



Modi urges people to shed vaccine hesitancy and get inoculated
page 10



BSP to fight alone in Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, says Mayawati
page 9



U.K. Health Minister Hancock resigns after breaching COVID norms
page 11



Djokovic eyes record-equalling 20th Slam as Wimbledon begins today
page 13

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NEARBY



Haryana govt. extends lockdown till July 5

GURUGRAM

The Haryana government on Sunday extended the lockdown in the State by another week till July 5, but allowed university campuses to open for research scholars and practical classes in laboratories. Anganwadi centres and creches will remain shut till July 31.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

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EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 5

Suspected drone attack on IAF Jammu station leaves 2 injured

J&K police call it a terror attack; FIR registered under UAPA; NIA team visits site

PEERZADA ASHIQ
DINAKAR PERI
SRINAGAR / NEW DELHI

In the first instance of a drone attack on a defence installation in the country, unmanned aerial vehicles are suspected to have dropped and detonated two explosive devices at the Jammu Air Force Station on Sunday, leaving two Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel injured.

"Two low-intensity explosions were reported in the technical area of the Jammu Air Force Station. One caused minor damage to the roof of a building while the other exploded in an open area. There was no damage to any equipment. A probe is on," an IAF spokesman said. The explosions took place



Bomb alert: Security personnel standing guard outside the Jammu Air Force Station on Sunday. ■ PTI

around 1:40 a.m., within six minutes of each other.

Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbag Singh termed it a "terror attack".

"An FIR under Sections

16,18, 23 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Section 3 of Explosive Substance Act and Sections 307, 120-B of the IPC has been lodged into the incident," Inspector-

General of Police Mukesh Singh said. The high-security station is a technical airport and hosts helicopters and transport aircraft only.

A National Investigation Agency (NIA) team, besides the IAF teams, visited the site. A few individuals were questioned, officials said.

Security agencies suspect the use of a drone or a quadcopter in the attack. "We are piecing together the evidence at the site," an official said.

The attackers may have been operating the drone in close vicinity of the air base as the quadcopter believed to have been used has limited range, officials said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Rajnath reaches Ladakh, to review ground situation

Defence Minister hails veterans for exemplary dedication

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The dedication of Indian soldiers and veterans towards the country is an "exemplary example", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday soon after arriving in Ladakh on a three-day visit.

Official sources said the Minister will carry out a comprehensive review of India's operational readiness in eastern Ladakh amid a stalemate in the next stage of disengagement with China at several friction points.



Confidence boost: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh interacting with officials after arriving in Leh on Sunday. ■ PTI

was testimony to the government's unwavering commitment towards the welfare of ex-servicemen. "Our aim is to take care of you in the same way as you all have taken care of the security of the country," Mr. Singh said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Crippled by India's vaccine export ban, Bhutan seeks help

Officials say only a political intervention will restart supplies

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

With no vaccines in sight, and just days to go for Bhutan's deadline for giving its eligible population of half a million people their second dose of COVID-19 vaccines, India's smallest neighbour is searching for any alternative that could help, its Health Minister said.

A spurt in the number of "Delta variant" cases coming in from Bhutan's southern border with India is adding to the worries that its healthcare system could "collapse" in the event of the pandemic spreading.

Officials in New Delhi



Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo

said no decision had been taken on when to provide Bhutan the promised second doses of Covishield, indicating that only a political decision to deliver them could change that as Bhutan needs the doses in the next two weeks.

However, sources said New Delhi was actively in-

volved in helping Bhutan facilitate the vaccines from "elsewhere".

"We are praying that countries will come forward to help Bhutan out, understanding the risks that we have as a small nation, understanding the health system that we have as a small nation," Health Minister Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo told *The Hindu* in an exclusive interview, speaking from Thimphu, where she just completed her 21-day quarantine after returning from the Global Health Assembly in Geneva.

RELATED REPORT ON ▶ PAGE 8

Resurgence of pandemic 'speculative' for now: govt.

No specific age group targeted, apex court told

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The possibility of a resurgence in COVID-19 infection is "speculative" and will depend on the "behaviour" of citizens and the virus, the Union Health Ministry told the Supreme Court.

"Possibility of any such resurgence would be speculative at this stage. However, the possibility of resurgence would depend on the behaviour pattern of the virus and the behaviour of the citizens, whether they follow COVID-19 appropriate behaviour or not," the Ministry said.

The Ministry said there was no "global scientific evidence" that the coronavirus



A healthcare worker collects swab samples for conducting RT-PCR tests in Delhi on Sunday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

would target children.

"Though there is no global scientific evidence of virus selecting to affect a particular age group, the Central government has ensured that all State governments are geared up to deal with any such potential threat to children," its affidavit filed through Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati noted.

sons include addressing Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI) in an adequate manner in a home-setting, protocol of 30-minute observation post vaccination, break in cold chain of the vaccine due to frequent opening of the vaccine carrier at every household, health risk for vaccinators.

children below 18".

Nevertheless, the government informed the court that the Drugs Controller General of India had on May 12 permitted Bharat Biotech to conduct clinical trials on the healthy volunteers aged between two and 18 years for its vaccine, Covaxin. "The enrolment process for this trial has also begun," the affidavit said.

The government said the States had been cautioned to maintain a "continuous vigil" and plan in advance for any exigencies that may arise due to resurgence of the pandemic. It said the Empowered Groups were reconstituted on May 29. These groups include ones on emergency management plan and strategy, emergency response capabilities, augmenting human resources and capacity building, and oxygen supply.

For Mizoram students, it's a struggle to 'catch the tower' and log on

They huddle on roads, climb trees seeking connectivity for online classes

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

In the age of work-from-home, students in Mizoram are studying from anywhere with a signal strong enough.

They are also sharing smartphones – a rarity in rural areas where relatively good 2G connectivity makes them an "unnecessary buy" – available in the village to attend online classes or sit for exams.

K. Vapaphai and 19 other college students in Mawhrui, a village in southern Mizoram's Siaha district, have taken a temporary break from trekking five to six kilometres in different directions in small groups to "catch the tower" for logging on to their online classes. The reason: their undergraduate exams ended a week ago.

A matter of chance
But for more than two months, walking up and down the hills and through jungles for classes was as good as travelling to his government college, about 70 km away in district headquarters Siaha. "We had to buy smartphones. But buying one did not guarantee us Internet access. We had to turn a road, tree, hilltop, bridge, riverbank or any structure into our makeshift classroom to study," he said.



Students attending online classes. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

If that were not enough, they had to subscribe to more than two Internet service providers because catching the signal of any of them was a matter of chance.

Connectivity is not the only issue, said Mizoram University Students' Council president David Lalrinchhana. "Access to electricity is an issue in many villages, as a result of which phones are redundant. Also, many in the rural areas cannot afford smartphones for their children to study online."

To add to students' woes, road-widening and construction projects have led to the damage of optical fibre cables, snapping connectivity.

"We have taken up the issue with the Chief Minister and officials concerned," Mr. Lalrinchhana, a post-graduate student of English and Mizo literature said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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SNAPSHOTS OF A BROKEN CITY: of loss, survival and heartbreaks

The pandemic has piled miseries on many lives and continues its deadly march. *The Hindu* captures some of the devastating stories, of resilience and sustenance, of death and despair, that encapsulate the chaos the virus has unleashed

Disabled husband, debts and loss of job



Kaushalya Devi with her husband and two sons at J.J. Colony. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

With repeated lockdowns being imposed by governments to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, coping with economic distress apart from impending health hazards, has proved to be difficult for many, including Kaushalya Devi, a domestic help.

As the sole breadwinner of the family, losing jobs when the nationwide lockdown was imposed last

year, looking out for new work, ensuring the family's safety and reeling under debt, she had to fend off multiple setbacks simultaneously.

"When the lockdown was announced last year, I lost work in one of the houses where I worked. It was also the place where I earned a chunk of my income. Losing that job meant that I was literally surviving on less than half of what I used to earn earlier. It took me almost six

months before I found a replacement," said Ms. Devi.

Living with her family of four in a 12-yard room in the Madanpur Khadar, Devi said that at the peak of the pandemic, taking precautions while using common utility facilities had also proved particularly difficult.

"There were times when we have visited the common washroom facility in the wee hours of the morning to avoid the crowd. Apart from being worried

for my family, I was also keen on taking precautions so as to not lose any further work as I visit multiple houses," she said.

Ms. Devi, whose husband and older son are differently abled, added that the lockdown imposed this year, had pushed the family under further debt.

"During the lockdown, we were buying essential items on credit from local shops. At times, our relative also helped us. But now I am under a debt of almost ₹15,000 which I am trying to repay. Due to my husband's condition, nobody is willing to give him any kind of job so the entire burden comes down to me," rued Ms. Devi.

Even though the national capital has begun "unlocking," for families like Devi's the road to recovery is still a long way, she added.

"It has been less than a month since I resumed work so I have to wait for salaries of many more months before I can be completely debt-free. This is in addition to the ₹3,500 that I pay as rent, apart from other expenses. The restrictions on public transport have also meant that I am forced to take an auto to work every day, which has increased my daily expense manifold," she said.

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

When her husband, Babli Kumari didn't know what lay ahead for her. The 33-year-old had to return to stay at her father's house, she did not have any money and became anxious about her 10-year-old daughter's future.

On April 26, her husband Ved Prakash, 47, died outside a COVID-19 treatment facility, the fourth they had taken him to. "He was breathless and we took him to three hospitals and he died outside the fourth. We couldn't even do a COVID test as no hospital admitted him," said Megh Singh, 60, his father-in-law, who was with him when he died.

Mr. Singh said his daughter is now back at his house. "She was going into depression at her in-law's house. Last week, my son went and brought her here. I don't think they will let her live there peacefully. She will have to live here I guess," he said.

Ms. Kumari, who has studied only till Class 10, said she wants to find a job now.

"I don't have any money with me. I need to find a job so that I can look after my daughter. My father is not working and my brother and his wife also stay here.



Babli Kumari with her daughter holding a photograph of her husband. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Husband's death and daughter's future

there. When relatives came over they told lies about me to them. My room at my husband's house had a water cooler, it was not working and they didn't even repair it. It was really hot during the summer and even when I switched on the ceiling fan, they sometimes said the electricity bill would be high," she narrated.

"I don't think I can go back to that house. I need to find a small house for rent for my daughter and me," she said.

No one is going to look after my daughter and me forever. I have to secure her future," she said.

Her daughter, Prachi, has not been going to school for the past year and Ms. Kumari said she wants to make sure that her daughter joins a school soon. "My life is over, but if

I can teach my daughter and put her in a good position, then my life would be complete," she added.

Mr. Singh said that the in-laws were "torturing" her and he was planning to file a complaint with the women's commission and local police station. "No one talked to me properly



Manju Kumari

Blessing turns out to be a curse

JATIN ANAND
NOIDA

The last year and a half have been a rollercoaster ride for Manju Kumari, a household help, and her family of five. What initially seemed like opportunities during the first national lockdown turned out to be disappointment.

Efforts her husband, a professional cook, and she took to safeguard their three children's academic future have, several months of mounting school fee dues later, put their education on hold for the foreseeable future.

"When the lockdown was imposed [in March 2020] we were able to make ends meet. We had options by staying back instead of going home while others like us did so. We made the most of it but it wasn't meant to last," she said.

"Though I wasn't allowed inside other residential societies, I got more work because the other household helps left their jobs to go home. Just when I got more work, my husband lost almost the same

amount of work because people had reservations about 'an outsider' cooking for them," she said.

For a few months, the family was able to sustain thanks to the extra work she got. As the unlock process began, the family got an opportunity to provide food to a private office working at half its capacity since those employed to do so had returned to their villages.

As the entire family – including their children enrolled in school – put in most of their waking hours to chip into their new "business," university students on rent putting up in the area returned and quickly turned into new clients.

"We not only thought the worst was over but even started imagining a better future. However, the unlock [process] brought people back and the private office terminated our service," she said.

"It was a blow but, thanks to the students who had returned, we were able to keep the service going and turned it into a tiffin service. Soon, however, the second wave

came and the students, whose universities and colleges were shut again, chose to leave the city," she also said.

In the meantime, as the school fee of their three children continued to mount, the family decided to pull their daughter out of Class 9 at a public school. As the profits from their catering business dwindled, so did the number of homes Kumari was servicing as their "original" helps returned to the city.

"Soon, we were paying off dues we had borrowed to ensure that our catering business ran smoothly; we had to pull the other two children – in Class 1 and another in Class 2 – out of their schools too," Ms. Kumari recounted.

"Instead of returning home, we thought we should use the extra opportunities to make a better life. But what we made during the first lockdown was snatched away in less than a year. We couldn't even sustain what we had before that, especially the education of children," she added.



Shiv Pillai and Vidu Gupta at their Shalimar Bagh residence in New Delhi. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

From sales executive to vendor

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Sitting at her one-bedroom rented house in north-west Delhi's Shalimar Bagh village, Vidu Gupta (30), who is seven months pregnant, couldn't help but cry thinking about what life has shown her in the last few months.

Her husband Shiv Pillai (31), who had been working in the automobile industry for eight years, was forced to sell maggi and coconut water to be able to survive the lockdown with Ms. Vidu requiring utmost care during her complicated pregnancy.

"I wanted to eat so many things and buy things for myself and..." she broke down before she could complete her sentence. "I just want to be able to do everything for my child but we can't manage with what he earns now," she said.

Shiv and Vidu left their house in Madhya Pradesh four years ago and came to Delhi – a metropolitan as she called it – for better opportunities to earn money and more importantly – because their families were against their decision to get married.

In Delhi, the two started living in Noida, in separate accommodations, as she worked in a call centre and he as a sales executive in an automobile company. The two were managing well, monetarily.

However, a couple of years ago, she had to get her eye operated on because of a weak retina. She had to quit her job at the call centre, which involved long hours in front of the computer and switch to event management. But her relationship with her family got better due to the illness.

But when everything was falling into order, the pandemic hit the country and Delhi was under lockdown in no time. The showroom her husband worked in was shut and he was told to leave. Vidu too lost her job last year, as there was a cap on events.

"My company gave ₹5,000 the first month after lockdown and after that, they told us that the salary will depend on the number of cars we'd sell. During the lockdown, who would buy cars? And for every customer, I spend on fuel whether or not

that meeting was fruitful," said Mr. Shiv.

During the first lockdown, Shiv started selling maggi right outside his workplace along with the tea seller. "I had no other option. What could I do to manage my household expenses? Thankfully, at that time Vidu was not in Delhi but at her mother's house in Madhya Pradesh," he said.

A year ago when the pandemic situation eased, in June, the two formally tied the knot and started living together in Mahendra Park, paying ₹6,500 as rent. In the coming months, Shiv started working again and the couple started managing their expenses.

Then, at the end of last year, she got pregnant. "If we had known that COVID-19 will strike again, we wouldn't have planned the child," said Ms. Vidu. To her misfortune, the pregnancy is complicated, she has been told.

Showing MRP on a leaf of tablets she has to consume every day, Vidu said that 10 such tablets cost ₹610 and she has to take one every day till the end of her pregnancy. "We couldn't afford a private gynaecologist and my doctor was in Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital but then it became a COVID facility during this wave and I had to stop going there. Consultation of this doctor is ₹700 each time," Ms. Vidu said.

In April, when the lockdown was announced again, Shiv stopped getting his salary and started selling coconut water. He rented a cart for ₹500 a month and sold coconut water for a month and a half till June mid. A few days ago, he rejoined work, but again on a commission basis.

"It was impossible to manage the household with selling coconut water. In February this year, they shifted to another rented accommodation in Shalimar Bagh. Our rent is ₹11,000 a month, there's a credit card instalment of ₹3,500, medical expense, grocery, milk and vegetables. I had to ask for help from people I knew and those who were helping the needy online," said Ms. Vidu.

The couple received monetary help from a few good Samaritans but they continue to struggle to make ends meet.

I blame myself for vaccinating wife



Ganga Prasad Gupta with his daughters at their home in Delhi. • SANDEEP SAXENA

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Running a high footfall snack shop in east Delhi's Ganesh Nagar, Ganga Prasad Gupta (48) and his wife Savita (45) were worried about consistent exposure to the virus. When they learned that vaccination is open for those above 45, they rushed and got their first doses on April 14. The couple and their five daughters thought they were utterly safe.

However, Savita never recovered from the after-effects of the vaccine and died 10 days later. The family alleges that theirs is a case of adverse events following immunisation. Like every inoculated adult, the couple too had fever and cough after being administered the vaccine. While Mr. Gupta had no post-vaccination problems, the vaccine took a fatal turn on his wife.

That happened when the family thought they had survived the pandemic. But everything changed from the day their mother got vaccinated and within a few days they lost her. After

getting vaccinated at LBS Hospital in east Delhi, she developed fever and body ache. She took paracetamol as prescribed by the medical staff but barely got any relief.

Mr. Gupta said that he took her to a local clinic but

the doctor said it was just a post-vaccination effect and she will get relief soon. But on April 25, she developed a breathing problem, he said.

"I rushed her to LBS Hospital at 5.30 p.m. as her condition was deteriorat-

said Mr. Gupta.

Mr. Gupta said that along with his wife he was managing his shop and family well. His wife used to take care of the shop and he used to supply material to other shops in the area.

"I shifted to Delhi from Bareilly in 1985 and got married to Savita in Delhi. We have five daughters and last year in November we got our eldest daughter married. And we were planning the marriage of our second daughter who is 23-years-old," he said.

Their youngest daughter is just 12-years old. "After the death of my wife, no one in my family is willing to take the COVID vaccine. Even my neighbours have refused to take the vaccine. No one from the government has come to visit us or order an inquiry into my wife's death. I still curse myself for persuading my wife to take the vaccine. I thought it would save us from the virus but it killed her," said Mr. Gupta.

SURABH TRIVEDI
JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

After a decade, speed limits across the city roads have been revised. For the first time, two-wheelers and local roads will also fall under the purview of these speed guidelines.

Joint CP (Traffic) Meenu Chaudhary said that the Delhi Traffic Police has notified maximum speed limit for different categories of motor vehicles plying on city roads.

The revision has been done keeping in view the traffic scenario, road safety and other key developments in road infrastructure.

According to road safety experts, enforcement will be a key component in relation to the revised speed limits along with the utilisation of road safety and engineering techniques, prioritising the lives of all road users.

Last revised in 2011

"The last revision of speed limits on majority of roads was undertaken in 2011. Thereafter, in 2017 and 2019, maximum speed limit for a few roads was further revised," said Ms. Chaudhary.

Professor P.K. Sarkar, road safety expert and member of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS-ISO), said empirical studies had shown that an increase of one kilometre in the permitted speed limit was

linked to a 2 to 3% increase in risk of accidents.

"One hopes that the speed limits have been revised where safety audits of the stretches concerned allow this. In Europe, for instance, speed up to 50 kmph is allowed outside urban areas and are restricted to 30 kmph inside them," Professor Sarkar said.

A traffic policeman said that overspeed violation detector (OSVD) system on high-speed corridors like Ring Road, Delhi-Meerut Expressway and Outer Ring Road has been installed to detect overspeeding violations.

More transparency

"We are moving towards automated traffic challan generation system to bring more transparency in the system.

The revised speed limits have been implemented and new challans have been issued accordingly," said the traffic police.

For the first time, speed limit for two-wheeler, which constitute the largest chunk of Delhi's vehicular population, has also been fixed in the city limits.

The Capital's vehicular population saw an addition of more than 5 lakh vehicles till March 31 last year, registering an increase of over 4% according to the Delhi Economic Survey 2020-21.

