted a Taliban convoy and militants' aggregations in the suburban districts of

Dasht-e-Qala and Rustaq.

Among the victims were eight outstanding members of the Taliban outfit, the statement noted, without saying if there were any casualties on the side of the security forces.

Two militants' vehicles and a number of their weapons and ammunition were also destroyed. The northern Afghan provinces have been the scene of heavy clashes and battles in recent weeks as Taliban militants continued their battles against government forces.

CELEBRATION VIBES



People walk past China national flags and Hong Kong flags for the celebration of the 24th anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to China in Tai Po New Town, on Sunday.

Blinken, Lapid meet in Rome amid reset US-Israel relations

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME, 27 JUNE

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will meet in Rome on Sunday as their new governments look to turn the page on former President Donald Trump and former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose close alliance aggravated partisan divisions within both countries.

Now, with Trump sidelined in Florida and Netanyahu leading the opposition, President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett are focused on pragmatic diplomacy rather than dramatic ini-



tatives that risk fomenting opposition at home or distracting from other priorities.

That means aiming for

smaller achievements, such as shoring up the informal cease-fire that ended last month's war with Gaza's militant Hamas rulers and replenishing Israel's Iron Dome defence system. A major push to revive the long-dormant peace process between Israel and the Palestinians could unsettle the delicate balance.

Nobody thinks it's a good idea to start charging through on a major new peace initiative, said Ilan Goldenberg, a Mideast security expert at the nonprofit Center for a

Palestinians find increasing oppression and hopelessness, and which has fueled countless cycles of unrest.

The Americans and Israelis will try to work out differences away from the public, as in Biden's "quiet" diplomacy, when he privately urged Netanyahu to wind down the Israel-Hamas war ahead of a truce that took effect 21 May.

They know you can have a pitched battle, or handle it behind closed doors and try to move the policy, said US Democratic pollster Mark Mellman, who worked as a consultant on Lapid's campaign.

Both governments will try to preserve Israel's fragile

governing coalition, in part by reducing provocations that played a part in sparking the 11-day war that claimed at least 254 Palestinian lives and killed 13 people in Israel.

The new coalition in Israel shares little beyond the conviction that Netanyahu had to go. It's composed of eight parties, each effectively with veto power on decisions. So if even one party bolts, Israel's government would be at serious risk of collapse, with Netanyahu waiting just offshore.

At least in the short term, Lapid, a centrist, will be Israel's point man on repairs to the tattered relationship with Biden and the Democrats.

'Like a hell': Ethiopia airstrike survivors recall massacre

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ADDIS ABABA, 27 JUNE

Maerg was serving customers at his cafe in Ethiopia's Tigray village of Togoga when the military airstrike occurred, filling the room with dust and bringing down debris that struck him on the head.

Everything was covered in black smoke, it was like a hell, he told The Associated Press by phone, recounting one of the deadliest attacks in the Tigray conflict.

There was so much blood. Seven people were killed in his cafe alone, and some 30 were wounded,

including his sister-in-law, who suffered burns on her face, hands and legs. Outside, he said, he saw dozens more bodies. As time passed, he watched in horror as survivors realised that Ethiopian soldiers were blocking medical aid from arriving.

"We feel very angry because a lot of lives could have been saved," he said.

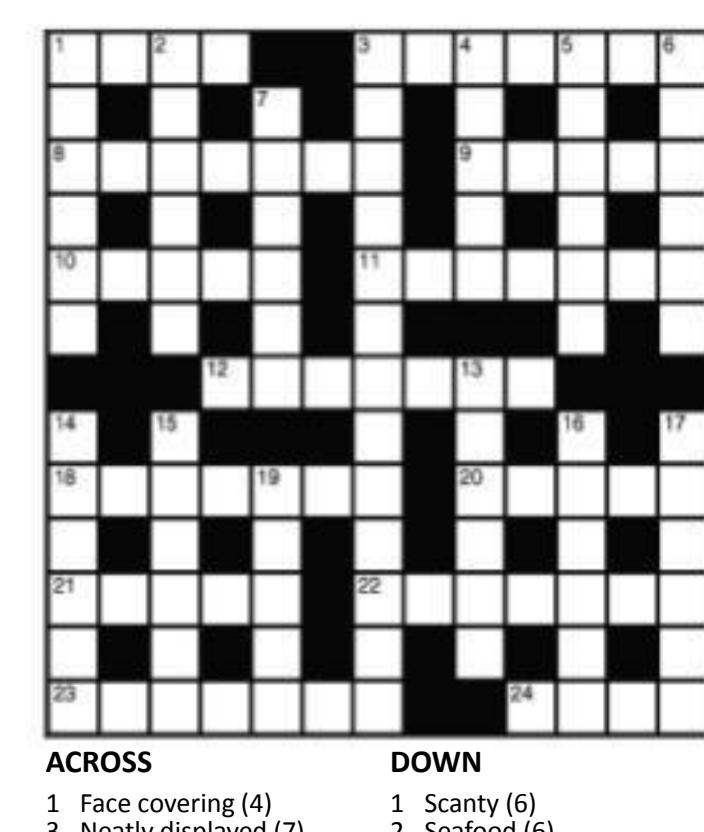
Such witness accounts are emerging after Ethiopia's military has said it was responsible for the airstrike that struck Togoga's busy marketplace on Tuesday, which health officials said killed at least 64

people and injured dozens more. Many died when soldiers blocked medical teams from reaching them, or from taking them to hospitals in the regional capital, Mekele, just 60 km away, health workers said.

