# THE ASIAN AGE

**NEW DELHI SATURDAY 19 JUNE 2021** 

NATION 2

PM Modi has lost moral authority to rule: Kapil Sibal



SPORT 7

**Denzel Dumfries and** 

Priyanka among the



www.asianage.com RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

### WINDOWS

### **Legendary sprinter** Milkha Singh dies after battling Covid Chandigarh:

Legendary sprinter Milkha Singh breathed his last on Friday night after a month-long battle with Covid-19, family spokesperson said. The 91year-old's condition had turned critical as he developed complications, including fever and dropping of oxygen saturation level, in the intensive care unit of the PGIMER Hospital. The sprinter, who contracted Covid-19 last month, had tested negative for the virus on Wednesday and shifted to general ICU in another block

### **Indian law supreme,** not your policy, MPs **tell Twitter top execs**

of the hospital.

New Delhi: Amid a tussle between the Centre and Twitter over the new IT rules, members of a parliamentary panel strongly objected to Twitter India officials' observations that they abide by their policy and categorically told them that the rule of land is supreme. Members of the Panel on IT also asked Twitter why it should not be fined as it has been found "violating" rules. Earlier this month, the Centre issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act. — PTI ■ More on Page 3

### **Guterres re-elected to** 2nd term as UN chief

**United Nations:** UN General Assembly on Friday appointed Antonio Guterres as the UN Secretary General for a second term, days after the powerful Security Council had unanimously recom-193-member body for re-election. — PTI

### **No political crisis at**

all in Karnataka: CM

Bengaluru: Karnataka CM B.S. Yediyurappa on Friday ruled out any political crisis, amid speculations in some quarters about his replacement. - PTI ■ More on Page 2

# COUNTERPOIN



It's a game changer in the next polls... let's promise to remove the gap between two doses of vaccine!





Max: 33°C Min: 24°C **RH:** 65% **Rain: 20%** 

Forecast: Partly cloudy

### **ASTROGUIDE**

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Jyeshta Shuddha Navami till 6.40 pm Star: Hasta till 8.23 pm **Varjyam:** 5.32 am to 7.04 am; 3.50 am to 5.20 am **Durmuhurtam:** 5.46 am to 7.30 am Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am **SUNSET TODAY 7.22 PM** 

**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.24 AM** 

**MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.33 PM** 

**MOONSET TODAY 1.05 AM** 



Memphis Depay shine as **Netherlands sink Austria** 

### TABLOID 9

new Victoria's **Secret Angels** 

### Vol. 28 No. 123 | 16 pages | ₹5.00

# ■ 3 student activists to stay on bail ■ '100-page HC order troubling' HC ruling on UAPA can't be used as precedent, we'll examine issue: SC

PARMOD KUMAR

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to interfere with the Delhi high court order granting bail to three student activists

Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal and Asi Iqbal Tanha — but said the high court judgment will neither be treated as a precedent in any court in the country in all matters relating to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, nor will it be relied on by the par-

Refusing to interfere with the liberty of the three student activists, a bench comprising Justices Hemant Gupta

Ramasubramanian expressed surprise over the 100-page order in a bail matter by the high court and said: "The issue is important and has pan-

Sonowal is in

Delhi, buzz

over rejig of

**Modi Cabinet** 

New Delhi, June 18:

Former Assam chief

Sonowal is in the

national capital to meet

senior BJP leaders, sources said Friday.

His arrival here this

afternoon comes amid

speculation of an intend-

ing reshuffle in the Union Cabinet and his

possible induction into

it. Mr Sonowal was chief

minister of the BJP-led

Assam government from 2016 till last

Even though the BJP-led alliance returned to

power, Mr Sonowal was

not made chief minister

and was replaced by Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Mr Sonowal is likely to

He met defence minis-

ter Rajnath Singh at a dinner hosted by Assam governor Jagdish

Mukhi last night in

Guwahati. Mr Sarma

was also present at the dinner held at the Assam Raj Bhavan.

There has been specu-

lation that Mr Sonowal,

who belongs to Assam's

indigenous Sonowal-Kachari tribe, was called by the party lead-ership to the national

capital for consultations

the Narendra Modi cabi-

net. There were reports

that Mr Sonowal is one

of the top contenders for

— PTI

More on Page 3

a post in the cabinet.

meet a few top BJP lead-

ers, the sources said.

month.