According to the survey,

Balancing speed and safety

Enforcement and driver education will play a major role in tackling the revised speed limits

the total number of vehicles registered in the city went up to 1.18 crore from 1.13 crore in 2019-20 and consists of almost 67% or 79.59 lakh two-wheelers followed by around 28% or 33.11 lakh cars and four-wheelers.

There were some variations in the speed limit at some stretches which have been corrected and speed limits have been made uniform, said the traffic police.

"There was a need to make speed limit uniform on Delhi roads as far as possible. Therefore, a revision of the existing speed limits was felt necessary," said Ms. Chaudhary.

A police officer said that during the revision of speed limits, there have been no major changes in the speed limit in all categories of vehicles in view of road safety, however, this time the maximum speed limit for the loops of flyovers



for the loops of flyovers

has been notified as 40 kmph.

Road safety expert S.M. Sarin said operating speed was also contingent upon the road environment. "The speed limit cannot practically be uniform across an entire stretch which may see patches of built-up area on some parts and desolation on others," he said.

"For example, on the Outer Ring Road, a maximum speed of 70 kmph seems completely okay. But, it will have to be reduced when one enters a congested part of the city alongside the same stretch. Enforcement and driver education are going to play a major part in relation to the revised limits," he said.

Relief for cab drivers

Also, now the maximum speed limit for taxis and cabs is notified at par with private cars on these roads, as per the notification which, according to taxi operators, is a major relief for both drivers as well as the passengers being ferried by them.

"We staged several demonstrations and even met Union Ministers as well as senior police officers over the issue of the discrepancy in the speed limits of private vehicles and taxis. Drivers and operators will be saved from the questionable fines they were issued for not adhering to impossible speed limits," said Sanjay Samrat, president, Delhi Taxi, Tourist Transporters Association.

Cruising limit

• 60-70 km/hr for cars, jeeps, and taxis on highways, Delhi-Meerut Expressway, Ring Road, Outer Ring Road, Noida Toll Road, Barapullah elevated road and Airport road

• 50-60 km/hr for two-wheelers on National Highways, flyovers and toll roads

• 40 km/hr for gramin sewa, TSRs, phat-phat sewa across Delhi

• 50 km/hr: cars/cabs cannot go beyond this limit on arterial roads

• 30 km/hr for vehicles in residential areas and commercial markets

• Overspeed violation detector (OSVD) cameras placed on more than 30 locations

speed limit for residential areas, markets, service lanes and for minor roads inside all residential area, commercial markets and service roads has been notified as 30 kmph, the officer said.

Erect signboards

The Delhi Traffic Police has requested the civic road maintaining agencies to erect corresponding informative signboards at all prominent locations on the roads, indicating the notified speed limits for guidance and convenience of all road users and general public.

"The need of the hour is to ensure not only technology-based interventions such as Intelligent Transportation System [ITS] but also safety and road engineering solutions such as soft shoulders on highways. Iron wire can be used instead of concrete on the boundaries of highways to ensure the safety of those occupying vehicles that meet with accidents," Professor Sarkar said.

"Another solution to help train drivers to stick to the speed limit and for enforcement officials to enforce it effectively is the utilisation of speed cameras linked with display boards on the road. These can warn errant drivers above the permitted limit at least once so they fall in line, failing which they can be prosecuted," he added.

This time, the maximum



Traffic speed signboard at the National Highway 9 near Mayur Vihar in Delhi. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

HC grants interim custody of married woman to her father

Due to matrimonial discord, she is being held in illegal detention by husband, he says

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed that a married woman, who suffered severe mental trauma, resulting in partial loss of memory and speech, allegedly at the hands of her husband and in-laws, be put under the interim custody of her father.

A vacation Bench of Justices Anup Jairam Bhambhani and Jasmeet Singh gave the direction on a habeas corpus petition by the woman's father.

The father sought production of his married daughter, who also has a three-year-old girl child, before the court alleging that due to certain matrimonial discord, she is being held in illegal detention by her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law.

The father stated that



due to mental and physical torture unleashed by her husband and in-laws, including actions that are subject matter of FIR, his daughter has suffered severe mental trauma, resulting in partial loss of memory and speech.

During the hearing, the daughter was produced by way of video-conferencing, where the court noticed that "she is not able to communicate by speech nor

does her behaviour appear to be normal on first blush."

The husband, who also joined the video-conference hearing, submitted that his wife has developed mental problems but not by reason of any fault on his part or on the part of his parents. He also submitted that his wife is being treated by a specialist doctor, who has indicated that her mental illness will take some time to get resolved.

"Considering the aforesaid state of affairs, first-and foremost this court is concerned about the state of mental health and physical wellbeing of the daughter," the court remarked.

It directed that the daughter be examined by a doctor specialising in mental trauma and illnesses at the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) in the presence

and under the supervision of her father.

Order to police

"This court is also of the view that it would be in the fitness of things that, at least for the present and until the next date of hearing, the custody of [the daughter] along with her 3 1/2 year old girl child, be given to the petitioner [the father]," the court said, directing the local Station House Officer to ensure the custody of the daughter to the father.

The court further directed that the status report detailing the opinion of the doctors and the line of treatment suggested in the case be submitted before the next date of hearing on July 5. The report would not be shared with the husband or her in-laws, the Bench added.

During pandemic, Chaudhary found an opportunity when there was a rising demand for oxygen cylinders and concentrators. He then started cheating people on the pretext of selling oxygen gas cylinders through his accomplices.

Elaborating on the modus operandi, the officer said each person in Chaudhary's gang had a task.

While one of them arranged the bank accounts for receiving cheated money, another got these bank accounts opened on the basis of forged credentials at the rate of ₹25,000 each account.

The accused used forged pre-activated SIM cards of different areas for cheating, police said, adding further investigation is under way.

Kingpin of inter-State cheating racket held

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch arrested the kingpin of a Nalanda-based cheating racket from Bihar for allegedly duping people on the pretext of providing oxygen cylinders to COVID patients

Accused used to dupe people on the pretext of providing oxygen cylinders to COVID patients

POLICE

Haryana found an opportunity when there was a rising demand for oxygen cylinders and concentrators. He then started cheating people on the pretext of selling oxygen gas cylinders through his accomplices.

Elaborating on the modus operandi, the officer said each person in Chaudhary's gang had a task.

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The accused used forged pre-activated SIM cards of different areas for cheating, police said, adding further investigation is under way.

Southwest Monsoon delayed: Met

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The arrival of the southwest Monsoon in the Capital has been delayed as it missed its normal arrival date on June 27.

The Met department has forecast that it is not to advance over the Capital over the next week and temperatures are likely to be a few notches above normal during the week.

"Prevailing meteorological conditions, large scale atmospheric features and the forecast wind pattern by dynamical models suggest that no favourable conditions are likely to develop for further advance of southwest monsoon into remaining parts of Rajasthan, west Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi and Punjab during next 6-7 days," the IMD said in its forecast on Sunday. It added that there was going to be a period of subdued rainfall activity over the next five days with regards to the monsoon.

On Sunday, the maximum temperature was 38.8 degrees Celsius, which is one degree above normal for this time of the year.

Man held in Chhatrasal Stadium case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old man was arrested in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl in which a wrestler died and his two friends were injured, the police said on Sunday.

The accused – Gourav Lora from Haryana – also a wrestler, was arrested on June 26, says DCP (Crime) Monika Bhardwaj.

An officer said the accused "had engaged in the fight in the stadium along with others leading to the death of the young wrestler, Sagar Dhankar".

City sees 89 cases with 4 deaths

Hotels, banquet halls with 50 people in attendance to reopen

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 89 fresh COVID-19 cases and four deaths on Sunday, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government a day before a new set of unlock measures are set to kick in.

The bulletin showed that 74,198 tests had been conducted in 24 hours that has a positivity rate of 0.12%. There are at present 1,568 active cases in the city. Delhi has recorded 14,33,934 COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began along with 24,965 deaths.

From June 28, weddings at

banquet halls and hotels with 50 people in attendance will be permitted along with reopening of gyms and Yoga centres at 50% capacity under the phased unlock process, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said in an order on Saturday.

The relaxations come after the number of new cases and fatalities continued to show a downward trend during the past week.

Delhi had reported 89 cases of COVID-19 and 11 deaths on Monday, 134 cases and 8 deaths on Tuesday, 111 cases and seven deaths on Wednesday, 109 COVID-19 cases and eight deaths on Thurs-

day, 115 cases and four deaths on Friday and on Saturday, 85 new cases and nine deaths were recorded.

Releasing the vaccination bulletin, AAP leader Atishi said the vaccination drive in the city had picked up speed with a record 2,07,559 doses being administered on Saturday.

Out of the total doses administered, more than 1.5 lakh doses were administered to the people in the 18-44 age group, she said. "With the availability of the vaccine stock, we have been able to vaccinate 25% of the youth population in Delhi," Ms. Atishi said.

Juveniles apprehended for killing man during snatching incident

Trio committed crime to make easy money to buy alcohol

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three juveniles have been apprehended for allegedly stabbing a 45-year-old man to death during a snatching incident in outer Delhi's Sultanpur, the police said on Sunday.

The deceased – Ravinder – from Nangloi, worked as a contractor in a shoe manufacturing unit at Mangolpur Industrial area, they said. The juveniles – all aged 17 years – worked at a wedding horse and carriage shop. They took to snatching to make easy money to buy liquor.

The incident took place on Friday when the three juveniles were looking for an easy target at a park near Jalebi Chowk. Around 9.30 p.m., they spotted Ravinder standing near the park, talking to someone over his mobile phone. During this, one of the juveniles caught Ravinder from his back by interlocking his neck to restrict his movement while another tried to snatch his mobile phone but he resisted. Meanwhile, the third juvenile took out a button-activated knife and stabbed

Ravinder multiple times, said a senior officer.

They then took out the victim's wallet and fled the spot, he said.

DCP (Outer) Parvinder Singh, said: "On Saturday, we received information from Sanjay Gandhi Hospital that one person named Ravinder was admitted in an injured condition from Jalebi Chowk. Later, he died due to treatment. A case of murder under Section 302 of the IPC was registered at Raj Park police station." During probe, the accused were held.

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THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

Haryana extends lockdown till July 5

Number of new COVID-19 cases have declined, but preventive measures still needed: Chief Secretary

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

The Haryana government on Sunday extended lockdown in the State for another week till July 5, but allowed university campuses to open for research scholars, doubt classes and practical classes in laboratories.

Anganwadis closed

Though relaxations allowed to shops, shopping malls, restaurants and bars in earlier orders would continue, the anganwadi centres and creches would remain shut till July 31.

The Department of Women and Child Welfare has been directed to release methodology for implementation of various women and child welfare programmes in the State.



Beneficiaries at a vaccination centre in Gurugram. ■ FILE PHOTO

Extending the lockdown, rechristened as "Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana" by the State government, Chief Secretary-cum-Chairperson, Haryana State Executive Committee, Vijai Vardhan, in a two-page order, said the positivity rate and the number of new COVID-19 positive cases had declined, but

there was a need to continue the preventive and precautionary measures.

As per the earlier orders over the past few weeks, all shops are allowed to open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and shopping malls from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The restaurants and bars, including those in hotels and

malls, are allowed to open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. with 50% seating capacity. The gatherings at weddings, funerals/cremations are capped at 50 people.

The gyms are also allowed to open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., but swimming pools and spas are closed.

Factories to open

All production units, establishments and industries are permitted to function with strict adherence to COVID-19-appropriate behaviour.

The sports complexes are also permitted to open for sports activities, but spectators are not allowed.

As per the latest health bulletin, only 121 new cases were recorded in the State on June 26 with the positivity

rate of 0.41%. The total number of active cases in the State is 1,804 and as many as 9,368 people have died so far. The cumulative positivity rate for COVID-19 is 7.76% and fatality rate is 1.22%.

Besides, more than 84 lakh vaccine doses have been administered in the State so far, with the highest 13 lakh in Gurugram.

The Haryana government had first imposed a weekend lockdown in nine districts — Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonipat, Karnal, Panchkula, Hisar, Sirsa and Fatehabad — from 10 p.m. on April 30 to 5 a.m. on May 3.

The entire State was then brought under lockdown for a week on May 3 and the restrictions are being extended on a weekly basis thereafter. In a letter to the Prime Minister, he said the State has created a capacity to vaccinate over 15 lakh people a day, but the pace of inoculation drive is limited to the extent of supplies received from the Centre. "The daily average of vaccine doses received since the start of vaccination drive for 18 years plus has been 3 to 4 lakh only," Mr. Gehlot said.

Gehlot seeks PM's help in vaccine supply to Rajasthan

State can vaccinate 15 lakh people daily, he writes to Mr. Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal intervention to ensure adequate supply of coronavirus vaccines to the State to prevent a possible third wave.



Ashok Gehlot. ■ FILE PHOTO

activities, I urge you to intervene personally and direct the concerned to ensure adequate supply of vaccines for the State," Mr. Gehlot said in his letter.

Situation better

He said the current COVID-19 situation in the State is relatively better with cases coming down sharply, but also mentioned the second wave had a far greater impact in Rajasthan.

He also said Rajasthan is among the best performer in the vaccination drive. Over 2.36 crore people have already been vaccinated in the State and over 70 lakh people would be due for their second dose by the end of July, he said.

NHRC seeks report on pregnancy among minors

Odisha lawyer flags 'inaction of govt.'

STAFF REPORTER

BHUABANESWAR

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought an action taken report from the DGP, Odisha, in connection with the allegation of pregnancy among minor students.

Radhakanta Tripathy, a human rights lawyer, had moved the human rights body drawing attention to sexual exploitation of minor girls in residential schools.

Mr. Tripathy had alleged that negligence and inaction of the State government was responsible for such incidents. He prayed for action against culprits and compensation and rehabilitation for victims.

"Through a network of 1,670 residential schools and 6,000 hostels, the government provides free education, food, clothing and

accommodation to nearly 6 lakh students between the ages of 5 and 18 years of whom 60% are girls. The Department gives high priority to safety, security and well-being of students in residential schools and several measures have been taken towards this end," the government submitted to the Commission.

The Commission said it had not received the Action Taken Report in cases of Nabarangapur, Malkangiri, Kendrapara, Jajpur and Kalahandi districts mentioned in the complaint. "The DGP Odisha is directed to submit the ATR within four weeks," it directed.

Besides, it ordered the District Magistrate of Dhenkanal to ensure the payment of ₹7 lakh to the victim and submit the proof of payment within four weeks.

Unlocking a city



Tourists throng the Heritage Street near the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Sunday as lockdown restrictions were lifted. ■ PTI

Rape accused held at vaccination centre

He was on the run for past two years: Odisha police

STAFF REPORTER

BHUABANESWAR

A rape accused, who was on the run for the past two years, was arrested from a vaccination centre in Odisha's Balangir district on Saturday.

Moments before the accused, identified as Arun Podha, registered for vaccination at Bhainsar village

under the Patnagarh police limit, he was taken into custody.

"Soon after a woman in the same village accused Podha of sexually assaulting her in March 2019, he had fled the village. He was arrested while he was standing in a queue for vaccination," said Jyotirmaya Bhukta, Sub-Divisional Police Officer of Patnagarh.

Mr. Podha, 24, had been working in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, to evade arrest.

Mr. Bhukta said the ac-

cused was confident that "nothing would happen" to him as his family members made attempts to influence the victim.

Acting on a tip-off, local police went to the vaccination centre and arrested him.

The police produced him to a court after conducting a medical examination.

"The decision to vaccinate him would be taken up at a later stage since he failed to get inoculated," said the police.

Bengal issues new vaccine SOP after fraud

TMC MP Mimi Chakraborty among participants given an antibiotic at a camp

BISHWANATH GHOSH
KOLKATA

West Bengal has issued a set of guidelines to be followed by non-government entities carrying out vaccination drives against COVID-19, after the discovery that fake vaccine was administered at a camp in Kolkata. The participants at this camp, held in the neighbourhood of Kasba, included actor and TMC MP Mimi Chakraborty.

Prior approval
The SOP makes it mandatory for private commercial health facilities and workplace administrations desiring to hold a camp to seek prior approval from the Health Department.

"All private CVC [Covid Vaccination Centres] must maintain a dynamic inventory of vaccines disclosing the source of their supplies,



Mimi Chakraborty.
■ FILE PHOTO

the Health Department every Sunday the list of people receiving both their doses of a vaccine. All vaccination will have to be done through the CoWIN portal only and CoWIN-authenticated code number must be displayed at the camp.

Report to authority

At the end of the vaccination session, the private CVC must submit a performance report to the local health authority. Not only that, all recipients would be observed for 30 minutes for Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI).

The camp at Kasba took place on June 21, and the fact that those vaccinated were actually injected with an antibiotic was discovered when Ms. Chakraborty became suspicious after she didn't receive a vaccination

certificate or a confirmation message on her phone and lodged a police complaint the following day.

Probe set up

The State government has already set up a probe into the fraud.

"This order is very important. Monitoring for AEFI for 30 minutes, which is a must, was not being followed in many camps, but now it is a must. Maintenance of cold chain is very important to get maximum immunity from vaccine, while Google spreadsheets and weekly submission of data will take care of unauthorised use of vaccine. Basically, every centre will now be accountable, which will strengthen the vaccination drive in our State," said Dr. Rajiv Pandey of the West Bengal Doctors' Forum.

Tripura Cong. suspends woman leader

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

The Tripura Congress on Sunday suspended a senior woman functionary from the party for six years on charges of 'unbecoming behaviour and gross discipline'.

CCP president Pijush Biswas ordered the action against Minakhi Chakraborty after All India Mahila Congress president Sushmita Deb advised her removal from the position of the Secretary in the party's women cell.

Some video clips had become viral in the social media where Ms. Chakraborty was allegedly seen creating chaos under the influence of liquor.

Party leader Rahul Saha said Ms. Chakraborty was suspended for her misconduct at a public place.

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IN BRIEF



Kumaraswamy questions Kerala's renaming bid

BENGALURU
The former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Sunday questioned the Kerala government for its alleged attempts to change the (Kannada) names of certain places in Kasaragod district to Malayalam. "Kasaragod has close ties with Karnataka. Though Kannada- and Malayalam-speaking people are in equal numbers in Kasaragod, they live in harmony," he tweeted. There was a need to protect this in future as well, he said.

Denied mobile phones, two boys end lives in A.P.

T. NARASAPURAM
Two minor boys ended their lives in separate incidents here in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh, as their parents allegedly refused to buy them smartphones owing to financial problems. Puram Venkata Sai Chandu, 10, a class IV student from Mutyalampeta village, jumped into a lake and M. Venkata Raju, 16, an intermediate student from Ponguturu village, allegedly consumed pesticide. Those in distress can dial '1092'.

'Primary education must be in mother tongue'

VISAKHAPATNAM
Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu has said it was the duty of every individual to preserve and promote one's mother tongue, without belittling other languages and cultures. He was speaking as the chief guest at the sixth annual 'Rashtrtara Telugu Samakhya' conference held virtually from the city on Sunday. Mr. Naidu also underscored the need for primary education to be in one's mother tongue, as envisaged by the National Educational Policy-2020.

New cases in Kerala stay above 10,000

Karnataka's test positivity at 2.18%, A.P. below 5%; Telangana cases low even after lockdown was eased

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's test positivity rate (TPR) remained in the 10%-11% range and the State reported 10,905 new cases of COVID-19 on Sunday. The TPR for 1,03,996 samples was 10.49%.

Cases showed a rising trend in many districts and hospitalisation rates were flat. Public health experts called for targeted testing and focused containment efforts.