The military said the airstrike targeted Tigray fighters dressed in civilian clothes who had gathered to celebrate Martyrs' Day. But witnesses told the AP that although fighters loyal to Tigray's former leaders had been active in the surrounding countryside days before the airstrike, armed men were not in Togoga on the day of the attack.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Face covering (4)
- 3 Neatly displayed (7)
- 8 Unyielding (7)
- 9 Blemish (5)
- 10 Quick (5)
- 11 Determine (7)
- 12 Fragrance (7)
- 18 In relation to (3-1-3)
- 20 Hue (5)
- 21 Unwanted plants (5)
- 22 Sloping letters (7)
- 23 Contempt (7)
- 24 Drinking-places (4)
- 10 Laptop, 13 Saddle, 15 Step, 17 Overseas, 20 Rock climbing, 21 Dram, 22 Sheen, 11 Author, 12 Problem, 14 Despite, 16 Poker, 18 Emmys, 19 Argon, 23 Against (6), 19 View (5)
- 1 Scanty (6)
- 2 Seafood (6)
- 3 In some manner (5,1,7)
- 4 Hazards (5)
- 5 Annual (6)
- 6 Peril (6)
- 7 Lag behind (6)
- 13 Admitted (6)
- 14 Openly admitted (6)
- 15 Valuable things (6)
- 16 Fine layer (6)
- 17 Against (6)
- 19 View (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

- DOWN
- 10 Laptop, 13 Saddle, 15 Step, 17 Overseas, 20 Rock climbing, 21 Dram, 22 Sheen, 11 Author, 12 Problem, 14 Despite, 16 Poker, 18 Emmys, 19 Argon, 23 Against (6), 19 View (5)
- 1 Scanty (6)
- 2 Seafood (6)
- 3 In some manner (5,1,7)
- 4 Hazards (5)
- 5 Annual (6)
- 6 Peril (6)
- 7 Lag behind (6)
- 13 Admitted (6)
- 14 Openly admitted (6)
- 15 Valuable things (6)
- 16 Fine layer (6)
- 17 Against (6)
- 19 View (5)

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 18001251579, 23864470

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

PAR SCORE 40-50 by JUDD

SCRABBLE® BRAND

G R A M M A T I C



When you have a contagious variant like the Delta virus, a three-day (lockdown) doesn't work. If we're going to do this, we need to do it properly.

NEW SOUTH WALES PREMIER GLADYS BEREJIKLIAN
AS SYDNEY EXTENDS LOCKDOWN TO MORE AREAS

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	30	26 R
HONG KONG	32	29 R
TOKYO	27	20 H
LONDON	22	14 R
DUBAI	41	32 S
SAN FRANCISCO	20	14 H
NEW YORK	34	24 H
MOSCOW	31	20 R

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

THUMBNAILS



Various groups from the LGBT community gather to celebrate sexual diversity in the main plaza of Mexico City. AP

Four people dead in US hot air balloon crash: Four people were killed and one person was critically injured following a hot air balloon crash in the US state of New Mexico, authorities said. The accident took place in the city of Albuquerque on Saturday. The balloon hit a power line after which the basket that the passengers were riding in detached and crashed. IANS

Covid vaccine walk-in centres open across England: Adults in England will now be able to get a Covid-19 vaccine without an appointment at hundreds of walk-in sites that have opened amid a resurgence of new cases, local media reported. In the "grab a jab" campaign, those aged 18 and over can turn up at the National Health Service (NHS) drop-in sites like football stadiums, theatres, mall car parks and shopping centres. IANS

UK govt accused of hypocrisy as health minister quits

Hancock announced his resignation on Saturday, a day after apologising for breaching Covid norm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 27 JUNE



published images showing him and senior aide Gina Coladangelo embracing and kissing in his office.

The Sun said the images were taken on May 6, before lockdown rules were eased to allow hugs and physical contact with people not in one's own household.

Hancock, who is married, wasn't the first senior British politician caught red-handed for breaking the government's own COVID-19 rules.

Johnson's former top aide, Dominic Cummings, was accused of undermining the government's stay-home mes-

sage during Britain's first lockdown in 2020 when he broke a travel ban and drove across England to his parents' home.

The breach caused a furor and was widely seen to erode public trust in Johnson's government.

And Neil Ferguson, a leading government scientific adviser who advocated for strict lockdown rules, quit his position in May 2020 after it emerged he didn't practice what he preached and allowed his girlfriend to visit him at home.

At the time, Hancock

remarked that the social distancing rules in place are there for everyone and are deadly serious.

On Sunday, many questioned why Johnson publicly stood by Hancock after evidence of the latest rule breach emerged. Johnson had expressed confidence in the health minister, and his office said he had considered the matter closer after Hancock's apology, despite widespread calls to fire him.

Boris Johnson should have had the guts, the spine, the awareness, the judgment, to sack him on Friday, said Jonathan Ashworth, the opposition Labour Party's health spokesman.

Hancock had come under fire for his leadership in the government's response to the pandemic long before the publishing of the intimate photos.

He was accused of cronyism for hiring his friend, businesswoman Dido Harding, to run the much-criticised national test and trace system.

Questions were also raised after the government award-

ed a lucrative coronavirus testing contract to a company run by a landlord near Hancock's former constituency home. Hancock has denied involvement in the contract.

Some are now also asking how Coladangelo, a close friend of Hancock's from university, landed her job as non-executive director at the Department of Health.

The scandal came on the back of wider accusations from the opposition about sleaze in the Conservative party.

Last month, former Prime Minister David Cameron was called before lawmakers to answer questions about lobbying work he did to win government funds for a now-bankrupt financial services company. Lucy Powell, a Labour lawmaker, said the fact that Hancock wasn't fired reflected poorly on Johnson's judgment.