Sarbananda

The issue is important and has pan-India ramifications. We want to decide it for the good of the country.

> - Supreme ( Court Bench

India ramifications. We want to decide it for the good of the country.' The bench termed as troubling" the fact that

the high court has written 100 pages discussing the entire anti-terror law UAPA while deciding the bail applications and said that this will now require interpretation by Supreme Court.
Justice Gupta said this

soon after solicitor general Tushar Mehta referred to parts of the high court judgment contending that the bail order "turns on head the entire

**MANOJ ANAND** 

**GUWAHATI, JUNE 18** 

In a major setback for the

Congress Party in Assam, four-time Congress MLA

from Mariani in Upper

Assam on Friday resigned and declared that he would join BJP on Monday. Rupjyoti Kurmi, the only legislator in the

Congress from the tea

tribe community, charged

that the Congress had stopped listening to

younger leaders and pre-dicted the party's down-

fall if Rahul Gandhi con-

Mr Kurmi submitted his

resignation to the Speaker from the state Assembly. Soon after, the

Congress announced his

expulsion. Mr Kurmi called it a dif-

tinued to call the shots.

(Prevention) Act along with the Constitution". Telling the court to let

the three accused remain out on bail, Mr Mehta said in "the interim the impact of judgment is stayed without affecting the bail granted to the a c c u s e d ". Senior counsel Kapil Sibal, appearing for the student activists, opposed Mr Mehta's plea for a stay of the high court judgment. Agreeing with the court about examining the ruling for its acrossthe-nation ramifications, Mr Sibal said the court may say the judgment will not be a precedent. He added that if the solicitor general has "much to

"Issue notice. Let the counter be filed in four weeks. List the matter on

4-time Assam Congress MLA

Hints at exodus, says Cong 'not listening' to young leaders

**Maken: Top brass** 

in touch with Pilot

New Delhi: AICC gener-

al secretary in charge of

reports that senior lead-

ers of the party did not

ficult decision, given that

he was born to a Congress

family and his mother

Congress family, we grew

up in Congress culture. I

used to put up posters, I

served tea in meetings.

My mother was a minis-

ter... I have been a soldier

was born to a

was a state minister.

Rajasthan strongman,

Rajasthan Ajay Maken

on Friday dismissed

meet the party's

former deputy CM

quits: 'Rahul can't run party'

say", on issues relating to

the ÚAPA, then they (the

students) too "have a lot

a non-miscellaneous week starting from July 19. In will not be treated as a precedent by any party before any court," the Supreme Court bench

The solicitor general noted that the high court judgment, which made a distinction between the charges levelled against three student activists and a an act of terror, had said: "In our opinion, the intent and purport of Parliament in enacting the UAPA, and more specifically in amending it in 2004 and 2008 to bring terrorist activity within its scope, was, and could only have had been, to deal with matters of profound impact on the 'defence of India'. Nothing more and noth-

Assailing the high court judgment which said the

of Congress. That is why

it is a difficult decision...

Rahul Gandhi is unable to

shoulder leadership. If

he's at the helm, the party won't move forward," Mr

Kurmi told reporters soon

after submitting his resig-

"My mother was a three-time MLA and also a min-

ister. She died in 2004. I

was denied the party tick-

bypolls. The party gave

me a ticket in 2006. I have

been elected to the Assam

since 2006. I have now

realised that the party

leadership doesn't hear the voice of the small

community and party

workers," said Mr Kurmi

while justifying his

Assembly

Mariani

to contest in the

from the

constituency

Turn to Page 2

nation to the Speaker.