COVID-19

Kerala had 99,591 active cases on Sunday. Cumulative COVID-19 case fatalities stood at 12,879 with the State adding 62 deaths to the official list. The number of patients newly admitted to hospitals with COVID was 1,910 on Sunday.

Total ICU admissions of



Back to square one: People buying fish at the Visakhapatnam harbour in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

critically-ill COVID patients in public and private hospitals dropped to 2,211, with patients requiring ventilator support dropping to 883.

Thiruvananthapuram district reported the highest number with 1,401 cases.

Karnataka reported 3,604 new cases on Sunday, taking

the total to 28,34,630. Of these, 788 cases were from Bengaluru Urban. With 89 new deaths, the toll rose to 34,743. The TPR for the day touched 2.18%.

Less than 1,000 cases

The decline in cases in Telangana continued a week after

lockdown was lifted on June 20. On Sunday, the State recorded less than 1,000 cases after a gap of 86 days as 748 people tested positive for the virus, and comparatively fewer tests were administered. While 1.1 lakh to 1.3 lakh samples were tested in a normal day, only 81,405 were tested on Sunday. Eight more persons died.

Of Sunday's cases, the highest of 121 were from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area.

Andhra Pradesh reported fewer than 5,000 infections for the seventh day in a row and the TPR of samples analysed during the period was 5%. In the 24 hours ending Sunday morning, 33 deaths and 4,250 infections were reported.

The TPR of 95,327 daily samples was 4.46%.

Krishna district reported the highest toll of eight in 24 hours, Chittoor six, East Go-

davari and Srikakulam four each, Nellore three, and Guntur and Kurnool two each. East Godavari reported 890 new infections.

Fatalities dip in T.N.

Sunday saw 5,127 new cases in Tamil Nadu. The western districts of Coimbatore, Erode, Salem and Tirupur recorded the most number of new infections.

For the first time during the second wave, the State reported fewer than 100 deaths. Health officials recorded 91 deaths on Sunday (27 in private and 64 in government facilities) owing to the infection.

In Chennai, another 308 persons contracted the infection taking the tally of active cases in the district to 3,555. As many as nine deaths were reported.

(With inputs from Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Vijayawada & Chennai bureaus)

CPI(M) suspends two local leaders accused of rape

Woman says she was blackmailed and got death threats

STAFF REPORTER
KOZHIKODE

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has suspended two of its local leaders who were booked by the police on charge of raping a branch committee member at Vadakara here in Kerala. The preliminary action, subsequent to the police inquiry, was taken by the party's Vadakara local committee.

On Saturday, the police registered a First Information Report after receiving a complaint from the woman. According to her petition,

CPI(M) Muliyeri branch secretary P.P. Baburaj and another local leader T.P. Li-jesh raped her on different occasions nearly three months ago. The complainant said Baburaj had sexually assaulted her first. Li-jesh, who came to know about the incident afterwards, used it as a tool to blackmail her for sexual favours, she alleged.

Duo on the run
Police sources said the woman had reportedly received death threats many

times when she tried to take legal recourse. After the incidents, she had to reportedly undergo treatment for mental shock in various hospitals, they said. Her statement has already been recorded under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The Vadakara police said the two suspects had been booked under Section 376 (punishment for rape) of the Indian Penal Code. They were absconding. They would be taken into custody soon, they said.

Telangana govt. to borrow ₹1,000 cr. more

₹13,500 crore loan in this quarter

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government decided to raise another tranche of open market borrowings (OMBs) on Wednesday to meet its immediate financial commitments, including payments still due under the Rythu Bandhu scheme.

The government will raise a ₹1,000 crore State development loan through auction of securities by the Reserve Bank of India.

This will take the entire OMBs during the first quarter of the current financial year to ₹13,500 crore.

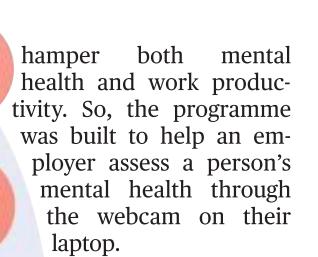
This is ₹1,000 crore higher than the ₹12,500 crore raised during the first quarter of the previous financial year, when revenue fell steeply following the lockdown imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The State government has raised ₹12,500 crore loans from open market so far this year and this includes ₹7,500 crore obtained in four tranches during June alone.

Senior officials said the government had to opt for fresh OMBs because of low revenues and increased commitments on account of a spree of welfare schemes.

The face as a mirror to the mind

Can AI help identify mental health issues from facial expressions? A team of students try to find out

ture extraction, and classification of expressions. The first is a processing stage to automatically locate the face region in the input im-



hamper both mental health and work productivity. So, the programme was built to help an employer assess a person's mental health through the webcam on their laptop.

Is this specific to people at work or can it be used elsewhere too?

The same system can be implemented in many areas but with some changes. For example, in schools, the reactions could be based on children's facial expression during a particular subject. Counsellors and teachers can then evaluate their preference for that subject and help identify their interests.

How does it collect and collate data?

The idea is that XpressEmoNet will be loaded on the workstation and detect an individual's emotions based on facial expressions. It will use photos to detect these emotions and keep track of an individual's state

of mind on a regular basis. The system will capture images over a predefined period of time and detect the emotion present based on the classifications.

We conducted a pilot study in which expressions such as happy, surprise, sad, angry, fear and disgust were captured. We trained the model for non-front images and for video feeds. The team is now busy with the next step, which is to enhance the model to feed the test video instead of test images and then deploy it on CCTV to capture real-time data and predict accurately.

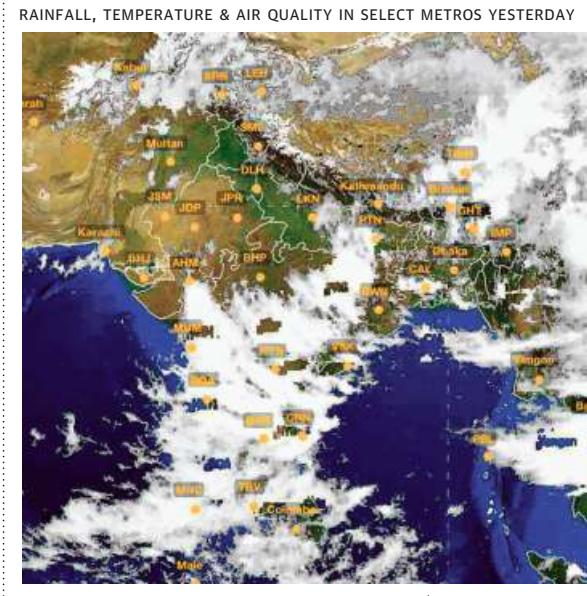
Of course, there is the issue of privacy. The question of consent will come up and anyone who uses this will have to inform those whose images are being captured accordingly.

ages. The next step is to extract and represent facial changes caused by expressions. Finally, the classification task allows to infer the facial expressions. In our approach, we have restricted our solution to facial feature extraction and classification of expressions.

How and why did you come up with this idea?

We had to decide on a project last year. With each of us working in the IT sector, we understood the levels of stress most people face and how this could

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over east Rajasthan and with lightning at isolated places over east Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Maharashtra

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.6	35	27	Kozhikode	9	31.5	23.5
Ahmedabad	—	36.3	28	Kurnool	17	26.3	22.4
Aizawl	—	—	20.6	Lucknow	8	35.1	26.6
Allahabad	—	32.6	25.8	Madurai	—	35.2	26.5
Bengaluru	2.2	26.2	20.2	Mangaluru	23.5	28.8	22.5
Bhopal	35.8	35.3	22.6	Mumbai	—	32.4	26.6
Bhubaneswar	3	33.4	26.9	Mysuru	—	29	21.4
Chandigarh	—	37	25	New Delhi	—	40.4	28
Chennai	—	34.1	28	Patna	—	34.6	26.4
Coimbatore	2	31	22.3	Port Blair	0.3	30.5	25.2
Dehradoon	—	34.6	24.3	Puducherry	—	37.2	—
Gangtok	7	22.6	18.3	Pune	—	31.1	23.1
Goa	136	29.8	22.6	Raipur	38.2	33.7	24
Guwahati	3	35.3	26.5	Ranchi	2	31.6	23.5
Hubballi	—	25	22	Shillong	0.1	25.2	18.1
Hyderabad	3	29.6	23.4	Shimla	—	26.2	16.2
Imphal	—	30.8	22.6	Srinagar	—	29.5	12.4
Jaipur	—	39.3	28.6	Tiruvananthapuram	2	32.3	23.8
Kochi	15	30.4	23.4	Tiruchi	0.1	35.1	26.8
Kohima	—	25.8	18.2	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	6	33.4	27.8	Visakhapatnam	—	35.2	26.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sonipat, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 275 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Vijayapura, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 9

AQI Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

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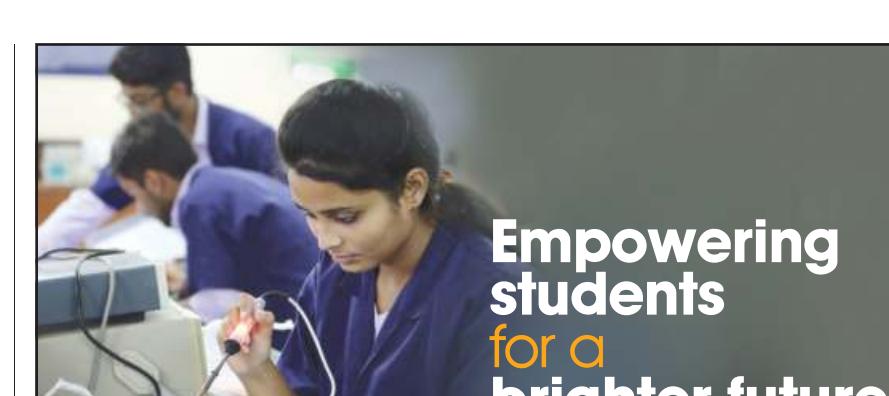
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With each of us working in the IT sector, we understood the levels of stress people face and how this could hamper both mental health and work productivity

The system will capture images over a predefined period of time and detect the emotion present based on the classifications. We conducted a pilot study in which expressions such as happy, surprise, sad, angry, fear and disgust were captured. We trained the model for non-front images and for video feeds. The team is now busy with the next step, which is to enhance the model to feed the test video instead of test images and then deploy it on CCTV to capture real-time data and predict accurately.

Of course, there is the issue of privacy. The question of consent will come up and anyone who uses this will have to inform those whose images are being captured accordingly.



SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY



Another shade of grey

While Pakistan stays on FATF list, India must push for justice in cross-border terror attacks

Pakistan's hopes of being let off the Financial Action Task Force's grey list were dashed once again, as the 39-member grouping decided to keep it on the list, and even add more tasks. Eventually, Pakistan missed the mark by one crucial action point out of 27 – being judged deficient in prosecuting the senior leadership of UN-proscribed terror groups. The FATF works closely with the UN Security Council's listings of terror groups as it evaluates countries on their efforts in anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT); Pakistan's failure to convict JeM chief Masood Azhar and others appeared to tip the balance against it. The Pakistani government publicly protested the decision, pointing out that many countries that had largely completed the action plans handed to them have been delisted in the past. Pakistan, which was on the FATF's "increased monitoring lists" from 2009-2015, was taken off the grey list in 2015 in a similar manner (before it was relisted in 2018). Pakistani leaders have predictably lashed out at India for "lobbying" for its continued listing, while others have hinted that the decision stems from a refusal to allow the U.S. the use of its bases after America's pull-out from Afghanistan. At FATF hearings, the Imran Khan government said it had introduced and amended terror financing laws, which have enabled the prosecution of more than 30 UN-proscribed leaders and their associates, for terror financing. While it is unclear how many of those are actually serving jail time, the convictions and prison terms, between 15-30 years are a break from the past, when Pakistani authorities would hold these leaders on charges under international pressure, and subsequently release them. By making this the sticking point, the FATF, which works on the principle of mutual compliance, has made it clear that Pakistan must complete the prosecution of all proscribed leaders of groups including the LeT, JeM, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban. By adding six more items to the list on amending its Money Laundering Act and cracking down on other businesses involved in money laundering and terror financing, the FATF has indicated that Pakistan could remain on the grey list for at least another one to two years.

For India, Pakistan's continuance on the list is some comfort, even as it awaits true justice delivered to leaders of groups such as the LeT and JeM for attacks, including Mumbai 26/11, Parliament (2001) Pathankot and Pulwama, and not just terror financing. However, the processes of FATF, that has taken a justifiably hard line in Pakistan's case, must be checked for overreach, as India faces its Mutual Evaluation Report, that has been delayed due to the pandemic. New Delhi should expect that Pakistan will push for a critical investigation of India's AML/CFT regime, and with the FATF announcing a new focus on "extreme right-wing terrorism (ERW)", it is clear that there will be more political aspects to its technical scrutiny of countries in the future.

Caution and optimism

Third wave may be weaker than second, but vaccination, preventive steps must stay high

India, with the second highest number of cases globally and third highest deaths, is seeing about 50,000 cases being added every day. Though on a decline, the second wave is far from over and several States are relaxing lockdown restrictions, which, experts say, may be seeding the ground for a potential third wave. In this context, a mathematical modelling study led by the scientists at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Imperial College London, shows a wary optimism. Will a potential third wave be as devastating as the second, the scientists attempt to find out, and their answer is 'no'. For that to happen, a trifecta of "extreme scenarios" has to converge. One, over a third of those who have been infected in the past year must entirely lose their immunity. Second, an emerging variant of the virus must have a reproductive rate (R) over 4.5, or every infected person should be passing on the virus to at least four to five others. And finally, both of these must occur almost close to when the second wave has almost extinguished itself. This is beyond the transmissibility seen so far.

A third wave could be significantly buffered by expanding vaccination. Were vaccines to be rolled out in a way to cover 40% of the population, with two doses until August, it could reduce symptomatic incidence by around 55%. Less than 20% of Indians have got at least one dose of the vaccine and only 4% fully vaccinated. The Centre proposes to vaccinate all adults – about 94.4 crore – by the year end. India's States, which have at various times dealt with unprecedented crises during the tragedy, now have an estimate of what is needed to tide out their peak phases. In that light, the ICMR's projections can help with ensuring the minimum number of supplies and other infrastructure in the event of an uptick. However, it should not be forgotten that this is after all a modelling study. None of India's eminent institutions, in the early part of the year, forecast the scale and intensity of the second wave. There is also the vexing matter of breakthrough infections, that is those contracting the infection in spite of being vaccinated. Sporadic studies in India suggest that this percentage of infection is small, though there is still no clarity on the real-world effectiveness of vaccines in the light of variants such as Delta and Delta Plus. There is also, so far, no theoretical limit on how infectious the coronavirus can become. The ICMR's analysis thus should not be taken as a forecast but rather a guidance and a reminder that along with vaccination, masks, avoiding crowds and physical distancing will remain the main defence against the virus for the foreseeable future.

New Delhi's tactical half-measure on Kashmir

More than a conflict resolution exercise, it is about setting the rules of politics and diplomacy



HAPPYMON JACOB

The meeting between the representatives of mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and the central leadership on June 24 was at best a good beginning, and an indication of the shape of unilateral politics in J&K in the months ahead, at worst. More than a conflict resolution exercise, the agenda-less meeting was more about the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government setting the rules of politics in Kashmir and getting them accepted by the mainstream stakeholders in J&K. To that extent, the all-party meeting, a politically clever and a tactically sound half-measure by the BJP-led central government, was definitely not a climb-down by the BJP.

Clever political move

Organising the all-party meeting was a clever political move by the BJP government for a variety of reasons. For one, the narrative will now shift to how and when the Centre will (or not) concede to at least some of the demands made by the Kashmiri politicians from the more critical questions of whether the decision of 2019 has delivered on any of its declared objectives. Consider this. The two justifications made by the BJP government for the decisions of 2019 – ushering in a new era of development and prosperity in J&K, and rooting out terrorism from Kashmir – seem to have disappeared from public memory today. There has been little development in the now Union Territory since 2019; if anything, the security lockdown post-2019 and the subsequent COVID-19 lockdown

have only worsened economic conditions in the Union Territory. What about terrorism and extremism? Until the India-Pakistan ceasefire of February this year, the security situation in the Kashmir Valley saw no significant improvement despite the double lockdown nor was there a major let-up in infiltration from across the Line of Control (LoC). As for home-grown insurgency, there is no way to measure anti-India sentiments in the Union Territory given the strict security clampdown and the subsequent double lockdown. In any case, brandishing the absence of violent protests during a double lockdown as a measure of success of the 2019 decisions is methodologically erroneous, at the least. In short, neither has the removal of special status improved the economic conditions of the general population nor has it been helpful in rooting out Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in the Valley or reducing anti-India feelings there.

BJP's political gains

And yet, the BJP's Kashmir grand strategy has hardly been a failure especially since the key objectives of its mission Kashmir were different from the stated ones. Look at it this way. By politically reaching out to Kashmir now, New Delhi has lost nothing given that both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister had stated several times in the past that Statehood would be returned to J&K at an 'appropriate time'. Let me put the ongoing negotiations on the issue of Statehood in perspective: withdrawal of Statehood in 2019 was a clever negotiating ploy to eventually force a trade-off between the return of Statehood and a tacit acceptance of the removal of Article 370. Kashmiri political leaders would have little option but to accept this trade-off eventually even as they wait for the 'appropriate time' to arrive.

In other words, Statehood versus Article 370 was a carefully



FILE PHOTO/AP

thought-out artificial choice made by the BJP government to gain advantage during future negotiations. The meeting on Thursday was the opening shot to judge the mood.

More crucially, if New Delhi manages to get the mainstream political parties in J&K to accept, out of sheer necessity, the offer of Statehood without the reunification of the State or return of special status, New Delhi would have laid down the rules of the game in Kashmir. Read this with the fact that the Jammu-based political parties, currently dominated by the BJP, will benefit from the ongoing delimitation of the Assembly seats in the Union Territory. So, the numerical advantage that the Valley had traditionally enjoyed over Jammu in the erstwhile State's Assembly will diminish, thereby helping the BJP, as also other Jammu-based parties, to strengthen their hold in the politics of the Union Territory/State.

Let us view these political realities from the perspective of the political parties in J&K: they have everything to gain by getting J&K's Statehood back, for politics without Statehood is an unattractive proposition. Politics, the Kashmiri political class knows only too well, is the art of the "possible". For them, it is a choice between something or nothing, and they do realise that choosing nothing over something (i.e., Statehood) is not a practical solution. In politics, irrelevance comes quickly and sharply and the Kashmiri politicians know that more than anyone. In effect,

therefore, the demands for the restoration of Statehood, and the well-timed and purposefully long drawn-out negotiations thereof, will bury the mainstream political demand for Article 370.

But, perhaps most importantly, the real gain for the BJP is ideological. The BJP, and the Jan Sangh before it, consistently argued for the removal of Article 370. They achieved that, albeit by questionable means, in 2019. The ongoing talks indicate that the Sangh Parivar's ideological agenda is all set to triumph in J&K.

Bilateral implications

As for Pakistan, it had maintained ever since August 2019 that it would not engage in a dialogue process with India until New Delhi retracts the Kashmir decisions of 2019. Pakistan tried to internationalise what it called India's "annexation" of Kashmir but garnered little support, and increased the heat on the LoC and inside Kashmir, again to no avail. Islamabad's stated position has evidently changed with the February 2021 ceasefire agreement on the LoC and the backchannel talks preceding it. There is an emergent and strong opinion within Pakistan that if India were to restore Statehood in J&K, it might open doors for a dialogue process. Therefore, if New Delhi offers Statehood to J&K, a process that began on Thursday, Pakistan might be open to talks with India.