I'm afraid it feels to me that the prime minister has a very dangerous blind spot when it comes to issues of integrity and conduct in public life, she told Sky News.

Classified UK defence ministry documents found at bus stop: Report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 27 JUNE

Classified documents from the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) containing secret information about a warship and the British military was discovered at a bus stop in south-eastern England, according to a media report on Sunday.

The MoD said an employee reported the loss of the documents last week, which were discovered by a member of the public in a soggy heap behind the bus stop in Kent early on Tuesday morning, the BBC report said.

One set of documents reportedly discusses the likely Russian reaction to HMS Defender's passage through Ukrainian waters, with guns covered and the ship's helicopter stowed in its hangar, was conducted in the expectation that Russia might respond aggressively. On Wednesday, more than 20 Russian aircraft and two coastguard ships shadowed the warship as it sailed about 19-km off Crimea's coast.

ence in Afghanistan after the US-led NATO operation there ends this year.

"It would be inappropriate to comment further," an MoD spokesperson said, as it was confirmed an investigation has been launched into the incident.

A member of the public, who wishes to remain anonymous, found the 50-odd pages of documents and contacted the BBC when he realised the sensitive nature of the contents. The BBC believes the documents, which include emails and PowerPoint presentations, originated in the office of a senior official at the MoD.

The documents relating to the Royal Navy's Type 45 destroyer, HMS Defender, show that a mission described by the MoD as an "innocent passage through Ukrainian territorial waters", with guns covered and the ship's helicopter stowed in its hangar, was conducted in the expectation that Russia might respond aggressively. On Wednesday, more than 20 Russian aircraft and two coastguard ships shadowed the warship as it sailed about 19-km off Crimea's coast.

Death toll in Florida collapse rises to 5; 156 still missing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SURFSIDE, 27 JUNE



Rescue crews found another body in the rubble of a collapsed 12-story condominium tower near Miami on Saturday, raising the death toll to five as they raced to recover any survivors while fighting back fire and smoke deep inside the concrete and metal remains.

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava announced the new toll at an evening media briefing, saying the discovery of the body dropped the number of unaccounted for down to 156. She said crews struggling throughout the day in the debris also found other unspecified human remains.

The mayor also said the reason the missing number went down by three was because authorities had identified three bodies. Officials said the remains they find are being sent to the medical examiner, and they are also gathering DNA samples from family members to help identify them.

Throughout the day, she noted, rescue workers continued to go over the massive

mountain of debris with rescue dogs and sonar searching for any survivors. Our top priority continues to be search and rescue and saving any lives that we can, she said.

Earlier, she said, a blaze very deep in the debris had posed incredible difficulties to the rescue teams because of the flames.

At one point Saturday, a fire hose blasted one of the lower floors on the north side of the tower as white smoke or steam streamed out, and a bitter, sulfur-like smell hung in the air.

A crane removed pieces of debris from the more than 30-foot pile in the city of Surfside, and scores of rescuers used big machines, drones, microphones and their own hands to pick through the rubble.

As variant rises, vaccine plan targets 'movable middle'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 27 JUNE



Thrown off-stride to reach its Covid-19 vaccination goal, the Biden administration is sending A-list officials across the country, devising ads for niche markets and enlisting community organizers to persuade unvaccinated people to get a shot.

The strategy has the trappings of a political campaign, complete with data crunching to identify groups that can be won over. But the message is about public health, not ideology. The focus is a group health officials term the "movable middle", some 55 million unvaccinated adults seen as persuadable, many of them under 30.

"We're not just going to do the mass vaccination sites," said Health and Human Ser-

vices Secretary Xavier Becerra. "It's door to door. It's mobile clinics. We're doing vaccinations at church, the PTA meeting, the barber shop, the grocery store."

Officials have seized on a compelling new talking point, courtesy of the coronavirus. The potent delta variant that has ravaged India is spreading here. Now accounting for about 1 in 5 virus samples genetically decoded in the

Doug Emhoff, the husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, has racked up thousands of frequent flyer miles, visiting at least 18 or 19 states by his count.

The administration also has recruited celebrities and athletes, including country music star Brad Paisley and the Tampa Bay Lightning hockey team. It has teamed up with Twitch and Riot Games to reach online gamers and with Panera and Chipotle to offer free food to those getting a shot.

It's unclear how well the levers of persuasion are functioning. Vaccination rates have dropped below 1 million a day, and there's no sign yet of a turnaround. The administration has acknowledged that it will fall short of its goal of having 70% of adults vaccinated by July Fourth.

Transgender rights, religion among cases US justices could add



ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 27 JUNE

A closely watched voting rights dispute from Arizona is among five cases standing between the Supreme Court and its summer break.

But even before the justices wrap up their work, likely later this week, they could say whether they'll add more high-profile issues to what already promises to be a consequential term, beginning in October.

This month, the court has already issued big decisions on health care and religious freedom. And next term, the high court has agreed to take on cases about abortion and guns. The court could say as soon as Monday what it will do about these issues awaiting action.

Transgender rights: Virginia school board is asking the court to uphold a policy, struck down by lower courts, that prohibits transgender students from using school bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity.

The case has been around for six years, since then-high school student Gavin Grimm filed a federal lawsuit over the Gloucester County board's refusal to allow him to use the boys bathroom.

Religion: The justices just wrapped up a case involving a church-affiliated foster care agency that declined to work with same-sex couples, ultimately siding with the agency. Now they'll have to decide

whether to hear other cases involving religious freedom claims.

Alternately, they could send the cases back to lower courts for review in light of their recent decision.

