



THE ART OF BEING
KAMALA HARRIS

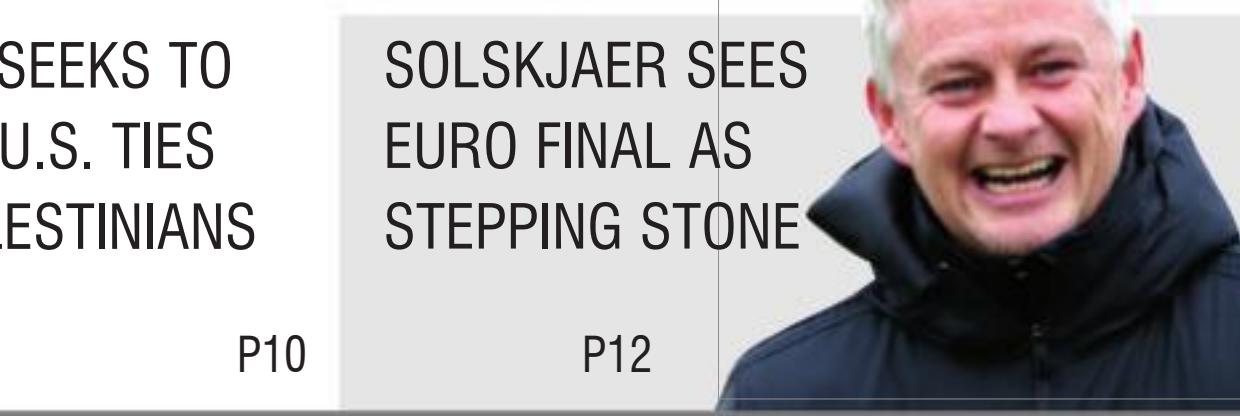


GHOSN PINS HOPE ON
FRENCH PROBES TO
CLEAR NAME



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

BLINKEN SEEKS TO
REBUILD U.S. TIES
WITH PALESTINIANS



SOLSKJAER SEES
EURO FINAL AS
STEPPING STONE

P7

P9

P10

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 40 and 22 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 64% Min: 19%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 39.5°C (-1) Min: 22.6°C (-4)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:25 hrs 19:12 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

20:26 hrs 06:55 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Farmers and supporters protest with black flags against farm laws marking a Black Day, at Singhu border, in the Capital on Wednesday.

SNS

Fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi captured in Dominica: Fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi, who had recently fled from Antigua and Barbuda, was captured in neighbouring Dominica after an Interpol Yellow Notice was issued against him, the local media reported on Wednesday. Police in Dominica captured Choksi on Tuesday night (local time) after an Interpol Yellow Notice was issued by Antigua and Barbuda. Efforts are on to hand him over to the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, the local media reports stated.

Farmers mark six months of protest: Vowing to continue their stir till the agri laws are repealed, agitating farmers marched with black flags, burnt effigies and shouted anti-government slogans at Tikri, Singhu and Ghazipur protest sites on Delhi borders as well as in several parts of Punjab and Haryana to mark the completion of six months of their agitation. A brief ruckus was reported at the Ghazipur protest site on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border where police tried to stop protesters from burning an effigy.

P5

Defamation notice against Ramdev: The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has served a defamation notice on Ramdev for alleged disparaging remarks against allopathy and allopathic doctors, demanding an apology from him within 15 days, failing which it said it will demand a compensation of Rs 1,000 crore from the yoga guru. The notice describes Ramdev's remarks as damaging to the reputation and the image of allopathy and around 2,000 practitioners of it who are part of the association.

P5

Jaiswal takes charge as CBI director



NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Former SPG officer Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, IPS (Maharashtra cadre-1985), today assumed charge as Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Jaiswal took over the post after handing over charge as Director General, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

He served as DGP, Maharashtra for nearly two years from February 2019 before joining the post of DG, CISF.

Jaiswal has served in Close Protection Teams of the Prime Minister of India during his six year tenure with the Special Protection Group as AIG & DIG. He also served in the Cabinet Secretariat for 10 years from 2008 to 2018. He has served as SP (Gadchiroli, Aurangabad & Osmanabad); DIG, in-charge Special Investigation Team; Additional CP, Anti-Terrorism Squad, Mumbai; Additional CP, Central Range, Mumbai; IGP Amravati Range and commissioner of police, Brihan Mumbai. SNS

Talks with Sputnik V makers on, they will supply vaccine to Delhi: Kejriwal

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

As Delhi grapples with a shortage of coronavirus vaccines, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the makers of Sputnik V will supply anti-Covid jabs to the city but the quantity is yet to be decided. He also said there were around 620 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis in Delhi, but Amphotericin-B injections used in its treatment are in short supply.

"Talks with the makers of Sputnik V are on. They will give us vaccines, but the quantity is yet to be decided. Our officials

and the representatives of the manufacturers met on Tuesday, too," the CM told reporters at the launch of Delhi's first drive-through vaccination centre at Vegas Mall in Dwarka.

The Centre has asked states to procure vaccines from the international market, but no state government has been able to purchase even "one additional vaccine" so far, he said.

"All state governments have tried everything, they have (floated) global tenders and talked to all vaccine-manufacturers. All firms have declined to talk to us," he said. The Centre needs to demonstrate a

It is something like Pakistan declaring a war on India and then they ask if Delhi has manufactured a nuclear bomb and Uttar Pradesh bought a tank.

ARVIND KEJRIWAL

sense of urgency and run the vaccination drive on a war-footing, he added.

"Today, we are at war against Covid-19, wherein the Centre and states have their share of responsibilities. The Centre cannot shirk its responsibility and ask states to fend for themselves. It is wrong," he said.

"It is something like Pakistan

declaring a war on India and then they ask if Delhi has manufactured a nuclear bomb and Uttar Pradesh bought a tank... It is the Central government's responsibility to procure and supply vaccines. Delhi can be held accountable if they (the Centre) do not open up centres," a visibly angry Kejriwal said.

Asked if the Delhi government is going to lift the lockdown, he said, "A lockdown cannot be extended indefinitely. It has hit economic activity and businesses. We will decide how to go about reopening."

(SEE P2)

Vaccine inequality in India sends many falling through gaps

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

As the coronavirus tears through India, night watchman Sagar Kumar thinks constantly about getting vaccines for himself and his family of five amid critical shortages of shots in the country. But even if he knew how to get one, it wouldn't be easy.

The main way is to register through a government website. But it is in English ~

a language the 25-year-old can't speak, read or write ~ and his family has a single smartphone, with spotty internet service. And even though his state of Uttar Pradesh gives free shots to those under 45, there is no vaccination site in his village, with the nearest hospital an hour away.

The pandemic's disparities already were stark in India, where access to health care is as stratified and unequal as many other parts of society.

Now wealth and technology is further widening those gaps, and millions are falling through the gaps.

That worries health experts, who say vaccine inequality could hamper India's already difficult fight against a virus that has been killing more than 4,000 people a day in recent weeks. "Inequitable vaccination risks prolonging the pandemic in India," said Krishan Udayakumar, founding director of the Duke Global

Health Innovation Center at Duke University in North Carolina. "Reducing barriers for the most vulnerable populations should be a priority."

India's vaccination campaign began in January with a goal of inoculating 300 million of its nearly 1.4 billion people by August. So far, however, it has fully vaccinated a little over 42 million people, or barely 3% of its population. The government didn't reserve enough shots for the campaign and it

was slow to scale up vaccine production. Then, with the country recording hundreds of thousands of new infections daily, the government on May 1 opened up vaccination to all adults. That made an already bad shortage even worse.

The central government also changed its policy on who can get vaccines and who must pay for them. It allotted itself half of the shots in the country and said it would give free shots to front-line

workers and those 45 and older. Individual states and private hospitals could then negotiate deals with vaccine-makers for the other half of the shots, the government said.

Many experts say the policy is a mistake, and it will hit the poorest the hardest. "Vaccinating people is the national duty of the government and they need to vaccinate everyone for free," said K Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India. "Nobody

should be denied a vaccine because they are unable to afford it or register for it."

Vaccine disparity is "not just a question of inequality but also inefficiency," said developmental economist Jean Dreze. If people get sick, Dreze said, they will not be able to work. That in turn could push many more into poverty. "We should not just make vaccines free but also give people incentives to get vaccinated," Dreze said.

Yaas pounds Odisha-Bengal coasts

High winds, massive sea surge devastate coastal villages; at least three killed; over 1 crore people affected in Bengal, says Mamata

SNS & AGENCIES
KOLKATA, 26 MAY



A scene of devastation after high tide during the landfall of cyclone Yaas in East Midnapore on Wednesday. ■ BHASKAR MALLICK

Cyclone Yaas, packing winds of up to 130-145 kmph, whiplashed the country's eastern coasts on Wednesday, dumping heavy rain, damaging houses and farmlands, and leaving at least three persons dead ~ two in Odisha and one in Bengal ~ officials said.

Yaas, classed as a very severe cyclonic storm with wind speeds of 130 to 140 kmph gusting to 155 kmph, made landfall at around 9.15 a.m. close to Dhamra in Odisha, with surging waters swamping mud-and-thatch houses in the low-lying areas, where a massive evacuation drive has been undertaken to move more than 20 lakh people to safety.

Yaas is the second cyclonic storm to hit India within a week after Tauktae into its western coast, causing death and destruction.

Yaas barrelled through Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha after landfall at Baranagar at 9 a.m. and its bandwidth of intensity covering south of Balasore with a wind speed much less than 165 kmph gusting to 185 kmph as had been pre-

dicted earlier. More than the wind, it was the sea surge that caused maximum devastation with at least 128 villages of Bhadrak and Balasore districts affected by the ingress. The tidal waves, four metres high, crashed in to seaside villages and marooned them.

Local sources said two persons were killed ~ one each in Keonjhar and Balasore ~ after trees fell on them, but there was no official confirmation yet. Another elderly woman in Mayurbhanj reportedly died

after her house collapsed. Odisha has shifted 5.8 lakh people to safer places, and West Bengal 15 lakh, ahead of the cyclone, amid concerns over spread of Covid-19 infection at the temporary shelters.

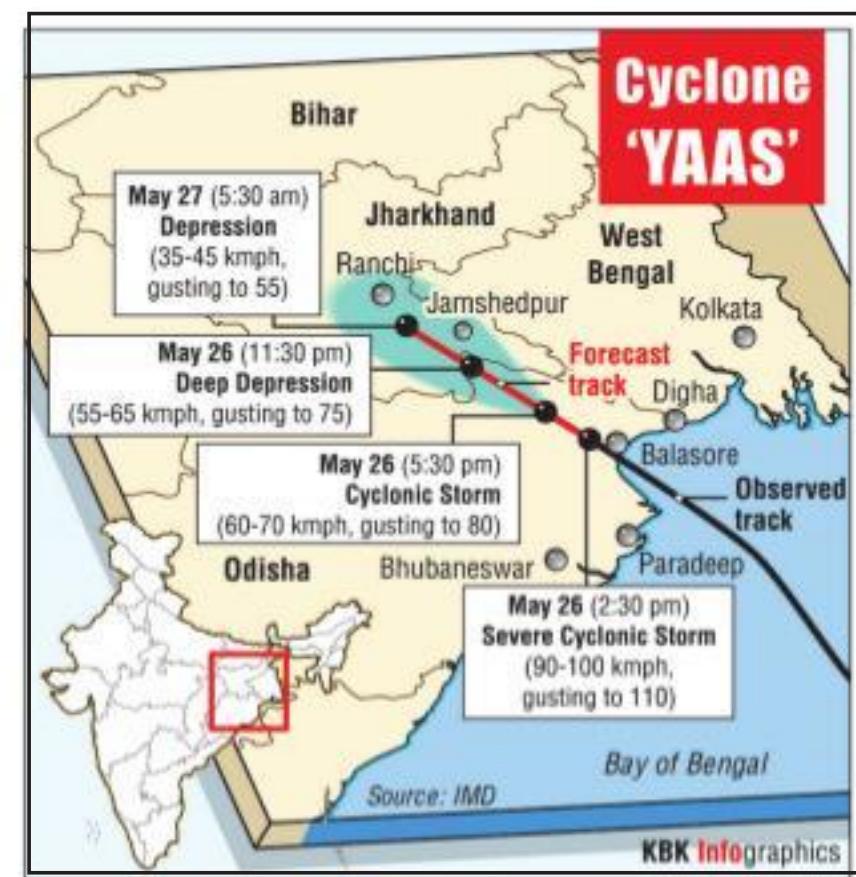
Wind howling at a speed of about 88 kmph claimed a life and battered the coastal districts of East Midnapore and South 24-Parganas in Bengal.

Wreaking havoc much before it actually hit land, Yaas lashed the beach towns of Digha, Mandarmani and

Sagar Islands from around 6 a.m. with winds blowing at about 88 kmph. The city of Kolkata, which remained calm unexpectedly for most of the day, experienced a wind speed of about 62 kmph at around 6.20 a.m.

Till 2.30 p.m. Yaas lay

centered as a severe cyclonic storm inundating the low-lying areas of the coastal districts of the state amid a storm surge. The seaside resorts of Digha and Mandarmani, which are major tourist attractions, were submerged, with sea waves



dated the villages turning residents into refugees. A fisherman is reported to have died in East Midnapore.

Yaas affected the lives of around one crore citizens of the state while causing damage to three lakh houses, according to chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

Miss Banerjee said three lakh houses and 134 embankments have been damaged in the state due to the cyclone. She added that relief materials worth Rs 10 crore have been sent to the affected areas.

In South 24 Parganas, hundreds of villagers were displaced in Kakdwip, Fraserganj, Gosaba and the Sunderbans region, as multiple homes were extensively damaged in the surging water and gale winds, officials said. Many rivers were in spate owing to the phenomenal rise in water level ~ caused by the dual effect of storm surge and the astronomical tide due to the full moon. There was waterlogging in certain low-lying areas of Kolkata with the authorities facing a tough time clearing the area due to high tide in Hooghly.

The weather office has predicted extremely heavy rainfall in East and West Midnapore districts and heavy to very heavy rainfall in Jhargram, Bankura, South 24-Parganas districts over the next 24 hours.

In Odisha, a red warning for heavy to very heavy rainfall was issued in nine districts. Heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places with isolated extremely heavy fall are very likely to occur over the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal," the weather office said.

MORE ON PAGE 4

New digital rules don't violate privacy: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY



LAW OF THE LAND

► The new rules, announced on February 25, require large social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer.

► The rules also require these significant social media intermediaries to enable identification of the "first originator" of the information that undermines sovereignty of India, security of the state, or public order.

► Non-compliance with rules would result in these social media companies losing their intermediary status that provides them exemptions and certain immunity from liabilities for any third-party information and data hosted by them.

Requiring messages to trace chats is the equivalent of asking us to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp which would break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermines people's right to privacy.

► The appointment of chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer.

The UK, US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada require social media firms to allow for legal interception, it said, adding "What India is asking for is significantly much less than what some of the other countries have demanded".

The government on Wednesday staunchly defended its new digital rules, saying the requirement of messaging platforms such as WhatsApp to disclose origin of flagged messages does not violate privacy, and went on to seek a compliance report from social media firms.

A day after WhatsApp filed a lawsuit in Delhi High Court challenging the new digital rules on grounds that the requirement for the company to provide access to encrypted messages will break privacy protections, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the new norms will not impact normal functioning of the popular messaging platform.

The requirement of tracing origin of messages under new IT rules is for prevention and investigation of "very serious offences" related to sovereignty and integrity of India and security of the state, a statement from his ministry said.

Separately, the ministry asked social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp to report their status on compliance with the new rules, which kicked in from Wednesday.

The new rules, announced on February 25, require large social media platforms to follow additional due diligence, including

the appointment of chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer.

The ministry in the statement termed WhatsApp's last moment challenge to the intermediary guidelines an unfortunate attempt to prevent the norms from coming into effect.

The petition, filed on Tuesday evening, seeks declaring the rule requiring the message service provider to identify the first originator of any message flagged as a violation of privacy rights provided by the Constitution.



Mann ki baat has not been supplying us vaccines; Bihar is getting the vaccine, Bengal is not

GAUTAM DEB, CHAIRMAN, BOA, SILIGURI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

HITTING OUT AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DURING HIS VISIT TO VACCINATION CENTRES IN SILIGURI

Talks with Sputnik Von, they will supply jabs to Delhi: CM

India is at war with Covid pandemic, it needs adequate vaccines to win the war, and this is the Centre's job to procure and distribute these shots to states which it must do, says Kejriwal

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

As the national capital continues to reel under an acute shortage of coronavirus vaccines, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today said the manufacturers of Sputnik V anti-Covid vaccine would supply the jabs to the city but the quantity is yet to be decided.

He also said there were around 620 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis in Delhi, but Amphotericin-B injections used in treatment are in short supply.

"Talks with the makers of Sputnik V are on. They will give us vaccines, but the quantity is yet to be decided. Our officials and the representatives of the manufacturers met on Tuesday, too," the CM told reporters at the launch of Delhi's first drive-through vaccination centre at Vegas Mall in Dwarka.

Kejriwal said that the Narendra Modi-led central government has asked states to procure Covid vaccines from the international market, but no state government has been able to purchase even "one additional vaccine" so far.

All state governments have tried everything, they have (floated) global tenders and talked to all vaccine-manufacturers. All firms have declined to talk to us," he said.

The Centre needs to demonstrate a sense of urgency and run the vaccination drive on a war-footing, the CM asserted.



He said it is the central government's responsibility to procure vaccines.

Kejriwal said India is at war with the coronavirus pandemic. It cannot afford to lose the war. It needs adequate supply of vaccines to win this war, but there is a shortage of vaccines which must end.

He appealed to the Modi government to play its role and procure enough Covid vaccines for Delhi as also for the rest of the country. Asking the states to procure vaccines on their own will not do.

This is the job of the Centre which must do it, he asserted.

If Pakistan attacks India, can we afford to ask the states to make their own defence arrangements? Can Uttar Pradesh buy its own tanks? Can Delhi procure guns on its own to defend itself? This is not

the way to win a war," Kejriwal said.

If the BJP government at the Centre loses the vaccine war it will be India that will be losing. If Delhi fails on the vaccine front, it will be India that will be the loser. If Maharashtra suffers a defeat it will be India's loss", he said.

Citing "massive" vaccine shortage in the country, the Delhi CM said India will lose the Covid war if the Centre and states fail to combat the deadly virus together.

It is the central government's responsibility to procure and supply vaccines. Delhi can be held accountable if they (the Centre) give us vaccines and we do not open up centres, "a visibly angry Kejriwal said.

Asked if the Delhi government is going to lift the lockdown, he said, "A lockdown can-

not be extended indefinitely. It has hit economic activity and businesses (and) we will decide how to go about reopening." While extending the ongoing lockdown till May 31, Kejriwal had last Saturday said his government will start the "unlock" process from next week if Covid cases keep declining.

The CM also said that anti-Covid shots manufactured by Moderna and Pfizer are both suitable for children and the Centre should procure these vaccines in large quantity to vaccinate them.

He said that a government-run drive-through vaccination centre is likely to be launched at Chhatrasal on Saturday.

"Many more drive-through vaccination centres will be opened up soon, but the shortage of vaccines is a major issue. The inoculation drive has slowed down. Many vaccina-

tion centres have been shut not just in Delhi, but the entire country," he said.

India was among the first countries to manufacture a vaccine for Covid, but "we are six months behind others because we did not make a plan in time for mass vaccination, distribution and to ramp up production", Kejriwal said.

"Forget what has happened, but there is no sense of urgency even now. All vaccines available in the international market can still be given approval for use in India within 24 hours," he added.

The drive-through vaccination centre at Vegas Mall is an initiative by the Delhi government and the Southwest Delhi district magistrate, a hospital spokesperson said.

Akash Healthcare Super Specialty Hospital has procured 30,000 Covishield doses for inoculation of the 18-44 age group at the centre, an official said.

"We will go slow at the starting to avoid rush on the road and administer 40 to 50 doses for the initial few days," DM Naveen Aggarwal said.

The number of doses administered per day will be increased gradually to around 300 per day, he said.

Kejriwal had earlier said his government has written to Dr Reddy's Laboratories for the supply of around 67 lakh doses of Russian vaccine Sputnik V. Dr Reddy's Laboratories launched Sputnik V in India on 14 May.

Fall in daily Covid cases, positivity rate seem direct result of lockdown: Jain

PTI
NEW DELHI, MAY 26

The fall in count of daily COVID-19 cases and the shrinking positivity rate in Delhi can be attributed to the implementation of lockdown in the national capital to combat the pandemic, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday.