Put differently, by offering to return Statehood to Kashmir and politically burying the issue of J&K's special status, New Delhi has won a tactical victory over Pakistan without making any real concessions. On the other hand, Pakistan would have to walk back from its preconditions for talks with India by agreeing to New Delhi's half-measure on Kashmir. On the brighter side, however, this undoubtedly has the potential to bring the two sides to the negotiating table on various outstanding

bilateral issues. New Delhi's current advantage in Kashmir over Pakistan could also be read with the lessons from the Balakot stand-off in early 2019. By carrying out a strike against Pakistan in its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, New Delhi created a new military normal between the two sides, i.e., counterterrorism strikes inside Pakistan could occur in case of a terror attack against India notwithstanding the Pakistani response, which as the ensuing air skirmish showed is likely to remain at the low conventional level. In other words, New Delhi has clearly signalled to Pakistan how far it will go on the Kashmir question and how far it will tolerate the menace of terrorism.

The challenges

Whether or not the BJP's political gain vis-à-vis the Kashmiri political parties, and tactical gain over Pakistan will help root out insurgency and terrorism from Kashmir is something we will have to wait and see. That the BJP government has not politically reached out to the Kashmiri dissidents is indicative of the fact that it will want to single-handedly dictate the contours of politics in Jammu and Kashmir – ceding limited space to the mainstream political parties, and little space for either the dissidents or Pakistan. Whether this policy will find success on the ground once Kashmir opens up and normal political activity resumes there is an important question. A cursory glance at Jammu and Kashmir's history would show that New Delhi's deals with Kashmiri's mainstream politicians routinely found little favour with either the ordinary Kashmiri or the agitating Kashmiri. In that sense, then, it is too early for New Delhi to claim victory in Kashmir.

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On the margins with full equality still out of reach

Despite judicial verdicts, India's sexual minorities face discrimination in employment, health issues and personal rights



FAISAL C.K.

This year, the world woke up to June, pride month, gazing at the Google Doodle of Dr. Frank Kameny (1925-2011), an American astronomer, veteran, and gay rights activist. Kameny, in the early 1970s, successfully challenged the American Psychiatric Association's classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder. The global LGBTQ+ community marched ahead after the 1970s. But in India, the queer community is still a stigmatised and invisible minority, a fact that is alarmingly incompatible with the country's living, liberal and inclusive Constitution.

The Constitution was conceived by India's founding fathers as a beacon of fundamental rights, leading once enslaved Indians to the promised land of life and freedom. Despite such a liberating Constitution, the Indian state and the law have been abusing and given many marginalised segments of the citizenry such as the queer community of India the cold shoulder.

Launch pad for jurisprudence
The Constitutional courtroom in post-colonial India became a space where the individual and the state could converse with each other. The meagre gains that the queer community won have been

granted by the judiciary; not by legislatures. In the book, *Sex and the Supreme Court: How the Law is Upholding the Dignity of the Indian Citizen* (2020), Saurabh Kripal observes: "In the tug of war between the demands of the traditional conception of society and the rights of individuals to their identity and dignity, the Supreme Court has come down firmly in favour of individual." The Supreme Court of India's ruling in *Navtej Singh Johar & Ors. vs Union of India* (2018), that the application of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to consensual homosexual behaviour between adults was "unconstitutional, irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary", has been a great victory to the Indian individual in his quest for identity and dignity. This judgment has provided a launch pad for the LGBTQ+ jurisprudence and queer liberation movement in India.

The Delhi High Court's verdict in *Naz Foundation vs Government of NCT of Delhi* (2009) was a 38th parallel in the law of sexuality and equality jurisprudence in India. The court held that Section 377 offended the guarantee of equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution, because it creates an unreasonable classification and targets homosexuals as a class (<https://bit.ly/3A1kHBZ>). Earlier, in a retrograde step, the Supreme Court, in *Suresh Kumar Koushal vs Naz Foundation* (2013), reinstated Section 377 to the IPC. But India witnessed the anastasis of Naz Foundation through the top court's judgment in *Navtej Singh Johar & Ors.* with an embedded firewall of the doctrine of proges-



GETTY IMAGES

sive realisation of rights.

Despite the judgments of the Supreme Court, full equality is still a pie in the sky for the queer community in India. In matters of employment, health and personal relationship, there is still a lot of discrimination against sexual minorities. It is only when these problems are adequately addressed that the LGBTQ+ community will be able to enjoy full autonomy and agency.

Legal sanction opposed

The Union of India has recently opposed any move to accord legal sanction to same-sex marriages in India stating that the decriminalisation of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code does not automatically translate into a fundamental right for same sex couples to marry. This was stated in response to the Delhi High Court notice to a plea by LGBTQ+ activists and couples who sought recognition of same-sex marriages. Justice Anthony Kennedy of the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Obergefell vs Hodges* (2015) underscored the emotional and social value of the institution of marriage and asserted that the universal human right of marriage should not be denied to a same-sex couple. As of 2021, same-sex marriage is legally performed and recognised in 29 countries. Indian society and the state should syn-

chronise themselves with changing trends.

Amend Article 15

Article 15 secures the citizens from every sort of discrimination by the state, on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth or any of them. This Article is the cornerstone of the concept that equality is the antithesis of discrimination. Imbibing the zeitgeist, the grounds of non-discrimination should be expanded by including gender and sexual orientation. It is only when these problems are adequately addressed that the LGBTQ+ community will be able to enjoy full autonomy and agency.

The United Kingdom passed the "Alan Turing law" in 2017 which granted amnesty and pardon to the men who were cautioned or convicted under historical legislation that outlawed homosexual acts. The law, named after Alan Turing, a World War II code-breaker and computing genius, who was convicted of gross indecency in 1952, provided a "posthumous pardon, also an automatic formal pardon for living people who had had such offences removed from their record". To expiate the excesses committed against the LGBTQ+ nation!

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Counteracting the next wave of COVID-19

It requires co-ordination across States and districts, based on real-time analysis of data



JISHNU DAS
& PARTHA MUKHOPADHYAY

As the focus shifts to a possible third wave, it is important for India to ask how it can marshal its resources better. Can we leverage the advantages of our size and federal character?

Delhi's experience is instructive. As the first wave abated, hospitalisation for COVID-19 patients plummeted. By January 2021, Delhi was using less than 20% of its bed capacity for COVID-19 patients. It then made the fateful decision, at the beginning of February, to reduce bed capacity back to its usual level of just above 5,000. The decision paid off till mid-March and then the system collapsed. As the second wave hit, bed occupancy went from 33% to over 90% in the first three weeks of April. The government responded rapidly, ramping up bed capacity (faster than what was seen in China or New York City) to more than the previous peak, but it could not keep up with the surge. Equally, as the surge subsided over an 18-day period, utilisation of government hospital beds went rapidly back to 30%, even as infections spread to many other areas with a shortage of key infrastructure. The fact is that it is extremely hard to ramp up capacity in response to the kind of surge that we saw in April 2021, and next to impossible to staff the additional capacity adequately. It is also true that all governments are under pressure to scale down capacity, if augmented capacity remains unused for a long period of time.

Elastic health infrastructure
Delhi's experience highlights two important issues. First, COVID-19 waves require the health infrastructure to be elastic (i.e. expand and contract based on need) and often over a very short period. Second, demand for COVID-19-specific health infrastructure is spatially varied. If cities, districts and States see a surge in cases at different points in time, does health capacity at a location need to be fixed or can it vary over time and across geography?



THULASI KARRAKAT

Preparing for the third wave thus requires us to think differently about health infrastructure, and focus on where we need to build capacity locally and where we can move capacity in response to a surge.

The response depends, in part, on the geography of COVID-19. When we look at the data, we uncover one key fact: in the second wave, COVID-19 returned to many of the districts affected in the first wave, a group that we call the 'permanently at risk' districts. There were 145 districts that accounted for 75% of the cases during the first wave. Strikingly, the same districts accounted for up to 80% of cases during the second wave. Of these, 45 districts accounted for 50% of the cases during the first surge and even more in the initial days of the second. The characteristics of these districts in terms of population size, density and mobility make them susceptible to rapid spread. An epidemiological question is why this happens if such districts have herd immunity, from prior infection and vaccination. One answer, as shown in models developed by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (<http://bitly.ws/eTR2>), is that if vaccination is only partly efficacious, as recent CMC Vellore results indicate, even limited reinfection and a more transmissible variant can lead to a large surge – and a potential third wave in the 'permanently at risk' districts. These 'permanently at risk' districts thus need reserve capacity and resources to be expanded to track and detect potential surges at an early stage.

A mobility framework

In addition to building capability, we can also 'move' health infrastructure from one location to another. This is what China did in Wuhan when the

pandemic first made global headlines. There are two key aspects to 'moving' infrastructure. First, it is important to identify what resources can be moved, linked to costs and supply elasticity – beds and concentrators have low mobility costs and high elasticity (some resources can be rapidly imported) while entire ICUs have high mobility costs. Health workers, on the other hand, have limited elasticity in the medium run as they cannot be trained within a month, but they are potentially highly mobile.

There are three distinct policy areas that need innovation. First, for healthcare workers, it may be possible (as some States have done) to induce almost trained final year medicine and nursing students and rehire retired medical personnel. Another strategy is to use paramedical workers to monitor patients, provide oxygen and assist in telemedicine. As the Liver Foundation in West Bengal has demonstrated, even informal health providers can be trained to deal with first-line treatments in a rural setting, perform basic administrative tasks, and seek formal medical assistance.

Second, resources with high mobility costs need to be more evenly distributed, beyond the spatially concentrated 'permanently at risk' districts, to ensure equity in access in poorly served areas.

Third, spatial equity also means that if we can't bring resources to patients, we can bring patients to resources. Within reasonable distances, it may be more effective to increase the capability to transport patients to care they need. An emerging factor is that patients may be unwilling to travel if there are no arrangements for families to stay nearby. But the many patients who cross State boundaries to seek treatment

in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Vellore and many more places are testimony to the fact that with the right support, it is possible.

Building on federal institutions

It is obvious that the efficiency of resource-sharing increases with the area of coverage, as surge risk is more widely distributed. Therefore, the benefits of resource sharing are higher if it is possible beyond districts, across State boundaries.

For inelastic resources, augmentation of capacities needs to be assured and contingent allocation must be arranged well before any eventuality arises. Moving resources requires coordination but even more importantly, trust. After all, no State or district would want to share resources if it doesn't trust that it will have access to them in its time of need. This is particularly the case if district 'A' in State 'X' helps district 'B' in State 'Y' but then requires help from district 'C' in State 'Z'. These arrangements are karmic in the long run, but lack immediate reciprocity and thus need greater institutional coordination.

Such sharing, though not particularly structured, was visible in the second wave, with Andhra Pradesh providing ventilators to Maharashtra at the request of a Union Minister and the Odisha Chief Minister responding positively to the request of the Maharashtra Chief Minister for oxygen supply. These success stories now need to be institutionalised through an inter-State platform, mediated through bodies such as the National Disaster Management Authority and the NITI Aayog.

COVID-19 has presented India with unprecedented challenges to build health capacities. Beating the successive waves requires enabling governance structures that treat COVID-19 as a national calamity, and coordination across the States and districts, based on real-time analysis of data and innovative institutional solutions.

As our study shows (<http://bitly.ws/eTQC>), our size can be a disadvantage, for the virus can lurk in many corners, but it is an advantage if we treat this as a shared challenge and build on our federal institutions.

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FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Reporting on negatives is a sign of optimism

Journalistic exposés have led to timely course corrections



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

get that it is not a scientific journal..."

While one can understand the angst of a citizen living under the shadow of a pandemic that has not just threatened lives but also the livelihood of millions, it is important to remember the fundamental role of a newspaper. It has to constantly fulfil three 'i's: inform, interpret and illuminate. One of the tasks that journalists do is to confront the distortions from the top to restore the space for a dispassionate look at events, policies and the people shaping our livelihoods.

The need for muckrakers

Former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, in his speech on April 14, 1906, pejoratively called journalists and critics "muckrakers". According to historians, this particular reference was taken from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Bunyan wrote: "the Man with the Muck Rake... who could look no way but downward." Journalists were quick to convert the pejorative term to a respectable one that denotes social concern and courageous exposition.

Journalists for over a century have known that reporting on negative developments, scrutinising ineffective governmental measures, and holding those in power to account are signs of optimism, not pessimism.

John Keane, co-founder of the Sydney Democracy Network and Professor of Politics at the University of Sydney, said that every generation needs its share of muckrakers. His argument is that muckrakers put their finger on a perennial problem for which democracy is a solution: the power of elites always thrives on secrecy, silence and invisibility. He wrote: "Gathering behind closed doors and deciding things in peace and private quiet is their speciality. Little wonder then that in media-saturated societies, to put things paradoxically, muckrakers ensure that unexpected 'leaks' and revelations become predictably commonplace."

As a journalist for nearly four decades, I have been witness to countless instances where journalistic exposés have led to timely course corrections. I am convinced that if journalists were pessimists, that would show in their journalism. It is often called 'fluff' or 'public relations journalism' and tends to become an apology for the ruling elites. On the other hand, if journalists are optimists, they will aggressively point out failures and hope for course corrections.

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The power of an apology

Apologies by countries for past mistakes can improve bilateral ties and help people reconcile with the past

TATIANA BELOUSOVA

In May, Germany officially apologised to Namibia for the massacre of the Herero and Nama people in 1904-1908 and called it a genocide for the first time. Around the same time, French President Emmanuel Macron said in Rwanda that he recognised his country's role in the Rwandan genocide and hoped for forgiveness.

Positive effects

The importance of these gestures cannot be overestimated. They can generate multiple positive effects. Apart from strengthening the relations between the countries involved, apologies by leaders help people reconcile with the past and countries and communities take lessons from history and avoid similar tragedies. Most importantly, they provide some solace to the victims' descendants; they give them a sense of justice and rectitude.

There were many public debates following the apology from Germany regarding reparations. Herero activists insist that the development aid offered by the German authorities is not enough and is generic in nature. According to them, the descendants of the genocide's victims should receive a tangible compensation, primarily in the form of land property that had been taken away by the German colonisers. This is a complex issue, whereby it is difficult to find a mutually acceptable compromise. 'What is the right price to pay for genocide?' is a rhetorical question.

Unlike Germany and France, Turkey has been in constant denial of the Armenian genocide during World War I. In April 2021, the Turkish President went as far as condemning the recognition of the genocide by the newly elected American President, Joe Biden. This strained bilateral relations between Turkey and the U.S. even further. Apparently, the overarching image of Mr. Erdogan as a 'strongman' does not go well with any kind of apology on the international stage. There is enough evidence that the killing of 1.5 million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I was indeed genocide. Leaders like Mr. Erdogan seem to believe that asking for forgiveness

can be interpreted as a sign of weakness. In fact, it is quite the opposite.

The Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has a propensity for apologies. According to him, "apologies for things in the past are important to make sure that we actually understand and know and share and do not repeat those mistakes". In 2016, Mr. Trudeau apologised before the descendants of passengers of the *Komagata Maru* ship. In 1914, the Canadian government of the day had decided to turn away the ship carrying South Asian migrants, mostly Sikhs. The ship was forced to return to India. Back home, the British suspected the passengers to be revolutionaries and an altercation began. Many passengers were shot dead.

In 2018, Mr. Trudeau apologised for his country's role in turning away a ship carrying over 900 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution.

Such apologies require courage, good will, compassion, and humility.

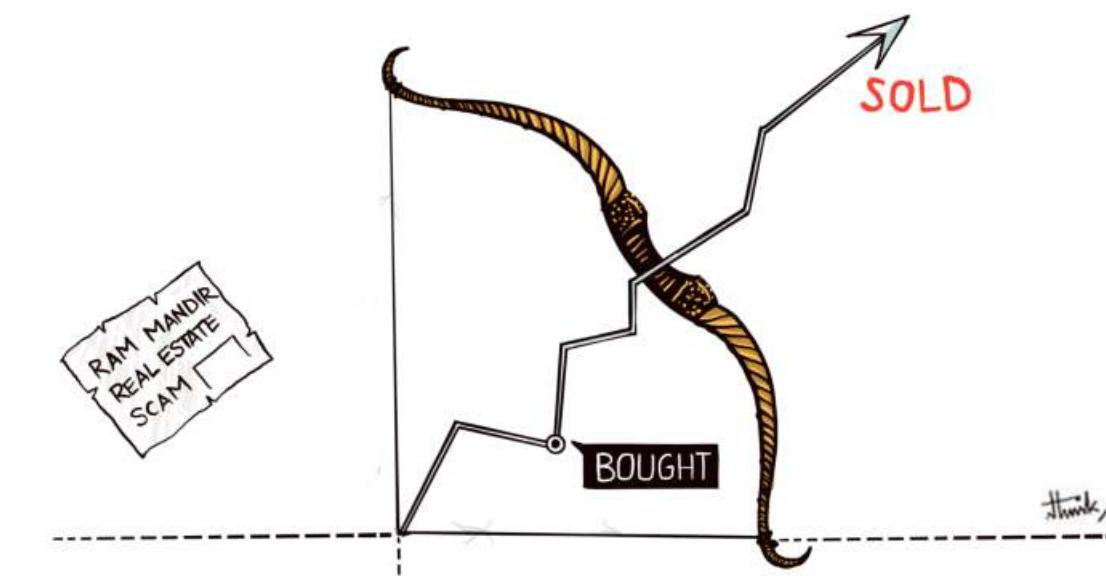
It is not an easy task to apologise, given that one has to do so for events that took place decades or even a century ago.

In search of a moral compass

Arguably, a sense of humility is a rare phenomenon in contemporary geopolitics. We are witnessing a re-emergence of political leaders, from Nicaragua to Myanmar, who are ready to resort to any means in order to remain in power. In this environment, apologetic voices become even more precious as they help us reconcile with tragic events of the past and remove the stains of history. Besides, they add a moral dimension to international relations.

In this sense, to be a pillar of the multipolar world is not to be a military power, manufacturing and/or financial hub, and/or a global investor alone. Countries that strive for global leadership should be able to provide moral leadership as well. This includes critical self-reflection, humility, compassion, and care not only towards their own people, but also towards the most vulnerable communities around the world.