Property rights: A chocolate company's expansion plans are at the heart of what could be the court's biggest case about property rights in years, if the justices take it.

The case involves a property the city of Chicago took by eminent domain in order to allow the Blommer Chocolate Company to expand.

Agreeing to hear the case would give the court the opportunity to overturn a 2005 case that has been roundly criticised by conservatives. **Freedom of speech:** A book that became the Hollywood movie War Dogs is at the center of what could become a landmark First Amendment case. Shkelzen Berisha, the son of the former prime minister of Albania, says the book harmed him by falsely linking him to would-be arms dealers from Miami.

Hesitated for defamation and wants the justices to revisit the high bar the court has set for public figures to win defamation lawsuits.

Berisha's complaint stems from a landmark civil rights-era case, New York Times v. Sullivan. Public figures can win defamation lawsuits only if they can prove that the person publishing the falsehood knew the statement was false or not.

Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin's conviction and lengthy prison sentence in George Floyd's murder could lead to better police hiring and training, law enforcement experts say. It could spur more effort to build trust among officers and communities.

And it might have made the public and future jurors more receptive to longstanding complaints about police interactions with minorities.

Even so, the case was so unusual from a bystander video of Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck for 9 1/2 minutes to police department brass testifying against him that it's difficult to say it was a watershed moment for lasting change.

The conviction was critically important, in part, because of how blatant the violence was and because of the list of acquittals and mis-

got underway. Paris voting stations that sometimes see lines stand largely empty, other than a few elderly voters. Turnout nationwide was less than 13 per cent by midday.

A record-low turnout of 33 per cent in the first round of voting on June 20 proved particularly damaging for the National Rally and Le Pen's hopes of securing a regional breakthrough to bolster her 2022 presidential campaign. The party has not previously won a region.

Polls had suggested that Le Pen's party had some momentum, with legitimate ambitions to win control of leadership councils in one or more of France's 12 mainland regions.

But the apathy last week also infected National Rally voters. Only in one region, in the southeast, did the party finish first. Its candidates

elsewhere were all relegated to second place or lower, with some openly abandoning all hopes of winning in round two.

A major question in the runoff is whether voters will bring together to keep Le Pen's party out of power as they have in the past, repulsed by her anti-immigration and anti-European Union populism and the racist, antisemitic image that clung to the National Front, which was founded by her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen.

The party dominated the first round of the last regional elections in 2015 but collapsed in the runoff as parties and voters joined together against it. The National Rally's best chance of a first-time regional victory is in the southeastern Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region.

Colours of Life



Candles stand in front of a closed and cordoned off department store in the city centre of Wuerzburg, Germany on Sunday.

likely led more people to believe longstanding complaints about police interactions with Black people, even if his actions were blatantly wrong, experts said. And that could make jurors less likely to simply believe police versions of events in the future.

Extreme cases by their nature open up public awareness... but it doesn't necessarily result in across-the-board reform because the situation was so unique, said former federal prosecutor Jeffrey Cramer, senior managing director of the consulting firm Guidepost Solutions.

What would be the reform? Don't put your knee on someone's neck for 9 1/2 minutes? Still, the testimony of Minneapolis Police Department officers, including the chief, that Chauvin violated his training though highly unusual could make officers think twice about using force.

And if it does, it's a good thing, Cramer said. Anyone that's been in this game long enough knows that comes down to hiring practices and training, but at the end of the day it's a certain officer in a certain situation. And I don't see these situations ending anytime soon.

Knowing that their encounters could be captured on cellphone video also could give officers pause, experts said. Minneapolis police originally said Floyd died in a medical incident.

But video shot by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier showed Chauvin ignoring Floyd's pleas that he couldn't breathe and continuing to press his knee into Floyd's neck even after the Black man was dead.

But Kirk Burkharter, a criminal law professor at New York Law School and a former 20-year New York Police Department detective, said police are being asked to do too much, especially in situations involving people with mental health issues or minor crimes.

That's been in this game long enough to believe longstanding complaints about police interactions with Black people, even if his actions were blatantly wrong, experts said.

And that could make jurors less likely to simply believe police versions of events in the future.

Extreme cases by their nature open up public awareness... but it doesn't necessarily result in across-the-board reform because the situation was so unique

North-East Bolstering defences

New Delhi is ramping up infrastructure to counter China's advances in border areas of the North-east and Ladakh

NAVA THAKURIA

The recent visit of Union defence minister Rajnath Singh to the North-eastern region was significant as Chinese forces at the borders continue to get reinforced. Singh dedicated 12 roads, built by the Border Roads Organisation, to the nation. Attending a meet at Lakhimpur locality in eastern Assam on 17 June, he inaugurated the 20 km long-Kimin-Potin (double lane) road along with nine other roads in Arunachal Pradesh and one each in the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

The projects were implemented by the BRO under the Arunak, Vartak, Brahmank, Udayak, Himank and Sampark initiatives. Speaking on the occasion, Singh commented that the new roads hold strategic and socio-economic importance as they would play an important role in strengthening national security as well as promoting development in the region, which is surrounded by five foreign countries, namely Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet-China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. Better road connectivity always helps in mobilising troops and necessary equipment along with ration, medicines and other goods to strategically important locations, said Singh. He also said that the projects were part of the Centre's Act East policy where special emphasis is given on the overall development of the Eastern border areas.

"A strong North-east is essential for India's security and progress," said Singh at the meeting, where Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu, Union minister Kiren Rijiju, India's Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat and BRO director general Rajeev Chaudhary, among others, were present. Jitendra Singh, the Union minister responsible for development of the North-eastern region that acts as a gateway to South-east Asian nations, was virtually present on the occasion.