Interacting with reporters, he also said about 600 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis have been reported here till date, with over 200 being recorded alone on May 23.

"Yesterday, 1,568 cases were recorded with a positivity rate of 2.14 per cent. Today's bulletin will come soon and the two numbers have further fallen. This seems like a straight result of the lockdown," he said.

The drive-through vaccination centre at Vegas Mall is an initiative by the Delhi government and the Southwest Delhi district magistrate, a hospital spokesperson said.

The lockdown in Delhi amid the ongoing second wave of the coronavirus pandemic

was imposed on April 19, which the government has successively extended and recently it was done till May 31.

Medical experts recently had attributed the lockdown as the main factor when the first dip in daily cases had been recorded in mid-May amid the second wave of the pandemic, while cautioning that "severity of cases was still the same as before".

Jain, when asked about the death of large number of doctors in the second wave, including in Delhi, said any death is unfortunate and added that about 10,000 lives have been lost due to Covid during the second wave here.

On black fungus cases, he said, on May 23 over 200 cases of mucormycosis were reported in a day and then about 100 cases were recorded per day. About 600 cases have been recorded in total till date, he added.

"Both private and government facilities are treating black fungus cases. But issue

is of injections needed for the patients. Each patients needs about six in a day. We had received 370 of these yesterday and then about 400. We appeal to the Centre again to augment its supply," he said.

On workers at crematoria and graveyard seeking frontline workers status, Jain said, "We will consider it".

Asked about reported closure of many mohalla clinics during the second wave of the pandemic, he said, "Barring 10-15 clinics, which were closed temporarily due to emergency reasons like duty doctors having got infected with Covid, all other facilities are working."

"Many mohalla clinics were under construction when the lockdown was imposed so work got affected. But our 450 mohalla clinics are functional otherwise," he said.

On shortage of Covid vaccine, Jain said, "We are being forced to go for global tenders but companies are not giving directly to us. They (Centre) are shifting responsibilities".

Delhi Mahila Cong demands Covid vaccination centres for pregnant & lactating women

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Delhi Pradesh Mahila Congress on Wednesday accused the Delhi government of not making use of the municipal hospitals to treat Covid patients, and demanded the immediate establishment of vaccination centres for pregnant and lactating women.

"The Delhi government

must immediately establish vaccination centres for pregnant and lactating women, as the Central government

pregnant and lactating women without registration, and Delhi should do likewise to boost immunity of such women.

Amrita Dhawan also said that with the next wave of the Covid-19 pandemic likely to hit children hard, the Delhi government should set up N-ICU, Covid Care Centre, and proper arrangements in the paediatric wards of hospitals.

Wrestler murder case: 4 associates of prime accused Sushil Kumar held

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Four associates of Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar, who were involved in the alleged property dispute case that led to the death of a 23-year-old wrestler at the Chhatrasal Stadium recently, have been arrested here,

arrested from Delhi's Kanjhawala area on Tuesday night, police said.

The arrests were made by a special team of Delhi Police's Rohini district on a tip off.

Olympian wrestler Sushil Kumar, the prime accused in the murder of wrestler Sagar, has already been arrested by the Delhi

cops and is currently in police custody.

All the four arrested yesterday are associates of Kumar and were involved in the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl. Non-bailable warrants were also issued against them in connection with the incident, police said.

Wrestler Sagar died and two

of his friends were injured after they were allegedly assaulted by Kumar and others inside the Chhatrasal Stadium.

The incident occurred on the intervening night of May 4 and May 5 over a dispute related to a property located in the Model Town area.

Deputy Commissioner of

Police (Rohini), Pranav Fayal, said the special staff of the district received information that four persons of the Kala Asaua and Neeraj Bawana gangs involved in the case were coming to Ghewar village to meet their associate Kala.

"Acting upon the information, our team laid a trap near Ghewar

railway crossing and apprehended all the four persons after their identification through a secret informer," he said.

When interrogated, all the four accused narrated the sequence of events and details of other persons involved in the crime.

They also said that they abandoned their vehicles and

weapons at the spot of crime, the DCP said.

Kumar and his associate Ajay were arrested on Sunday from outer Delhi's Mundka area

by a team of Delhi Police's Special Cell and the case was then transferred to the Crime Branch which is presently probing the case.

Classified

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to General Public that my clients Mrs. Sunita Sabharwal, w/o Late Sunit Kumar Sabharwal, r/o

A-2794, First Floor, Left Side, Greenefield Colony, Faridabad-121010 have disentitled/disowned her son Arun Sabharwal and his wife Sejal Sabharwal from all her moveable and immovable properties rights and titles.

Public at large is notified that anybody dealing with them

shall be doing it at their own cost and risk and my client shall not be liable for any dealing transaction hereinafter with them.

Manoj Tewari
Advocate
Ch. No. 133, Patiala House Court
New Delhi-110001.

Delhi logs 1,491 new Covid cases, 130 deaths; positivity rate 1.93 pc

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

while the positivity rate had stood at 2.14 per cent.

With today's count, the city's Covid toll mounted to 23,695, the health bulletin stated.

Last Monday, the national capital had recorded 1,550 fresh cases and 207 fatalities and the positivity rate was 2.52 percent. On Sunday, 1,649 cases and 189 deaths were recorded, while the positivity rate was 2.42 per cent.

Since April 19, both daily cases and single-day death count had been spiralling in Delhi, with over 28,000 cases and 277 deaths recorded on April 20. As many as 306 fatalities were logged on 22 April. On May 2, the city registered a record 407 deaths, according to the official data.

Today's cases were detected out of 77,103 tests, including 53,542 RT-PCR tests and 23,561 rapid antigen tests. The number of Delhi's cumulative Covid tally mounted to 14,21,477 while nearly 13,78,634 people have recovered from this viral infection so far, the bulletin said.

Of 25,106 hospitals beds meant for Covid patients in the city, 17,878 were said to be vacant. The number of active cases stood at 19,148, down from yesterday's 21,739, the bulletin said.

Can't undo sexual offence; can give some security with compensation to victim: HC

PTI

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The Delhi High Court has awarded Rs 6 lakh interim compensation to a six-year-old victim of sexual assault, observing that though the system cannot undo the offence it can provide psychological security and sense of empowerment that monetary compensation can give, the high court.

The high court, which set aside the trial court's order awarding Rs 50,000 interim compensation to the boy-child, enhanced the amount to Rs 6 lakh saying the previous sum was low, to say the least.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhamhani said that while attempting to quantify the compensation payable to the victim even at the interim stage, the court's effort should be to offer monetary recompense, to the extent possible, for atonement of the crime.

The court noted that the boy-child was subjected to physical and mental traum-

ma and emotional scars was left on his psyche.

Since the system cannot turn the clock back nor undo the offence, there is little else the court can do other than prosecute the offender and provide to the victim whatever psychological security and sense of empowerment that monetary compensation can give, the high court.

The 6-year-old boy was allegedly subjected to sexual assault, abuse and sodomy by his uncle in his own house in 2020 and the prosecution of the accused is underway, at the stage of recording evidence.

The court was informed that the victim belonged to extremely weak financial background with a mother who works as a housemaid and a bed-ridden father and the family's monthly household income is about Rs 6,000 in which four members are to sustain.

Advocate Prabhakar Kaur, representing the child, contended that the

additional sessions judge has failed to appreciate that even at interim stage the compensation is to be granted to a minor who is victim of sexual abuse to enable him or her and the family to overcome the incident.

She said the child needs to be compensated for the damaging effect on the victim's psyche and to help rehabilitate him or her into the society, for relief and rehabilitation and not merely to cover for the expenses to be incurred for the time being.

The high court directed the Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to disburse the amount to the child forthwith and clarified that the interim compensation shall be subject to adjustment against the final compensation awarded by the trial court on conclusion of the trial.

It is not hard to see that apart from the actual expenses that would be incurred for the petitioner's psychological counselling and treatment at a

specialised institution like IHBAS, as recommended by the Child Welfare Committee in its report, it would also be necessary to put money in the hands of the petitioner's family, to arrange for the petitioner to safely attend the school he was attending earlier or some other school and to cater to his educational needs, it said.

The victim's counsel argued that taking the Delhi Victim Compensation (DVC) Scheme, 2018 as a benchmark, interim compensation awarded should have been somewhere between Rs 6 lakh and Rs 10.5 lakh.

The Delhi government's counsel said the DVC scheme was not a binding on the trial court and since no basis was provided in the application under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act for calculating the compensation, the trial court awarded the minimum threshold amount of Rs 50,000.

It is not hard to see that apart from the actual expenses that would be incurred for the petitioner's psychological counselling and treatment at a</p



I will soon be undertaking an aerial survey of the affected areas in Purba Medinipur, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas districts

MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 27 MAY 2021

03

Farmers in N India observe 'black day' against Modi govt

Farmers put up black flags at their houses & tractors, take out rallies, and burn effigies of Modi govt to mark 6 months of their protests at Delhi borders against Centre's controversial agri laws



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MEERUT, 26 MAY

Farmers in several states across North India, including Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, today reportedly put up black flags atop their houses, burnt effigies of the Narendra Modi-led central government and held protests, joining a "black day" call given by farmer unions to mark six months of their agitation at Delhi borders against the Centre's three controversial farm laws.

Black flags were put up by the BKU members, their supporters and farmers at their houses, tractors, even as processions were taken out against the BJP-led Centre in some villages and towns. At various places effigies of the Modi government were also burnt. At some places protestors also had a clash with police which was trying to prevent people from burning effigies.

The RLD and the Samajwadi Party workers and leaders also burnt effigies while observing black day on the call of farmers at some places.

Farmers put up black flags at their houses and tractors in different villages of Meerut, Shamli, Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor and Saharanpur. They also demonstrated with black flags and some also wore black outskirts.

In Meerut, villagers in Ghopla village of Partapur shouted slogans against the Union gov-

ernment, showed black flags to cops and burnt effigy of the government. The cops who tried to stop the protesting farmers from burning effigies were shown black flags.

BKU's chief secretary of NCR, Mangeram Tyagi, led the protest in Bulandshahar. Farmers led by Tyagi collected at Kala Aam crossing of Bulandshahar and protested there holding black flags. They burnt the effigy of the Union government inspite of the heavy police deployment that was done to prevent them from doing so.

"We protested peacefully and burnt the effigy of the government though police tried to stop us from doing so," said Tyagi adding that there was a heavy deployment of police force at Kala Aam crossing to stop them.

In Baghpat, BKU supporters protested at Vandana Chowk with black flags.

They also blocked the traffic on Delhi-Saharanpur Highway for some time. The protestors handed over a memorandum to sub divisional magistrate Anubhav Singh. In the memorandum, the agitating farmers reiterated their demand for immediate withdrawal of 3 central farm laws and to legalise purchase of crops at MSP.

The protests were held in Shamli district as well. Here a group of farmers took out a motorcycle rally with black flags that passed through many villages in Chausana area of Shamli district.

In support of the demands of farmers, Samajwadi Party leader Sudhir Panwar also staged a protest at Kandha town in Shamli district along with party workers. He said that six

months have passed but the Modi government was continuing to ignore the demands of farmers.

There were also protests at many places in Muzaffarnagar district. The BKU activists demonstrated at Shahpur, Mansoorpur, Purkaji and many other places in the district with black flags.

The family members of BKU leader Rajesh Tikait put up a black flag at their residence on circular road in Muzaffarnagar. Vil-

lagers also protested in Sisaulli village, the native village of Tikait, where the family members put up a black flag. Besides, the effigy of the Union government was burnt in Bhooraheri village of Muzaffarnagar.

In Saharanpur, BKU-led farmers protested outside their city office at Numaish ground. In Gaghaleri town of Saharanpur district, the farmers burnt the effigy of the central government showing black flags. "Black day" was also observed by farmers in Najibabad, Dhampur, Kiratpur, Nageen, Chandpur, Bijnor.

Similar protests with black flags were reported at many places in Amroha, Sambhal and Moradabad districts.

Earlier, BKU leader Rakesh Tikait wore a black turban to mark the protest at Ghazipur border. In a statement, he said that the farmers movement would continue until their demands are accepted by the Union government.

At many places protestors wore black turbans, black kurta and black outfits as a mark of protest.



With profound grief, we share the loss of our beloved **Smt. Anjana Ghosh** who left us for her heavenly abode on 14th May 2021

A committed teacher, devoted homemaker and a loving mother. She devoted her life to serving her community and supporting her family. Her memory will always be cherished by those whose lives she touched. She lives in the hearts of her family & friends.

Amalendu Bikas Ghosh (Husband), Kaustuv Ghosh (Elder son), Udit Ghosh (Younger son- +91 8178228231)

HP Cong, CPM slam Modi govt for 'failing' farmers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 26 MAY

Himachal Pradesh's Congress and Communist Party of India (Marxist) parties along with farmers' organizations on Wednesday staged protests across the state against Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government for failing to resolve farming community's issues who were sitting on protests on Delhi's borders for the last 6 months.

State Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore said the Modi government's decision to not to talk with farmers' organizations shows its insensitivity on farming community's issues. "The Centre government should immediately withdraw three anti-farmer laws in the interests of the farming community of the country and end their six month long protest," he added.

Rathore stated that the Modi government was behaving in an autocratic manner and was suppressing the people's voice in a democratic system where

no one can even protest against the government's decisions.

"PM Modi seems to be more interested in sharing his 'Man Ki Baat' with the people of the country but he isn't listening to the grievances of farmers and general public which have been adversely affected by unemployment and price rise amidst the Covid pandemic."

The country's GDP has fallen to record low and the economy too is facing the worst phase yet the government doesn't seem bothered by these developments and isn't taking steps to resolve the issues of all sections of society including the farming community," he added.

Himachal Kisan Sabha chief Kuldeep Singh Tanwar too accused the Modi government of ignoring the interests of the farming community and said the farmers were only asking the government to fix minimum support price for their produce.

But the Central government hadn't even bothered to talk to farmers' representatives since the last four months, forcing them to continue their protests even in Covid pandemic, he said.

"Modi government hasn't taken any decision for the welfare of people in the last seven years, except for selling the government's assets and burdening the people with price rise," he added.

"It's been seven years since PM Modi led NDA government took over reigns in the country

HP mobile medical units proving boon in remote areas amid virus outbreak

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 26 MAY

The mobile medical units under Jeevan Dhara Mobile Health and Wellness centre are proving boon for residents in remote areas of Himachal Pradesh by conducting 3,366 Covid tests in seven districts.

An official of the Health department said the mobile medical units were ensuring a complete range of healthcare services for populations living in remote, inaccessible, un-served and underserved areas.

HP CM hints at easing curfew after 31 May

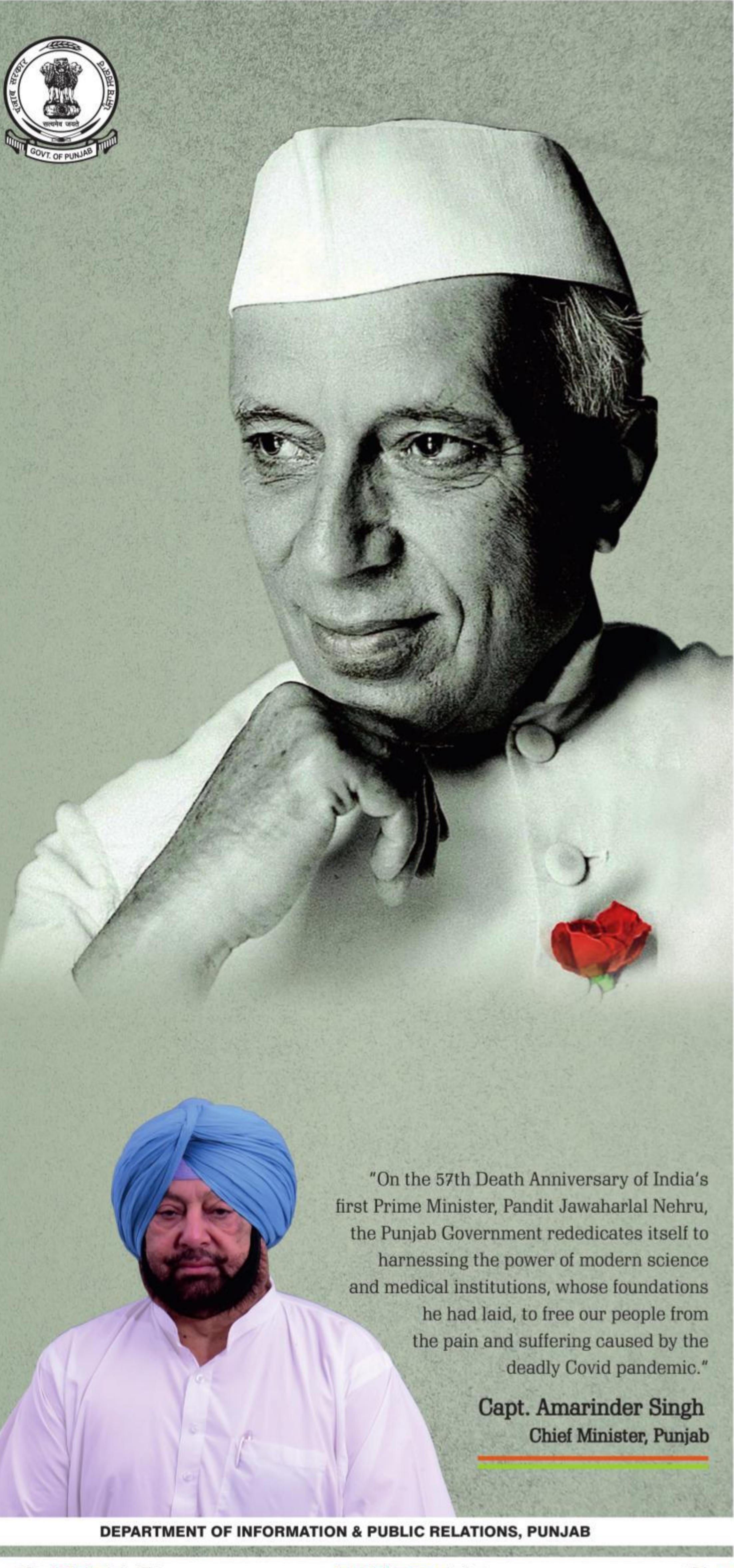
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 26 MAY

As the Covid cases in Himachal Pradesh are witnessing a downward trend since the last week, chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Wednesday hinted at easing Corona curfew norms in the state after 31 May if Coronavirus cases continue to decline. He made the announcement during a meeting with Himachal Pradesh Vyapar Mandal whose chief Sumesh Kumar Sharma had called on the chief minister to apprise him about various demands of the traders community.

Thakur said that the state government was aware about the hardships and difficulty that the business community was facing due to the Corona curfew which had been implemented in the state. "The decision to impose Corona curfew in the entire state till 31 of this month was taken by the HP government in the larger interest of the state and its people, in wake of sharp surge in the number of Covid-19 cases in the state," he added. He further stated that since Himachal Pradesh was witnessing considerable decline in number of Covid-19 cases during the last few days, the government may consider going for gradual and phased unlocking after 31st of this month, provided there was a sharp decline in the new cases.

He further stated that the fourth phase of vaccination drive for 18-44 years age group would be held on 27 May 2021 in the state and for this, 214 vaccination centers had been established in the state.

To get themselves registered and for booking appointments, sessions were published on Cowin portal throughout the state on 25 May and 21,235 persons booked their schedule till now, he added.





Farmers who give blood for every food grain are observing 'black day'. Citizen of the country is angry with the insult meted out to farmers due to Centre's ego

SAMAJWADI PARTY SUPREMO AKHILESH YADAV

THUMBNAILS



Police officers wear helmets with the model of the coronavirus to spread awareness, in Hyderabad on Wednesday. ■ IANS

COVID equipment cost: A special inspection drive has been launched in Kerala to ensure price control of Covid medical equipment, amid widespread complaints of exorbitant rates charged for the devices in the state. The top official also warned stringent action against those who are charging exorbitant price for the tools. PTI

Four-time Gossaigaon MLA Narzary dies: Four-time Gossaigaon MLA Majendra Narzary (68) died due to post-Covid complications at a state-run hospital in Guwahati, on Wednesday, its doctors said. The Bodoland Peoples' Front leader is survived by his wife and four children. PTI

Centenarian Gandhian Doreswamy dies: Centenarian Gandhian and freedom fighter H S Doreswamy (103) on Wednesday passed away due to a cardiac arrest at the Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases. He had contracted Covid on 8 May and was admitted to the hospital and discharged on 13 May. PTI

Pb: Farmers observe 'black day'

Farmers put up black flags and burnt effigies of govt leaders at Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 26 MAY

Farmers in Punjab and Haryana put up black flags atop their houses, burnt effigies of the central government and held protests on Wednesday, joining a 'black day' call given by farmer unions to mark six months of their agitation at Delhi borders against the Centre's three contentious farm laws.