### India vs NZ: Rain washes out first day's play



A large screen announces that the first day's play has been abandoned at the World Test Championship final between New Zealand and India at the Ageas

Bowl in Southampton on Friday. Since over six hours of play was lost. under ICC regulations the reserve (sixth) day will now be brought in. After thundershowers began

Thursday night, the downpour continued till Friday afternoon, making play impossible. The umpires called it off at 3 pm local time (7.30 pm IST). - PTI Report on Page 8

# Covid rules' flouting to hasten 'third wave', can't allow it: HC

62K cases, 1,587 deaths in 24hrs Virus still with us: PM

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JUNE 18

"We have paid a huge price in the second wave. We don't know if there is any household which has not suffered in the second wave, closely or remote-ly," a Delhi high court bench said Friday while taking cognisance of the violation of Covid-19 protocols in markets and other public places in Delhi. The court said such breaches will only hasten the "third wave", which can't be permitted. The high court asked the Centre and the Delhi government to take strict measures, sensitise shopkeepers and hold a series of meetings with markets and vendors' associations

about this. India on Friday saw 62,480 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours while the daily death toll came down to 1,587. Active cases have come down below eight lakhs (7.98 lakh) for the first time in 73 days, while 88,977

A young woman receives a dose of the Covid-19 vacling abroad in Gurgaon on Friday.

cine at a special vaccination camp for citizens travel-

patients recovered in the last 24 hours. The daily recoveries continue to outnumber the daily new cases for the 36th consecutive day and the national recovery rate has reached 96.03 per cent. The daily positivity rate is 3.24 per cent nationally, and the weekly positivity rate is 3.80 per cent, prompting Dr V.K. Paul, Niti Aayog's member (health), to say: "The pandemic is shrinking."

However, with people taking social distancing

and mask-wearing norms lightly ever since the unlocking began, there is a fear that the third wave may be just around the corner. "People started taking Covid appropriate behaviour lightly after the vaccine was rolled out. We have started the unlocking process, but we still need to remain cautious and follow all Covid protocols properly," said AstraZeneca top official backs India's 12-16 week gap of Covishield: Page 3

# Row over Cal HC judge for alleged BJP 'links'

RAJIB CHOWDHURI and PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE,

A major controversy has hit Justice Kausik Chanda of the Calcutta high court as West Bengal's ruling Trinamul Congress on Friday linked the judge to the BJP after he scheduled chief minister Mamata Banerjee's election petition, challenging her Assembly poll defeat to Leader of the Suvendu

Adhikari in Nandigram, for hearing after a week.

At around 11 am, the TMC supremo's plea

under the Representation of the People Act was listed for mentioning before Justice Chanda. The judge said the petitioner's presence as mandatory during the hearing in such a case. He also sought to know from the CM's panel of lawyers led by Soumendra Nath Mukherjee whether she would attend the hear-

ing. Mr Mukherjee assured

▶ TMC STATE general secretary Kunal Ghosh tweeted two photos of Justice Kausik Chanda of the Calcutta high court, when he was a lawyer earlier, at a BJP legal cell meeting addressed by state chief Dilip

the judge of abiding by the law. Justice Chanda then fixed June 24 as the date of hearing. An hour later, TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh tweeted two photos of Mr Chanda, when he was a lawver earlier, at a BJP legal cell meeting addressed by state chief Dilip Ghosh.

In his post, the former TMC Rajya Sabha MP said: "With due respect to Judiciary: Justice Kaushik Chanda. He has Justice been assigned to hear the N a n d i g r a m Case.@MamataOfficial @abhishekaitc @AITCofficial @nandigram." He then called the judge a "BJP sympathis-

er" and asked him to "recuse himself" from the He later claimed: "The

question of bias is there. How could a judge with a strong political affiliation be assigned to hear a sensitive petition filed by the CM on her poll defeat?

cases, fought by Mr Chanda as a lawyer for the BJP, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien wondered: "See what we found. Matters where

■ Turn to Page 2

### TMC plans to challenge BJP narrow win in 4 Bengal seats RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JUNE 18

Turn to Page 2

West Bengal's ruling Trinamul Congress, inspired by its supremo and chief minister Mamata Banerjee's legal challenge to Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari's narrow win over her in Nandigram in the Assembly election, also filed election petitions in the Calcutta high court contesting its defeat by the BJP in four more seats by close margins.
These Assembly con-

stituencies Balarampur in Purulia, Bongaon South in North 24 Parganas, Goghat in Hooghly and Moyna in East Midnapore. Among the four TMC nominees, three, including a minister, were MLAs earlier. If Nandigram is also factored in, the total number of seats under legal battle even after the polls goes up to five, which is again a rare instance in the state's political history.