Singh did not forget to pay tributes to soldiers in the line of duty who showed exemplary courage during the Galwan river valley incident last year against the aggressive Chinese Armed Forces. Saluting the brave soldiers who laid down their lives for the nation, he asserted that India being a peace-loving nation had never shown hostile intent against any country, but New Delhi would not tolerate any misadventures towards its sovereignty and integrity.

It was a year since the Galwan valley conflict in Ladakh on 15 June and the Indian Army paid homage to the supreme sacrifice of its personnel



by laying a wreath at the Leh War Memorial. A defence statement mentioned the bravery of 20 soldiers, who laid down their lives, without a single shot being fired, to defend the nation, and also caused heavy casualties on the opposite side in the clash.

Beijing initially did not acknowledge any casualty or injury to People's Liberation Army members in the high altitude (over 17,850 feet) clash. New Delhi, however, officially declared its casualties while preventing the Chinese misadventure. Accordingly, all the martyred soldiers were sent to their respective home localities for cremation with full national honours.

China admitted only in February this year that five military officers and soldiers were killed in the Galwan face-off. Unconfirmed sources, however, claim that at least 45 PLA members were killed in the conflict and they were all buried at a nearby locality. The Chinese media, under strict control of Beijing, remained silent over the matter.

Recently, the *Global Times* reported an event where Chinese citizens paid tributes to their soldiers commemorating the Galwan episode. Quoting a number of netizens, the government-controlled media outlet reported the valour of their soldiers by saying that Chinese people and history would never forget the heroes



The newly built Kimin-Potin road

for protecting the country's sacred borderland.

The violent India-China stand-off at the Galwan valley reminded people of both nations about the 1962 War. Soon after the Communist government captured Tibet in 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama had to flee and temporarily settle in Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh. Han Chinese soldiers invaded many parts of

Arunachal Pradesh including the sacred Tawang valley. PLA troops even arrived in Tezpur town of Assam.

Claiming a large area of Arunachal Pradesh as South Tibet, the Beijing administration justified the invasion. Unprepared Indian forces under the leadership of then defence minister Vengalil Krishna Kurup Krishna Menon in Jawaharlal Nehru's central cabinet suffered heavy casual-

ties.

After that conflict, another confrontation between the two countries happened in the Pangong area during August last year. Earlier, several such Chinese contraventions were reported between 2016 and 2018 including the infamous 2017 Doklam logjam. By now, 11 rounds of military talks between India and China have been organised, but all along, Chinese soldiers remain active in all disputed regions.

Beijing recently launched the newly tracked 435-km Lhasa-Nyingchi rail line, a dream project of President Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party of China ahead of its centenary celebrations on 1 July. The fully electrified high-speed rail line connects the capital of Tibet and goes to around 17 kilometres off Arunachal Pradesh's northern border up to Nyingchi town, where some battalions of the PLA are stationed. The Chinese regime has also built a highway linking Lhasa with Nyingchi airport.

Satellite imagery confirms that China has lately undertaken various infrastructure projects near the borderline. They have constructed some permanent structures in the Ladakh area and rehabilitated many villages in the Doklam plateau. A Chinese village with hundreds of dwellers has also been reported in the disputed Arunachal Pradesh border areas. All such developments would enable the PLA to mobilise troops and military equipment faster, as and when needed.

A few weeks ago, exiled Tibetan leader Lobsang Sangay called the term "Indo-China border conflict" a misnomer. Speaking to a group of journalists in Guwahati, the former head of the Dharamshala-based Central Tibetan Administration argued that many Indians believe that Tibet is a part of China and they prefer to use the term, but in reality China was never a neighbour to India.

"When Tibet was an independent country, only 75 Indian soldiers guarded the entire border as more troops were not needed," said the Harvard University-educated politician, while adding that the same border presently needs to be guarded by thousands of soldiers. It has now turned into the Indo-China border and compelled New Delhi to enhance Budgetary allocations to safeguard its Northern Himalayan front, said Sangay.

Facing the heat, New Delhi has also reinforced its troops with enhanced artillery in the Eastern and Northern international border areas by deploying over 50,000 armed personnel. Moreover, the Central government has emphasised on improved military infrastructure in such localities, where the government-owned BRO has been entrusted with enhanced annual Budgetary allocations and higher responsibilities.

The writer is the Guwahati-based Special Representative of *The Statesman*

PLUS POINTS

Scribe dead



Manipur lost one more scribe to Covid-19 as Ukhrul-based television journalist Thotshang Shaiza (*in photo*) succumbed to novel coronavirus infection-related ailments on 12 June. Shaiza (52), who worked for the ISTV cable news channel alongside a Tangkhul newspaper, passed away while undergoing treatment at the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences in Imphal. The Manipur Hill-Journalist's Union and Ukhrul District Journalist's Association have condoled his untimely demise.

The state earlier lost Saikom Shantikumar (51), who worked at the news desk of Ireibak daily newspaper in Imphal, to the pandemic. Prior to him, senior journalist Sagolsem Hemant passed away from Covid-19 complications. Hemant (65) worked for various newspapers like *Pudin, Eikhoige Panthung* and *Ningiam Lanpao*.

Meanwhile, Tripura lost two scribes namely, Jitendra Debbarma and Tamoy Chakraborty, to Covid-19 complications while Assam witnessed the demise of more than 10 journalists to virus-aggravated ailments. Two eminent Assamese author-journalists, Dr Lakshmi Nandan Bora and Homen Borgohain recently lost their battles to Covid-19 complications.