In Punjab, protesting farmers burnt effigies of the BJP-led central government at many places.

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal also raised a black flag at his house in Badal village in Muktsar district and urged the central government to accept the demand of protesting farmers.

In Haryana, state Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) chief Gurram Singh Chaduni said farmers at many places hoisted black flags atop their houses and vehicles to register their protest.

Several political parties

including the Congress, SAD and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have extended their support to the farmers' call of observing the day as 'black day'.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of protesting unions, had announced that farmers will observe May 26 as 'black day' to mark the completion of six months of their protest.

Farmers carrying black flags while women wearing black 'chunnis' held protests in villages and raised slogans against the Union government.

In Punjab, protesting farmers also burnt effigies of the BJP-led government at many places including Amritsar, Muktsar, Moga, Tarn Taran, Sangrur and Bathinda. Farmers, especially youth, put up black flags on their vehicles including tractors, cars and two-wheelers at several places in Punjab to register their protest.

Punjab AAP leaders including two party legislators Kuldeep Singh Sandhu and Meet Hayer held a protest outside Punjab Raj Bhawan in Chandigarh in support of protesting



BKU leader Rakesh Tikait and other members during a protest marking a Black Day, at Ghazipur border on Wednesday.

farmers.

Holding black flags, they shouted slogans against the BJP-led government and sought that the laws be repealed.

Later, they were removed from outside the residence of the Punjab governor by the Chandigarh Police.

SAD leaders led by Bikram Singh Majithia and Daljit Singh Cheema hoisted a black flag at their party office in Chandigarh.

TN govt will pass resolution against agri laws

CHENNAI, 26 MAY

Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin today said that the state government will bring a resolution in the state Assembly asking the Union government to withdraw the three farm laws.

In statement issued to the media, he said the government will take necessary measures to ensure that the Central government withdraws the three Farm laws which were passed last year.

Stalin reiterated that the DMK in its manifesto had promised to pass a law against the Farm laws and will also urge the Central government to cancel the laws.

It may be noted that when Stalin was the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly he requested the State government to pass a resolution against the three farm laws.

SNS

BJP seeks leadership change in Kerala unit

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 26 MAY

Expecting that the Centre leadership of the BJP may interfere in the affairs of the state unit of the party in the wake of the party's poor performance in the Assembly polls, the BJP leaders in Kerala who are opposed to the state president K Surendran and Union minister V Muraleedharan have initiated move for leadership change in the party.

After poll debacle, many a BJP cadres in the state are a disillusioned lot and it has been stated that they want a major operation in the party to make a root and branch change in the organizational set up of the state unit of the party.

The leaders of the groups led by PK Krishnadas and Sobha Surendran blame party state president K Surendran and union minister V Muraleedharan for the party's debacle in the polls. Along with the interference of the Central leadership, these leaders are also expecting support from the RSS for leadership change in the party.

The present leadership of the party has utterly failed in taking the party to face the polls as a single united entity and there was no co-ordination

nation in the works, they argue. Surendran and Muraleedharan gave importance in protecting the interest of their group and this has adversely affected the party. BJP leadership in Kerala kept off firebrand leaders like Sobha Surendran from party activities for a long time. She was given ticket to contest polls only after the interference of the central leaders.

After poll debacle, many a BJP cadres in the state are a disillusioned lot and it has been stated that they want a major operation in the party to make a root and branch change in the organizational set up of the state unit of the party.

It has been reported that in protest over the debacle in the election, severe criticism was raised against K Surendran and V Muraleedharan in district committee meetings. Those who are seeking leadership change are enthused by the developments taking place in the state unit of the Congress.

ON THE SAFE SIDE



A flock of seagulls perch on a floating metal drum during strong winds in the sea, at Vizhinjam coast in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. ■ IANS

IT veteran Pai slams WhatsApp on privacy row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 26 MAY

The Indian government and the country's laws should define and protect the privacy of citizens, information technology industry veteran T V Mohandas Pai said on Wednesday as he accused large social media platforms like WhatsApp of "double standards".

"Let the Court decide, not WhatsApp", he said, commenting on WhatsApp filing a lawsuit in Delhi High Court challenging the government's new digital rules saying the requirement for the company to provide access to encrypted messages will break privacy protections.

The big issue is: should a private social media platform decide such matters by means of a one sided contract or



declaring the rule requiring the message service provider to identify the first originator of any message flagged as a violation of privacy rights provided by the constitution.

"They (WhatsApp) have clear double standards. Our government and our law should define and protect our privacy, not these platforms," Pai said.

The new Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 were announced by the government on February 25 and it requires large social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to

comply with the norms by 25 May. The rules require such large platforms to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer.

WhatsApp said the traceability provision is unconstitutional and against the fundamental right to privacy.

Confirming filing of the petition in the high court on Tuesday, the WhatsApp spokesperson said that "requiring messaging apps to 'trace' chats is the equivalent of asking us to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp, which would break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermine people's right to privacy."

Confirming filing of the petition in the high court on Tuesday, the WhatsApp spokesperson said that "requiring messaging apps to 'trace' chats is the equivalent of asking us to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp, which would break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermine people's right to privacy."

As many as 38 cases, involving 13 leaders including DMK's Anita R Radhakrishnan, now Fisheries Minister and party's Tuticorin south district secretary were ordered to be withdrawn by Stalin, an official release here said.

Cases against MDMK chief Vaiko, veteran CPI leader R Nallakkannu, CPI(M) state secretary K Balakrishnan, Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam top leader TTV Dhinakaran, DMDK leaders Premalatha Vijayakanth and L K Sudhish and six others were ordered to be withdrawn.

Sterlite row: TN govt asks to withdraw cases against leaders



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 26 MAY

Chief minister M K Stalin on Wednesday ordered withdrawal of cases against leaders of political parties, filed in connection with the protests held in 2018 against Vedanta's Tuticorin based Sterlite copper.

As many as 38 cases, involving 13 leaders including DMK's Anita R Radhakrishnan, now Fisheries Minister and party's Tuticorin south district secretary were ordered to be withdrawn by Stalin, an official release here said.

The inquiry panel has recommended relief to 94 people who were arrested and accordingly 93 would be given Rs one lakh each and Rs two lakh to the mother of a deceased person

On May 21, the state government said barring select cases, including those with the CBI, all others against anti-Sterlite Copper protesters would be withdrawn and relief assistance of Rs one lakh each to 93 arrested people shall be given.

Stalin had taken that decision based on the interim report of Justice Aruna Jagadeesan, heading the Commission of Inquiry into the Tuticorin police firing and violence.

The inquiry panel has recommended relief to 94 people who were arrested and accordingly 93 would be given Rs one lakh each and Rs two lakh to the mother of a deceased person, the government had said.

The protests in Tuticorin in southern Tamil Nadu against Sterlite Copper over environment concerns peaked on 22 May, 2018 leading to violence that resulted in 13 deaths in police firing.

Midnapore (E): At least 10 blocks ravaged, 100 villages flooded

BISWABRATA GOSWAMI
MIDNAPORE, 26 MAY

At least 10 blocks including coastal blocks of east Midnapore were devastated due to storm cyclone Yaas which coincided with the perigee spring tide of Wednesday's full moon.

The damage mostly occurred due to the seawater ingress into the coastal villages rather than the damages caused by the storm, an administrative official said.

Around 9.30 am, when Yaas made landfall near Dhamara port in Odisha, the water level of the sea swelled to 4 m above the astronomical tide (spring tide) which lashed on the embankment of Digha causing widespread inundation. Apparently the sea advanced about three to five km towards the coast.

Cars were floating in Old and New Digha, sea waves even touched coconut trees and the storm with speed of around 110 kmph wreaked havoc on shops and buildings.

The major part of the sea embankment from Digha to Sankarpur has been damaged extensively. At many places, sea embankments were breached as tidal waves carving parts of it and cracking walls of the embankment.

Due to heavy rainfall, hundreds of acres of low-lying areas in the coastal belt have been inundated. Hariapada Jana, 48, a fisherman from the coastal village of Tajpur, about 10 km from Digha, said the sea began to swell around 8 pm yesterday.

"There was chest-deep water in most parts of the village by 11 pm yesterday. The winds were so strong that my hut collapsed in front of my eyes. This morning, we took shelter at a relief camp set up at a primary school in our village," he said.

"Around 500 people from our village and neighbouring areas have taken shelter at the camp." Torrential rain lashed the district throughout Saturday, forcing people to remain indoors.

TENDER

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD. (Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala) Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in e-tendering portal: https://eproc.punjab.gov.in	Date: 25-05-2021
Tender Enquiry No. QQ-230/PO-C	Date: 25-05-2021
Chief Purchase Officer/MM, Central Purchase Organisation, PSPCL, 2nd Floor Multistorey Building, The Mall Road, Patiala invites E-tender of 15.6 MT ISI Marked Polypropylene yellow coloured rope of assorted sizes, 3 strand, Hawser Laid, conforming to IS:5175-1992 (with latest amendments) and PSPCL Specification QQ-230.	
For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 27-05-21 from 3-00 p.m. onwards.	
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in	
U40109PB2010SC033813	

OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PHED, JAIPUR REGION-I, JAIPUR Jyoti Nagar, Sahakar Marg, Jaipur-302005 Phone: 0141-2740170 (o) E-mail: ace1.jpr.phed@rajasthan.gov.in No. F/ACE/PHED/Ar. Distt/JJN/IT-32/2021-22/2163-84 Date: 18-05-2021 (o)-NIT No. 32/2021-22	
On behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan NIT No. 32/2021-22 online tender is here invited from eligible bidders for "RWSS of block Piplani under JJM Sub Div. Piplani District Division Jhunjhunu costing Rs. 540.87 lakh" as per criteria mentioned in the detailed NIT/tender document available on websites: https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in & http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in Tenders are to be submitted online in electronic format on website: https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in as per prescribed schedule.	
NIT No. PHE 2122 A0923 UBN No. PHE 2122 WLOB2290	
SAVE WATER-SAVE LIFE	
DIPR/C/4844	Arun Srivastava Addl. Chief Engineer PHED, Jaipur Region-I, Jaipur



States are forced to take out a global tender for vaccines and they have been left disappointed by the companies, but the central government is not acting at all

ACCUSING PM OF USING VACCINES FOR 'PERSONAL PUBLICITY' RATHER THAN A TOOL TO SAVE PEOPLE'S LIVES

CONGRESS LEADER PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 27 MAY 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Senior officers of Jammu and Kashmir patrolling a closed market at Lal Chowk in Srinagar on Wednesday.

MOHAMMAD AMIN WAR

Priest found dead inside temple in UP : A 70-year-old priest was found dead inside a temple with hilt marks on his body in a village in Barabanki on Wednesday, police said. The temple is located in Khamoli village, they said, adding a case has been registered at Tikaianagar police station.

PTI

IOCL offers 78 ICU hospital beds: Indian Oil Corporation Limited has offered to install 78 number of ICU beds at Guwahati medical college hospital to support the state government's relentless fight against the pandemic. Governor Jagdish Mukhi took a comprehensive review of the situation and called for widespread testing.

SNS

Rlys moves 969 tonnes of oxygen in 24 hours: Beatin inclement weather conditions, 12 Oxygen Express trains carried 969 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen to six states and a UT in a span of 24 hours, the Railways said on Wednesday. While three such trains reached Tamil Nadu, four arrived in Andhra Pradesh, and one each in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, UP, Assam and Kerala.

PTI

Row over MP Covid death numbers

BHOPAL, 26 MAY

Amidst the raging political controversy over the actual number of deaths due to Covid in Madhya Pradesh, former Congress minister and senior MLA Dr Govind Singh today alleged that according to the records of the Bhind District Hospital, there were 178 deaths due to Covid whereas the state government's figures show only 12 such deaths.

The Congress MLA from Lohar constituency in Bhind district said that the figures of the hospital's official record register are from 6 February 2021 to 18 May 2021.

"According to the state government figures there had been only 10 deaths last year and this year's government figures show just 12 deaths due to Covid during the said time period," Dr Singh alleged.

"As per the Bhind government's district hospital's record, 68 deaths occurred in its COVID ICU ward, 35 in the COVID surgical ward, 18 in COVID Emergency ward, 15 in COVID Paediatrics ward, 8 in COVID eye ward and 8 in COVID Special ward between 6 February and 18 May 2021," Dr Singh claimed. He said other patients also died in the hospital during the said period, and total 178 deaths were registered.

He accused the state government of deliberately hiding the actual figures of deaths, so that it can escape from the responsibility of paying financial assistance of Rs one lakh each to the kin of the deceased and granting appointment on compassionate grounds to the family members of government employees.

Dr Singh has demanded that a police case be registered against CM, health minister and responsible officials of the state government.

On 22 May, MP Congress chief and former CM Kamal Nath had claimed that he had received figures from crematoriums and burial grounds of all 52 districts and they revealed that 1.27 lakh last rites were carried out during March and April. Nath had alleged that at least 80 percent of those deaths have been due to Covid.

'Vaccine must to save lives, defeat Covid'

PM says, India is proud of its scientists for developing vaccines and saluted healthcare & frontline workers for risking their lives to save others

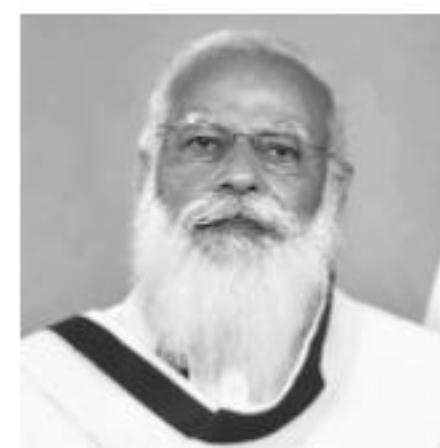
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday described Covid vaccines as "absolutely important to save lives and defeat the pandemic", noting that this "once-in-a-lifetime" crisis has brought tragedy and suffering at doorsteps of many and caused huge economic impact.

Delivering the keynote address on the occasion of "Vesak Global Celebrations" on Buddha Purnima, he said the pandemic has impacted every nation, adding that the planet will not be the same after this and the events in future will be remembered as either pre or post-Covid.

He, however, added that there have been many noteworthy developments which strengthen our strategy to fight it.

"Most importantly, we have the vaccine which is absolutely important to save lives and defeat the pandemic," Modi said, asserting that the emer-



gence of jabs within a year of the Covid outbreak shows the power of human determination and tenacity.

India is proud of its scientists for developing vaccines, he said, and also saluted healthcare and frontline workers for risking their lives to save others.

Offering condolences to those who have suffered and lost near and dear ones in the pandemic, the prime minister said he grieved with them.

In Covid, the humanity has faced its worst crisis in decades and has not seen a pandemic like this for a century, he said.

His comments came amid

several states complaining of a shortage of vaccines and also reports of vaccine hesitancy in a section of the population. On the occasion, Modi also highlighted the issues of climate change and terrorism, saying one must not lose sight of the other challenges faced by humanity while fighting the pandemic.

With the prime ministers of Nepal and Sri Lanka and the secretary general of International Buddhist Confederation in attendance at the virtual event, Modi gave a call for all those who believe in humanity to come together and defeat terrorism and radicalisation.

The life of Gautama Buddha was about peace, harmony and co-existence, he noted, adding that there are still forces whose existence depends on spreading hate, terror and mindless violence.

Such forces do not believe in liberal democratic principles, he added, according to a statement.

Referring to the issue of climate change, Modi said the

reckless lifestyle of the present generation is threatening future generations, and asserted our planet should not remain wounded.

Buddha's emphasis was on a way of life where respect for mother nature is paramount, he said, highlighting that India is among the few large economies to be on track to achieve their Paris targets.

For India, sustainable living is not only about right words but also about right actions, he said.

Modi said Lord Buddha devoted his life to removing human suffering and noted that in the last one year, several individuals and organisations rose to the occasion and did everything possible to reduce human suffering during the pandemic.

Generous contributions of equipment and materials were made by Buddhist organisations and followers of Lord Buddha from around the world, he said, adding these actions are in line with his teachings of "blessings, compassion and welfare of all".

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 26 MAY

7.87 lakh people are in the high risk category due to their jobs that includes ~ workers of civil supplies dept, fertilisers, pesticides shops, vegetable, flower, meat, fish markets, kirana & saloon shops.

Telangana has identified nearly eight lakh people as super spreaders who are in the high risk group due to their profession and will conduct a special Covid vaccination drive for them between 28 and 30 May. The state health officials also said that after two weeks of lock down the state has seen a drop in active cases, new infections as well hospital admissions and hoped the state will emerge out of the second wave by end of June.

Meanwhile, Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will chair the meeting of the state Cabinet on 30 May which will discuss on extending the lock down.

Among the roughly estimated 7.87 lakh people who are in the high risk category due to their jobs 80,000 are from civil supplies department and

state to 92.58 per cent as on today. Active cases too have dropped from 59,133 to 38,362. Daily cases also dropped from 4,723 to 3,762. He added that the number of hospital admissions have also gone down. Rao also concluded given the trend Telangana might recover from second wave by end of June.

Andhra CM Jagan tells officials to make Covid hospitals self-sufficient: In Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has taken initiative to make the state self sufficient in liquid medical oxygen supply. Every hospital in the state with 50 beds or more shall have to install oxygen plant by August this year so that the state will never have to struggle for oxygen as it did for the last two months. Till date a total of 28,737 people were covered under Arogyashri and availed Covid 19 treatment.

Central Vista: CPWD to transplant 1,838 trees for construction of three new buildings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The CPWD has decided to transplant 1,838 trees from the campus of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), which is proposed to be demolished for the construction of three new office buildings under the Central Vista redevelopment project.

The Central Public Works Department has invited bids according to which the agency concerned will have to transplant trees in 60 days and 365 days will be for the maintenance of the transplanted trees.

The CPWD said the entire project will be executed at an estimated cost of around Rs 1.86 crore.

Last month, the CPWD had invited bids for three new office buildings under the Common Central Secretariat along Rajpath at a cost of Rs 3,269 crore and Rs 139 crore was set aside for five years' maintenance of the transplanted trees.

The CPWD said the entire project will be executed at an estimated cost of around Rs 1.86 crore.

The agency will carry out a social audit and get certified "survival assessment report" at the end of each maintenance sub-period (quarterly) to ascertain survival rate.

maintenance.

These three new buildings will come on the plot where the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is currently located.

According to the bids for the transplantation of trees, there are 2,219 trees (approximately) on plot number 137, out of which 1,838 trees (approximately) are to be transplanted.

There are 1,150 trees having girth up to 50 cm, which will be transplanted, the bids stated, adding that there are also 401 trees which have girth beyond 50 cm and up to 90 cm.

In bid documents, the CPWD said it is proposed to avoid cutting of trees to the maximum extent and instead transplant the affected trees, within the site or in the vicinity, in a phased manner.

The girth and height of the tree will be measured and recorded before the start of any activity, the CPWD said, adding

that photographs of each tree before the start of the process of translocation will be submitted by the bidder. The tree will be geo-tagged before and after transplantation.

"Lifting of trees shall be carried out or supervised by a qualified and/or suitably experienced person and crane operator using a crane and supports. It shall be ensured that there is no damage to the soil ball or any scratching and splitting of the root system. The tree should be kept intact without injuries to its root system, trunk and crown," it stated.

The entire process of translocation will be video graphed and submitted fortnightly to the CPWD. Penalty of Rs 5,000 will be imposed if the agency fails to do so.

The agency will carry out a social audit and get certified "survival assessment report" at the end of each maintenance sub-period (quarterly) to ascertain survival rate.

DIVINE MOMENT



Buddhist monks offer special prayers on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, at Mahabodhi Buddha Vihara in Hyderabad on Wednesday. IANS

IMA serves defamation notice on Ramdev

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DEHRADUN, 26 MAY

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has served a defamation notice on Ramdev for alleged disparaging remarks against allopathic and ayurvedic doctors, demanding an apology from him within 15 days, failing which it will demand a compensation of Rs 1,000 crore from the yoga guru.