At Balarampur, Shantiram Mahato, a former minister of the TMC, lost to Baneshwar Mahato by 423 votes, one of the lowest margins. Another TMC candidate, Alorani Sarkar, was defeated by Swapan

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### **UK Lib Dems spring surprise, win safe Tory seat**



UK Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey and new Liberal Democrat MP for Chesham and Amersham Sarah Green during a victory rally in Chesham, England, on Friday, after Sarah Green won the Chesham and Amersham byelection. In a surprising result, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party was easily defeated in a special election for a seat it has held onto for decades. 

Report on Page 4

# Low turnout in Iranian prez polls, ayatollah's protégé tipped to win

voted Friday in a presidential election dominated by a hardline protege of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei after the authorities disqualified nearly all of his strongest competition, leading to what appeared to be a low turnout fuelled by apathy and calls for a boycott. Opinion polling by state-

linked organisations along with analysts indicated that judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi, who is already under US sanctions, was the frontrunner in a field of just four candidates. Former central bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati is running as the race's moderate candidate but hasn't inspired



the same support as outgo-ing President Hassan Rouhani, who is term-limited from seeking the

By late afternoon, the turnout appeared far lower than in Iran's last



ing his vote in Tehran on

office again.

polling places, several of which seemed to have only a handful of voters in the election's early hours. Those passing by several polling places in Tehran said they similarly saw few voters. In addition to

disqualifications, voter apathy has also been fed by the devastated state of the economy and subdued campaigning amid a months-long surge in coronavirus cases. In images on state TV, poll workers wore gloves and masks, and some wiped down ballot boxes with disinfectants.

If elected, Mr Raisi will Turn to Page 2

SHORT TAKES

### **BJP SUBMITS PLEA TO SPEAKER TO SACK ROY AS MLA**

RAJIB CHOWDHURI

The West Bengal BJP legislative party on Friday submitted its petition to **Assembly Speaker Biman** Banerjee seeking disqualification of its MLA Krishnanagar North Mukul Roy under the anti-defection law for his switch to the ruling Trinamul Congress recently. Signed by Nandigram BJP MLA and leader of the opposition Suvendu Adhikari under his letterhead, the plea urges Mr Banerjee, "Respected Sir, petition for disqualification of Sri Mukul Roy, member of legislative assembly from 83, Krishnanagar Uttar assembly constituency is enclosed herewith. I request you to dispose of the same as soon as possible. Please acknowledge receipt of the same." Mr Roy was not available for comments. His present party also remained silent. But the growing crack in the BJP since his return to the TMC came out in the open once again during the day. A poster calling BJP general secretary Kailash Vijay-vargiya as a "TMC Setting Master" over his proximity to Mr Roy earlier and asking him to "Go Back" was placed outside two main party offices, one at Muralidhar Sen Lane and another at Hastings, in the city. A similar one was found near the Kolkata Airport also. Acco-

### **WOMAN MAOIST GUNNED DOWN IN BASTAR GUNFIGHT**

rding to BJP insiders, a sec-

tion of angry party workers

on the instructions of their

state leaders was behind the circulation of the poster.

AGE CORRESPONDENT

A woman Naxal was on Friday gunned down in an encounter with security forces near Chandameta in the Bastar-Sukma inter-district border in Chhattisgarh. The encounter took place at around eight in the morning. Acting on specific inputs on the presence of Maoist cadres of Darbha division at the inter-district borders of Bastar and Sukma, a joint operation comprising personnel of district reserve group (DRG), district force and CRPF's 80 and 227 battalions was launched in the area. Bastar range inspector general of police Sunderraj P told this newspaper. An exchange of fire took place between a section of search party comprising DRG personnel and Maoists near Chandameta-Pyarbhat jungles under Darbha police station in Bastar district that lasted nearly two hours. Later, the body of a woman Maoist cadre in Maoist uniform along with five weapons including an AK 47 assault rifle were recovered at the encounter site, he

# **Sibal: PM failed to stand with** people needing medical help

Attacks govt for what he called ineptness to strategise Covid vaccination

There may or may not be a

does it mean that he should

credible alternative but

New Delhi, June 18: Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has "without doubt" lost the moral authority to rule for not standing with people in need of medical aid during the second wave of Covid-19 and for doing playing political one-upmanship in polls instead.