Tatiana Belousova is Assistant Professor at the Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana



DATA POINT

Sharing the shots | Of the 24.7 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses which were available for administration until May in India, 83% were supplied by the Centre to the States, 10.7% were procured directly by the States and 6.3% by private hospitals. The data are sourced from the affidavit presented by the Union government to the Supreme Court. Across States, wide variations were observed in vaccines procured by private hospitals and States directly. By Sumanth Sen, Jasmin Nihalani & Vignesh Radhakrishnan

HIGH PRIVATE PROCUREMENT | In 9 States/UTs the share of doses procured by private hospitals was more than the Indian average of 6.3%

State/UTs	Centre to States	States' own procurement	Private hospitals
Delhi	64.6	11.0	24.4
Telangana	75.1	6.0	18.9
Maharashtra	75.2	9.3	15.5
Karnataka	76.9	9.5	13.6
Haryana	76.8	10.8	12.4
W.B.	78.7	10.2	11.1
Arunachal	86.2	4.0	9.9
Chandigarh	83.3	7.1	9.6
T.N.	80.7	12.8	6.5
India Avg.	83.0	10.7	6.3

MIXED BAG | In States such as Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Andhra Pradesh, the share of direct procurement by the States was relatively high

State/UTs	Centre to States	States' own procurement	Private hospitals
Sikkim	91.3	2.6	6.2
Goa	90.7	4.2	5.1
Punjab	85.7	9.5	4.8
Kerala	87.6	8.5	3.9
Uttarakhand	88.3	8.2	3.5
Gujarat	88.9	8.8	2.3
U.P.	80.5	17.3	2.2
Mizoram	94.9	3.0	1.6
Assam	86.0	12.4	1.6
A.P.	81.7	16.9	1.4

LOW PRIVATE PROCUREMENT | In 18 States/UTs the share of doses procured by private hospitals was less than 1%. Of the 1.9 crore doses available for administration in Rajasthan until May, 0.8% were procured by private hospitals, 9.4% directly by the State govt. and 89.8% were given by the Centre

State/UTs	Centre to States	States' own procurement	Private hospitals
Jharkhand	87.3	11.8	0.9
Rajasthan	89.8	9.4	0.8
Odisha	90.9	8.7	0.4
Madhya Pradesh	89.3	10.4	0.3
Himachal Pradesh	95.7	4.0	0.3
Chhattisgarh	90.4	9.3	0.2
Jammu & Kashmir	88.9	10.9	0.2
Bihar	85.6	14.4	0.0
Nagaland	91.0	9.0	0.0
Meghalaya	92.4	7.6	0.0
Manipur	93.2	6.8	0.0
Puducherry	93.7	6.3	0.0
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	93.8	6.2	0.0
Daman and Diu	94.2	5.8	0.0
Andaman and Nicobar	95.9	4.1	0.0
Tripura	96		

FROM PAGE ONE

Suspected drone attack leaves two injured

Union Defence Minister Rajnath also spoke to Air Chief Marshal H.S. Arora, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff of the IAF, regarding the incident.

Western Air Commander Air Marshal V.R. Chaudhari is scheduled to visit the base to assess the situation. IAF chief, Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria, who is on an official trip to Bangladesh, is monitoring the situation from there, officials said.

Earlier this year, the Border Security Forces (BSF) foiled a few attempts to drop weapons and drugs by using drones on this side of the International Border in Jammu's Samba and Kathua belt.

There have been warnings that Pakistan-based ter-

rorist groups could attempt to target military bases with drones. After the drone attack on Saudi Aramco oil facilities in Eastern Saudi Arabia in September 2019, the armed forces held deliberations on the issue and put in place plans to procure counter-drone capabilities.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed an anti-drone technology for short ranges which was deployed for Prime Minister's security during the Independence Day address last August.

Last December, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh said that the Navy was procuring Smash-2000 rifles to counter drones, among other measures.

Rajnath reaches Ladakh, to review ground situation

He later interacted with 300 veterans, including Ashok Chakra winner Naib Subedar (Honorary) Chhering Mutup (Retd) and Maha Vir Chakra winner Colonel Sonam Wangchuk (retd).

Listing various measures taken by the government for the welfare of veterans, Mr. Singh said a number of steps have been taken to address the issue of resettlement, including organising job fairs through Directorate General Resettlement, in which a large number of veterans were given employment.

Later, Mr. Singh met the elected representatives of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils, Leh, Kargil and officials in Leh. During his visit, he will

also inaugurate infrastructure projects constructed by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and interact with troops deployed in the region.

He was accompanied by Army chief General Manoj Naravane and Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh R.K. Mathur.

The BRO has taken up infrastructure development in a big way to beef up connectivity in the border areas.

This is the Defence Minister's first visit to the region since the first phase of disengagement in February, in which both sides pulled back thousands of troops, tanks and armoured vehicles from Pangong Tso.

(With inputs from PTI)

It is a struggle to 'catch the tower' for Mizo students

He felt the University Grants Commission (UGC) should have factored in poor or no connectivity to reduce or exempt fees. "There is anyway no point of making students pay the fees in full when they cannot access laboratories, library and other facilities in college or university," he said.

Mizoram University's Vice-Chancellor, K.R.S. Sambasiva Rao acknowledged the hardships faced by students in remote and rural areas in accessing online classes. But he also saw the silver lining. "The determination of the students to go the extra yard for connectivity underlines their academic interest. The fellow-feeling among the Mizo community has also come to the fore with any villager – even if not related to a student – letting his or her smartphone be used for

classes or exams," he told *The Hindu*.

He also alluded to instances of civil society organisations such as the Young Mizo Association helping put up makeshift exam centres for the students in areas with Internet connectivity. "We also have a learning management system, a platform for digital learning from where students can download study material whenever they are able to. There are alternative methods if students contact their teachers concerned about not getting the academic programmes online," Mr. Rao said.

Mizoram University has about 3,000 students, of whom about 600 are from other States, including Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The university's students from these States have better access to the Internet.

Leadership woes continue in Karnataka Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU
Coming close on the heels of a perceived feud in the Karnataka unit of the Congress between the Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar over who the next Chief Minister would be, another group is set to meet the central leaders on Monday.

Party sources said that B.K. Hariprasad, MLC, and former Union Minister K.H. Muniappa are in Delhi to apprise the central leaders about the development between the camps of Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar. On Saturday, the two leaders met former Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara to discuss the developments here.

Meeting in Delhi
"The group that does not associate in either of the camps believes that the fight

for leadership will cost the party dear. They left for Delhi on Sunday afternoon to meet AICC leader K.C. Venugopal," a source said, adding that they were likely to meet him on Monday. "They would seek the intervention of the high command to control both groups."

Sources said that public statements by the followers of Mr. Siddaramaiah or Mr. Shivakumar's response to these statements did not augur well for the party before it even came to power.

In a related development on Sunday, Dr. Parameshwara and Dinesh Gundu Rao, both former KPCC presidents, met to discuss the developments, party sources said. The KPCC Disciplinary Action Committee has said it had taken *suo motu* notice of the recent events of elected representatives and party members expressing their views in public.

CM

Govt. faces a tough choice on interest rates

A cut in small savings rates will be 'unpopular' and further hurt households amid a surge in inflation, say economists

VIKAS DHOOT
NEW DELHI

The Union government has a tricky political decision to make over the next couple of days, with the quarterly reset of interest rates on small savings schemes due on June 30. A cut in small savings rates at this point would be an "unpopular" move and further hurt households amid a surge in inflation, according to economists.

Sharp cuts in the rates for the current quarter on instruments, including the Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificates (NSCs) announced on March 31, were rolled back within hours amid the West Bengal Assembly election campaign.

"If you go strictly by the formula set for small savings rates, they may need to cut rates to some extent. But I think the government will not do it this time as it will be a very unpopular move due to the rising inflation and declining savings rates," CARE Ratings chief economist Madan Sabnavis told *The Hindu*.

However, the government

sharply to 6.3% in May this year after averaging 6.2% through 2020-21. Inflation is expected to stay elevated around 5.5%-6% through 2021-22.

Moreover, household savings have been shrinking significantly for two quarters in a row even before the second COVID-19 wave, as per recent Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data on savings rates for the third quarter of 2020-21.

"If you go strictly by the formula set for small savings rates, they may need to cut rates to some extent. But I think the government will not do it this time as it will be a very unpopular move due to the rising inflation and declining savings rates," CARE Ratings chief economist Madan Sabnavis told *The Hindu*.

However, the government

Existing rates

A look at the existing interest rates for select small savings schemes

Instruments	Existing rates of interest
1-year term deposit	5.5
5-year term deposit	6.7
5-year recurring deposit	5.8
Senior Citizen Savings Scheme	7.4
National Savings Certificate	6.8
Public Provident Fund	7.1
Kisan Vikas Patra	6.9
Monthly Income Account	6.6
Sukanya Samridhi Yojana	7.6



will also have to weigh the costs of leaving the rates unchanged on its borrowing plans.

Recent auctions

Some recent auctions of 10-year government securities (Gsecs) have struggled to find takers at the interest rates being offered by the

Central bank.

No bids were received for such an auction held last Friday, which suggests borrowing from the market at low rates may not be sustainable. The RBI has often blamed the high administered interest rates on small savings for poor transmission of its rate cuts in the economy.

Mr. Sabnavis said the government must revisit the formula adopted since April 2016 that links small savings to Gsecs' rates, as they are not really market-determined, but being managed by the Central bank.

Policy rethink needed

"This is a tad convoluted. The RBI is ensuring rates don't rise through a policy-induced stance of managing the yield curve, so the gsec rates are getting divorced from reality. Even the market is signalling [that] the RBI needs to pay more to raise government borrowings, with Friday's auction eliciting no bids," he said.

Bengaluru Dr. B.R. Ambedkar School of Economics University Vice-Chancellor N.R. Bhanumurthy said the extent of rate cuts on small

savings should be carefully calibrated.

"We can't give a shock that discourages financial savings by effecting sharp rate cuts like those announced last time. We are a savings-dependent economy and need a policy that gives them the same importance as investments," he said.

Small savings rates had been slashed between 0.5% and 1.4% on different instruments in April 2020, bringing the PPF rate to 7.1% from 7.9%.

The PPF returns were further slashed to 6.4% for the first quarter of 2021-22, before the government reversed the move citing an "oversight".

The range of rate cuts proposed at the time was 0.4% to 1.1% on various instruments.

Don't take action against Newsclick till July 5: HC

ED is pursuing money laundering case

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered the Enforcement Directorate (ED) not to take any coercive action against news portal Newsclick and its editor Prabir Purkayastha until July 5 in an alleged money laundering case.

Justice Jasmeet Singh gave the direction while issuing notices to the investigating agency on Newsclick and Mr. Purkayastha's plea seeking a copy of the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) registered against them.

Search operations

Newsclick and Mr. Purkayastha contended that in February 2021, several search and seizure operations were carried out by the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at their office and residence.

During the operation, Mr. Purkayastha was informed that an ECIR had been registered by the ED for the com-

mission of an offence under the PMLA.

Mr. Purkayastha said the ED had been continuing its investigation for over four months and Newsclick and himself have rendered full cooperation.

The plea said he had not been supplied the copy of the ECIR, despite requests.

It submitted that the ED had been providing the ECIRs in some cases as per their "pick-and-choose policy".

ED's counsel Amit Mahajan said there was no concept of an ECIR under the PMLA, 2002.

Justice Singh, while relying on the ruling of the Supreme Court order, directed "that till the next date of hearing, no coercive action shall be taken against the petitioners [Newsclick and Mr. Purkayastha]."

The court also issued notice to the Economic Offences Wing (EO) of the Delhi police on Newsclick's plea to quash an FIR registered in August last year against it.

Delta variant cases rise in Bhutan

Country's Health Minister warns of collapse of health system amid vaccine shortage

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

Bhutan's Health Minister Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo has said the number of COVID-19 cases of the Delta variant from towns bordering India has been rising, with the country registering more than 2,000 cases, though only one fatality has been recorded so far.

The spurt in cases comes even as the country is facing a worrying vaccine gap to immunise its eligible population after India banned exports following its deadly second wave.

Bhutan has reached out to at least 16 countries other than India in the last few weeks.

In an effort to step up "non-pharmaceutical" solutions, even Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has been travelling by road and foot to remote villages around the country to reinforce the use of masks and sanitising hands.

"I think the global community must understand that Bhutan does not have a mature health system, like many of the countries in the region do, and for example,

we have only one intensive care unit [ICU] doctor. So if our health systems were to get overwhelmed, it would basically collapse our system," Ms. Wangmo explained.

Speaking to *The Hindu* from Thimpu, Ms. Wangmo said the country was open to all options to ensure that its citizens get their second dose within the 14 week deadline.

This includes "mixing and matching" or heterologous inoculation, using a different second vaccine. "Above all, it is also a very good opportunity to generate some very good scientific data as well,"

Ms. Wangmo added.

The Narendra Modi government had sent 5,50,000 Covishield doses as part of its 'Vaccine Maitri' programme to Bhutan by March 21. With the first tranche delivered and the second dose promised within "eight to twelve weeks", the Bhutanese government set about vaccinating nearly 93% of its adult population between March 27 and April 6.

The 'Vaccine Maitri' programme was, however, suspended in the wake of the deadly second COVID-19 wave that hit India in late March.

In April, after cases in In-

dia began to rise, New Delhi reportedly informed Bhutan that there would be a delay, but Bhutan still hoped that the doses would be delivered by the end of June, when 14 weeks would have elapsed.

Ms. Wangmo said that after consulting a few international experts, the government has now decided to extend the gap to 16 weeks, but needs the second doses delivered by mid-July at the very latest for the vaccines to be efficacious.

While the global COVAX alliance has promised to send 20% of Bhutan's requirement of AstraZeneca vaccines, these might only be delivered by August, and the U.S.'s announcement on June 21 that it would distribute 16 million U.S.-made (Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson) vaccines in Asian countries, including Bhutan, has not clarified when these may arrive.

India hit record highs in vaccine production and distribution last week, but the government has "no plans currently" to restart its 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative for Bhutan, three senior officials told *The Hindu*.

Mandatory installation of airbags in cars deferred

Airbags for front seats in existing car models can be installed by Dec. 31: govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has deferred by four months the mandatory installation of dual airbags for front seats in existing car models in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior government official

said on Sunday.

At present, only the driver's seat airbag is mandatory for existing car models.

In view of the prevailing situation, the Ministry has decided to defer mandatory installation of front passenger airbags in the existing car models till December 31,

2021, the official said on the condition of anonymity. "The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers [SIAM] has asked for time. For new models, it's already mandatory," the official added.

The Ministry had on March 6 said vehicles manu-

factured on and after April 1, 2021, in the case of new models, and August 31, 2021, in the case of existing models, should be fitted with an airbag for the person occupying the front seat, other than the driver. The step is aimed at improving passenger safety in case of an accident.

The Ministry had on March 6 said vehicles manu-

	Name of Patient: Master Devendra Chandeva, 10 years. Hospital Name: Christian Medical College. Diagnosis: Thalassemia Major. This is a type of life threatening Blood Disease. The best option for him would be to undergo Allogeneic Peripheral Blood Stem Cell Transplant (PBSCT). The estimated cost of PBSCT at this
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Drones are now a favoured terror tool

Undetected by radars, they are used to smuggle drugs and weapons and conduct aerial surveillance

DEVESH K. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The dropping of explosive devices from drones in the technical area of the Air Force Station in Jammu triggering blasts in the early hours of Sunday was the first such instance in India. However, over the past two years, drones have been deployed regularly by Pakistan-based outfits to smuggle arms, ammunition and drugs into Indian territory.

"The Air Force Station is about 14 km from the border. Though the local police suspect that the drones were flown from across the border, it is yet to be established beyond doubt. High-quality explosives were apparently used," said an official in the know of the developments. "Drones fly low and therefore cannot be detected by any radar system ... preliminary findings suggest that the target was to damage a helipad inside the station."

The official said the incident could be an extension of the trend of Pakistan-based syndicates using drones to smuggle drugs and weapons into the Indian side, apart from conducting aerial surveillance.



Heightened security: Special security force personnel arriving at the Air Force station in Jammu on Sunday. ■ PTI

According to government figures, 167 drone sightings in 2019 and 77 in 2020 were recorded along the border with Pakistan.

In January 2021, the Jammu & Kashmir Police caught two persons while they were picking up a consignment of 16 grenades, two AK-47 rifles, nine AK magazines, a pistol and ammunition, which were smuggled via drones. In another case, the Punjab Police seized 11 grenades that were air-dropped from Pa-

kistan in December 2020. In October 2020, the Army shot down one drone along the Line of Control in the Keran sector of J&K.

A case of dropping arms was reported when the Border Security Force shot down a UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) near Rathua village in the Hir Nagar sector of Jammu on June 20 last year. The drone was transporting an American-made M4 rifle, several grenades and ammunition.

In another case, in the intervening night of June 3 and June 4 last year, a consignment was dropped through three drone sorties outside Dharamkot Randhawa in Gurdaspur in Punjab. The consignment included two MP-9 guns, six pistols and ₹4 lakh in counterfeit currency. It later turned out that the consignment was sent via drones at the instance of Pakistan-based Khalistan Zindabad Force chief Ranjeet Singh Neeta.

On September 21, 2019, the Punjab Police had busted a pro-Khalistan terror module and seized five AK-47 assault rifles with 16 magazines, four pistols of China make with eight magazines, nine grenades, 472 cartridges, ₹10 lakh in counterfeit currency, and five satellite phone sets. That consignment had also been dropped by drones.

"The use of drones by Pakistan-based elements has been a major cause of concern. All tech-based solutions are being explored to counter it. Anti-drone jammers cannot be that effective in the border areas, but they can be deployed at security-sensitive installations to prevent such attacks in future," the official said.

Weaponised drones were first used by the Islamic State in northern Iraq in 2016 and then in Syria.

Another emerging challenge for the security forces is the increasing use of improvised explosive devices. On Sunday, one such device weighing about 5 kg was also found by the Jammu Police, raising suspicion over the involvement of the same group in both cases.

'Era of suppression must end to make dialogue credible'

A dissenting voice is not a criminal act, says Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti said on Sunday that the dialogue process initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream leadership could gain credibility by ending what she called an "era of oppression and suppression" in the Union Territory, and in understanding that a dissenting voice was not a criminal act.

"The use of drones by Pakistan-based elements has been a major cause of concern. All tech-based solutions are being explored to counter it. Anti-drone jammers cannot be that effective in the border areas, but they can be deployed at security-sensitive installations to prevent such attacks in future," the official said.

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Another emerging challenge for the security forces is the increasing use of improvised explosive devices. On Sunday, one such device weighing about 5 kg was also found by the Jammu Police, raising suspicion over the involvement of the same group in both cases.

Onus on Centre
Ms. Mufti, who was part of the delegation, made it clear that the onus was on the Centre to make the dialogue process credible, and said the Centre should initiate confidence-building measures and also ensure protection of jobs and land.

"When I say allow people to breathe, I mean that today, any dissenting note



Give the people the right to breathe and rest will follow later

MEHBOOBA MUFTI
PDP president

that, all the draconian orders passed have to stop. Jobs and land rights have to be protected," the PDP president said.

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

Maintaining that she had taken part in the Delhi talks only to apprise the Central leadership of the problems faced by the people, Ms. Mufti said, "I have not come for any power politics as my stand is clear that I will not contest any elections until the special status of Jammu and Kashmir is restored."

Ms. Mufti also reiterated that she would not contest elections if J&K remained a Union Territory.

"I have made it clear many times that I would not contest any elections under the Union Territory, but at the same time, my party is also aware of the fact that we will not yield political space to anyone. We contested the District Development Council elections held last year," she said.

'Get vaccinated and motivate others'

President Kovind visits his native village during the five-day trip to Uttar Pradesh



Back to the roots: President Ram Nath Kovind, right, with U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Paraunk village. ■ PTI

He said when he was in school, the village only had primary education facility and students had to go out for secondary school.

"He said he had felt at that time that if there had been a secondary school there, even children who did not get an opportunity for education would have been able to pursue higher studies and would not have been deprived of the benefits of education. In those days, it was almost impossible to send

girls out of the village to pursue education. He was happy to note that today, the children of Paraunk village are getting education at the Veerangana Jhalkari Bai Inter College."

He emphasised the importance of education, saying it opened up new opportunities for development.

On the COVID-19 pandemic, he said it had caused great disruption and the adverse impact was pervasive and tragic.

"Many people have lost their loved ones. To fully eradicate this pandemic, we still need to be extremely cautious. He said Uttar Pradesh, the most populous State, has taken comprehensive and effective steps for investigation, prevention and vaccination to curb the spread."