The six-page notice served on behalf of IMA (Uttarakhand) secretary Ajay Khanan by his lawyer Neeraj Pandey describes the remarks by Ramdev as damaging to the reputation and the image of allopathy and around 2,000 practitioners of it who are part of the association.

In its letter to Modi, the IMA said it was gratifying to note that only 0.06 per cent of people who received both the doses of vaccine "got minimal" infection by Covid, and "very rarely" vaccinated people had a severe lung infection.

Ramdev should be booked under sedition charges: IMA in letter to PM

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that yoga guru Ramdev be booked immediately under sedition charges for alleged misinformation campaign on vaccination and challenging government protocols for treatment of Covid.

In its letter to Modi, the IMA said it was gratifying to note that only 0.06 per cent of people who received both the doses of vaccine "got minimal" infection by Covid, and "very rarely" vaccinated people had a severe lung infection.

compensation of Rs 1,000 crore will be demanded from him at the rate of Rs 50 lakh per

Ramdev to make a video clip contradicting all his allegations and circulate it on the social media platforms where he had uploaded his earlier video levelling them. It further asked the yoga guru to withdraw a "misleading" advertisement from all platforms endorsing "Coronil kit", a product of his firm, failing which an FIR and a criminal case will be lodged against him by the IMA.

On Sunday, Ramdev was forced to withdraw a statement made in a viral video clip in which he is heard questioning some of the medicines being used to treat the coronavirus infection and saying that "lakhs have died from taking allopathic medicines for Covid".

The remarks were met with vociferous protests from the doctors' association, following which Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan asked him to withdraw the "extremely unfortunate" statement.

FIR after conducting a preliminary enquiry against NCP leader Deshmukh following an order from the HC on 5 April.

While one paragraph is about allegations levelled against Deshmukh by Sachin Waze, who has been dismissed from police service, the second paragraph pertains to corruption in transfers and postings of police officials.

Additional Solicitor General SVRaju, appearing for the CBI, made the statement before a vacation bench of justices S J Kathawalla and S P Tavade, which was hearing a petition filed by the state government. The government had sought a direction to CBI to set aside and not carry out any investigation with regard to two paragraphs from the FIR lodged by the agency on April 21 against former home minister of Maharashtra Anil Deshmukh. The CBI had lodged the

hands with regard to the production of documents sought by the CBI from the Maharashtra government until this petition is placed before the other bench. This would be only with regard to details sought from the state government and not the entire probe, Raju said.

The court accepted the statement and directed the HC's registry office to place the petition before the bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni on June 8. It is made clear that the statement made by the CBI will continue up to June 9, the court said. Senior counsel Rafique Dada, appearing for the state government, last week told the court that the CBI had sought details and copies of the letter written by Shukla to the government with regard to allegations of corruption in transfers and postings of police officials.

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Nuclear inspection

Iran has toughened its stand on matters nuclear, asserting that the "nuke inspector deal" had expired or had passed its sell-by date, if you will. The Speaker of the country's hardline Parliament made it explicit on Sunday that a temporary deal between Tehran and international inspectors to preserve surveillance images taken at nuclear sites had ended, escalating tensions amid diplomatic efforts to save the Islamic Republic's atomic accord with world powers. As fellow hardliners demanded that Iran delete the images, officials delayed a planned press conference by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. That signaled negotiations between the United Nations agency and Tehran will continue. The last-minute discussions further underscored the narrowing window for the US and others to reach the terms of engagement with Iran.

The Islamic Republic is already enriching and stockpiling uranium at levels far beyond those allowed by its 2015 nuclear deal. Iran's hardline parliament in December approved a bill that would suspend part of UN inspections of its nuclear facilities if European signatories did not provide relief from oil and banking sanctions by February. The IAEA struck a three-month deal with Iran in February to have it hold the surveillance images, with Tehran threatening to delete them afterwards if no deal had been reached. That three-month deadline expired on Friday ~ under the Gregorian calendar. Under the Persian calendar, however, the three-month deadline comes on Monday.

On Sunday morning during a session of parliament, the Speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, announced the deal had expired. The nuclear negotiations have been plagued by contradictory, anonymously leaked information coming from Iran, testament to a conflict between the administration of the outgoing President Hassan Rouhani, the relatively moderate cleric who clinched the 2015 deal, and the hardliners now seeking to replace him. Indeed, as Iran prepares for presidential elections next month, hardliners have made it clear there has been enough dithering by their calculations and it is now for the US to simply lift sanctions. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken described Iran as taking "destabilizing actions throughout the Middle East."

However, he said in order to counter that, "the first thing that we need to do is put the nuclear problem back in the box." He added: "What we haven't yet seen is whether Iran is ready and willing to make a decision to do what it has to do. That's the test and we don't yet have an answer." On Sunday, Iran had its way, rather an unpalatable piece of news for the likes of President Joe Biden. Mr Trump no longer occupies the White House but the ghosts of his policies haunt the Middle East.

Defence of the Asian

Considering the surge in hate crimes against Asians in the United States of America, President Biden has been remarkably prompt in signing legislation to address the increasing phenomenon of man's inhumanity to man. His signature on the watershed legislation was couched in the hope that such crimes would now be more accurately calibrated and reported so that they can be ended. That would be a signal achievement should the intent of the legislation materialise. The bill will provide resources to create specialised hate crime units that will help states create hotlines accessible to people with limited English proficiency.

The technological as well as linguistic aspects have thus been taken care of. And the bill, which is fairly wideranging in its scope, provides resources for training of state and local law enforcement entities to identify, investigate, and report such heinous crimes, Mr Biden said after signing the legislation. The bill thus goes beyond the colour of the skin and rivets its attention on the continental origin of the victims.

The need for such legislation became palpable from the brutal killing of as many as six Asian women in Atlanta in March this year. Earlier this week, the House of Representatives passed the Senate-approved version of the Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. This bill was introduced by Senator Mazie Hirono and Representative Grace Meng in the House, and incorporated the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act, so-called.

This legislation will address the current rise in anti-Asian hate and improve the reporting of crimes. President Biden also urged people to change their minds and hearts. He hit the bull's eye when he said: "But of all the good that the law can do, we have to change our hearts. We have to change the hearts of the American people. I mean this from bottom my heart ~ hate can be given no safe harbour in America. I mean it: no safe harbour. It can't be dismissed like, Well, that's just what happens. My sister, Valerie, and I talk about it all the time. You've got to speak up. Speak up and speak out." The President has been remarkably forthright in his evaluation of attitudes that have soured... to the point of death!

After a year in which the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) segment experienced a horrifying rise in hate crimes and incidents driven by racist and inflammatory language during the pandemic, last Friday's bipartisan legislation conveys an unmistakable message of solidarity to the community at a crucial juncture. It will help federal, state, and local governments confront anti-Asian hate across America. There is urgent need to review Covid-19 related hate crimes. It is hard not to wonder whether public health and hate crimes are thus intertwined in one of the worst-affected virus-afflicted countries.

Science v quackery ~ II

Social media, particularly, WhatsApp, is abuzz with 'magic' remedies. Remedies vary from the queer to the eccentric, to the plain nauseating ~ that 'regular saline nasal wash will prevent virus from entering the lungs and eliminate them from the nasopharynx', that 'Vitamin D supplements will improve immunity and prevent Covid-19 infection' and that 'drinking whiskey frequently will kill the virus'



There are many remedies and placebos being forwarded across the social media as a 'cure' for Covid-19 advising people to follow them, hook, line, and sinker, and for lack of opportunities to sift the grain from the chaff, with no public health guidelines available to them, people are known to fall for them.

Manipur Police booked a journalist and another activist under the National Security Act (NSA) recently, over their "offensive" social media posts on death of Manipur state BJP chief S Tikendra Singh which, one might guess, was for appending a comment that cow urine and dung do not cure Covid-19 and for the implication hidden in it.

Last year, the Ministry of AYUSH advocated the use of alternative medicines such as homoeopathy and Ayurveda to ward off coronavirus, and also recommended sipping water boiled with tulsi, ginger and turmeric to fight the infection. While their medical qualities might be immense, to recommend them as prevention of Covid-19 infection was misleading.

Tamilisai Soundararajan, formerly the National Secretary and Tamil Nadu State Unit President of the BJP, and currently appointed as the Governor of Telangana, last year tweeted prescriptively: "Look at new drugs to target SARS CoV-2 and COVID19. Compound identified is Camphor! In traditional medicines Ayurveda, it has been used as a remedy. Camphor was used to fight plague and influenza epidemics. Pray with camphor or make Chakkarak Pongal (sweet pongal) with Pacchai Karpooram." The suggestion was naturally lapped up because it came from a person of constitutional authority and who was a doctor by training.

At the time of writing this, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y

S Jagan Mohan Reddy ordered scientific tests on an ayurveda medicine that is being distributed by an ayurveda practitioner in the port town of Krishnapatnam in Nellore district as a "cure" for Covid-19. The ruling YSRCP MLA, K Govardhan Reddy, actively promoting the ayurveda medicine in the town, claims it to be a "miracle cure" for Covid-19. Alarmed over the huge number of people queuing up for the medicine,

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, who hails from Nellore district, asked Union Minister for Ayush Kiren Rijiju and ICMR Director Balram Bhargava to conduct a study on the medicine, and submit a report.

Social media, particularly, WhatsApp, is abuzz with such 'magic' remedies. Posts claiming that "inhaling a combination of camphor, cloves (laung), carrom seeds (ajwain) and a few drops of eucalyptus oil can help in increasing oxygen levels in the body" are doing the rounds in gay abandon. Remedies vary from the queer to the eccentric, to the plain nauseating ~ that "regular saline nasal wash will prevent virus from entering the lungs and eliminate them from the nasopharynx", that "Vitamin D supplements will improve immunity and prevent Covid-19 infection", that "lemon juice through the nose will kill the virus", that "drinking ayurvedic or homemade kadhas 3-4 times a day will prevent/improve immunity and prevent infection", that "common antibiotics will cure Covid-19" and last but not the least, "drinking whiskey or other forms of alcohol frequently will kill the virus in the throat" ~ giving rise to a false sense of complacency, prompting people to lower their guards, buying

over-the-counter antibiotics, often with unforeseen consequences such as excessive intake of Vitamin D supplements causing toxicity.

The Government of India has constituted the "Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog", under the Ministry of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, in 2019 to organize animal husbandry on "modern and scientific lines" and to take steps for preserving and improving breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle. One of the 'scientific' claims it has made is that diseases like psoriasis, skin disorders, eczema, arthritis, inflammation and leprosy, among others, can be treated by consuming 'Panchgavya' products ~ cow milk and its derivatives as well

as cow urine and dung. "Divya Godhan Ark is an ancient Ayurvedic medicine made by extracting the goodness from gomutra or cow urine", claims the Patanjali online website, which produced some 5,000 litres of cow urine every day as per claims made by its CEO five years ago.

Whether production of such products has been ramped up in view of their promotion as antidote to lung infection is not known, but the implications of advocating such therapies in the name of science at a time when the entire nation is reeling under a deadly second wave of the pandemic are bound to be counterproductive to a country which is still riddled with superstition. Surely, the scientific community has to deal with such quackeries with greater stridency.

One can argue that modern quackery does not put animals at risk. Harvesting cow dung and

cow urine can never harm them, particularly if we compare some of the unusual medieval remedies listed by writer-historian Toni Mount who has to say that during medieval times to cure a severe throat infection was to take a fat cat and flay it well, followed by requiring to clean and draw out the guts.

After procuring the grease of a hedgehog and the fat of a bear and resins and fenugreek and sage and gum of honeysuckle and virgin wax ~ to be crumbled small and to be stuffed within the cat ~ the poor animal had to be roasted well, and the grease thus gathered had to be applied to the patient.

Just in case, the attendant cruelties shock us further, we can take recourse to The Natural History by Pliny the Elder who, in his turn, draws upon the memoirs of Democritus, to prescribe that for some diseases, the skull of a malefactor is most efficacious, while for the treatment of others, that of one who has been a friend or guest is required. With the pandemic in the air, such prescriptions today can be a call to a civil war.

The World Health Organization estimates that India had 1.2 million snakebite deaths (average 58,000/year) from 2000 to 2019. Many of the deaths could have been preventable, had not superstition got the better of the victims' families, and had there been adequate healthcare facilities.

The problem for so-called advocates of science in India is often that the tenets of 'scientific' methods they forward are themselves subject to various forms of weird belief now and then. But we must remain alert to keep away from voodoo and quackery as means to combat the pandemic so as not to further compromise the hard-earned signposts of Indian science. Precious lives must be saved.

(Concluded)



PRASENJIT CHOWDHURY

The writer is a Kolkata-based commentator on politics, development and cultural issues

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

Tampering with test results rings alarm

That three employees from two Chinese enterprises in Lagos, Nigeria, were found to have altered the results of their Immunoglobulin G test reports so they could board a flight home should be a wake-up call that vigilance can never be relaxed as far as the screening of those who pass through the customs from overseas is concerned.

Who knows how many people would have contracted the virus from them and how many would have been infected from those who have got the virus from the three, had it not been for the good work of the staff at the local Chinese consulate-general.

It is not the first time that such alterations of test reports have been discovered. Another Chinese returnee who altered the result of his test report so that he could come home from Russia in December was confirmed to be infected with the novel coronavirus.

He was sentenced to one year of imprisonment for what he had done. The importance of safeguarding what has been achieved can never be overstated.

Without the joint efforts of governments at all levels and residents

CHINADAILY

strictly observing the prevention and control measures, China would not have become one of the safest havens from the virus, and neither would its economy have regained its vitality.

Apart from having as many of its citizens as possible vaccinated, it is of the utmost importance to be on guard against the possibility of the virus being brought into the country from overseas.

Although the sources of the local clusters of infections in Northeast China's Liaoning province and East China's Anhui province are not clear yet, the virus quite likely came from overseas since the country had been free from local cases for months. And these clusters would not be the first time that bursts of local infections have been caused by either imported cargoes or

Given the pandemic's complexity due to the deterioration of situation in a number of countries and the appearance of different variants of the virus, control and prevention measures at customs need to be further tightened.

Those who alter their test results present a risk to others, as they will undoubtedly pass the virus to their contacts, who would then spread the virus to their contacts.

No one can tell how serious the consequences of such a cycle would be. As such, heavier penalties need to be meted out to deter such behavior.

Domestically, every individual also needs to observe prevention and control measures as they did during the epidemic, leaving no space for the virus to spread.

twist onto the vault before finishing it with a double somersault in a piked position.

It could be said for sure that after watching the unbelievable performance of the 24-year-old ace gymnast, all admirers of gymnastics across the world would eagerly wait to see her performance in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics as Biles has already assured her spot on the U.S. Olympic team.

Yours, etc., Sourish Misra, Kolkata, 24 May.

NO POLITICS

SIR, The report 'Covid positivity rate falls to 11.34' published today, seems like light at the end of the tunnel. India's daily Covid-19 positivity rate has fallen to 11.34 per cent from 24.83 per cent in just 14 days and this is quite encouraging. It is also a great source of sigh that India's daily recoveries continue to outnumber new cases for the ninth consecutive day. As of today, as many as 3,55,102 recoveries have been registered in the last 24 hours as reported by the Health Ministry. The overall picture indicates that if we do not violate the Covid protocol of wearing a mask, social distancing, etc., the virus's spread can be minimized. The most important thing is that vaccination of all citizens must be completed as early as possible. But this is not happening as per expectations. If paucity of vaccine supply is one reason, then lack of vaccination centres across the country is another.

There is no denying the fact that the first surge of Covid in India was restrained properly due to the timely imposition of lockdown. Though the Central government had been criticised for this, India did not suffer as much as developed countries. During the second wave, it was not the Centre but state governments that should have imposed lockdowns based on local conditions. At this crucial time, political parties should not do politics over Covid and work in tandem to fight this virulent virus.

Yours, etc., Mihir Kanungo, Kolkata, 24 May.

Focus on Nehru

SIR, The article 'Connecting with Nehru' by Abhik Roy (The Statesman, 21 and 22 May) was bold and informative. It has bust the illusions about our first Prime Minister through references to the admissions made by the subject himself at different times. Nehru was from a well-to-do Indian household, with socio-political influence, economic affluence and overseas education. His elitist attitude with obvious social disconnect ~

resulting from his very special upbringing ~ is the essence of the article. The second part focused on the crisis that Nehru had to face due to his elitist and Westernized mindset.

His feeling of being alienated in both the countries is typical of the middle class in Indian society. The middle class being conscious about their social standing feel inhibited among the people higher up in the social ladder. At the

same time they consciously distance themselves from the people lower down the social order. The same social disconnect troubled Nehru yet did not impede his prospects of becoming the first Prime Minister of the country.

Perhaps, due to his close association with Gandhiji, the champion of traditional Indian society, or the inherent loyalty of Indian people towards dynastic orders or illusions about people of high birth, Nehru earned high respect and

adulation from his countrymen. Ironically, all or some of the above factors stood him in good stead, despite his supercilious attitude towards that very Indian culture and tradition.

Yours, etc., Prasenjit Baidya, Kodalia, 23 May.

AMAZING BILES

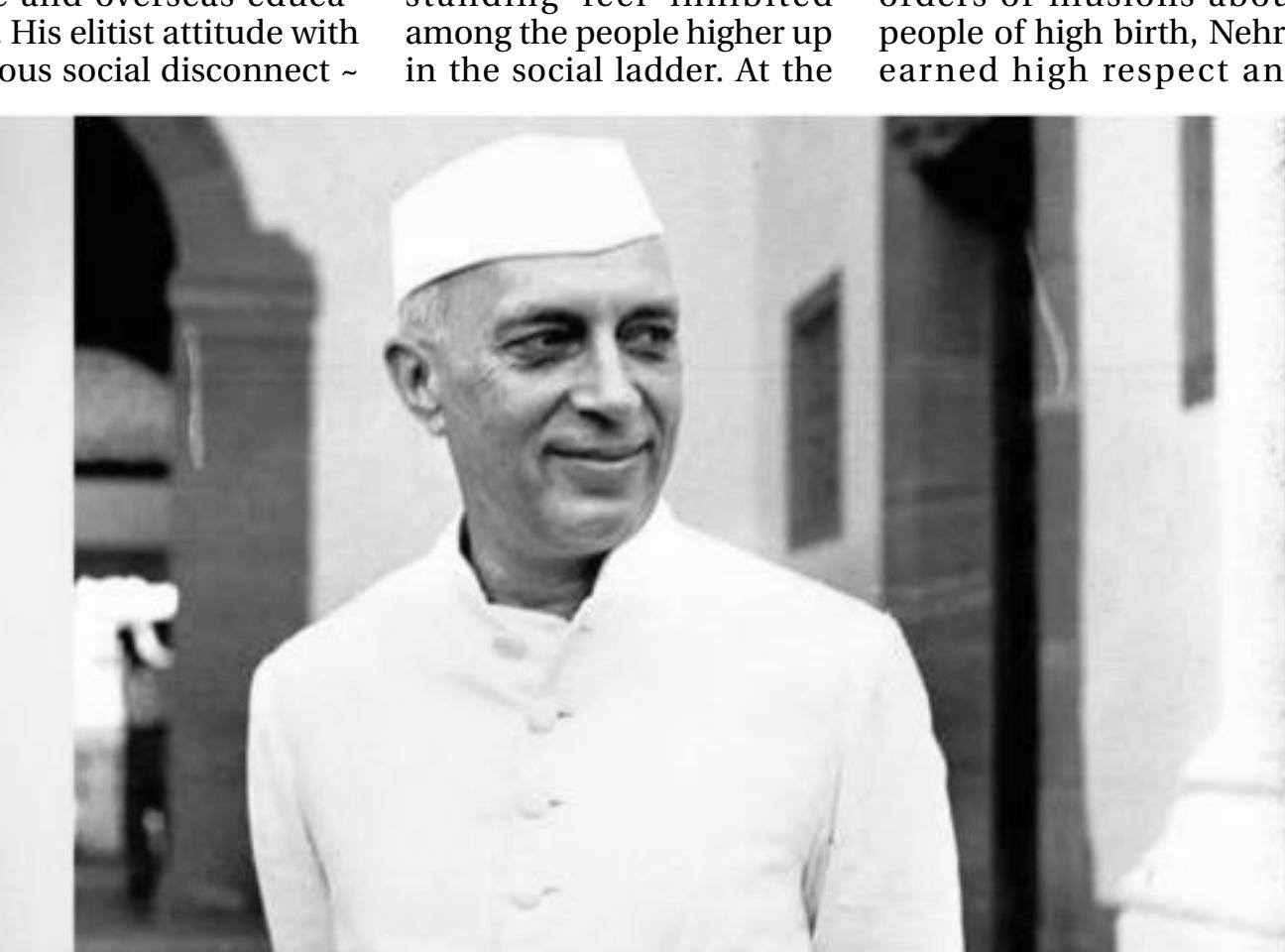
SIR, US gymnastics superstar Simone Biles should be congratulated for making history by becoming the first

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SUNIL SHARAN

At 78, Joe Biden appears fragile, even though he may not be because he exercises regularly. Every time one sees him, one hopes he completes at least one term of his presidency. The US presidency, like the prime minister of India, makes young men old. Think Barack Obama and Rajiv Gandhi. What to say of making old men older.