Earlier, the state witnessed the deaths of Rubul Dihingiya, Anirban Bora, Kalyan Barooah, Nilakshi Bhattacharya, Aiyushman Dutta, Jadu Chutia, Shivacharan Kalita, Golap Saikia, Ashim Dutta and Dhaneshwar Rabha from Covid-19 related illnesses.

India remains at the top of the list of Covid-19 victims among journalists with over 245 casualties, followed by Brazil (239 dead), Peru (163), Mexico (112), Colombia (66) and Italy (58). Other severely affected countries include Bangladesh (53), the United States (49), Iran (32), the United Kingdom (30), Pakistan (27), Nepal (19) and Afghanistan (nine), among others. According to the Geneva-based Press Emblem Campaign, over 1,500 journalists have died from Covid-19 in 77 countries till the second week of June this year.

- NAVA THAKURIA

Disputed oil wells



The Nagaland government has shut down three wells of state-run energy giant Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited for allegedly not obtaining prior permission before starting drilling activities. Dimapur deputy commissioner Rajesh Soundararajan had shot off a letter to ONGC earlier this month, asking it to stop operations at the three wells. The letter, a copy of which is available with *PTI*, stated that a report was received on 9 April regarding setting up of drilling activities at Pihku, Tokishe and Nikihe villages, "which are under Dimapur district."

Sources, however, said the sites fall under a disputed area with Assam. Soundararajan, in the communiqué to ONGC executive director for Assam Arakan Basin, claimed that the company carried out drilling activities "without the prior permission from the Government of Nagaland. Therefore, you are requested to submit clarification in this matter... at the earliest. Further, the authority concerned is hereby asked to stop all activities in the above said area in the meantime," he said.

Querries sent to ONGC officials remained unanswered. When contacted, a senior official of the Nagaland government said, "Discussion is underway between the government and ONGC. We are awaiting a reply from the company."

The sources said the area where the drilling wells are located is not under the control of Nagaland. "The Central Reserve Police Force is in charge of the area and it has a separate border magistrate," one source said. He said ONGC has been operating there for some time, and while one well is at the exploration stage, another is already producing. There has been no activity at the site in Tokishe village, the source claimed.

"As far as we are aware, ONGC got all the necessary permission like exploration and mining licence from the Government of India and Government of Assam," officials in Assam said.

-PTI

SHRADHA R CHHETRI

PREJUDICE RATHER THAN PRIDE

Like the rest of the country, Sikkim is yet to ensure the rights of transgender and non-binary people



of 2014 that upheld transgender people's right to self-determination.

Currently, the bill has provisions for a certificate of identity (of having become a member of the third gender) issued by the District Magistrate, on the following conditions – first, the person has undergone a gender reassignment surgery, and second, a report from a psychologist at a government hospital.

The conditions are problematic, and invalidate or bypass the all-important principle of self-identification. The Nalsal judgement remains important to the transgender community because it considers self-determination/self-identification and that is completely overlooked in the framing of the Transgender Bill 2019.

For clarity, it is crucial that one learns the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation. The Nalsal judgement explains, "Gender identity, therefore, refers to an individual's self-identification as a man, woman,

transgender or other identified category... Sexual orientation refers to an individual's enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person.

"Gender identity and sexual orientation, as already indicated, are different concepts. Each person's self-defined sexual orientation and gender identity is integral to their personality and is one of the most basic aspects of self-determination, dignity and freedom and no one shall be forced to undergo medical procedures, including sex reassignment surgery, sterilisation or hormonal therapy, as a requirement for legal recognition of their gender identity."

In 2019, the Electoral Commission of India had declared that three transgender people would be voting (which would mean that their identities should have been verified by the government) in that year's General Election, but a day or two later they retracted their statement, saying that

a mistake had been made and there were no such people identified by the ECI.

The social justice and welfare department has no quantitative data on the queer community of Sikkim. Although its primary objective is working for the welfare of others, there is a hint of hesitancy when it comes to applying that to people whose sexuality and gender don't fall in the two limiting binaries of male and female. Queer activists have been bounding their doors for years and journalists have sought answers time and again but to no avail.

A teenager wants to run away from home because of the transphobic slurs their family uses against them – do they need companies to change their logo to rainbow hues in June, or a safe place and legal systems to protect their life and dignity? A person who identifies as queer is physically attacked outside their house – will the media report their case and

then immediately proceed to forget the incident until something more serious occurs?

One feels the media, and not just the one in Sikkim, must do better. Journalists are quick to question everyone and everything else but themselves. Insensitive questions, lack of research and passive-aggressive language while reporting or writing is something to be checked and corrected. We hold others accountable for their mistakes but what about us in the media?

On the other hand, departments and bodies set up for the welfare of the marginalised need to understand that queer people cannot be excluded from that category. They need to step up to lend resources to people who've already begun research on the community, create a safe space for those who have been disowned by family or face abuse at home and work, and make sure that boards or panels set up for queer people include members of the community itself.

The issue of transgender invisibility in Sikkim can largely be credited to the strict hetero-normative structures in culture and society, where anything that does not fall under the banner of male or female is seen as unwanted and unnecessary. The Constitution of India's fundamental rights state the right to equality for all yet those who pledge to work towards that often exclude the queer community.

Being able to live without the rigid and limiting idea of gender binaries or sexuality; understanding the many intersections of caste, culture, politics with queer discourse and replacing prejudice with understanding – such are the basic tenets people must adhere to as we observe Pride Day today.