He said there had been an increase in health awareness because of the pandemic and there was a need to highlight the importance of personal and public hygiene.

"The President said the vaccination drive is going on all over the country and also in Uttar Pradesh. He said vaccine is like a shield for protection against the coronavirus. Therefore, one should not only get vaccinated oneself but also motivate others to get vaccinated," said the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Later, the President attended another event at Pukhrayan, where he said he had started his public life.

NC leader hits out at Congress and People's Conference

They are evading a stand on restoring special status'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Hitting out at the Congress and the Peoples Conference, National Conference leader and Member of Parliament Hasnain Masoodi on Sunday said that leaders who called Article 370 'sub judice' and avoided taking a stand on the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir were just being evasive.

"Once it comes to the abrogation of the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, the leaders shy away stating that the matter is *sub judice*," said Mr. Masoodi.

"The leaders take cover under the argument to create an impression, though deceptively,

issue. Same is true about farm laws, where though the constitutionality of the laws is going through judicial scrutiny, the political parties are vying with one another to support the farmers' agitation and call the challenged laws 'black laws,' said Mr. Masoodi.

He added that people are not so gullible as the leaders believe they are, and that they very well understand the game plan.

"The NC reiterates the principled stand that the restoration of August 4, 2019 constitutional position alone would lead to durable and lasting peace in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and fulfil the aspirations of the people," he said.

NHRC panel to meet Bengal victims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) committee investigating complaints of post-election violence in West Bengal will meet victims and complainants on Sunday and Monday, the Commission said.

The NHRC had set up the committee of officers on the direction of the Calcutta High Court on June 18.

"The Committee, headed by Rajiv Jain, Member, NHRC has been touring various places of West Bengal and enquiring into the veracity of these complaints/allegations," the Commission said on Sunday.

As a part of its process, some committee members will meet stakeholders, victims and complainants in Salt Lake, Kolkata for three hours on Sunday evening and three hours on Monday morning from 10 a.m.

No differences in MVA govt.: Pawar

Six-member team coordinating between coalition partners, says the NCP chief



Sharad Pawar

ussion of my colleagues in these three parties on strategic issues," said Mr. Pawar. Mr. Pawar's remarks come amid reports of tensions between the three MVA partners, with the Congress's recent announcement of fighting polls alone and the Sena's alleged frustration at being dominated by the NCP.

"We came together on issues while forming the MVA government ... we are aware that some questions arise while running a government. All three parties in the coalition are agreed on this endeavour. That does not mean there are any differences..." he added.

Speaking in his strong-hold Baramati, Mr. Pawar further stressed that coordination between three ideologi-

cal opposites in running a government properly was one thing and that the right of each party to increase its strength was quite another. "There is a consensus among all three parties in this coalition. There are no differences or any rifts. There is always a joint dis-

tribution of my colleagues in these three parties on strategic issues," said Mr. Pawar.

Mr. Pawar's remarks come amid reports of tensions between the three MVA partners, with the Congress's recent announcement of fighting polls alone and the Sena's alleged frustration at being dominated by the NCP.

"We came together on issues while forming the MVA government ... we are aware that some questions arise while running a government. All three parties in the coalition are agreed on this endeavour. That does not mean there are any differences..." he added.

On Twitter, "This news is absolutely false, misleading and baseless. There is not even an iota of truth in it and the BSP strongly denies it."

Ms. Mayawati said apart from Punjab, the BSP would go it alone in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Her clarification comes amid speculation that her party would rope in smaller parties.

Ms. Mayawati's party is part

Cong. must be fulcrum of any anti-NDA alliance'

Parties should unite, says Tejashwi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

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

In an interview with PTI, Mr. Yadav also said that the Congress was in a direct fight with the BJP in more than 200 Lok Sabha seats and should focus on them while allowing regional parties to be in the driver's seat

in other constituencies.

Asked about the meeting of Opposition leaders and several civil society members at Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar's house here last week, the RJD leader said he was not aware of what transpired in the meeting.

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

On Twitter, "This news is absolutely false, misleading and baseless. There is not even an iota of truth in it and the BSP strongly denies it."

Ms. Mayawati said apart from Punjab, the BSP would go it alone in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Her clarification comes amid speculation that her party would rope in smaller parties.

On Twitter, "This news is absolutely false, misleading and baseless. There is not even an iota of truth in it and the BSP strongly denies it."

Ms. Mayawati's party is part

New IT rules require platforms to appoint a grievance officer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

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

The source said that Dhar-

endra Chatur, who was re-

cently appointed interim resident grievance officer for India by Twitter, has quit the post.

The social media company's website no longer displays his name, as required under Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021. Twitter declined to comment on the development, which comes

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

Twitter now displays the company's name in place of grievance officer, with a U.S. address and an email ID.

Responding to a news report that the two parties would contest the election together, Ms. Mayawati said

Mr. Owaisi's party is part

of the Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha, a loose formation of smaller outfits led by Om Prakash Rajbhar, president of the Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party. Mr. Owaisi said the AIMIM has decided to contest 100 seats in U.P. as part of the Morcha. "We have not had any talks regarding election or alliance with any other party," Mr. Owaisi said.

On Twitter, "This news is absolutely false, misleading and baseless. There is not even an iota of truth in it and the BSP strongly denies it."

Ms. Mayawati's party is part

TRIBAL AREA DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT			
Head Office: Commissioner, Tribal Area Development Department, Udaipur			
Phone - 0294-2428721-24, Fax No. - 0294-241147, E-Mail : comm.tad@rajasthan.gov.in			
No.F.6(4)Acct./CTAD/Purchase/eClass/2021/22			
Date: 08/07/2021			
Notice Inviting e-Bid 03/07/2021-22			
(UBN : TAD2122GLB00004)			
Tribal Area Development Department, Udaipur invites Proposal for Setting up of Integrated Smart Classes, Implementation and Training in Departmental Educational Institutions from reputed firms having expertise and experience in the fields of IT, ITeS through single stage open competitive bidding process as follows:			
S. No.	Items	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	BID Document Fees (Rs)
1.	Setting up of Integrated Smart Classes, Implementation and Training, Maintenance in Educational Institutions	640.00	2000.00
RISL Processing Fee (Rs)			

Shed vaccine hesitancy and get inoculated soon, says Modi

PM says vaccinations will be the tribute to those who died of COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the country to shed vaccine hesitancy and get themselves inoculated soon, and to trust science and scientists to combat the threat of the COVID-19 which still remains among us.

He spoke to some residents of Dulariya village, a tribal area in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh, during his monthly radio broadcast *Mann ki Baat* (straight from the heart), after they shared their fear of getting vaccinated after rumours of its "ill effects" spread in their village.

Over 31 crore vaccinated
"More than 31 crore Indians have taken the vaccine. I have taken both doses. My mother, who is nearly 100 years old, has also taken it... these vaccines, along with masking and social distancing, are our only armour against this shape-shifting disease"

More than 31 crore Indians have taken the vaccine. I have taken both doses. My mother, who is nearly 100 years old, has also taken it... these vaccines, along with masking and social distancing, are our only armour against this shape-shifting disease

NARENDRA MODI Prime Minister

and social distancing are our only armour against this shape-shifting disease," he said.

Mr. Modi also hailed the fact that over 86 lakh vaccine doses were administered on a single day on June 21 at the start of the new phase of inoculation under which all adults are being given free jabs by the Union government.

He also paid tributes to Guru Prasad Mohapatra, Secretary in his government who died from COVID-19 recently, saying the officer worked overtime to make arrangements to ramp up oxy-

gen production and supply during the recent wave even as he was battling the disease himself.

"Corona has snatched him away from us. There are countless people who have never been discussed. Our tribute to every such person would be that we follow the COVID protocol fully, get our vaccinations done," Mr. Modi said, noting that Doctors Day fell on July 1, a community that continues to be at the vanguard of the fight against the pandemic.

In his broadcast, he also paid tributes and remembered the contribution of Indian sprint legend Milkha Singh, who died earlier this month. Mr. Modi hailed Singh's contribution to Indian sports, and said he will always cherish his interactions with the athlete. Singh died in a Chandigarh hospital after a month-long battle with COVID-19.

Struggles of athletes

Mr. Modi also shared the struggles and triumphs of Olympics-bound Indian athletes, and said people must not build any pressure on these sportspersons but "cheer for India".

He said Guruprasad from Chennai had written to him appreciating his respectful references to Tamil Nadu and its language and culture and the frequent citing of Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural. "He says he has compiled all these references in an e-book and would like it uploaded on the Namo App [Prime Minister Modi's personal app]. I have assured him I will do so," he said.

While 19.4% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 4.1% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021.

45,217 new cases
India recorded 45,217 new COVID-19 cases until 8.45 p.m. on Sunday, taking the cumulative caseload to 3,02,77,659. As many as 958

new deaths were also registered taking the tally to 3,96,741.

Kerala reported 10,905 new infections, followed by Maharashtra (9,974) and Tamil Nadu (5,127). Maharashtra recorded 405 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (91) and Karnataka (89). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

'Tribal vaccine coverage better than average'

'May order of Covaxin yet to be supplied'

Health Ministry provides break-up of expected vaccine delivery schedule to SC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI
Vaccination coverage in tribal areas is "better" than the national average, the government claimed in the Supreme Court.

In fact, more walk-in vaccinations are happening in tribal districts as compared to the national average. The gender ratio for people vaccinated was better in the tribal districts, the Health Ministry said. "Vaccination per million population in tribal coverage is better than the national average as on June 23. Ninety-seven out of 176 tribal districts are performing better than the all-India vaccination coverage," the Ministry told the court.

Statistics, as on June 23, presented in court shows that "doses per million population" on a national basis is 2,13,244 while in tribal districts it is 2,19,762. The male:female ratio is 54:46 (national) and 53:47 (tribal districts).

The Centre said "exceptional" coverage of vaccination was observed even in districts with the most difficult and remote areas and with higher proportion of tribal population. A chart shows that up to 86.5% of the Schedule Tribe population in Ladakh, Lakshwadeep, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura had at least one vaccine dose.

Bharat Biotech is yet to begin supply for a batch of vaccines, an order for which was placed by the Health Ministry in May, according to an affidavit filed by the Ministry in the Supreme Court on Saturday.

The Health Ministry told the apex court that it expected to receive at least 51 crore doses from January-July. 32 crore of these have already been administered as of Sunday evening.

In a break-up of the expected vaccine delivery schedule by the government, the Centre had ordered 3 crore doses of Covaxin since January that was to have been delivered until the end of May.

It placed another order of 5 crore doses on May 5 that is expected to be delivered by

the end of July. However, in its remarks in the affidavit on the "supply status" of the vaccine, the Centre notes that of this lot, "Covaxin was yet to start supply".

This, however, was based on information updated as of June 21 and it is possible that Bharat Biotech may have

supplied some additional doses in the last week. According to data on the Co-WIN website, as of Sunday, 3.8 crore doses of Covaxin have been administered so far been.

As *The Hindu* reported on May 28, Bharat Biotech has stated that it took four

months for a batch of Covaxin to be manufactured and readied for supply. Thus, production of batches of Covaxin that were initiated during March this year would be ready for supply only in June, the company had said in a statement. At that point, about 2.2.5 crore doses of Covaxin had reportedly been supplied.

This implies that only the batches of the vaccine produced in April would be ready for supply by July.

The government had earlier projected that Bharat Biotech is to scale up production to 6.7 crore doses a month from July-August and 10 crore doses a month from September. This works out to at least 52 crore doses from July-December, of which 40 crore is marked off from September to December.

What made him embark on poll mode? His panchayat, the little known Kushumjore under Sinapali block, shares a border with Chhattisgarh. The remoteness and prevailing vaccine hesitancy had made difficult the task of local administration in inoculating the population.

The young sarpanch's assurances came in handy, and the administration is now just short of vaccinating 18 more people before achieving 100% population coverage for the first dose in the 45 years and above group in Kushumjore panchayat.

The vaccines and their recipients are ready. By the first hour of Monday, Kushumjore is set to achieve the rare feat of vaccine saturation in Odisha.

This is a no mean achievement. A few weeks ago, people

were running away from the mere mention of vaccination, saying they would die in three months if they took the vaccines.

"Though government authorities had been trying hard to persuade people to get the jab, it was not happening. People were expecting someone from the community to provide the assurance. I told people that I would shoulder responsibility for their family members if anything happened to them after vaccination. It instilled confidence among people," said Mr. Jyoti.

Kushumjore comprises five villages – Haldikhol, Nuaguda, Kaseipani, Kushumjore and Brahmaniguda.

COVID-19 vaccination is probably the first major health response the people of this panchayat have come across. The nearest Primary Health Centre is situated at a

distance of 15 km. Not all habitations under the panchayat can be reached by vehicle.

"Of the 708 persons aged above 45 in panchayat, about 100 persons had received vaccine in April. However, when Chhattisgarh recorded COVID-19 deaths around that time, it made them panic. We were not able to convince people to get vaccinated thereafter," said Bhairab Charan Panigrahi, an Ayush doctor in charge of the panchayat.

Dr. Panigrahi said the vaccination team of Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), Anganwadi workers, the sarpanch, and top block and district level officers, conducted meetings and went from door-to-door, appealing to people. After a lot of effort, the vaccination drive picked up pace from June 21.

U.P. BJP leader slams handling of COVID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALLIA

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

State BJP working committee member Ram Iqbal Singh, who made the remarks on Saturday, is the lat-

est among the party's leaders who have questioned the handling of the coronavirus infection in the State.

Speaking to reporters here, Mr. Singh rued that the Health Department did not learn any lesson from the first wave of COVID-19 which led to a large number of deaths due to the disease in the second wave.

"At least 10 people died from every village in the

State during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic," he alleged.

The BJP leader also demanded that ₹10 lakh be given to the kin of those who succumbed to the infection.

Chief Minister misled

He lamented that after 75 years of freedom, Ballia district with a population of 34 lakh, had "no doctors or medicines". On being re-

minded that during his visit to Ballia, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made by the Health Department, Mr. Singh said the officials had misled the Chief Minister.

Last month, BJP's Sitapur MLA Rakesh Rathore had ex-

pressed resentment over COVID-19 mismanagement and said that he feared a sedition charge for speaking up.

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1.64 million vaccine doses administered on Sunday

Rajasthan records highest number of vaccinations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

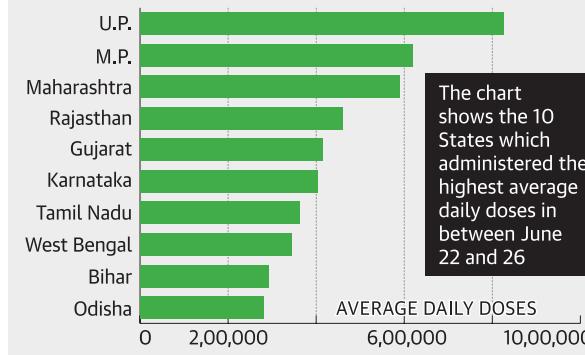
India administered 1.64 million new doses of COVID-19 vaccines until 9 p.m. on Sunday. Rajasthan recorded the highest number of vaccinations (0.24 million) followed by Gujarat (0.22 million) and Chhattisgarh (0.17 million).

Between June 1 and 26, 4.06 million doses were administered daily in India on average.

At the current rate, a total of 1,089.10 million doses can be administered by December 31, 2021, which is around 791 million doses less than those required to fully vaccinate all adults (1,880.37 million).

Pace picks up

An average 65.99 lakh doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered daily between June 22 and 26 in the country. On June 21, a record 87.2 lakh doses were administered



While 19.4% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 4.1% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021.

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new deaths were also registered taking the tally to 3,96,741.

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First case of Delta Plus in Rajasthan

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A fully vaccinated 65-year-old woman in Rajasthan's Bikaner district has tested positive for the Delta Plus variant, making it the first case of the mutant virus in the State. The woman, who had received both the doses of Covaxin, has since recovered.

Her sample was sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, on May 30 for genome sequencing and her diagnostic test report was received in Bikaner on Friday. Bikaner Chief Medical & Health Officer O.P. Chahar said it was the first confirmed case of Delta Plus in Rajasthan, though the woman was asymptomatic and had recovered completely.

The Sardar Patel Medical College in Bikaner had sent 10 random samples of COVID-19 patients, including hers, to NIV for genome sequencing. The woman and her three family members, who were diagnosed with COVID-19, had recovered without any institutional treatment.

Odisha sarpanch helps villages overcome hesitancy

Today, Kushumjore's will complete first dose for 45+

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

In the past one month, Udit Pratap Singh Jyoti, a young sarpanch in Odisha's Nuapada district, has doled out more promises than he did during his election campaign days.

From shouldering the burden of a family upon the death of its breadwinner to footing hospital bills, Mr. Jyoti (29), has just kept shattering promises.

What made him embark on poll mode? His panchayat, the little known Kushumjore under Sinapali block, shares a border with Chhattisgarh. The remoteness and prevailing vaccine hesitancy had made difficult the task of local administration in inoculating the population.

The young sarpanch's assurances came in handy, and the administration is now just short of vaccinating 18 more people before achieving 100% population coverage for the first dose in the 45 years and above group in Kushumjore panchayat.

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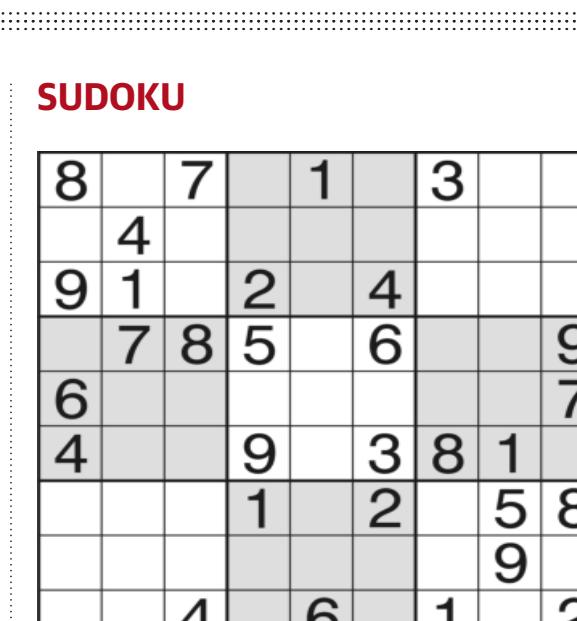
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SUDOKU



At Ohio rally, Trump hints at 2024 plans

In the campaign-style event, the former President repeated claims of 'election fraud', hit out at Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WELLINGTON

Donald Trump held his first big campaign-style rally since leaving the White House, giving a vintage, rambling speech on Saturday to an adoring audience as he launched a series of appearances ahead of next year's midterm elections.

The former President, who has been booted from social media platforms and faces multiple legal woes, has flirted with his own potential candidacy in 2024, but in the 90-minute address at a fair grounds in Ohio he made no clear mention of his political future, even when the crowd chanted "four more years! four more years!"

Mr. Trump did tease them at one point by alluding to the possibility of another run for the White House.

"We may have to win it a third time. It is possible," he



Back to spotlight: Donald Trump points to the crowd as he arrives for his rally in Wellington on Saturday. •AFP

said, showing yet again he thinks he won in November. The crowd cheered wildly.

On other matters Mr. Trump flitted from one to the next – immigration, crime, gun rights, Afghanistan, Iran and more – bouncing like a pinball in true Trumpian style.

One repeated message was that President Joe Biden

is a catastrophe. "Joe Biden is destroying our nation before our very eyes," Mr. Trump said.