In an interview with PTI, the former Union minister launched a hard-hitting attack on the prime minister saying the lack of a credible political alternative did not mean that he should stop discharging his duties believing that his political fortunes are secure. Mr Sibal also attacked the government ment's failures. for what he called its

MUMBAI

4 arrested in

director also

raises doubts

The Mumbai police has

arrested four persons in

the last two days for

allegedly cheating over

300 members of an upscale housing society in Hiranandani in Kan-

divali by giving them doses of fake vaccine.

Meanwhile, Bollywood

music producer Ramesh

Taurani, who heads Tips Industries Limited, has

also raised doubts over

vaccination of his 365

employees, as they have not received certificates

According to Mr Taurani, he got his 365

employees vaccinated on May 30 and June 3, but

they are yet to receive their vaccination certifi-

cates. The vaccination

team charged ₹1200 per

dose plus GST. But since

no certificate has been issued even after several

days, the recipients of

the vaccines grew suspi-

cious. He said that more

than the money, now

they are worried about

what was administered to them. "Is it genuine

for the same.

**SHAHAB ANSARI** 

MUMBAI, JUNE 18

vaccine scam,

stop discharging his responsibilities believing that his political fortunes are secure Kabil Sibal, Senior Congress leader ineptness to strategise the Covid-19 vaccination, saying it borders on criminal negligence and its priori-

toolkit issue is nothing but an attempt to "deploy forgery" to divert public attention from his govern-

"A Prime Minister who

ties in tackling the pandemic are "misplaced and faulty and lack sincerity".

He also said that the

should have stood with the people while they were languishing outside hospitals in need of medical aid during the pandemic, was busy playing political one-upmanship during Assembly elections in West Bengal, Assam etc, has, without doubt, lost the moral authority to rule.

"There may or may not be a credible alternative but does it mean that he

should stop discharging his responsibilities believing that his political fortunes are secure," Mr Sibal told PTI while blaming the Prime Minister for inaction in saving precious lives during the second wave of the pandemic. Mr Sibal said he agreed that at present "there is definitely a void in terms

of a strong political alternative" and that is why he has suggested reforms in his own party so that the country has strong and credible Opposition.

The senior Congress leader said when the

whole world was doing its best to tide over the pandemic and save precious human lives, our PM was busy addressing election



Children dive into the Arabian Sea during high tide in Mumbai on Friday.

# Tomar rules out repeal of 3 farm laws amid deadlock

Minister says govt ready to resume talks on provisions

New Delhi, June 18: Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday ruled out repealing the three new farm laws but said the government is ready to resume talks with protesting farmer unions on provisions of the legislations.

Covishield or any saline The government and water?" he said. have held 11 Mr Taurani has stated rounds of talks, the last that when his office peobeing on January 22, to ple contacted the person break the deadlock and who had arranged the end the farmers' protest. drive they were told that Talks have not resumed the certificates following widespread viocome by June 12. lence during a tractor After Mr Taurani clairally by protesting farm-

ers on January 26.
Thousands of farmers, med that he might have been duped by vaccine mainly from Punjab, scammers, the police Haryana and western said the suspects, who were held in connection Uttar Pradesh, have been with another similar camping at Delhi's borcase, are being questioned as well. ders for more than six months in protest against

procurement of crops at MSP. The Supreme Court has put on hold the

the three laws

that they say will end state

implementation of the three laws till further orders and set up a committee to find solutions "Government of India is

ready for talks with farmers. Except for repeal, if any farmers' union wants to talk on provisions of the Act even at midnight, Narendra Singh Tomar will welcome it," the agriculture minister said in a video posted on his Twitter account.

Three Union ministers, including Tomar and Food Minister Piyush Goyal, have held 11 rounds of talks with the protesting

In the last meeting on January 22, the government's negotiations with 41 farmer groups hit a roadblock as the unions squarely rejected the Centre's proposal of putting the laws on suspension.