The writer is a freelance journalist based in New Delhi



**SHAFALI'S RECORD**

Opener Shafali Verma (photo, left) on Sunday became the youngest Indian cricketer to make debut across formats after being picked for the first ODI against England Women. The Haryana girl took 17 years and 150 days to make her debut across formats, making her the fifth youngest cricketer overall in the list, headed by Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

No Olympics for Serena: Serena Williams said she will not go to the Tokyo Olympics, but did not want to say why during her pre-Wimbledon video conference with reporters Sunday. "I'm actually not on the Olympic list. ... Not that I'm aware of. If so, then I shouldn't be on it," Williams said.

Yuvraj in talks with club: A Melbourne-based cricket club has claimed that it is very close to striking a deal with Yuvraj Singh and Chris Gayle for its T20 games this summer. The Mulgrave Cricket Club, who play in Melbourne's Eastern Cricket Association (ECA) third-tier competition, said they are also in talks with West Indies legend Brian Lara and South Africa great AB de Villiers.

Deepika on target, gold rush for India at Archery World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PARIS, 27 JUNE



Star archer Deepika Kumar ruled the show with supreme authority to grab a hat-trick of gold medals as India made an unprecedented clean sweep at the World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday for a perfect build-up to the Tokyo Olympics in less than a month's time.

In the absence of the world number one Korea, the Indians faced little challenge to win the women's individual, team and mixed pair events with Deepika a constant in each of them, playing back-to-back four matches in less than five hours.

Having secured Olympic qualifications, Korea, along with other Asian heavyweights like China and Chinese Taipei, skipped all the World Cups in the build up to the Tokyo Games.

India topped the medal tally with four gold medals as Abhishek Verma had clinched the solitary top medal in the compound section on Saturday.

India's gold rush began with the women's recurve team of Deepika, Anjita Bhakat and Komalika Bari notching up a comfortable win over Mexico, shrugging off the disappo-

ntment of missing Olympic qualification last week.

In a repeat of the World Cup first stage final where they struggled to clinch the gold, the trio this time did not even drop a set to win their second world title in two months.

Eyeing their first-ever gold medal together, Deepika and husband Atanu Das, who are India's best medal hope in

archery in the Olympics, bounced back from a 0-2 deficit to down the Netherlands' Sjeff van den Berg and Gabriela Schloesser 5-3.

That was the only time India faced some challenge on the final day here as they displayed fine composure to reign supreme.

Deepika blanked Elena Osipova 6-0 to cap a perfect three out of three in the recurve women's section, her fourth individual World Cup gold medal.

The World No 3 had won it

in Guatemala City 2021, Salt Lake City 2018 and Antalya 2012.

Overall, she has nine gold, 12 silver and seven bronze medals in the World Cup.

"This is the first time I've won all three medals in a World Cup. I'm really happy but at the same time, I've to continue improving as we have some very, very important competitions lined

up," Deepika said.

Less than a month from now, the Indian archers will be chasing their elusive Olympic medal dream among the best in the world.

"We do not have any Olympic medal in archery, so it's really important that we keep improving and keep up the show," she said.

In the semi-final, Deepika used all her experience to produce two spectacular opening sets to lead 4-0 against 20-year-old Ana Vazquez of Mexico before sealing a 6-2 win.

Deepika shot 29 in the first two sets, while an under-pressure Ana faltered with two 8s to concede the match.

In the mixed pair final, fifth-seeded Atanu and Deepika complemented each other well as the latter came into her own after a sluggish start to give themselves a perfect anniversary gift in advance.

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Subs give Italy 2-1 win over Austria, spot in quarters

AGENCIES

LONDON, 27 JUNE

With three exquisite touches of control, technique and finishing, Federico Chiesa snatched 95 minutes of Italian frustration.

This record-breaking team is off to the quarterfinals of the European Championship with a defense that finally allowed a goal after more than 19 hours but with a national team record 12th straight victory.

After breezing through the group stage at Euro 2020, Italy was made to fight for its 2-1 victory over Austria on Saturday in a last-16 game that came to life in extra time.

It was Roberto Mancini's substitutes who made the difference with the goals from Chiesa and Matteo Pessina on Wembley Stadium.

"We needed some fresh energy," Mancini said, "and the guys who came on were brilliant."

An unmarked Chiesa brought down Leonardo Spinazzola's high cross with his head, controlled the bouncing ball with his right boot and then used his other foot to shoot low into the net.

"Usually when the ball arrives like this you try a first time on the volley," Chiesa said.

"We are a great group."

The group spirit was clear in the raw emotion of the goal

was relaxed and I was focused." The goal rolled the clock back 25 years to when European Championship games were last played in England and his father Enrico Chiesa scored for Italy. Euro '96, however, ended in the group stage for Italy.

Now it's onto a quarterfinal meeting in Munich on Friday against the winner of Sunday's match between defending champion Portugal and top-ranked Belgium.

"Ideally we would like to avoid both," Mancini said, "but it's not possible."

After scoring seven goals without reply in the group stage, Italy didn't have it so easy against an Austrian team playing in the knockout stage at a European Championship for the first time.

"After 90 minutes we said that we just had to improve the quality of the final passes," Spinazzola said, "and finally the goals arrived in extra time."

Individual skill produced the breakthrough from Chiesa. Italy's second was more about calmness in a goalmouth scramble. Pessina, who came on midway through the second half, sent the ball into the far corner of the net in the 105th minute.

"In this team everybody can score and this is our main strength," Pessina said.

"We are a great group."

The group spirit was clear in the raw emotion of the goal



celebrations as teammates collapsed on Pessina, a late injury replacement in the squad.

"He's not a player I have necessarily unearthed; he has been doing brilliantly for Atalanta," Mancini said. "He has certainly proved that he is a top player and I think he will have a great future with Italy because I think he is only going to get better."