And Mr. Trump hammered away yet again at the falsehood that he won the November election but Mr. Biden prevailed through fraud.

"The election was over," Mr. Trump said, "And we

took a massive victory. They did into something that should never be allowed."

Until now Mr. Trump had delivered two major speeches since leaving Washington in January, including a vindictive monologue in North Carolina this month when relitigated his loss to Mr. Biden.

The Ohio rally drew a crowd of several thousand, who were enthusiastic but not quite raucous.

One purpose of it was for Mr. Trump to endorse conservative candidate Max Miller, a former aide.

With this event, Mr. Trump made clear he wants to remain a powerful force in the Republican Party's effort to retake the Senate and House of Representatives next year.

In particular, he has signaled a willingness to help candidates who embrace his Make America Great Again

(MAGA) movement.

In the crowd many sported shirts with slogans like "Trump 2024 – Because America can never be too great."

"If you look at all of Trump's rallies, you'll see hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of people and there is no way a demented old man won this election," said Laura Benas, 57, a retail manager in Wellington, referring to Mr. Biden.

Visit to Mexico border

Mr. Trump, 75, has maintained a relatively low profile since leaving the presidency under a cloud three weeks after the deadly January 6 uprising at the U.S. Capitol.

Mr. Trump will also enter

the public sphere next Wednesday with a visit to the U.S. border with Mexico, where he will hammer the Biden administration on its immigration policy.

Blinken, Lapid to meet in Rome to reset U.S.-Israel ties

Replenishment of Iron Dome Defence System may figure in talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will

meet in Rome on Sunday as their new governments look

to turn the page on former President Donald Trump and former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose close alliance aggravated

partisan divisions within both countries.



Antony Blinken

curity expert at the nonprofit Center for a New American Security. "But there are things you can do quietly under the radar, on the ground, to improve the situation."

That approach – of managing the conflict rather than trying to solve it – may succeed in papering over domestic divisions. But it also maintains a status quo that the Palestinians find increasingly oppressive and hopeless, and which has fueled countless cycles of unrest.

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

Classified U.K. defence papers found at bus stop

It detailed the movement of a warship

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Britain's government said on Sunday it was investigating how classified defence documents, outlining the movements of a warship that led to Russia firing warning shots off the Crimean coast, were found at a bus stop in England.

The Ministry of Defence said that an employee told it last week that the documents had been lost, and that an investigation had been launched. "It shouldn't be able to happen," Brandon Lewis, Minister for Northern Ireland,

told Sky News. "It was properly reported at the time... there's an internal investigation into that situation."

The documents appear to show that the U.K. officials knew the route could lead to a possible reaction from the Russians, but that taking an alternative passage could be considered by Moscow as "the U.K. being scared/runaway". The route it did take would instead "provide an opportunity to engage with the Ukrainian government... in what the U.K. recognises as Ukrainian waters," said another document.

Riots in Lebanon over economy

Amid political deadlock, troops, protesters clash over country's economic crisis

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIRUT

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

Sporadic protests were reported throughout Lebanon on Saturday as the country's 20-month economic crisis worsened. The World Bank described the crisis as one of the worst the world has witnessed in 150 years. It is coupled with a political deadlock that has left Lebanon



On the boil: Protesters burning tyres to block a road in Beirut, Lebanon, on Thursday. •AP

without a government since August. The largest protests were in the southern port city of Sidon and in Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city and most impoverished.

Protests took place in Beirut.

Lebanon has been suffering severe shortages of vital products, including fuel, medicine and medical products, angering the public.

Lebanon's currency hit a record low on Saturday, reaching £18,000 to the U.S. dollar. The pound has lost more than 90% of its value since the crisis began.

In October 2019 protesters called for the removal of the political class that has run the country since the end of the 1975-90 civil war and has been blamed for corruption and mismanagement that has ruined the country's economy.

The Army said rioters on motorcycles threw stun grenades at troops in Tripoli injuring nine soldiers, while another was injured when hit by a stone.

UK's Hancock quits over breach of COVID-19 rules

Sajid Javid is new Health Secretary

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

U.K. Health Secretary Matt Hancock resigned on Saturday following revelations he broke government coronavirus restrictions during an affair with a close aide, with former Finance Minister Sajid Javid taking up the role.

The frontman for Britain's response to the pandemic, particularly the nationwide vaccine roll-out, quit in a letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

"We owe it to people who have sacrificed so much in this pandemic to be honest when we have let them down as I have done by breaching the guidance," he wrote.

"The last thing I would want is for my private life to distract attention from the single-minded focus that is leading us out of this crisis."

Mr. Johnson had initially stood by his Health Secretary after Mr. Hancock admitted breaking COVID-19 social distancing rules, when at the same time he was urging the public to stick by the measures.



Matt Hancock

'Marib clashes kill 111 govt., rebel fighters'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUBAI

Clashes between rebels and Yemeni government fighters killed at least 111 in Marib in three days, pro-government sources said, following a renewed offensive by Houthi insurgents.

The fighting killed 29 pro-government personnel and at least 82 rebels, the pro-government sources said.

"These areas witnessed fierce fighting amid artillery shelling from both sides and intense coalition air raids," a government military official said.

The Iran-allied Houthi insurgents escalated their efforts to seize Marib, the government's last stronghold in northern Yemen, in February, and the fighting has killed hundreds on both sides. Control of the oil-rich region would strengthen the Houthis' bargaining position in peace talks, but the battle has also raised fears of a humanitarian catastrophe, as many Yemenis had fled to the area to escape fighting in other parts.

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'Saudi Arabia releases two women activists'

Samar Badawi, Nassima al-Sadah were held on suspicion of harming Saudi interests

REUTERS
LONDON

Saudi Arabia has released two women's rights activists detained nearly three years ago after they had served their time, London-based Saudi rights group ALQST said on Sunday.

Samar Badawi and Nassima al-Sadah were detained in July 2018, along with more than a dozen other activists, on suspicion of harming Saudi interests, a move that drew international condemnation.

The Saudi government's media office did not immediately respond to a Reuters

request for comment. Few details have been provided by authorities on the charges against the women or on sporadic trials that have been closed to the public.

Their release follows that of prominent activist Loujain al-Hathloul in February who had served half of her custodial sentence on broad cybercrime and counterterrorism charges. She still faces a five-year travel ban.

Human Rights Watch, while welcoming the release of Ms. Badawi and Ms. Sadah, said, "These brave women should have never been detained in the first place.



Samar Badawi

They should have been appreciated for leading change in Saudi Arabia."

Ms. Badawi received the U.S. International Women of Courage Award in 2012 for challenging the Saudi male

guardianship system, and was among the first women who signed a petition calling on the government to allow women to drive and to vote and run in local elections.

Ms. Sadah, from the relative Shia-majority Qatif province, has also campaigned to abolish the guardianship system.

The women's rights activists were detained before and after the kingdom in 2018 lifted a ban on women driving as part of social reforms that have been accompanied by a crackdown on dissent that has also netted clerics and intellectuals.

ASK US



K. NITYA KALYANI

Q: I took a health insurance cover paying a heavy premium with the assurance of cashless facility when hospitalised. I was admitted in an approved hospital and presented the identity card issued by the insurance TPA seeking cashless facility to the hospital authorities. The hospital authorities informed me that the TPA did not accede to my request denying cashless facility, stating "Cashless denied, Hospital not in GIPSA/ PRN Network." I was asked to pay a minimum of ₹1 lakh immediately. After getting discharged, I wrote to the TPA, informing them that the relative hospital is included in the network hospital list provided by them when the insurance coverage was taken. After several reminders they advised me to submit hospital bills and get reimbursement. I wrote to them of the trouble I was put to on the sick bed to arrange for monies demanded by the hospital, and demanded they refund the premium amount paid by me as they failed to keep up their assurance of cashless facility. There is no response from the TPA, despite reminders. May I have advice from your insurance specialists as to the remedy if any available for me in this regard, through your paper column, at the earliest.

B V NARASINGA RAO

A: You have two issues. One that your cashless facility was not forthcoming and two that you are yet to receive/prefer your claim. Please write to the Grievances Officer of the branch of your insurance company where your policy is, with a detailed complaint. You have to do this in writing, either by post or e-mail, with all relevant information and copies of all supporting documents. Please ensure you get an acknowledgement of the communication.

You will find their contact information on your policy document and also on the website of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). You should expect them to respond to you and resolve the issue in about two weeks. If that does not happen, please escalate the issue to IRDAI through their online grievances facility called the 'Integrated Grievance'.

Just to recap what was said in the column Cover Note some time ago:

"Every insurer has to have a policy for policyholder service parameters approved by its Board of Directors as mandated by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

The policy should specify turnaround times for various services to policyholders and an 'effective Grievance Redressal Mechanism' to ensure that complaints are resolved in a time-bound and efficient manner.

Complaints to the Grievance Officer can be about dissatisfaction with the insurer, distribution channels, intermediaries, insurance intermediaries or other regulated entities about an action or lack of action about the standard of service or deficiency of service and the insurance company is required to resolve a grievance within two weeks of its receipt."

If you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint, you can escalate it to IRDAI, which will take it up with the insurance company and facilitate a re-examination of the complaint and resolution.

You can call the IRDAI Grievance Call Centre on Toll Free Numbers 155255/ 1800 425 4732 that works from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday to Saturday and offers services in English and all major Indian languages.

You can send an e-mail to complaints@irda.gov.in, or you can visit IRDAI's consumer education website www.policyholder.gov.in and fill and submit the complaint registration form there.

You can post your complaint letter with copies of all supportings to The General Manager, Consumer Affairs Department - Grievance Redressal Cell, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), 4th Floor, Survey No. 115/1, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 500032.

IRDAI has also established an online complaints registering system called the Integrated Grievance Management System (IGMS) at www.igms.irda.gov.in where you can fill and submit a form with your complaint which will reach both the regulator and your insurance company, and so the IRDAI monitors consumer complaints in real time.

The system also lets you track the status of your complaint as the action taken by your insurer are updated on the system which alerts the various stakeholders on tasks and deadlines.

Your complaint should be resolved in two weeks and, if you don't revert in eight weeks after that, the complaint will be closed by the insurance company.

If the company does not respond even after 15 days or if you are not satisfied with the action taken, you can escalate the complaint to IRDAI again and the regulator will take it up with the company for resolution.

You still can go to the Insurance Ombudsman or seek other legal remedies if the insurance company's response is not to your satisfaction.

(K. Nitya Kalyani is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Watch out for these investment risks

It is preferable to invest through regulated vehicles so that a risk is out of your way

JOYDEEP SEN

There is lots of literature on risk in investments. Here, we will simplify the concept and enable you to approach your investments with a proper understanding. To start with, let us classify investments broadly into three categories:

Market-dependent: Here, your returns depend on the 'market', i.e. price levels of the instruments in the secondary market moving up. Equity stocks, equity-oriented mutual fund schemes, and equity-oriented portfolio management services are of this nature. Contractual return: Your returns are fixed or contracted upfront. Some people refer to

these as guaranteed, but guarantee is a different concept. Bank deposits, post office schemes, corporate deposits and bonds held till maturity are of this category;

Combination of market and fixed returns: To a certain extent, your returns are fixed or known upfront, but depending on the market movement, your final return may be somewhat higher or lower. Open-ended debt mutual funds and insurance policies with guarantee / loyalty additions are of this type.

Volatility risk

Where returns have to come from the market, it by definition, depends on other market participants being willing to buy it at a higher price/better valuation. This is not in your control. You have to hold on to the investment for the requisite horizon. In the meantime, prices may fluctuate, and obviously when prices drop, you are not going to like it. This volatility or market risk is a part and parcel of market-oriented investments.

The concept of mark-to-market is relevant here. In equity mutual funds, the daily net asset value (NAV) is calculated at market-based prices. It is not relevant that the entire portfolio of the fund is not sold off or purchased back every day. It is that every day, the valuation of the portfolio is on market-based prices, so that investors entering or exiting do it at market-relevant levels. Hence, the value of your holding,

which is the number of units in the fund multiplied by the NAV, will fluctuate accordingly. To give a perspective on the volatility we are talking about, in January to March 2020, the equity market, represented by the indices, fell by 40%. Since then, the loss has been more than made up and indices have touched record highs. How much an investment will fluctuate is anybody's call; you may look at historical data for a perspective.

Credit risk

In contractual return investments, market price movement is not relevant. For deposits like bank or corporate deposits, there is no secondary market, hence no question of any market price discovery. The risk here is, if there is a default in the payment obligations, your return calculations, as was known upfront, goes awry. The risk of potential default depends on the entity from which your money is due. If it is from the government (go-

vern-

ment bonds) or a government-owned organisation (post office deposits/ nationalised bank), your money is safe. Even otherwise, your money would be safe, but you have to take note. If it is a bank, is it a leading private sector bank or an obscure co-operative bank? If it is a corporate deposit, is it rated AAA, placed with a well-known business house? For corporate

regulated by the Reserve Bank of India and well-structured mutual funds regulated by SEBI. On the other hand, there are ponzi schemes that run on the basis of members bringing in new members and fresh money, which gives them handsome returns. Alarmingly, there is no investment as such of the funds. People get lured by the expectation of high returns i.e. greed overtakes investment logic. In the spectrum of regulated (bank, MF) and unregulated (ponzi schemes), somewhere in between, there would be lightly-regulated investment vehicles like chit funds or plantation schemes. It is advisable that before making any investment, check the regulator for that investment vehicle. There are vehicles regulated by SEBI and there are informal structures

bonds or bond mutual fund schemes, there are credit ratings, ranging from AAA downwards, which signify the credit risk.

Where your investment is a combination of contractual and market-dependent returns, both the risks are relevant. Market or volatility risk is relatively lesser than only market-oriented avenues. The defined or known return makes it less volatile if all the returns were to come from the market movement only. Credit risk would be there, as known payments such as a coupon (interest) on bonds, have to come from the issuer of the bond.

Conclusion

Exact measurement of risk is not possible as it is about the future, which we are trying to gauge based on past data or experience. Having said that, it is preferable to invest through regulated vehicles so that one risk is out of your way. On the common risks like market or default, there are mitigants like adequately long investment horizon or superior credit rating. As long as you have a fair understanding of these two risks, you can venture into your investments. However, it is advisable to consult a financial planner for professional guidance.

(The writer is a corporate trainer and author)

**COVER NOTE: THIRD PARTY LIABILITY**

When you are the 'first party' and an accident claim is made against you

Do not make any commitment to the other party; call your insurance company and let them do the talking

K. NITYA KALYANI

We have so far had a broad look at the options of making a third-party claim for a vehicle accident. Now, what if you hold a motor-third party liability (TP) insurance policy and a claim is made against you?

It pre-supposes your vehicle has been in an accident and somebody is injured, or their vehicle or any other property has been damaged in the incident.

Ahead of any consideration, you should ensure that any injured person gets immediate medical attention. However, do not offer any monetary help or promise to be injury, death or damage. This could amount to your admitting liability and may compromise your insurance company's ability to handle the case. This is, in fact, an

express condition in your TP insurance policy.

Inform the police and share personal contact information of both parties, the vehicle registration details and other information. Call your insurance company and they will take you through the next step and formalities for the likely TP claim against you.

You may want to file an 'own damage' claim as well.

If it is only an injury or a vehicle damage, there would be 'helpful' suggestions to settle it between yourselves, from bystanders or friends and family. My advice is please choose the formal path. The injured party will lodge a complaint, a first information report (FIR) will be registered by the police and all the procedures outlined in these columns earlier may be witnessed. Your presence would be required at the police station depending on the nature and extent of the injuries.

Once your insurance company is in the picture, you can heave a sigh of relief. Now that is the true value of TP insurance. Do their documentation and let them take over the case at the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) and proceed with negotiated settlements where permitted. You don't have to look for a lawyer, pay the lawyer fees or appear in court. In fact, insurance companies are careful and will not even let the litigant's lawyer as much as get in touch with you. If somebody does so, ensure you inform your insurer in writing with all the details.

In the case of third-party injury or death, the liability of the

insurance company is unlimited. This means that the entire award of the MACT or the negotiated settlement ratified by the court would be paid by your insurer. In the case of third-party

property damage, the limit of the policy's liability is ₹7.5 lakh. If the court awards anything more than that, you have to pay out of your pocket.

As with anything dealing



Wider spectrum: In the case of third-party injury or death, the liability of the insurance company is unlimited. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

with insurance, caveats apply. Your TP insurance should be valid. Your driving licence, or that of the person who drove the vehicle when the accident took place, should be valid.

The person driving should not have been under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and the vehicle should not have been in use for any unlawful purpose. Neither should it be in use for any purpose other than what it has been intended for, which will be part of your insurance terms. For instance, using a private car as a commercial vehicle.

In these cases, the TP policy will not be liable, but the buck would stop with the vehicle owner.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES				
Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (₹) Loan amount- 5 lakh Tenure - 5 years	EMI (₹) Loan amount- 1 lakh Tenure - 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
HDFC Bank	10.50-21.00	10,747-13,527	2,149-2,705	Up to 2.5% (Max ₹25,000)
ICICI Bank	10.50-19.00	10,747-12,970	2,149-2,594	Up to 2.50%
Bank of Baroda	10.00-15.60	10,624-12,053	2,125-2,411	₹1,000-10,000
State Bank of India	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	Up to 1.5% (Max ₹15,000)
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.75-24.00*	10,809-14,384	2,162-2,877	Up to 2.5%
Punjab National Bank^	8.95-14.50	10,367-11,764	2,073-2,353	Up to 1%
Federal Bank	10.49-17.99	10,744-12,694	2,149-2,539	Up to 3%
South Indian Bank	10.85-14.40	10,834-11,738	2,167-2,348	2%
Bank of Maharashtra	9.55-12.90^^	10,513-11,351	2,103-2,270	Up to 1%
Indian Overseas Bank	12.05	11,135	2,227	Up to 0.75%
Indian Bank	9.05-13.65	10,391-11,544	2,078-2,309	1%**
Dhanlaxmi Bank	11.90-15.70	11,097-12,079	2,219-2,416	Up to 2.5% (Min ₹1,250)

*Digital Personal loan starting at 10.50% p.a.

**For pensioners, NIL processing fees for loan up to ₹25,000, and fees of ₹250 for loan above ₹25,000

^0.10% additional concession in applicable interest rate to customers who opt for coverage under Credit Life Insurance

^^ Interest rate of 8.55% p.a. offered to BPCL (Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd.) employees

Rates as on June 22

NEW CAR LOAN-RATES AND CHARGES				
Name of Bank	Interest rate (%)	EMI (₹) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure - 5 years	EMI (₹) Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure - 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
Bank of Baroda	7.00-10.25	9,901-10,685	1,980-2,137	Generally flat 0.50%
Union Bank of India	7.15-7.50	9,936-10,019	1,987-2,004	₹1,000
Canara Bank	7.30-9.90	9,972-10,599	1,994-2,199	0.25% (₹1,000-5,000)
Bank of India	7.35-8.55	9,983-10,270	1,996-2,192	Up to 0.25% (Max: 5,000) For Rural Areas: ₹1,500-20,000
UCO Bank	7.45-7.70	10,007-10,067	2,015-2,034	1% (Max: ₹1,500)
State Bank of India*	7.50-11.20	10,019-10,921	2,030-2,184	Up to 0.40%
IDBI Bank	7.50-8.10	10,019-10,162	2,030-2,184	₹2,500
Punjab National Bank**				

Czechs stun the Dutch; Italy holds off Austria

Holes, Schick's strikes earn a last-eight clash with the Danes; The Azzurri ride on extra-time goals by Chiesa and Pessina

EURO 2020

REUTERS
BUDAPEST

Striker Patrik Schick scored his fourth goal of the tournament as the Czech Republic stunned 10-man Netherlands with a 2-0 victory in their Euro 2020 last-16 clash in front of 56,000 fans at the Puskas Arena on Sunday.