The other day a friend asked if the concern was that Donald Trump would return to power. I said, no, the concern is that Kamala Harris would become president in case something happened to Biden. After virtually accusing Biden of being a racist during the debates for the Democratic presidential nominee, Harris now stands by Biden's side like a loyal sentry, even in the Oval Office. Even the fawning Mike Pence didn't behave with such servility before Trump.

A vice president has to always walk two steps behind the president. Biden is a gentleman. He makes sure that Harris, a woman, walks in front of him. He lets her speak before him while making major announcements. It's almost like he's training her to become president after him.

But how good a student has Harris been? It's been sixty days since Biden tapped Harris for her first big job, that of resolving the migrant crisis at the southern border that is now rattling America even more than Covid. Sixty days and Harris has not once been to the border. Biden blew his top at Susan Rice, his domestic policy head, who promptly headed to the border to see what was going on there.

Harris had defeated Rice, who as a former US national security advisor and US ambassador to the UN was more experienced than Harris, in the vice-presidential stakes. Rice was considered for the secretary of state position, which instead went to longtime Biden hand, Antony Blinken. Rice had to settle for domestic policy chief, whatever that entails.

Harris knows that the southern border is toxic for a US politician. Most American whites don't want swarms of coloured people streaming into their country. Trump had instituted strict curbs at the border, including building his border wall, which had stemmed the tide of migrants. Biden has loosened those curbs. Now migrants are pouring into the US.

Harris knows that the only way to solve the migrant crisis is to be strict like Trump. But her boss, Biden, has painted himself to be very empathetic and won't have anything to do with Trump's policies. What is Harris to do then? She has decided not to visit the border nor give a press conference about the crisis. Two Yemens on the US terror watch list were caught coming through the southern border recently. The border is toxic; Harris doesn't want to touch it.

Harris has been a public prosecutor all her life. Her entire natural mien is one of grilling someone else. She did that quite effectively with the then nominee for the US Supreme Court, Brett Kavanaugh, who she almost reduced to tears. Kavanaugh is a US Supreme Court justice now. Heavens if a case against Harris were to come before him.

What are Harris's views on Iran? If she has any, how have they been shaped? On North Korea? On Israel-Palestine? On India-Pakistan? On China? Biden is an old hand at foreign policy but how much can he impart to Harris in such a short time? Wouldn't it have been better if he had chosen the seasoned Rice as his Vice President. But Harris has the glam quotient that Rice lacks perhaps.

It was the glam quotient that made Vogue magazine put Harris on its cover. Now firmly ensconced in the vice presidency and in the vice presidential mansion, Number One Observatory Circle, which arguably is more plush than even the White House, Harris seems to have had time to work out and shed some weight and look even more glamorous.

The vice president is the shadow president of the US. Her only job is to get ready to become president in case the president falters. Because a vice president benefits the most if something were to happen to the president, some presidents in the past have regarded vice presidents with suspicion. Modern-day vice presidents like Pence and Harris have had to appear utterly loyal to the president. Pence was loyal to Trump but that didn't stop Trump from having his Vice President almost murdered by inciting the January 6 Capitol insurrection.

Biden has given Harris in charge of another job, that of creating jobs in the US. So petrified is Biden of unemployment in his country that he has announced three multi-trillion relief packages to instigate job creation. There is the \$2 trillion Covid relief bill, which is giving so much in unemployment benefits (dole) and handouts to the poor that they are staying at home because they are financially better off that way than working.

Then there is the roughly \$3 trillion infrastructure package, which is nothing but Biden's Green New Deal in disguise. Obama had his own green new deal but failed miserably to create green jobs. Finally, there is the trillion-dollar jobs plan that Biden has handed over to Harris. With so many competing plans, which agency (ministry) will take credit for what job creation is moot.

Harris is not bashful. She will not hesitate to take credit for whatever jobs that are created. She knows how to stay away from trouble like the southern border, and how to gravitate towards success like Biden's trillions chasing jobs.

The writer is an expert on energy and contributes regularly to publications in India and overseas.

The art of being Kamala Harris



Why humans should not be bees

KIM SEONG-KAN

When I joined the faculty of Seoul National University in the early 1980s, clashes between teargassing riot police and teargassed radical students were rampant on campus. To strengthen solidarity against the dictatorial regime, student leaders began to organize the so-called Daedongje, which means "Togetherness Festivals" or "Accompaniment Ceremonies." At Daedongje, there was no place for individual identity: Only the group mentality prevailed. At that time, I warned of the dangers of "crowd psychology" that ignored individuality in the name of unity and solidarity. Yet, they would not heed my admonition at all.

Traditionally, "group mentality" or "crowd psychology" has been prevalent in Korean society. The problem with this tendency is that it could easily degenerate into a "mob psychology" or "mob democracy," which would eventually help build a totalitarian society where people do not tolerate different opinions. Under the circumstances, everyone becomes part of a group or a faction, losing his or her individual identity. Then, political activists can easily manipulate the people for political gain. Naturally, Korean student leaders in the 1980s preferred a "people's democracy" to a liberal democracy



that allowed individuality. Wikipedia writes, "People's democracy was a theoretical concept within Marxism-Leninism."

In such a society, people have to give up their individual identity and rationality. Swept by "crowd psychology," people easily become emotional, angry, and hostile to others who do not join them or who, they think, are their political foes. If you Google "crowd psychology," you can indeed find descriptions that highlight its problematic tendencies: "As part of a group, people can lose their sense of individual identity. Being part of a group can lead to heightened emotional states, be that excitement,

anger, hostility."

Psychologists argue that humans need to belong because they have to compete with other groups. This suggests that humans, when alone, are weak and vulnerable. Historically, Korea always had to compete with or guard herself against hostile neighboring countries. Even inside Korea, people have to compete with other people, other groups, and other factions. Thus, it is understandable that the Korean people exhibit group mentality. However, if group mentality or crowd psychology is pervasive in society, people will lose individuality and become emotional, exhibiting hostility toward others who do

not belong to their group. For example, if you do not join in the nationwide anti-Japan or anti-American campaigns, you will be condemned immediately as a national traitor. If you do not support the candlelit demonstrations or the Korean soccer team, you will also be doomed to be an outcast, as well.

Psychologists call such a phenomenon "hive psychology," a word derived from a bee's hive. Bees indiscriminately and ruthlessly attack any intruders or outsiders, accepting the hive dwellers only. Scientists also use the term, "swarm intelligence," which supersedes individual intelligence in a society of group mentality. Even though the "swarm intelligence" is mistaken, you can do nothing, no matter how intelligent you are.

Living in Korea, I have always resisted group mentality or crowd psychology that suppresses individuality. Even as a child, I wanted to be alone, instead of joining the noisy crowd. When I entered elementary school, our first grade homeroom teacher asked us a series of questions. Each time, he asked, "Does anyone know the answer?" All my fellow first graders raised their hands eagerly and shouted, "Me! Me! Me!" When this would happen, I would remain silent, I knew all the answers already, and yet I did not raise my hand because I did not want to be part of the crowd who shouted in

unison.

Since I was the only one who did not raise a hand, my maternal grandmother, who accompanied me to the entrance ceremony, got impatient because she knew that I knew the answers. Finally, she rushed to me and whispered, poking my elbow, "For God's sake, raise your hand!" I forgot about the incident, but later she told me that I muttered cynically, "You raise your hand if you like, Grandma."

When I was in the fourth grade, I was the top student in my class. Thus, my teacher sent me to a popular KBS radio quiz show, thinking that I could make my school famous by answering all the questions. That was his fatal mistake. When I saw all the students from various schools were raising hands, yelling, "Me! Me! Me!" I decided to be aloof again, even though I knew all the answers. Consequently, I failed my teacher who must have thought that the MC of the quiz show had not given me any opportunity. The truth was that I never raised my hand. I thought that joining the crowd was silly and childish.

The two incidents were merely a feeble gesture of my resistance to the crowd psychology of our society. We should not let group mentality override our individual identity. Instead of hiding behind the masses, we should come out and demand individuality and diversity. Our society, too, should tolerate those who have different opinions.

The Korea Herald/ANN

NO 28924

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 JUST, BEDCHAMBER
- 2 ACDA, AHRE
- 3 CLAMOUR, UNAWARE
- 4 KLM, CINK
- 5 AMPHITHEATRES
- 6 NEYS, SAOS
- 7 ALLIES, PUNGENCE
- 8 PESSA, N
- 9 EMIGRATE, EMOTES
- 10 SMEEAUAI
- 11 BUDGET, DEFICIT
- 12 OSBORNE, OPIOIDS
- 13/15 TURPENTINE, READ
- 14 Civic officer left Ann in

charge of Newport revamp

- 1 Hackney, falsely promising (4,7)
- 2 Observers initially imply, wrongly, Charlie is like a legendary athlete (7)
- 3 A feature of Saturn, it emits a flame (3,4)
- 4 Pub invested in satellite TV not doing enough food (6)
- 5 Poor Root, a prisoner of history, stewing for hours on 10 (5,5)
- 6 Rubbish, burnt out team from 27 making a fast start (3,9)
- 7 Civic officer left Ann in

DOWN

- 1 Would Woods's woods be with these? (5)
- 2 Small, tailless Aussie songbird starts to gently hover towards sash windows (9)
- 3 Assistant Chief Constable (Retired) saving j built up (8)
- 4 Honour King working a role in AMND (6)
- 5 Frigid virago's admission? (3-4)
- 6 Front of Ford Sierra hit US radio presenter (7)
- 7 UK hero's history novel The Fourth Riding? (5,9)
- 8 Awkward gait when going over American forest (5)

Isn't this Soviet spin pervading? Tag it properly (8)

- 9 A very English mass song/prayer (3,5)
- 10 No longer 25, in 27 you got married off (6,3)
- 11 See 13 Across
- 12 "Flipping hit it ref" English Queen gulped (9)
- 13 Statement of principles: firm is in the red (actually, the opposite) (5)
- 14 Leader of supporters supporting supporters in part of orchestra (5)
- 15 Run round second base (she'll never strike) (5)
- 16 Discover big game trip from a great distance (4)

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The obituary notices of the late Mr. J.G. Ritchie appear to have omitted the fact that he was for some time Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation, from which post he retired in 1896. He was, like his famous relative William Makepeace Thackeray, born in Calcutta, but about forty years later, namely, in 1853; and he returned to India in 1873 in the Civil Service, as was the custom with the Thackerays, the Carnacs, the Temples, the Cottons, and dozens of famous Anglo-Indian families, to serve the country of whose salt his forbears had eaten for generations. He served in Alipore, Kalimpong, and Bhagalpur in the Calcutta Corporation, and subsequently in various Commissions, retiring finally in 1901. He was a typical Englishman of the old school, grave and a little stiff in his manner, handsome and debonair in his person, and liberal and conscientious in his official outlook. He found the Municipal Corporation a sufficiently difficult "team" to drive twenty-five years ago. Nevertheless he remained on excellent terms with the Commissioners, and on the occasion of the farewell river trip to which he was entertained on laying down his office Sir Surendranath Banerjee, then, as now, the most eloquent Indian in public life, compared the Corporation to a happy family, and the disputes which so frequently arose within its ranks to those domestic differences which failed to break up its essential solidarity.

NEWS ITEMS

WATER POWER IN BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

Bombay, May 26
At the instance of the Government of India, the Bombay Government engaged Mr. P.L. Bowers, Executive Engineer, to carry out an investigation with the object of discovering what amount of water power is capable of development in this presidency. A considerable part of the country was covered, the investigation extending from the Mani River in Reva Kantha Agency to Tadri river in North Kanara. Sites examined varied in facilities for development of power, but of those examined 21 were considered to be sufficiently promising. All sites investigated or under survey lie within transmission distance of one or more railway lines and are capable of being developed for industrial or commercial purpose when required.

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Simla, May 26
The Governor-General in Council is pleased to prescribe the rate of daily allowance admissible to the members of the Legislative Assembly at Rs 20. This concession will have retrospective effect from the date on which members became entitled to draw the existing rate of Rs 15 a day. His Excellency is further pleased to extend to members who live in Delhi elsewhere than at Raisina the concession of free haulage of a motor car and also to rule that members who live at Raisina and who elect for free haulage of a motor car, may draw a conveyance allowance of Rs 75 per mensem in addition to the concession of free haulage. These modifications will have retrospective effect so as to cover the case of members who attended the last Delhi session.

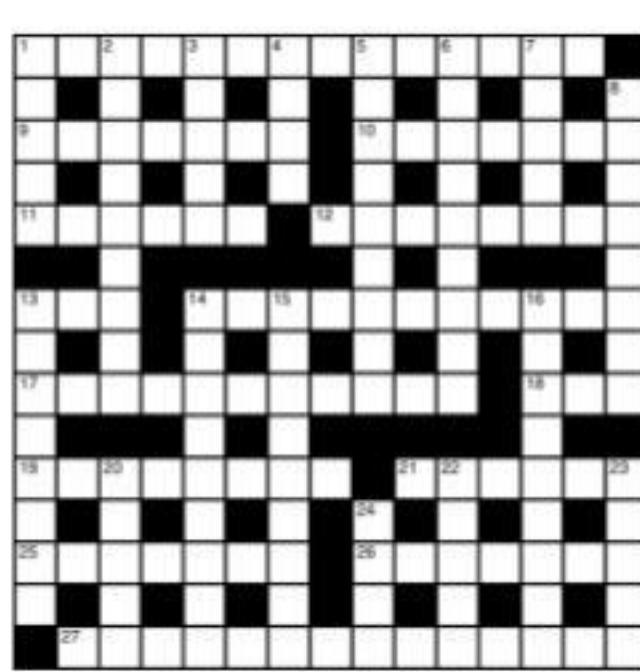
A CHANCE TO MAKE AMENDS

A recent judgment of Mr. Justice Bucknill at the Patna High Court has been characterised by the legal journal of the Province as marking a novel history of the administration of justice in this country. A young man was charged with cheating in respect of the sum of five rupees. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Barh convicted and sentenced him to six months' imprisonment, and the officiating Sessions Judge of Patna reduced the sentence on appeal to four months. When the matter came up in the High Court, Mr. Bucknill sent for the accused and gave him a few words of advice, urging him to live an honest life. His lordship being anxious that the petitioner should not become a regular thief or criminal, said he would take what perhaps would be thought a lenient course and remit the rest of the sentence.

KHULNA LAWYERS JOIN IN HARTAL

Owing to hartal here on May 18 no muktears attended the courts. In consequence notices have been served on Babu Surendra Nath Shome and Munshi Nazamal Haq Khan Muktears to show cause why their conduct should not be reported to the High Court as they failed to attend a part heard case in the court of Mr. A Ahamadulla, Deputy Magistrate. Babu Surendra Nath Shome has asked the court to let him know under what law he has been served with the notice. June 2 has been fixed for hearing the cause to be shown by Munshi Nazamal Haq. It is understood that in connection with the hartal ten pleaders have been asked to see the District Judge tomorrow.

CROSSWORD



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





We see ourselves as a key enabler of a sustainable energy future and are playing our part in the fight against global warming.

N VENKATESWARAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CEO OF HITACHI ABB POWER GRIDS

THUMBNAILS

LTI launches vaccination drive: LTI, the infotech arm of the engineering major L&T, on Wednesday announced the launch of a multi-city COVID vaccination drive for its employees and their families. The company has tied up with healthcare providers for the drive, which started off at its Hinjewadi campus in Pune and will also be conducted at other campuses including Powai, Mahape, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Delhi, as per an official statement.

PTI

Casinos & online gaming: The government has set up a panel of state ministers for better valuation of services of casinos, online gaming portal and race courses for levying goods and services tax (GST). The seven-member panel, convened by Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, will also examine whether any change is required in the legal provision for better means of valuation of these services. The panel would also look into the impact of such valuation on other similarly placed services like lottery.

PTI

Atal Pension Yojana crosses ₹6 lakh crore mark: PFRDA

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

The total assets under management of the National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) have crossed the milestone of Rs. 6 Lakh crore (₹6 trillion), informed the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) today. The AUM growth of last Rs 1 trillion has been achieved in just 7 months. "We feel immensely gratified at reaching this milestone of ₹6 trillion AUM, and in less than seven months as we were at ₹5 trillion in October 2020. The achievement shows the faith subscribers have in NPS and PFRDA. A growing realisation during this pandemic is the priority accorded by individuals to retirement planning for preserving their financial well-being," said Supratim Bandyopadhyay, Chairman of Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

The government also informed that PFRDA has witnessed remarkable growth in NPS subscribers over the years with 74.10 lakh government employees in the scheme and 28.37 lakh individuals joining from the non-government sector. The total subscriber base of PFRDA has increased to 42.28 crore. As on 21 May, the total number of subscribers under NPS and Atal Pension Yojana has crossed 42.28 crore and the Asset under Management (AUM) has grown to ₹603,667.02 crore.

PFRDA regulates the National Pension System and the Atal Pension Yojana.

National Pension System was initially notified for the central government employees but it is now also subscribed by state government employees and those from the corporate sector whereas Atal Pension Yojana is for the employees working in the unorganised sector.

SNS

Inflation back to haunt on higher input prices

Input costs are rising because of a surge in prices of global commodities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

Higher input prices and disruptions to the rural economy have resulted in price pressures and inflation is back to haunt us, a rating agency said in its research report on Wednesday.

The report by Crisil said it sees upside risks to its 5 per cent estimate on consumer price inflation in FY21 because of this.

It can be noted that the Reserve Bank is required to maintain the crucial number at 4 per cent in the medium term, with a 2 percentage point leeway on either side as part of its inflation target. A surge in inflation worries had led it to desist from introducing rate cuts during much of FY21, despite the over 7.6 per cent contraction in the economy.

In its note, Crisil said data collection was disrupted in April and May 2020 because of the national lockdown, and last year's base will not reflect accurate trends. Therefore, it



has focused on sequential price trends on a seasonally adjusted basis.

When viewed thus, both WPI (wholesale price index) and CPI indices continued to increase on-month in April 2021, it said.

Input costs are rising because of a surge in global commodities, which are raising manufacturing costs and hence fanning domestic inflation, the report added.

It said crude oil price at USD 65 a barrel is double that of seen

last year and back to 2019 levels, edible oils are up 57 per cent-on-year, the metals index is up by 76 per cent, and transportation costs are also high with the surge in the Baltic index.

WPI inflation has surged in double digits in April on-year for items directly linked to these commodities, it said, adding crude-linked inflation has risen the sharpest, partly led by the base effect too.

Producers are currently bearing a higher burden of rising input costs than consumers. However, as demand revives, these costs can get increasingly passed on to consumers, the report noted.

On top of the commodity prices, supply disruptions brought on by the intensification of the second Covid-19 wave in rural India are resulting in inflationary pressures, it said, adding that upside inflation risks are clearly growing.

These risks include the rising input prices, upside pressure on food prices and rising rural core inflation, it pointed out.

Industry in Karnataka may get a reprieve from lockdown

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

Captains of industry in Karnataka are looking forward to reopening their units in a phased manner considering the adverse impact on them due to the nearly two month long pandemic related lockdown. The state is considered a software and auto hub with many leading companies from the sectors housed here. Indications to this effect were given by chief minister B S Yeddyurappa here during a meeting with the representatives of the Confederation of Indian Industry, Bengaluru Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Automotive Components Manufacturers' Association.

According to the industry captains, the CM assured them that he would consider the possibility of opening the industries in a phased manner, within the Covid-19 protocols.

The lockdown in the state which ends on 7 June, the industry leaders said had hit the medium and small scale units hard in addition to impacting their exports.

Sensex soars above 51,000-mark; IT & finance stocks sparkle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 26 MAY

The BSE Sensex returned to winning ways on Wednesday after a day's pause as technology, finance and auto counters witnessed robust buying amid a largely positive trend in Asian markets.