Italy was also celebrating in extra time after setting a world record for minutes played without conceding a goal in international soccer.

The previous record was

also Italy's and was set with goalkeeper Dino Zoff in the team. The Italians went 1,143 minutes between 1972 and 1974 without allowing a goal.

But Italy soon conceded for the first time in 1,168 minutes, from a set piece in the 114th minute when Sasa Kalajdzic headed the ball in from a corner.

"Maybe Italy was a little bit nervous," Austria defender David Alaba said.

The Austrian comeback ended there, however, and Italy held on for its 31st straight unbeaten match another

national team record.

Video review helped, too.

Austria took 63 minutes for its first shot, then found the net two minutes later. Alaba headed the ball across the penalty area and Marko Arnautovic nodded the ball past Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma. But the video review showed Arnautovic's right boot was offside.

"We are disappointed and sad," Austria coach Franco Foda said.

"We need justice in football but today it fit us. It was a close offside and we have to live

with it."

Denmark beats Wales

Still riding a wave of emotion, Denmark won again at the European Championship.

And they won a big one at a stadium that means a lot to them.

The Danes advanced to the quarterfinals at Euro 2020 by beating Wales 4-0 on Saturday in Amsterdam, getting two goals from Kasper Dolberg exactly two weeks after Christian Eriksen collapsed on the field during the team's opening match.

Eriksen had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator and spent several days in the hospital before returning home last week.

Both Eriksen and Dolberg played for Ajax, the team that plays its home matches at the Johan Cruyff Arena. Much of the crowd of 16,000 was cheering on the Danes.

"It feels like a home game," Dolberg said. "This stadium, which is very special to me, it's fantastic."

Dolberg, who was given his first start of the tournament by Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand, scored a goal in each half.

Joakim Maehle scored the third in the 88th minute and Martin Braithwaite added the fourth in injury time.

It was the second match in a row that Denmark scored four

times, after beating Russia 4-1 to qualify for the round of 16 after losing its first two matches. Denmark is the first nation to score four or more goals in consecutive matches in the history of the European Championship.

And they won a big one at a stadium that means a lot to them.

"We needed the love and support and that's what gave us wings," Hjulmand said of the crowd in Amsterdam.

After soaking up early pressure by Wales, Dolberg struck.

He took a pass from Mikkel Damsgaard in the 27th minute and cut infield from the left before curling a right-foot shot into the far corner. He doubled the lead in the 48th minute when he scored with a low shot after Neco Williams' attempted clearance went straight to him.

Dolberg knows all about about scoring in Amsterdam. He found the net 45 times in 119 matches for Ajax from 2016-19 before signing for French club Nice.

"I think we have a star striker in Kasper," Hjulmand said.

Saturday's strikes brought history to the Johan Cruyff Arena to 31, with the other 29 coming for Ajax.

"Today when we were walking... to the stadium I felt that it was something very, very special for me," Dolberg said. "Today everything feels right."

Dolberg became the first Danish player to score at least twice in a match at a major tournament since Nicklas Bendtner.

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'Unrealistic to give opportunity to all youngsters in Sri Lanka'

MUMBAI, 27 JUNE

India head coach for the tour of Sri Lanka, Rahul Dravid, on Sunday said it is unrealistic to expect that all the youngsters picked for the limited-overs assignment will get a game as they try to make an impression ahead of this year's T20 World Cup.

The series marks the coaching return of Dravid, who is based in Bengaluru as the chief of the National Cricket Academy. The second string squad, led by Shikhar Dhawan, has six uncapped players.

"...I think it's probably going to be unrealistic to expect us in a short tour like this with three games, or three one-dayers to give everyone an opportunity...and the selectors will be there as well," Dravid declared in the pre-departure press conference.

Among the players who are fighting for a place in the T20 squad for this year's World Cup are the capped trio of Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav and Sanju Samson. The Sri Lanka series starts with the ODIs from July 13, followed by T20s from July 21.

The World Cup, originally scheduled in India, is set to be held in the UAE in October because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The three T20s in Sri Lanka hold more importance than the ODIs as it will be the last set of international games India play before the marquee event.

"There are a lot of people

in this squad who are pushing for places or looking to cement their places in the World Cup coming up, but I think the key goal of everyone in the squad and in the team...is to try and win the series," the former India captain said.

"These are the only three games before the World Cup. I am sure that you know the selectors and management would have a pretty fair idea by now as to what is the kind of squad that they are looking for."

With the Test team in England at the moment, Dravid said that one of the reasons for his success as an India Under-19 and A coach was the strategy to give every travelling player a game to build their confidence.

"There is an opportunity for may be one or two places that, maybe, the team management or the selectors might be looking for, spots that they might want to fill, and give them a few more options," he said.

"That would be the goal probably over the next three T20s and to win the series. It is slightly different (from the A tour). When you're at a developmental level all of those tours are slightly different to something like this."

"It will be a great learning experience for the young kids even if they don't get to play," said Dravid.

West Indies beat South Africa by 8 wickets

AGENCIES

ST GEORGE'S, 27 JUNE



Evin Lewis (in photo) made 71, including a half-century from 22 balls, to steer the West Indies to an eight-wicket win over South Africa in the first of five Twenty20s.

South Africa fell short of a par total when it was held to 160-6 from its 20 overs after being sent in.

Lewis took his 71 runs from only 35 balls and shared partnerships of 85 for the first wicket with Andre Fletcher and 39 for the second with Chris Gayle to set up the West Indies' win. When he was out in the 12th over, the West Indies were 124-2 and within sight of victory.

Gayle's and Andre Russell's unbroken 37-run partnership for the third wicket carried the West Indies past South Africa's total in