The Czechs created the better chances against their more fancied opponents in the frenzied atmosphere and booked a quarterfinal meeting with Denmark in Baku on Saturday when Tomas Holes headed in at the back post in the 68th minute after Tomas Kalas had steered the ball into his path.

Holes then turned provider as he set up Schick for a

second, the striker slotting the ball coolly past veteran Dutch goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg to continue his dream run. The Dutch challenge was dealt a blow in the 55th minute when centre-back Matthijs de Ligt received a red card for a handball just outside his own box. He was initially given a yellow card, but referee Sergei Karasev changed his mind after a VAR check.

At Wembley on Saturday, substitutes Federico Chiesa and Matteo Pessina struck in extra-time as Italy beat a battling Austria 2-1 to reach the quarterfinals.

Leonardo Spinazzola crossed from the left and Chiesa controlled the ball and rifled home with his left foot five minutes into the ex-

tra half-hour.

Italy effectively ended the match 10 minutes later when Francesco Acerbi shepherded the ball to Pessina, who finished superbly.

But there was still time for late drama when Austria's Sasa Kalajdzic stooped to head the ball in at the near post from a corner with a little over five minutes to go.

That was the first goal Italy had conceded since October 2020, ending a run of 1,168 minutes without conceding. But it held on to win with a new national record of 31 games unbeaten.

The results: Sunday: The Netherlands 0 lost to Czech Republic 2 (Holes 68, Schick 80).

Saturday: Italy 2 (Chiesa 95, Pessina 105) bt Austria 1 (Kalajdzic 114).



Breaking through: Holes heads home the Czech Republic's opening goal. ■ REUTERS

Spain takes on Croatia

The Swiss run into French firepower

ASSOCIATED PRESS
COPENHAGEN

dominate possession.

Perisic tests positive

However, Croatia will be without one of its best players after forward Ivan Perisic tested positive for COVID-19. Perisic, who scored two goals during the group stage, will have to self-isolate for 10 days.

Luis Enrique has continued Spain's traditional possession-based approach but the team's attacking play looked laboured against Sweden and Poland.

Croatia, though, will play a more aggressive style and won't sit back to let Spain

TODAY'S MATCHES

ROUND OF 16

Croatia vs Spain

9.30 p.m.

France vs Switzerland

12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Live on Sony Ten 2, 3 &

Sony Six (SD & HD)

The Swiss, on the other hand, are hoping to end a run of three consecutive exits in the round of 16 at major tournaments.

Beaumont and Sciver power England to victory

The two add 119 for the unbroken third wicket; Mithali's knock goes in vain for India

INDIA IN ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRISTOL

Skipper Mithali Raj's fighting half-century went in vain as England rode on Tammy Beaumont and Nat Sciver's aggressive unbeaten half-centuries to ease past India by eight wickets in the first ODI of the three-match series here on Sunday.

Mithali led from the front with a patient 72 (108, 7x4) to guide India to a modest 201 for eight after being put in to bat. The captain held the innings together after two early dismissals and was involved in two fruitful partnerships – 56 with Punam Raut (32) and 65 with Deepi Sharma (30).

In reply, England cantered home with 91 balls to spare, thanks to opener Beaumont (87 n.o., 87b, 12x4, 1x6) and Sciver's (74 n.o., 74b, 10x4, 1x6) unbroken 119-run third-



On the charge: Beaumont's 87-ball 87, with 12 fours and a six, took England past the finish line with plenty to spare. ■ REUTERS

wicket partnership that came off just 19 overs.

Batting first, India lost its openers cheaply. Shafali Verma who, at 17 years and 150 days, became the youngest Indian to make her debut across formats, smashed three fours while making 15 off 14 balls. She fell when she miscued a Katherine Brunt (2/35) delivery to Anya

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Smriti Mandhana b Shrubsole 10 (25b, 1x4), Shafali Verma c Shrubsole b Brunt 15 (14b, 3x4), Punam Raut c Ecclestone b Cross 32 (61b, 4x4), Mithali Raj b Ecclestone 72 (108b, 7x4), Harmanpreet Kaur c Jones b Ecclestone 1 (7b), Deepi Sharma lbw b Shrubsole 30 (46b, 3x4), Pooja Vastrakar lbw b Ecclestone 15 (17b, 2x4), Tanya Bhattacharya st. Jones b Brunt 7 (12b), Shikha Pandey (not out) 3 (7b), Jhulan Goswami (not out) 1 (3b); Extras (lb-6, w-9): 15; Total (for eight wkts. in 50 overs): 201.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-24 (Winfield-Hill, 4.4), 2-83 (Knight, 15.5).

ENGLAND

Lauren Winfield-Hill c Tanya b Jhulan 16 (20b, 2x4), Tammy Beaumont (not out) 87 (87b, 12x4, 1x6), Heather Knight b Ekta 18 (30b, 2x4), Nat Sciver (not out) 74 (74b, 10x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-2, w-3, nb-2): 7; Total (for two wkts. in 34.5 overs): 202.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-24 (Winfield-Hill, 4.4), 2-83 (Knight, 15.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Jhulan 6-25-1, Shikha 5-0-30-0, Pooja 4-0-23-0, Ekta 8-0-55-1, Deepi 7-0-32-0, Harmanpreet 4.5-0-35-0.

Toss:

England.

Player-of-the-match:

Tammy Beaumont.

ENGLAND BOWLING

Brunt 10-0-35-2, Shrubsole 8-3-33-2, Sciver 7-0-32-0, Cross 7-1-23-1, Ecclestone 10-1-40-3,

FALL OF WICKETS

1-24 (Winfield-Hill, 4.4), 2-83 (Knight, 15.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Jhulan 6-25-1, Shikha 5-0-30-0, Pooja 4-0-23-0, Ekta 8-0-55-1, Deepi 7-0-32-0, Harmanpreet 4.5-0-35-0.

Toss:

England.

Second ODI:

June 30, Taunton, 6.30 p.m. IST.

Slam No. 20 in Djokovic's sights

Ball in Serena's court at Wimbledon with rivals' fitness doubts

Storylines to keep an eye on

■ Five-time winner Djokovic, who clinched his 17th Major in Paris recently, will look to pull level with Federer and Nadal.

He can also become the first man since Nadal in 2010 to do the French-Wimbledon double



■ Federer is seeded sixth this time. The lowest he has been seeded while winning the championship at SW19 is fourth (in 2003, first win).

Federer is nearly 40 and there hasn't been an older men's singles Grand Slam champion in the Open Era (oldest: Rosewall, 37, at 1972 Aus Open)

■ Seven-time singles winner

Serena will make yet another attempt to tie Margaret Court's record of 24 Majors. The American has faltered in the final at SW19 in the past two editions



■ This will be Indian ace Sania's second Major

since the semifinal (in doubles) at the 2017 US Open, as she prepares for Tokyo 2020. She made a first-round exit at the 2020 Aus Open

MONDAY'S PICKS

MEN

1-Djokovic vs Draper

Murray vs Basilashvili

3-Tsitsipas vs Tiafoe

WOMEN

2-Sabalenka vs Niculescu

7-Swiatek vs Hsieh

10-Kvitova vs Stephens

'Simultaneous tours, a short-term answer'

Chance to push for the one or two spots: Dravid

It is a new challenge and a great opportunity to show our talent, says Dhawan

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

Rahul Dravid has said that simultaneous fixtures against different opponents in different formats with separate sets of players is a short-term necessity for Indian cricket amidst the pandemic.

"These are the only games before the T20 World Cup, and am sure the selectors and management have a fair idea by now on the squad they are looking for," Dravid said on Sunday. "It's a chance for a few people to push for the one or two spots the management may be looking for, just to give them a few more options over the next few T20s."

Squad to leave today

Dravid will be in charge along with captain Shikhar Dhawan for the tour, comprising three ODIs and three T20Is, starting on July 13. The squad will leave for Co-



Men at the helm: Dhawan and Dravid struck a confident note ahead of the limited-overs series in Sri Lanka. ■ TWITTER/BCCI

We are positive and confident that we will do well. There is a lot of excitement. It is a new challenge and a great opportunity for all of us to show our talent," he said.

Dhawan is set to open the innings with Prithvi Shaw, who has earned a recall, with promising openers Duvvud Padikkal and Ruturaj Gaikwad also in the squad. Coach Dravid, clarifying that everyone in the squad of 20 is unlikely to get a chance, stressed that the youngsters shouldn't treat the tour as the only opportunity to impress the selectors.

"It's a crucial tour for a lot of members in the team. That doesn't mean it's a life-or-death situation, it doesn't mean if you don't have a good tour of Sri Lanka, you'll never make it. Neither does that mean that if you do well against Sri Lanka you automatically make it. There's a lot that goes into it," he said.

Lot of excitement

"This is a very good team.

lombo on Monday. The head coach said he will have a detailed discussion with the leadership group of the Test squad in England before the Sri Lanka series.

"I have had a little bit of contact with the team management in England, didn't want to disturb them during the WTC final but will touch base over the next couple of weeks on what their plans

are," Dravid said.

The absence of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma has meant Dhawan will lead India for a full series for the first time.

Stressing that it's "an honour" to lead India, Dhawan said the squad has the fire-power required to succeed in the shorter formats.

Surging ahead:

Siddhant Thingalaya, centre, en route to winning the 110m hurdles. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

about on the third day of the National Inter-State Athletics Championships here on Sunday. Most athletes did not even come close to their own bests.

None of the top quarter-milers in the country participated in the individual 400m heats in the morning session, presumably to preserve energy for the relay on the final day of the competition.

better their timings.

In the women's 400m, the elusive Anjali Devi skipped the event while V.K. Viswamaya, a key member of both

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI
Youngsters Arjun Erigaisi and D. Gukesh punched above their weight, stunning Vedit Gujrathi and women's World No. 1 Hou Yifan on the second day of the Goldmann Asian Rapid online rapid chess tournament on Sunday.

Even as Levon Aronian and Ding Liren stayed ahead with seven points from 10 rounds, Arjun (5.5) was seventh. Gukesh, who also held Wesley So, was tied 13th with Vedit at four points.

The results (involving Indians): 10th round: Vedit Gujrathi drew with Alireza Firouzja (FIDE); Arjun Erigaisi bt Hou Yifan (Chn); B. Adhiban bt Saleh

CM YK

Arjun and Gukesh cause a flutter

Youngsters Arjun Erigaisi and D. Gukesh punched above their weight, stunning Vedit Gujrathi and women's World No. 1 Hou Yifan on the second day of the Goldmann Asian Rapid online rapid chess tournament on Sunday.

TV PICKS

Wimbledon 2021: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
Tour de France: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.45 p.m.
Euro 2020: Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
Copa America 2021: Sony Ten 1, 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
NBA: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

IN BRIEF



Quartararo wins Dutch MotoGP, stretches lead

ASSEN (NETHERLANDS) Yamaha's Frenchman Fabio Quartararo won Sunday's Dutch MotoGP to stretch his lead at the top of the drivers' standings with a dominant display here. Quartararo extended his advantage to 34 points ahead of second-placed Johann Zarco. AFP

Aishwary Pratap shoots 1176

OSJEK (CROATIA) Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar shot 1176 out of 1200 in the men's rifle 3-position event in the World Cup here on Sunday. The 20-year-old Aishwary had 395 in kneeling, 396 in prone and 385 in the standing position. With more shooters yet to finish their match, Aishwary did not have hopes of making the top eight and qualifying for the final. Sanjeev Rajput, shooting in the first batch, had 1173 with 391 in kneeling, 395 in prone and 387 in standing positions.

COPA AMERICA

TODAY'S SCHEDULE
GROUP A
Uruguay vs Paraguay 5.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
Bolivia vs Argentina 5.30 a.m. (Tuesday)
Live on Sony Ten 1, 2 & Sony 6 (SD & HD)

Deepika the star in India's gold rush

Helps country win women's, mixed team categories; emerges on top in individual event

ARCHERY

SPORTS BUREAU
PARIS

Olympic-bound archer Deepika Kumari helped India claim three recurve gold medals in the Archery World Cup Stage-3 here on Sunday.

Thanks to Deepika's consistent efforts, India took the top honour in women's team, mixed team and women's individual events.

Adding to the kitty

With one compound gold, the country gathered four gold medals here.

Deepika first joined hands with Komalika Bari and Ankita Bhakat to beat Mexico's Alejandra Valencia, Ana Vazquez and Aida Roman 5-1 in the final and take the women's team title.

After sharing honours in the first set (57-57), the Indian trio won the next two (55-54, 55-52) to add four more points and seal victory.

This was the second gold for the Indian women's team, which could not get an

Olympics quota place, after the Guatemala-leg this year.

Perfect couple

Deepika then combined with her husband Atanu Das to bag the mixed team crown. The Indian couple fought back to beat the Dutch duo of Gabriela Schlesser and Sjef van der Berg, the winner of the previous World Cup in Lausanne, 5-3 in the summit clash.

After losing the first set (37-38), Deepika and Atanu took the next two (36-33, 39-37) and shared points in the last (38-38) to emerge victorious and enhance their chances in Tokyo.

Deepika saw off Ana Vazquez 6-2 in the women's individual semifinals before beating Russian Elena Osipova 6-0 in the final.

The Indian, the World Cup Stage-1 winner, showed her accuracy to win the first three sets (29-26, 29-28, 28-27) in the title clash and get her second individual gold medal this year.



Bulls eye: Komalika, Ankita, coach Purnima and Deepika are delighted after taking the honours in the women's recurve event on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SHORT TAKES



Suns take commanding series lead

LOS ANGELES Devin Booker scored 25 points and Chris Paul made several clutch free-throws in the waning moments as Phoenix Suns held on for an 84-80 win over Los Angeles Clippers in the NBA Western Conference finals. **The result:** Western Conference finals: Los Angeles Clippers 80 lost to Phoenix Suns 84 (Suns lead series 3-1).

Neeraj finishes third in a strong field

NEW DELHI Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra produced a much improved show from his previous two outings as he finished third with an effort of 86.79m in Kuortane Games in Finland on Saturday. Neeraj

Diksha sizzles, finishes T-4

BEROUN (CZECH REPUBLIC) Diksha Dagar registered her best result in almost two-and-a-half years with a superb tied fourth-place finish with a flawless final round of 6-under 66 at the Tipsport Czech Ladies Open on Sunday. This is Diksha's second-best result after her lone triumph on the Ladies European Tour in early 2019 when she took the Investec

began with 83.21 and then achieved 86.79m off his second attempt. All the remaining four throws were fouls. Season-leader and 2017 World champion Johannes Vetter of Germany won with a best throw of 93.59m. He is the favourite for the gold in Tokyo.

women's South African Open title.

In the final round, Diksha got off to a superb start. After a par-par opening, she had three birdies in a row from third to fifth and added three more from the eighth to 10th to be 6-under through 10 holes. At that stage she was T-2 and just one behind the leader and eventual winner, Atthaya Thitikul, the 18-year-old Thai prodigy.

Arpitha wins title

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Telangana's Arpitha Kothagundla won the National girls' (under-12) online rapid chess championship by pipping Delhi's Sachin Jain on superior tie-break score on Sunday.

Arpitha and Sachin aggregated 10 points from 11 rounds to take the first two spots.

Yashvi Jain, also of Telangana, headed a three-way tie involving Andhra's Sarvani Cheedella and Karnataka's Rudra Rajeev, at nine points to finish third.

CHESS U-12

REUTERS
SPIELBERG

Lewis blasts Windies to victory

SA IN WINDIES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
(ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA)

Evin Lewis led a rampaging assault by the West Indies as it made a mockery of a potentially tricky target of 161 in an eight-wicket victory with five overs to spare in the opening fixture of their five-match T20 series against South Africa here on Saturday.

Lewis blazed 71 off just 35 deliveries with seven sixes and four fours. He and opening partner Andre Fletcher raced to 85 before the end of the seventh over when Fletcher was run out.

The scores: South Africa 160/6 in 20 overs (Quinton de Kock 37, Rassie van der Dussen 56 n.o.; Fabian Allen 2/18, Dwayne Bravo 2/30) lost to West Indies 161/2 in 15 overs (Andre Fletcher 30, Evin Lewis 71, Chris Gayle 32). **Toss:** West Indies; **MoM:** Lewis; West Indies won by eight wks, with five overs to spare and leads five-match series 1-0.

Srihari Nataraj makes Olympic 'A' cut

SWIMMING

SPORTS BUREAU
ROME

India's Srihari Nataraj went under the A-mark Olympic Qualification Time in the 100m backstroke event (53.85s) with a timing of 53.77s in a requested time trial at the Sette Colli meet here on Sunday.

The 20-year-old had missed the A-mark on Friday by five hundredths of a second in what was perceived to be his last chance. The latest result, if ratified, will make him the second Indian after Sajan Prakash to earn a direct berth for Tokyo 2020.

"It will be for FINA to accept the result from the time trial at an approved qualification event," said Monal Chokshi, secretary general SFI, in a statement.

Meanwhile, a day after achieving the 'A' cut for the Olympics, Sajan continued his purple patch by coming up with a new best Indian performance in 200m freestyle event in the same event on Sunday.



Srihari Nataraj. ■ FILE PHOTO

swimmers and hoping this result will be considered by FINA."

Meanwhile, a day after achieving the 'A' cut for the Olympics, Sajan continued his purple patch by coming up with a new best Indian performance in 200m freestyle event in the same event on Sunday.

Sajan clocked 1:49.73 seconds in the heats at the FINA-accredited Olympic qualifier, bettering the 2010 Asian Games bronze medallist Virdhawal Khade's previous National mark (1:49.86).

It's Verstappen on top of podium again

STYRIAN GP

REUTERS



Verstappen celebrates with the trophy. ■ REUTERS

then that Red Bull had celebrated four successive victories. Valterti Bottas was third for Mercedes.

The Briton was 35.743 seconds behind at the chequered flag after a late stop for fresh tyres to bag a bonus point for fastest lap.

It was the first time since 2013 that Mercedes had gone four races in a row without a win and the first time since

Bull) 47.434; +1 lap: 5. Lando Norris (McLaren); 6. Carlos Sainz (Ferrari); 7. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); 8. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); 9. Fernando Alonso (Alpine); 10. Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri); 11. Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo); 12. Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin); 13. Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren); 14. Esteban Ocon (Alpine); 15. Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo); +2 laps: 16. Mick Schumacher (Haas); +3 laps: 17. Nicholas Latifi (Williams); 18. Nikita Mazepin (Haas F1); DNF: Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri); George Russell (Williams).

Standings: Drivers: 1. Max Verstappen 156; 2. Lewis Hamilton 138; 3. Sergio Perez 96; 4. Lando Norris 86; 5. Valterti Bottas 74; **Constructors:** 1. Red Bull Racing 252; 2. Mercedes 212; 3. McLaren 120; 4. Ferrari 108; 5. AlphaTauri 46.

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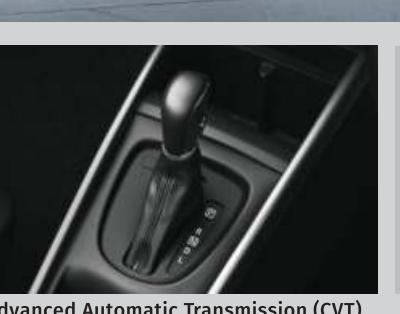
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