Overcoming a tepid start, the 30-share benchmark gained momentum through the session to end 379.99 points or 0.75 per cent higher at 51,017.52. The Sensex reclaimed the 51,000-level after March 10 this year.

The broader NSE Nifty extended its winning run to the fourth consecutive session, climbing 93 points or 0.17 per cent to finish at 15,301.45.

Bajaj Finserv was the top performer in the Sensex pack, rallying 4.82 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Maruti, HDFC, L&T, Tech Mahindra and M&M.

On the other hand, PowerGrid, NTPC, ONGC, Kotak Bank, Dr Reddy's, HDFC Bank, ITC and Bharti Airtel were the losers, dropping up to 3.11 per cent. "Domestic equities remained upbeat as improved visibility about economic recovery from 2QFY22 con-

tinued to lift investors' sentiments," said Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Domestic markets started cautiously positive and witnessed strong rebound as it gained momentum from expectations of another set of relief measures. The new stimulus package is expected to focus on boosting the worst-hit sectors like tourism, aviation and hospitality alongwith MSMEs." Value buying was seen in the IT sector while metal stocks remained in the correction phase due to muted international commodity prices, he added. Sector-wise, BSE reality, IT, teck, finance and auto indices rose as much as 2.85 per cent.

In the broader markets, the BSE midcap index dropped 0.14 per cent, while the small-cap gauge spurted 0.69 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended on a positive note, while Seoul was in the red. Equities in Europe were trading on a mixed note in mid-session deals.

information Revolution should be deployed in the right way, so that it brings happiness to humanity."

"The Right Way" can be key operative words in any SoftBank introspection, in tandem with its "try hard, have fun" motto stated to be the core value and DNA driving what SoftBank Group hopes will be 300 years of growth. As the Asian version of the maverick Elon Musk, Son wants posttern to know him as the "a crazy guy who bet on the future", but he now knows better the addictive gambler's perils of crazy betting.

There is not much clarity on exact sources of its Vision Fund's \$100 billion kitty. But that clarity will be unavoidable in this digital age of increasing corporate transparency. SEBI too announced yesterday its decision to have forensic audits of financial statements of listed companies.

Strong pipeline for small biz IPOs

RAJA MURTHY

NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

exchange has organised around 150 webinars to create awareness among SMEs about the advantage of equity funding and listing, he said.

According to Thakur, lack of awareness about listing has led to a lot of pre-conceived notions that listing involves increased compliance levels and increased costs.

He opined that listing will help SMEs to increase their visibility as well as brand building; improve their credit rating; provide easy finances and growth opportunities.

"BSE SME became the first SME platform where 400 prospectuses have been filed by SMEs. Of these, 337 have already listed and the remaining 63 will be listed in one-year time because of the ongoing pandemic," Thakur said.

During the pandemic, the

Banking technology provider Zeta has become latest beneficiary of SoftBank's uncommon attention to India, with the Bangalore-based startup yesterday announcing receiving \$250 million in Series C funding from the Japanese behemoth.

A \$250 million investment is relatively petty cash by SoftBank standards, more so since six-year-old Zeta deals in banking software that is expected to be a \$300 billion industry. Zeta with SoftBank propulsion has become the 14th unicorn this year in India.

Prior to Zeta, another Bangalore-headquartered start-up Meesho received \$300 million from SoftBank and joined India's burgeoning tribe of unicorns now numbering more than 100.

Under its 63-year old chief executive officer Masayoshi

Son, the Tokyo-headquartered SoftBank operates its \$100 billion Vision Fund.

SoftBank has the past five years invested more than \$10 billion in India, with multi-billion dollar funding targets including Flipkart, Paytm, Ola, Delhivery, Grofers, Snapdeal, Housing.com, FirstCry and PolicyBazaar.

With \$18 billion more slotted for India, SoftBank ironically as biggest funder is also largest disrupter of conventional brick and mortar retail industry that continues being among largest jobs providers in the country. India's retail industry received \$6.2 billion from investors in 2020, estimated the New Delhi-based India Brand Equity Foundation.

Ironic too that SoftBank's latest funding to banking software provider Zeta inspired this particular media attention and analysis. SoftBank is not a bank as is commonly per-

ceived. SoftBank started in 1981 distributing software. Its name is to mean "a bank of software" – and some integrity strict regulator in future may order SoftBank to go through a name change to avoid false perceptions, similar to Indian courts stopping private companies from having names that convey being a government entity.

SoftBank's Korean-origin founder Masayoshi Son may be familiar with the power of

perceptions, real and false. His SoftBank base Minato City, one of Tokyo's 23 special wards packed with embassies and conglomerates, is glitz landmark to his extraordinary journey. A poverty-stricken son of a pig farmer, Masayoshi left his hometown To study in the USA at age 16 courtesy a McDonald's franchise owner.

He made his first million dollars while studying at Berkeley University, after selling a pocket translator he invented to Sharp. Son is now financially worth about \$30 billion, despite losing \$70 billion in the year 2000 dot.com crash.

A philanthropist, Son is Japan's second wealthiest citizen and well-known technology visionary. "We have sought to use the Information Revolution to contribute to the well-being of people and society," says his SoftBank Group vision statement. "The unlimited potential of the Infor-

Koo raises \$30 million Series B investment led by Tiger Global



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BENGALURU, 26 MAY

guages", said it has garnered nearly six million downloads in just a year of operations with an "impressive" community posting content every day.

Koo was founded by serial entrepreneurs Aprameya Radhakrishna, founder of "Taxi For Sure" and Mayank Bidawatka who previously founded companies like Media Ant and Goodbox.

Radhakrishna said: "We have aggressive plans to grow into one of the world's largest social media platforms in the next few years."

Every Indian is cheering for us to get there soon.

Tiger Global is the right partner to have on board to realise this dream."

The fresh round of funding would be utilised mainly to strengthen engineering, product and community efforts across all Indian languages at Koo, the statement added.

Two-wheelers to account for 8-10 per cent of new sales by 2025; 3-wheelers to contribute 30 per cent: ICRA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 26 MAY



to limited span of commute and can also adopt battery swapping to allay charging related concern for commercial applications.

Furthermore, operating cost metrics continue to favour electric 2W and 3W for commercial operations. In fact, e3W over life of the vehicle will be much more cost economical than its CNG counterparts, it said.

Electric two-wheeler (2W) and three-wheeler (3W) segments have relatively lower dependency on commercial charging infrastructure, owing

due to the low operating cost and attractive subsidy support, and are thereby expected to become early adopters of EVs in India, he said.

We expect the share of EVs to reach about 8-10 per cent level in 2W, and over 30 per cent in 3W by 2025. The penetration levels in cars and trucks are likely to remain low in the medium term, Dewan noted.

According to the ratings agency, the global automobile industry is witnessing major technological transitions, with a shift from conventional powertrains to the electric powertrain.

This transition will not only impact original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and their vendors within the auto industry but other stakeholders like oil producers, refiners, financiers, and others, it said.

Secret Bay. Not only does this allow investors to diversify their assets and build their wealth portfolio, but it can also operate as a second home in times of crisis – something that Indians have become all too familiar with.

Aside from attractive investment options, the benefits that come with Dominican citizenship are immeasurable. Most notably, Indian investors can access around 75% of the world with visa-free or visa-on-arrival travel to over 140 countries and territories. This is a vital component for accessing global markets, particularly when looking to keep business competitive. In comparison, the Indian passport grants its holders entry to roughly 61 destinations. Additionally, Dominica's proximity to the United

States also presents an economic advantage to investors, especially as the island's currency is pegged to the US dollar.

"As governments become more insular and impose stricter visa controls, the opportunity to travel and do business internationally is considerably hampered. That why Citizenship by Investment is a wonderful way to reverse that as it gives the Indian nation better access to travel and business opportunities" says Michael Emmett, CEO of CS Global Partners, a London-headquartered legal advisory specialising in providing citizenship solutions.

As one of the oldest citizenship by investment programmes on the market, the ultimate safety net in today's uncertain climate.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Over the last year, India's wealthy population has migrated out of the country searching for greener pastures due to several concerns exacerbated by the pandemic. According to the Global Wealth Migration Review Report, roughly 2% of India's millionaires – or approximately 5,000 high net-worth individuals – flock overseas in 2020 alone.

As the country grapples with another deadlier wave of Covid-19, along with stronger taxation laws that'll require Indians to be taxed on their worldwide income, high net-worth individuals have begun to reconsider their options when it comes to protecting

Dominica has consistently ranked as the world's best offering for second citizenship, published by the Financial Times' PWM magazine. The report cites the programme's affordability, family-friendly structure and streamlined processing as some of the reasons for its popularity. With India witnessing an exodus of its millionaire class, it has become increasingly clear that having an insurance policy in the COVID-era is crucial for globally-minded individuals.

Whether seeking increased financial freedom, bypassing travel restrictions or accessing better services, second citizenship provides the ultimate safety net in today's uncertain climate.

paper.thestatesman.com



Express and appreciate China Friendship Foundation for Peace & Development for donating Covid prevention material to Nepal/CPN-Maoist Centre.

CPN-MAOIST CENTRE CHAIRPERSON PUSPA KAMAL DAHAL 'PRACHANDA'
IN A VIRTUAL MEETING

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 27 MAY 2021

09

Pak presents blueprint for bilateral ties to Biden admin

The blueprint was not based on security and defence but economy, trade and business

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 26 MAY

Seeking a "paradigm shift" in its ties with the US, Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf has presented to his American counterpart Jake Sullivan a blueprint to enhance bilateral relations not based on security and defence but focusing on economy and trade, according to a media report on Wednesday.

Yusuf, who was appointed as the National Security Adviser (NSA) this month, met Sullivan on Sunday in Geneva. In a first in-person high-level meeting, the Pakistani and the US NSAs held wide-ranging talks on the bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Breaking from the past practice, Yusuf presented the Pakistani plan, seeking bilateral cooperation with the US



not based on security and defence but economy, trade and business.

Sources familiar with the development told The Express Tribune that Pakistan is seeking a "paradigm shift" in its approach as far as ties with the US are concerned.

The relationship between Pakistan and the US has often been seen as transactional as Islamabad for long relied on the country's strategic location for leverage with Washington.

Former US president Don-

ald Trump had suspended all security assistance to Pakistan in January 2018, arguing that he was not satisfied with Islamabad's cooperation and role in the fight against terrorism.

However, there has been a consensus among the policymakers that Pakistan needs to move away from geo-strategic to geo-economics. At an Islamabad Security Dialogue held earlier this year, Pakistan's civil and military leadership talked about that shift.

In line with that approach,

Prime Minister Imran Khan in March formed an Apex Committee that was tasked with formulating a new strategy on ties with the US under the Biden administration, the report said.

The 14-member committee is headed by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and comprises ministers for finance, national food security, economic affairs, information technology, national security adviser, and Prime Minister's advisor on commerce, climate change, human resource development, power, and investment.

The Terms of Reference of the committee solely focused on finding ways and means to seek cooperation between Pakistan and the US in the fields of economy, trade, business, energy, technology, and climate change.

This is seen as a clear departure from the earlier

approach adopted by Pakistan and the US that largely focused on security cooperation with Afghanistan.

Sources said Moeed went to Geneva with a blueprint envisaging Pakistan's desire to broaden its relationship with the US beyond security cooperation and Afghanistan, according to the report. Different ministries and departments made several proposals identifying potential areas of cooperation between Pakistan and the US.

The Board of Investment (BoI) has proposed to attract more US foreign direct investment in Pakistan, especially through technology firms. The BoI also seeks US investment through special incentive regimes.

It has also proposed to enhance structured engagement through TIFA Ministerial Council and Business Opportunities Conference.

Yemen officials demand answers after report on mysterious air base

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, 26 MAY

Yemeni officials demanded answers on Wednesday after an Associated Press report highlighted a mysterious air base being built on a Yemeni island in one of the world's crucial maritime chokepoints.

A lawmaker asked Yemen's internationally recognised government if the United Arab Emirates built the facility as data in the AP report links the UAE to the construction.

Another official openly criticised the UAE for undermining the government of President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi.

A Saudi-led coalition fought on the government's behalf when it entered Yemen's long war in 2015 against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels now holding its capital.

The UAE, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, has not responded to repeated requests for comment regarding the base and offered no immediate reaction on Wednesday to the officials' comments.

The runway on Mayun Island allows whoever controls it to project power into the strait and easily launch airstrikes into mainland Yemen, convulsed by a years-long bloody war.

It also provides a base for any operations into the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and near-

by East Africa.

Satellite images from Planet Labs Inc. obtained by the AP showed dump trucks and graders building a 1.85 kilometer (6,070-foot) runway on the island on 11 April.

By 18 May, that work appeared complete, with three hangars constructed on a tarmac just south of the runway. Images from Tuesday showed vehicles parked at the base's newly built hangars.

Runway of that length can accommodate attack, surveillance and transport aircraft.

An earlier effort began toward the end of 2016 and later abandoned had workers try to build an even-larger runway over 3 kilometers (9,800 feet) long, which would allow for the heaviest bombers.

That earlier effort also saw ships linked to the UAE take part in the construction.

Military officials with Yemen's internationally recognised government, which the Saudi-led coalition has backed since 2015, say the UAE is building the runway.

Emirati officials have not acknowledged any disagreement and said they were withdrawing from the war in 2019.

Hadi's government has been critical of the UAE, especially for backing southern separatist groups during its military campaign in Yemen.

Corruption cases mount against South Africa's Gupta family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JOHANNESBURG, 26 MAY

A host of companies linked to the influential Indian-origin Gupta brothers received a total of over 49 billion rands in irregular payments from a number of parastatal corporations in South Africa, a witness has claimed at the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture.

Ajay, Atul and Rajesh Gupta

have been accused of siphoning billions of rands from the state-owned corporations

through their alleged close-



president Jacob Zuma.

The family, which is from Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh and controls a slew of South African companies, has denied the allegations and challenged anyone to prove them.

Paul Edward Holden, a researcher with the London-based Shadow World Investi-

gations, explained that hundreds of financial transactions and bank statements were studied to arrive at detailed conclusions about the sources of funds and the companies used in the money laundering that are listed in the report.

Neotel, in which Tata Communications held a majority interest until it sold its stake to Liquid Telecom in 2016. The report says Neotel received over 5.6 billion rands for what was called network services and CCTV installations from the national rail network operator Transnet

Defiant Ghosn pins hopes on French probes to clear his name

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT, 26 MAY

Auto magnate-turned-fugitive Carlos Ghosn is cam-

pling his brazen escape from Osaka, and reflected on his new reality in crisis-hit Lebanon, where he is stuck for the foreseeable future.

Mending his reputation will be an arduous task. Ghosn was arrested in Japan in November 2018 on accusations of financial misconduct and fled to Lebanon a year later.

He now faces multiple legal challenges in France after the Japanese accusations triggered scrutiny of his activities there. Meanwhile, several associates are in jail or on trial in Japan and Turkey, in cases related to his financial activi-

ties or escape.

There has been a lot of col-

lateral damage... but I don't think I'm responsible for that. The people responsible for that are the people who organized the plot to bring him down, Ghosn said Tuesday.

Ghosn has denied accusa-

tions of underreporting his compensation and misusing company funds, contending he was the victim of a corporate coup linked to a decline in Nissan Motor Co.'s financial performance as the Japanese automaker resisted losing autonomy to French partner Renault.

He said he voluntarily agreed to undergo days of questioning in Beirut next week by French magistrates

investigating allegations of financial misconduct in France that led to the seizure of millions of euros of his assets.

The outcome could result in preliminary charges being handed to him or in the cases being dropped.

The French investigators are looking into the financing of lavish parties Ghosn threw at the Versailles chateau complete with period costumes and copious Cham-

pagne... as well as 11 million euros in spending on private planes and events arranged by a Dutch holding company, and subsidies to a car dealership in Oman. Ghosn denies any wrongdoing.

Ghosn backs ex-colleague

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

TOKYO, 26 MAY

Former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn has backed his former colleague Ameri-

can lawyer Greg Kelly in

Tokyo in November 2018 and is charged with falsifying securities reports. If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in prison. Ghosn fled Japan in late 2019.

Testimony and docu-

ments presented at Kelly's trial have shown that he sought ways to beef up compensation for Ghosn after he agreed to a pay cut at Nissan in 2010, when Japan began requiring disclosures of high executive pay.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Fortified wine (4)
- 2 Rapidity (5)
- 3 Sot (8)
- 4 Thin fog (4)
- 5 Obesity (10)
- 6 Roman magistrate (6)
- 7 Rarely (6)
- 8 Foreknowledge (10)
- 9 Game played on horseback (4)
- 10 Celestial body (8)
- 11 Author (8)
- 12 Alma mater, 13 Evasive (6)
- 13 Lullaby, 14 Discus, 15 Rib-eye, 16 Merit, 17 Scampi, 18 Twiddle, 19 Chip.
- 18 Bar chart, 19 Regret (3)

DOWN

- 1 Cut of meat (4,4)
- 2 Flow (3)
- 3 Barrier of shrubs (5)
- 4 Punctuation mark (9)
- 5 Simple (4)
- 6 Handbook (6)
- 7 Storage tank (9)
- 8 This fog (4)
- 9 Overwhelm (5)
- 10 Deficit (4)
- 11 Bar chart, 12 Alma mater, 13 Evasive (6)
- 14 Outlay, 15 Rib-eye, 16 Merit, 17 Scampi, 18 Twiddle, 19 Chip.
- 20 Styl., 21 Sty., 22 Pot, 23 Team.

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 26585000, 26588900

• Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour

Chemist Shop 420000447

• Vidysagar 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

22586000, 22585007

• Punjab Roadways 23867842, 23860626

• Rajasthan Roadways 25671576, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 37737377

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 2001803838, 238685181

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

port 011-25671580; Terminal 1 B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

• AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25656421/25656431

• AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181 (City) 25652294 (Airport)

• KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

• Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

• SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 2001803838, 238685181

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

port 011-25671580; Terminal 1 B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 37737377

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 2001803838, 238685181

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	31°C	27°C R
HONG KONG	31°C	27°C R
TOKYO	19°C	15°C R
LONDON	20°C	9°C H
DUBAI	36°C	29°C H
SAN FRANCISCO	17°C	11°C H
NEW YORK	29°C	15°C H
MOSCOW	22°C	13°C R

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

THUMBNAILS



A woman places a bouquet of yellow roses on her father's grave in Sharon, Mass., on Wednesday. ■ AP

Plane lands safely on Sydney beach: A recreational plane landed safely on a Sydney beach with three people aboard including a baby on Wednesday after its single engine failed, officials said. ■ AP

Three arrested in Italy cable car crash: Police arrested three people Wednesday in the cable car disaster that killed 14 people in northern Italy, saying an investigation showed a clamp, intentionally placed on the brake as a patchwork repair, prevented the brake from engaging after the lead cable snapped. ■ AP

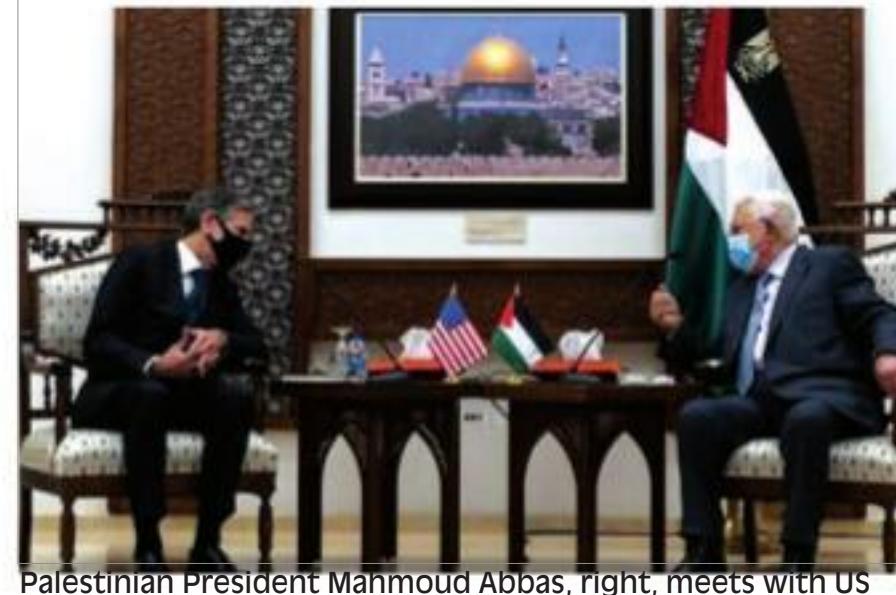
Global Covid caseload tops 167.6 million: The overall global Covid caseload has topped 167.6 million, while the deaths have surged to 3.48 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University. The US continues to be the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 33,165,808 and 590,922, respectively. The other worst-hit countries are Brazil and India. ■ AP

Blinken seeks to rebuild US ties with Palestinians

Blinken made clear that Biden will pursue a more even-handed approach to the region than Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JERUSALEM, 26 MAY



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, right, meets with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, in the West Bank city of Ramallah, on Tuesday. ■ AP

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has announced plans to reopen a key diplomatic outreach office to the Palestinians and pledged nearly \$40 million in new aid reversing key policies of the Trump administration as he moved to bolster the embattled Palestinian government in the West Bank.

On his first official visit to the region on Tuesday, Blinken met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders with the immediate aim of shoring up last week's cease-fire that ended 11 days of fighting between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. He vowed to rally international support for the effort while also promising to ensure that none of the aid would reach Hamas.

Blinken repeatedly alluded to the underlying issues of the decades old conflict and expressed empathy for both sides, but he showed little interest in launching another US push for lasting peace, perhaps because previous efforts by past administrations have all failed. Instead, he expressed hope for creat-

ing a better environment that might one day yield peace talks.

Despite these modest aims, Blinken made clear that President Joe Biden will pursue a more even-handed approach to the region than former President Donald Trump, who sided overwhelmingly with Israel in virtually every area of disagreement with the Palestinians.

As I told the president, I'm here to underscore the commitment of the United States to rebuilding the relationship with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people, a relationship built on

mutual respect and also a shared conviction that Palestinians and Israelis alike deserve equal measures of security, freedom opportunity and dignity, he said after a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank.

In an act with great symbolic meaning, Blinken said the US would reopen its Jerusalem consulate an office that for years served as the de facto embassy to the Palestinians.

Trump had downgraded its operations and placed them under his ambassador to Israel

when he moved the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to the holy city in 2018, and which Israel and the US consider a terrorist group.

The US is trying to bolster Abbas, who has been sidelined by recent events, in his rivalry with Hamas and on the international stage.

Abbas heads the internationally backed Palestinian Authority, whose forces were driven from Gaza when Hamas seized power there in 2007. He now administers only parts of the occupied West Bank.

Though deeply unpopular at home, he is seen internationally as the representative of the Palestinian people and a key partner in the long-defunct peace process.

Blinken also announced some \$38.5 million in additional aid for the Palestinians. In all, the Biden administration has pledged some \$360 million to the Palestinians, after the Trump administration cut almost all aid. Tuesday's pledges included \$5.5 million in emergency assistance for Gaza.

The 11-day war killed more than 250 people, mostly Palestinians, and caused heavy destruction in the impoverished coastal territory.

Blinken promised that any assistance will be kept out of the hands of Hamas, which opposes Israel's right to exist

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New grand jury seated for next stage of Trump probe

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK, 26 MAY

New York prosecutors have convened a special grand jury to consider evidence in a criminal investigation into former President Donald Trump's business dealings, a person familiar with the matter said on Tuesday.

The development signals that the Manhattan district attorney's office was moving toward seeking charges as a result of its two-year investigation, which included a lengthy legal battle to obtain Trump's tax records.

The person familiar with the matter was not authorised to speak publicly and did so on the condition of anonymity.

The news was first reported by The Washington Post. Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr is conducting a wide-ranging investigation into a variety of matters such as hush-money payments paid to women on Trump's behalf, property valuations and employee compensation.

The Democratic prosecutor has been using an investigative grand jury through the course of his probe to issue subpoenas and obtain documents.

That panel kept working while other grand juries and court activities were shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Lawyer: US got ex-Ukrainian officials' data in Giuliani probe

NEW YORK, 26 MAY

The US prosecutors in 2019 sought the electronic messages of two ex-Ukrainian government officials and a Ukrainian businessman as part of their probe of Rudy Giuliani's dealings in that country, a lawyer accidentally revealed in a court filing Tuesday.

The filing said federal prosecutors in New York had informed defense lawyers that the seized communications included an email account believed to belong to the former prosecutor general of Ukraine, Yuriy Lutsenko. Lutsenko was a key figure in Giuliani's efforts to press Ukraine for an investigation into then-presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter.

The two have both said in interviews that they met to discuss both the possibility of Ukraine launching an investigation of Hunter Biden's job with a Ukrainian gas company and Lutsenko's desire to meet with the U.S. attorney general to discuss efforts to recover looted national assets. ■ AP

Australian scientists develop new drugs to fight Covid-19

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

SYDNEY, 26 MAY

Scientists from QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia's Queensland have developed two new drugs to both prevent SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind Covid-19 infection, and also treat people who have been exposed to the virus so they do not develop severe disease.

The two early intervention drugs target how human cells respond to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, instead of the virus itself, according to the findings published in the journal

Nature Cell Discovery. The first peptide-based drug would be given pre-exposure to the virus and help boost the efficacy of vaccines, while the second drug would stop the spread of the virus in already infected cells.

"Our drugs stop the tag from being removed and also protect the untagged ACE2 receptors from being infected," Professor Sudha Rao, head of QIMR Berghofer's Gene Regulation and Translational Medicine Group said. The drugs are also stable and can be stored at room temperature

GOP to offer Biden nearly \$1T infrastructure counter

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 26 MAY

Senate Republicans revived negotiations over President Joe Biden's sweeping investment plan, preparing a \$1 trillion infrastructure proposal that would be funded with Covid-19 relief money as a counteroffer to the White House ahead of a Memorial Day deadline toward a bipartisan deal.

The Republicans said Tuesday they would disclose details of the new offer by Thursday, sounding upbeat after both sides had panned other offers.

At the White House, press secretary Jen Psaki declined to address the new plan, but said: "We expect this week to be a week of progress."

Talks over the infrastructure investment are at a crossroads as Biden reaches for a top legislative priority. The White House is assessing whether the president can strike a bipartisan deal with Republicans on his American Jobs Plan or whether he will try to go it alone with Democrats if no progress is made in the days ahead.

Yet the administration and the GOP senators remain far apart over the size and scope of the investment needed to reboot the nation's roads, bridges and broadband but also, as Biden sees it, the child care centers and green energy investments needed for a 21st-century economy.

Biden had dropped his \$2.3 trillion opening bid to \$1.7 trillion, and Republicans had nudged their initial \$568 billion offer up by \$50 billion late last week, but talk teetered as both sides complained the movement was insufficient.

EU takes on AstraZeneca in court over vaccine deliveries

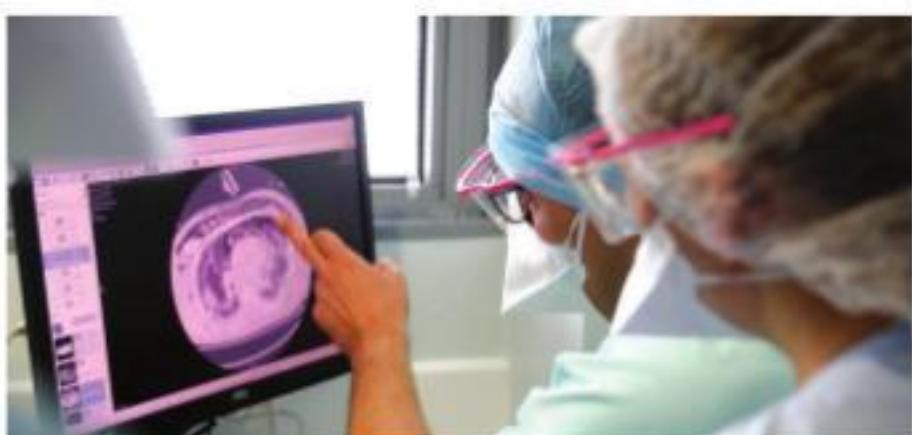
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, 26 MAY

with an option for a further 100 million. The doses were expected to be delivered throughout 2021. But only 30 million were sent during the first quarter. Deliveries have increased slightly since then but, according to the European Commission, the company is set to provide only 70 million doses in the second quarter. It had promised 180 million.

AstraZeneca's contract signed with the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, on behalf of member states foresaw an initial 300 million doses for distribution among all 27 countries,

UK study finds long-term lung damage after Covid



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 26 MAY

Researchers in the UK have identified persistent damage to lungs in Covid-19 patients at least three months after they were discharged from hospital, and in some cases the duration is even longer.

The study, conducted by Sheffield and Oxford researchers using a cutting-edge method of imaging, said the damage was not detected by routine CT scans and clinical tests, and the patients would consequently normally be told their lungs are normal.

Early research by the team has shown that patients who have not been hospitalised with Covid-19 but who are experiencing long-term breathlessness may have similar damage in their lungs, and a larger study is needed to confirm this, a release by the Sheffield University said on Wednesday.

In a paper published in Radiology, the world's leading radiology journal, the researchers from the University of Sheffield and the University of Oxford said that hyperpolarised xenon MRI (XeMRI) scans had found abnormalities in the lungs of some Covid-19 patients more than three months and in some cases, nine months - after leaving hospital, when other clinical measurements were normal. Lead author of the study, Professor Jim Wild, Head of Imaging and NIHR Research Professor of Magnetic Resonance at the University of Sheffield, said, the findings of the study are very inter-

WHO asked to review spiked Italy report

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ROME, 26 MAY

Whistleblower protection groups urged the World Health Organization on Wednesday to launch an independent review into the case of an Italian researcher who reported being pressured to falsify data in a now-spiked WHO report into Italy's coronavirus response.

The groups, including Transparency International, Whistleblowing International Network and some 30 other public health and anti-corruption groups, sent an open letter to the president of the World Health Assembly. The assembly, WHO's highest decision-making body, is made up of all WHO member states and is meeting this week.

In the letter, the signatories called for the U.N. agency to commit to reforming its

whistleblowing protection policy. They said the Italian researcher, Dr. Francesco Zambon, had suffered retaliatory treatment for having reported the incident in WHO's internal ethics system.

Zambon resigned in March, saying he had been isolated and marginalized after he complained internally, and then publicly, about the scandal.

Zambon has said he was pressured by a then-assis-

tant director general, Dr. Raineri Guerra, to falsify data about Italy's preparedness going into the pandemic in a report he and other researchers were writing to help other countries prepare as Covid-19 swept across the globe last year.

Emails and drafts of the report show Guerra wanted the report to say that Italy had updated and reconfirmed its pandemic preparedness plan in 2016. Zambon says Italy's plan dated from 2006 and refused to make the change.

The report was published on 13 May, 2020, but was taken down from the website a day later, after WHO's Beijing office flagged politically sensitive problems with a timeline about the virus' origins in China. Zambon says he corrected the timeline and had the report reprinted, but WHO never re-posted it or distributed it.

A LAZY DAY



A yacht sails past as the moon rises in Sydney, on Wednesday. ■ AP

Grief, smiles as Floyd family meets Biden a year after death

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 26 MAY

They mourned together and laughed together in the Oval Office and spoke of what President Joe Biden called "the hard reality that racism has long torn us apart".

The first anniversary of George Floyd's death was supposed to be a milestone moment in Washington, a time to mark the passage of a policing law to make criminal justice more just. Instead, Floyd's family met with Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris at the White House on Tuesday to commemorate their loss and continue to push for legislation.

"It was a remembrance of what happened to my brother," Philonise Floyd said of the meeting with Biden, calling the president "a genuine guy".

Biden told them "he just wants the bill to be meaningful and that it holds George's legacy intact", said George Floyd's nephew Brandon Williams. Williams said Biden showed "genuine concern" for how the family is doing.

Biden took time during the meeting to play with George Floyd's young daughter Gianna, who enjoyed some ice cream and Cheetos.

The president said, after she told him she was hungry.

Later, she stood before the cameras outside the White House and softly called out, "say his name". Family members chanted in return: "George Floyd."

A sister, Bridgett Floyd, stayed away, aiming to come to Washington only when there is a bill to be signed into law. "That is when I will make my way to DC," she said from Minnesota.

She and several other family members joined Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey and others marking the anniversary in the city where George Floyd died, and other events took place in New York,

Los Angeles and other cities in the US and abroad.

Speaking to reporters at the end of the day, Biden said he had spoken with congressional negotiators and was "hopeful that sometime after Memorial Day, we will have an agreement".

With the proposed George Floyd Justice in Policing Act still pending, his family began the day meeting with legislators and headed back to Capitol Hill later from the White House.

They met Tuesday morning with Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Republican Karen Bass, D-Calif., who ushered the bill through the House. The Floyds met in the day with Democrat Cory Booker of New Jersey and Republican Tim Scott of South Carolina, the Senate's lead negotiator on the bill. The family then visited Black Lives Matter Plaza, the site near the White House where protesters gathered throughout last summer.

Lines that must not be crossed

A Governor must maintain neutrality in his approach and opinions and maintain distance from political parties, argues LOKENDRA MALIK.



Under the Indian constitutional scheme, the Governor is a constitutional head of the State Government. She or he acts on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Chief Minister in the exercise of constitutional powers and functions. However, there are some areas where the Governor can act at his discretion. In a parliamentary form of government, the people elect a government that remains collectively responsible to the legislature that examines, checks, and even reprimands the omissions and commissions committed by the government. The moment the legislature withdraws its support from the government, the government will be out of power. It is the fundamental constitutional principle that ensures the working of a responsible government in a parliamentary democracy. The Governor is not accountable to the people and his role is to facilitate the functioning of a popularly elected government by discharging his functions on its aid and advice as mandated under the Constitution. The Governor is a nominated constitutional functionary who reports to the President of India.

In several landmark judgments such as *Ram Jawaya Kapur, Samsher Singh, Maru Ram, S. R. Bommai, and Rameshwar Prasad*, etc. the Supreme Court has also observed that the Governor is a constitutional head, not the real head of the government. The Chief Minister is the real head of the government. Now the position is well-settled and no Governor should have any confusion about his constitutional position, role, pow-

ers, and duties.

The President appoints the Governor, who holds his office during the pleasure of the President and can be removed from his office by the President at any time without assigning any reason. But despite all this he is a very important link between the Centre and the State, and plays a great role in the federal governance. As the President's nominee, the Governor ensures that the State's administration is being carried on under the constitutional norms. He is not merely a figurehead or a cipher.

Under Article 163 of the Constitution,

the Governor has some discretionary powers that can be exercised by him without receiving ministerial advice in certain rare cases.

In addition to this, he also has a right to seek information from the Chief Minister on the state's affairs, policies, legislations, and programs under Article 167 of the Constitution,

and the Chief Minister has to furnish him with such information.

Unfortunately, West Bengal's Governor Jagdeep Dhankar, who is a senior advocate by profession, seems not to be ready to follow this well-recognized constitutional practice. He has interpreted the Constitution to justify his activism. He believes he has a constitutional right to monitor the State Government's work. Ever since he assumed the Governor's office, he has defied all constitutional conventions and protocols in exercising his constitutional powers and functions. On several occasions, he has criticized the policies of the State Government. He has complained against the Chief Minister to the

Union Government, visited Universities, and intervened in their decision-making process. Not only this, but he also summoned some senior government officers without taking the Chief Minister into confidence.

Recently, he visited the post-poll violence-affected areas in the state despite the objections of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who had urged him not to visit such areas and stick to the "Manual of Protocols & Ceremonials of West Bengal Government" but he ignored her request and visited the riot-hit areas in Cooch Behar and criticized the state administration scathingly. The concerns raised by the Governor to stop the violence are genuine and need the attention of the government, but he was not expected to visit such areas given the larger interests of constitutional propriety. He should have used constitutional channels to collect information about the violence in the state.

It is widely alleged that the Governor of West Bengal is running a parallel government in the state on the directions of his political masters who were badly rejected by the people of West Bengal in the Assembly elections. The Governor needs to remember that he is not an active politician who has the freedom to criticize the government unhesitatingly. He is a constitutional functionary, always expected to maintain neutrality in his functional approach and opinions. His comments and views about the Chief Minister, the State Government's work, interaction with its officers should be guided by well-settled constitutional conventions, practices, and protocols, not by extraneous

considerations. The Governor deserves respect, but not power. The power belongs to the elected government and the Governor should not snatch it.

The Governor should maintain a social distance from party politics. The Chief Minister is duty-bound to take a serious note of the post-poll violence as an elected government has to protect the life of each citizen equally irrespective of their political affiliations. An elected Chief Minister belongs to all.

Given the above discussion, it is submitted that the Governor has no justification for criticizing the state's administration and behaving like a leader of the opposition. He should not offer unnecessary public comments on situations that can be handled by the elected government effectively. However, he can use constitutional platforms to convey his message to the state government and can also seek information from the Chief Minister as per Article 167 of the Constitution. He can summon the Chief Minister and give her a piece of advice or suggestions in private and in confidence, not in the presence of the media. He may always act as the guide, and a friend to the Chief Minister and her colleagues, but cannot assume for himself the role of their master. This is how the Governor can preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution. He can facilitate the elected government by staying within his constitutional boundaries and limitations.

The writer is Advocate, Supreme Court of India.

Anatomy of judicial sloth

There are many stakeholders in the system that breeds judicial delay,

Basil Nabi Malik

We are all fed up with delays in the judicial system. And as any lawyer who actively practises can tell you, the first thing someone will say upon finding out that you are a lawyer is that the judicial system is pitifully inefficient and cumbersome. The lawyer will usually admit this, but shift the blame onto the other actors in this delicate dance of delays.

In order to understand why they do this, you would have to understand the persona that is this lawyer. Lawyers tend to wear their uniform more like a badge of identity as opposed to a casualty of their profession. It is like their personality starts at the black coat and ends at the tip of their black tie. Even their cars and motorcycles feel the need to exclaim who is so eloquently riding them day in and day out.

As such, there is a great deal of pride, perhaps misplaced to some extent, in dealing with people as a representative of the said community and that of the system that produced them. They consider the problems of the judiciary as those which are essentially of someone else's making, and that they are at the vanguard of the struggle to course correct.

People would perhaps be gullible enough to defer to such a sentiment had they not seen this dance before. Was not the lawyers' movement in Pakistan all about change in the system as opposed to merely the restoration of a chief justice many in the bar disliked in any case? Was not the National Judicial Policy supposed to be an attempt to better a system which typically afforded justice not to the claimants, but the children of the children of such claimants? Have chief

justices not acknowledged incessantly the need for changes to better the delivery of justice without any real and substantive changes actually taking place? The answer to all these questions is yes, and the sum of all these zeros is still a zero.

The reasons for this are multifaceted. The issue with the current judicial set-up is not that the system is evil in and of itself, but the problem rather lies in the interests and capacities of the various players that drive this set-up.

For example, lawyers usually take their professional fees in lump sum and at the beginning of engagements. It doesn't matter whether the case lasts for a day, a month, a year or a decade; the lawyer is straddled with the brief till its conclusion or his own. This is coupled with a competitive market in which the client wants more for less and considers 'intangible services' such as legal services to be a source of unlimited bargaining, so much so that the lawyer has to insist on taking his fee in advance for the fear of never seeing it at all. In such a structure, the lawyer has to consistently take on more and more cases to ensure a certain level of monthly income to sustain his household. This in turn results in each lawyer having multiple cases fixed in court each day, with the only solution being that he manages his daily workload by adjourning some matters and proceeding with others.

Now the solution to this may well be to increase the professional fee per case, thereby taking away the need for the lawyer to become an ambulance chaser seeking to continuously augment his income. But this brings us to our next player, that is, the client.

The client wants everything. And I mean



everything. He wants the best lawyers, the swiftest of reliefs, the most convenient of experiences, and he wants this all at the same price as you would buy a toaster from a supermarket. As a result, in feeling justified in compelling a lawyer to take on more cases for lesser fees, the client unwittingly encourages the lawyer's need for bulk, and in doing so, contributes directly to the very reason that many cases, including his own, are not proceeding in court. Furthermore, ironically, the interests of many clients may not even be in bringing the case to conclusion, but merely in having it drag on until the other side simply gives up, or even better, expires during pendency. In doing so, the client furthers his own stake in the system of delays he so emphatically calls out in the comfort of his own home.

Judges, on the other hand, are also a part of the system that perpetuates delays. This is not to say that they intentionally cause it, but that the system leaves them with little choice. Effectively, put a roster or docket of over 40 to 50 cases before anyone on a daily basis, and let us see if they can conclude all those matters within a span of

four and a half hours on any given day. It's just not possible.

Judges who are freshly inducted do not perhaps appreciate this enough, which is why they start their judicial career with the aim to deliver justice at the speed of light, only to eventually realise that the bureaucracy of the system is such that on any given day, they would be lucky to dispose of one to two matters on merit.

As such, with a docket of so many cases, judges will either be more receptive to requests for adjournments or simply not have the time to proceed even if all parties are ready. Hence the joke amongst lawyers that on any given day, it does not matter if the parties are ready if the judge is not.

In conclusion, if you want to change the system, you will have to change the stakes and interests of each of its players. Attempting or promising grandiose changes without context results in an insignificant change as we have witnessed in Naya Pakistan, where old wine (or honey) in new bottles is sold for a dime a dozen.

The writer is a Pakistani lawyer.
Dawn/ANN

ROE V WADE IN THE CROSSHAIRS
The US Supreme Court judgment that underpins abortion rights may be under threat, says EMMA LONG

Reproductive rights advocates in the US are expressing dismay at the announcement by the supreme court that it will hear argument in an appeal which, if successful, could threaten the legal basis on which women can obtain abortions in America.

The case, *Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization*, involves a 2018 Mississippi law which prohibits doctors from performing abortions after 15 weeks except in medical emergency or in case of severe foetal abnormality. A local women's health group sued to overturn the law, which the district and federal appeals courts ruled was unconstitutional.

Now the supreme court will hear arguments in its next term, starting in October, and are likely to deliver a decision in the spring or early summer of 2022. Not only will this be the first major ruling on abortion from a court shaped by the three appointees of former president Donald Trump, but many commentators suspect that, as *Slate's* legal reporter Mark Joseph Stern asserted: "the supreme court is taking direct aim at Roe v Wade".

Roe v Wade is the 1973 Supreme Court ruling which established the legal baseline for American abortion law. It has become a touchstone for both the pro-choice and anti-abortion movements, seen by the former as the bedrock upon which women's freedom to participate fully in society is built and by the latter as a licence to commit state-sanctioned murder.

Amid all the sound and fury, much about the court's actual ruling in *Roe* gets lost. So, what exactly did *Roe* establish?

In 1970, a Texan woman named Norma McCorvey, seeking to end her pregnancy, challenged the state law which outlawed abortion except to save the life of the woman. Her legal challenge ended up in front of the US supreme court in 1973. The case pitted McCorvey, referred to in court documents as "Jane Roe" to preserve her anonymity, against Henry Wade, the district attorney in McCorvey's Dallas county district.

After hearing arguments in the case, the court not only upheld her challenge, but struck down all remaining state laws that banned abortion outright. The sheer breadth of this judgment led to a huge backlash, the consequences of which we still see in US politics today.

Roe established two main principles and a framework for putting them into effect. First, the court made clear that banning abortion completely was not acceptable. The court ruled that the right to privacy "is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy". An earlier case, *Griswold v Connecticut*, paved the way for this decision by establishing a couple's right to use and to receive information about the use of contraceptives.

The *Roe* decision has become crucial for pro-choice groups seeking to protect abortion access across the country – at the very least *Roe* made clear abortion had to be an available option.

But, back in 1973, the supreme court also recognised that the state had a legitimate interest in seeking to protect the health and safety of the pregnant woman and that "as long as at least potential life is involved, the state may assert interests beyond the protection of the pregnant woman alone".

So, Roe did not, as is too often claimed, establish an absolute right to terminate a pregnancy. In the words of Justice Harry Blackmun who wrote for the majority:

"[Some] argue that the woman's right is absolute and that she is entitled to terminate her pregnancy at whatever time, in whatever way, and for whatever reason she alone chooses. With this we do not agree."

To balance these interests, the court created the trimester framework in which the interests of the state in protecting the health of the woman and the life of the foetus increase as pregnancy progresses. In the second trimester, regulations to protect the health of the woman are permitted. In the final trimester, the point after which a foetus was assumed by the court to be able to live separately from the mother, the court allowed that the state "may go so far as to proscribe abortion... except when it is necessary to preserve the life or health of the mother".

The Mississippi law at question in *Dobbs* then violates *Roe* only insofar as it seeks to restrict abortion before the third trimester.

The court's ruling acted as a catalyst to what became the pro-life movement. The anti-*Roe* backlash was neither smooth, organised, nor inevitable. But it drew on wider trends in US society and politics. The decision became a shibboleth for both sides: a statement of women's social and political equality that must be protected on one hand, and, on the other, evidence of the decline of traditional family values which must be firmly opposed.

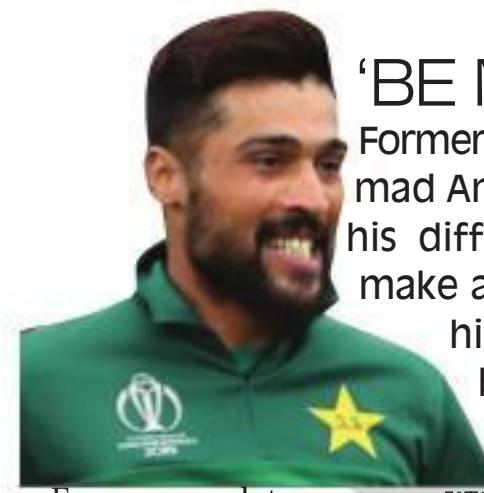
The *Dobbs* case represents only one of thousands of legal challenges posed in the past few decades. Most are decided at local level and never reach the supreme court, but each attempt raises the political temperature and further entrenches the positions on both sides.

Dobbs represents perhaps the best opportunity for success in weakening *Roe* anti-abortion campaigners have had since 1992. In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v Casey*, the court declared continuing support for *Roe* but ultimately weakened the legal principles underpinning it.

It did so by abandoning the trimester framework and replacing it with the "undue burden" test. Under *Casey*, a state's abortion law may be found unconstitutional only if it creates a "substantial obstacle" to obtaining an abortion. But "substantial" is in the eye of the beholder and laws that severely restrict abortion access, especially for poorer women, have been found acceptable under *Casey*.

Pro-choice advocates fear this latest case will further weaken *Roe v Wade*. And with a newly deeply conservative supreme court signalling that it is prepared to hear the case, there is some justification for their misgivings.

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**'BE MATURE'**

Former Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has urged Muhammad Amir (photo, left) to show "maturity" in sorting out his differences with national team management and make a comeback in near future. Amir had announced his retirement from international cricket in December last year after a fallout with head coach Misbahul Haq and bowling coach Waqar Younis.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Ankita out: Ankita Raina's yet another attempt to qualify for the singles main draw of a Grand Slam failed as she bowed out of the French Open Qualifiers with a second-round defeat on Wednesday.



Foakes ruled: England's wicketkeeper-batsman Ben Foakes was on Wednesday ruled out of the upcoming two-match Test series against New Zealand after a freak dressing-room accident resulted in a torn hamstring.

India assured of 12 medals at Asian Boxing ChampionshipsSTATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

Tokyo-bound Simranjit Kaur alongside two other boxers made their way into the semi-finals on the second day as Indian women assured the country of 10 medals at the 2021 ASBC Asian Boxing Championships in Dubai.

With Simranjit (60kg), Sakshi (54kg) and Jasmine (57kg) progressing into the last-4 stage and MC Mary Kom (51kg), Lalbuatsaih (64kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), Pooja Rani (75kg), Monika (48kg), Saweety (81kg) and Anupama (+81kg) kickstarting their campaign in the semi-finals, women's team confirmed India a medal in each weight category.

While Shiva Thapa (in photo right) and Sanjeet also entered the men's semi-finals, the country is now assured of at

least 12 bronze medals so far across categories at the on-going prestigious event which is jointly hosted by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and UAE Boxing Federation.

The World Championships

won silver in the last edition of the event in 2019, will take on Rimma Volosenko of Kazakhstan in the semi-finals on Thursday.

Sakshi and Jasmine also managed comfortable victories in their respective categories. While Sakshi blanked Ruhafoz Haqazaroza of Tajikistan 5-0 to set up a last-4 clash against 2016 World Champion and top-seed from Kazakhstan Dina Zholaman, Jasmine beat Mongolian Oyunsetseg Yesenug 4-1 to confirm her maiden medal at the Asian Championships. Jasmine will confront Vladislava Kukhta of Kazakhstan in the semi-finals.

All the 10 Indian women boxers, including six-time world champion Mary Kom, will be seen in action on the fourth day of the event on Thursday as they will play their respective semi-final

matches. Meanwhile in the men's 91kg quarter-final played late in the night on Tuesday, Sanjeet registered a dominating 5-0 victory to progress into semi-finals and confirmed second medal for the country in men's category. Earlier in the day, Shiva Thapa (64kg) entered last-4 and secured his fifth successive medal at the Asian Championships.

The third day of the Championships on Wednesday will see five men Indian pugilists, including Tokyo Olympic qualified boxers Amit Panghal (52kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg) and Ashish Kumar (75kg), fighting in the quarter-final rounds. Narendra (+91) and Varinder Singh (60kg) are the other two boxers who will also be keen to make winning starts in the tournament and confirm medals for the country.

'Indian pacers on par with our men but focus will be on Ashwin, Jadeja'PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 26 MAY

India's pace attack is on par with New Zealand's world class swing operators but the Black Caps batsman Henry Nicholls is more wary of the threat spinners Ravichandran Ashwin (in photo) and Ravindra Jadeja may pose during the upcoming World Test Championship final.

India and New Zealand will fight it out for the inaugural title at Southampton's Ageas Bowl, one of those rare English tracks known to aid the slow bowlers for a considerable period in Test matches.

"India have a very good seam attack and also have the experienced spinners like Ashwin and Jadeja. They have been consistent in all parts of the world (of late) and bring quality (to attack)," Nicholls, who has been in good form of late in Test cricket, told PTI in an interview.

If there are no injury concerns, the Indian pace troika that is expected to be in the playing XI for the clash starting June 18 would be Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami.

"Mohammed Shami along with Jasprit Bumrah and



Ishant Sharma have proven their quality over the years which is similar to our seamers (Trent Boult, Tim Southee and Neil Wagner) on whom we really pride ourselves on.

"So if you are facing that kind of a line-up, it's an exciting challenge and as a group we are expecting it to be tough but also looking forward to the challenge," the 29-year-old southpaw, who enjoys a 43-plus average over 37 Test matches, said.

His teammate Devon Conway's strategy of pouring dry kitty litter on the track in order to create rough was backed by Nicholls as they are

playing at a "neutral venue" which is known to assist the spinners.

"That was something that we experimented in the camp before we came over to UK. You managed to get some more turn and get some practice. So playing at a neutral venue, we need to check what the wickets will be like there. Also the guile of Ashwin and Ravi Jadeja is something that we need to be prepared for," he said.

Nicholls was a part of the New Zealand team that thrashed India inside three days in two home tests in early 2020, something that will give

them confidence going into the final.

"It's an exciting challenge as finally we will be playing a Test match at a neutral venue. So that for both sides kind of levels the playing field."

"We beat them 2-0 a season back (2019-20). But we know and accept that it's a different challenge but as a group we take a lot of confidence from that series win against India. Obviously, Number one and two playing the final is a challenge too," he said.

Nicholls' sequence of scores in the last three Tests is 174 (vs West Indies), 56, 11 and 157 (vs Pakistan). "It's nice to kick on and get a couple of big scores. A season before this, I was playing well but not getting the results, so a lot of it was like keeping the things same as it had been.

"If I get in, I want to bat as long as I can. To be able to do that couple of times during the summer, it was good to contribute to couple of Test wins," said Nicholls.

He has recently had couple of big partnerships with skipper Kane Williamson, including a monumental 369 run stand against Pakistan in Christchurch.

"Kane is one of the best in

the world and so consistent across all three formats that you just try to watch him and learn as to how he goes about his work," Nicholls said.

"He is a genius and great guy to talk to about the game. He keeps his plans pretty simple. So he is also nice to be someone with whom you want to bat out there in the middle and you have the best seat in the house when Kane is on strike."

Before the WTC final, New Zealand will play England at the Lord's in the first of the two Test matches.

Black Caps' highest scorer in that fatal 2019 World Cup final still at times finds it difficult to shrug off the disappointment.

"It's something that will be there forever," said Nicholls about the game that New Zealand lost on boundary count. "It would have been an amazing game of cricket anywhere in the world but it happened to be the World Cup final at Lord's which made it special."

"It was disappointing as a group not to win but that we certainly held our heads high after such a performance. But again the way it finished was the way it finished. You can't do much about it," he concluded.

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY
KOLKATA, 26 MAY

The Indian Premier League of Twenty20 cricket, now in suspended animation after a rash of Covid-19 infections in what was said to be its bio-secure bubble, is all set to take a serious financial beating even if it's shifted to West Asia and completed before the format's World Cup later in the year in India.

Or, so says a well-informed veteran in the country's sport promotion industry "taking a number of factors" into consideration. "We've been told the plan is to hold the IPL in Dubai once the Indian team return from England. They say they're going to rush through 31 matches in three weeks getting going in the third week of September so a supercolossal financial loss can be obviated.

But the shift will imply a complete overhauling of all the contracts entered into with different agencies, most importantly the broadcasters. The brand value of the show will surely go down in the bargain and so will the sundry takings that make the tournament such a magnet for all those on either side of the negotiating table.

There's no doubt that even the reduced amounts will be attractive enough but the dip in revenue will be an unavoidable fact," the source said, insisting on anonymity.

According to him, income from television will surely slide considerably if double-bills are fallen back upon so all the held-over games can be squeezed into a tight schedule. The source, who has over the years been associated with some of India's best-known sport extravaganzas, also told *The Statesman* today that the porous bio bubble of IPL 2021 would cost the Board of Control for Cricket in India dear next year as well, given that some of the foreigners in the tournament had tested positive for the coronavirus.

Hesaid that Indian sport, collectively, had taken a nasty toss in the aftermath of the second surge in this land of the killer virus, with the IPL's fallibility darkening the gloomy outlook further.

"There's no doubt that the IPL was in a state of ill-concealed panic because of those positive tests for some time before it came

eventually to be shelved. Well might the memory play back, haunting especially the foreigners, many of whom found themselves escaping to the

Kohli, Rohit static in ODI batting chart, Bumrah 5th among bowlersINDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
DUBAI, 26 MAY

India skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma held on to their second and third positions respectively in the batting chart, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained static at number five in the bowling list of the latest ICC ODI player rankings issued on Wednesday.

Kohli and Sharma were sitting pretty with 857 and 825 points respectively in the batting list headed by Pakistan's

Babar Azam with 865 points. In bowling, Bumrah was at the 5th position with 690 points, while New Zealand's Trent Boult was atop with 737 points, followed by Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan (725), Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman (708) and Kiwi pacer Matt Henry (691).

Bangladesh off-spinner Hasan became only the third bowler from his country to be ranked among the top two after a fine showing in the first two matches of their ongoing World Cup Super League in 2010.

Left-arm fast bowler Mustafizur Rehman is another

series against Sri Lanka. Hasan has advanced three places to reach the second position after returning figures of four for 30 and three for 28 bowing with the new ball.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan had grabbed the number one position in 2009 for the first time, while left-arm spinner Abdur Razzaq is the other Bangladesh bowler to have been in the top two, reaching the second position in 2018.

Mahmudullah has advanced two places to 38th position after his scores of 54 and 41.

DHAKA, 26 MAY

Mushfiqur Rahim hit his eighth ODI century as Bangladesh secured its first ODI series victory over Sri Lanka with a 103-run win by DLS method in the rain-interrupted second match.

In an innings twice halted by rain, the wicket-keeper batsman scored 125 off 27 balls with 10 fours as Bangladesh was bowled out for 246 in 48.1 overs. It was Bangladesh's first series victory against Sri Lanka across three formats.

"It's good to win the series, but we haven't played our perfect game yet, Bangladesh captain Tamim Iqbal said.

"We lost a lot of wickets and 200 was looking difficult at one point. Mushfiqur's innings was really good and Mahmudullah chipped in as well. We still haven't nailed it yet. Hope to play well in the third match."

Sri Lanka was 126-9 after 38 overs when rain interrupted the game for a third time. Sri Lanka was set a revised target of 245 in 40 overs, mean-

ing it needed 119 runs from the final two overs. The visitors ended on 141-9.

Bangladesh won by 33 runs on Sunday in the first of their three-match series. The final match is on Friday.

Mushfiqur, who scored 84 in the first match, helped Bangladesh recover from a shaka start after Tamim opted to bat first.

Sri Lanka fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera utilized the early moisture of the wicket-well to swing the ball in both ways.

His in-swinger accounted both Tamim and Shakib Al Hasan in the space of three balls in the second over, leaving Bangladesh 15-2.

Chameera reviewed his leg-before-wicket appeal against Tamim, who scored 13, successfully to overturn the umpire's decision. Later, he got Shakib (0) via leg-before also.

Out-of-form Liton Das struggled to make 25 off 42, with two fours before left-arm spinner Lakshan Sandakan got the better of him with a delivery that turned sharply. *PTI*

Solskjaer sees Europa League final as United stepping stoneAGENCIES
GDANSK, 26 MAY

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (in photo), winning the Europa League would mean more than avoiding another trophyless season. He's hoping Wednesday's final will be the start of something bigger.

Up against Spanish team Villarreal and its Europa League specialist coach Unai Emery, Solskjaer's team is bidding to avoid a fourth consecutive season without silverware. That would be the longest drought for United since the 1980s, in the early days of Alex Ferguson's otherwise trophy-filled reign.

"These are big nights for us. It might be the stepping stone for something better to come, a bright future because this team is a young team," Solskjaer said



has traveled with the team to Poland for Wednesday's final.

"I'm sure the players, if they wonder about something, can ask him and he's always available for a chat because this is the club in his heart," Solskjaer said of Ferguson.

United hasn't won a trophy of any kind since Jose Mourinho's team comfortably beat Ajax 2-0 in the 2017 Europa League final. Under Solskjaer, the team reached the semifinals of the same competition last season before giving up a

1-0 lead in a 2-1 loss to eventual champion Sevilla.

Three runs to the latter stages of the Europa League in five seasons would count as success for many clubs, but for United it's also a reminder of the club's failure to challenge for the bigger prize in the Champions League.

This season, United ended up in the Europa League after slumping to a 3-2 loss against Leipzig in the last game of the Champions League group stage.

Solskjaer's team rescued the season with a second-place Premier League finish, the best for United since 2018. For them, ideally Wednesday's game will be the club's last in the Europa League for some time to come.

Just being in the final is groundbreaking for Villarreal, which has never before played

for a major European trophy. Coach Emery is heading into his fifth final in the competition after three consecutive wins with Sevilla from 2014 through 2016 and being runner-up with Arsenal in 2019.

Emery was fired by Arsenal in November 2019 and joined Villarreal the following July. To reach the final, Emery had to go back to Arsenal to wrap up a 2-1 win on aggregate in the semifinals against his former team.

"We have got answers from the team at some important moments of the season so we know now we have a very, very strong and robust team," Emery said Tuesday. "Of course Manchester United can be (the) favorite, they are very good and if they play their best they can beat anyone, but we will try and find some responses against this big team."

Ceferin warned the clubs last month that if they say we are a Super League, then they don't play Champions League, or course.

UEFA gave no timetable for the expected disciplinary cases against the three which have all qualified on merit for the Champions League next season.

Any bans for the clubs and elevation of other Spanish and Italian teams to replace them would likely lead to appeals at the Court of Arbitration for Sport and pressure to resolve the cases before next season's European competitions. The Champions League group stage draw is on Aug. 26 and matches start on Sept. 14.

The nine clubs who settled with UEFA are: AC Milan, Inter Milan, Atletico Madrid, Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester United, and Tottenham, plus Champions League finalists Chelsea and Manchester City. Those clubs agreed to UEFA's terms to forfeit 5% of their prize money from European competitions in the 2022-23 season and pay a combined 15 million euros (\$18.4 million) as a gesture of goodwill to benefit children, youth and grassroots football. For a storied club, a successful season in the Champions League currently earns around 100 million euros (\$122.5 million) in UEFA prize money. The agreement also saw the nine clubs consent to be fined 100 million euros (\$122.5 million) if they seek again to play in an unauthorized competition or 50 million euros (\$61.2 million) if they breach any other commitments to UEFA as part of the settlement.

UEFA opens disciplinary cases against Super League rebelsAGENCIES
GENEVA, 26 MAY

UEFA has opened disciplinary cases against Super League rebels Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus that could lead to bans from the Champions League.

Proceedings are now active for a potential violation of UEFA's legal framework," UEFA said Tuesday.