During the 10th round of talks held on January 20, the Centre had offered to suspend the laws for 1-1.5 years and form a joint committee to find solutions, in return for protesting farmers going back to their respective homes from Delhi's borders.

Farmer groups have alleged that these laws will end the mandi and MSP procurement systems and leave the farmers at the mercy of big corporates, even as the government has rejected these apprehensions as misplaced. — PTI

Arun warns of action over violation of party discipline

# BSY likely to stay K'taka CM, BJP leader ends 3-day visit

Bengaluru, June 18: BJP general secretary in-charge of Karnataka Arun Singh on Friday warned of action against violation of party disci-pline as rumblings within played out in the open during his three day visit to the state, amid speculation about replacing chief

Yediyurappa.
Though Mr Singh, who had earlier ruled out leadership change, did not make any direct comments on the issue, he is said to have made it clear at the Karnataka BJP core committee meeting that Mr Yediyurappa will continue as the chief minister.

In a gesture signifying that things are in his favour, Mr Yediyurappa, who did not make any comments on what transpired at the meeting on the leadership issue, flashed the victory sign as he departed from the state

"The leadership issue was not discussed... Yediyurappa is our leader, there is no change in that. Our in-charge Arun Singh has asked me to make it clear. revenue minister and core committee member R. Ashoka said. There was no question of replacing Mr Yediyurappa, he said. "The government will

### **MLC Vishwanath alleges** ₹21,473cr tender 'scam'

Bengaluru, June 18: of the government. Disgruntled BJP legislator A.H. Vishwanath, ₹20,000 crore is rea who has been demanding that Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa be replaced, on Friday alleged the irri-gation department has readied a ₹21,473 crore tender in a hurry and without financial approval, and termed it a

'scam". He accused Mr Yedi yurappa's son and BJP state unit vice- president B.Y. Vijayendra of interfering in the functioning tractors.

"The tender of over ₹20,000 crore is ready in the irrigation department, which pertains to Bhadra Upper canal project and Cauvery irrigation project. No financial clearance (from the finance department) has been sought, no board meeting took place. It was done in a hurry," Mr Vishwanath alleged at a press conference.

He alleged that the intention was to take "kickbacks" from con-

function under (Yediyurappa) leadership. This is the clear stand,' he said, adding that it has been decided to take strict action against those making open statements on Mr Yediyurappa earlier

in the day had downpla-yed the dissidence against him as he ruled out any political crisis in the state.

"There is no political crisis at all...what is happening is just because one or two people are saying

something in the media, it is creating misunder-standing... these one or two people speaking against me is not new, they have been doing it since the beginning and it is getting highlighted," he said, pointing out that Mr Singh did not even meet those involved in such activities. "There is no confusion or crisis, we are all together and united, and are focusing on the development work," he

# 'Choksi moved to Dominica jail, but to stay in hospital'

New Delhi, June 18: A magistrate court in Dominica on Thursday moved businessman Mehul Choksi from police custody to a state prison, his lawyer in India said, but added that he would continue to remain in hospital as his medical condition "deteriorated".

'Yes, (Choksi's) police custody has been changed to prison custody but he shall remain in hospital as his medical condition has deteriorated," lawyer Vijay Aggarwal said.

His legal team had submitted a medical certificate from doctors at the Dominica China Friendsnip Hospital, where Choksi is undergoing treatment, of "mental stress" and elevated blood pres-

The change in custody is being seen as a ray of hope for India which has approached the Dominica High Court seeking to be impleaded as a party in the case filed by lawyers of Choksi whose bail plea

was earlier rejected. Choksi is wanted in India in a case of loan fraud worth about ₹13,500 crore in the state-run



National Bank. The CBI

affairs have sought to be impleaded in the habeas corpus matter, which seeks return of Choksi to Antigua and Barbuda, by filing two affidavits in the Dominica high court, officials said.

The Central agency is likely to focus on establishing criminal culpability of Choksi, fugitive status, pending warrants against him, Red Notice and charge sheets while tne ministr of external affairs will argue that Choksi continues to be an Indian citizen, they said. The affidavits, if admit-

ted by the high court, will pave the way for noted lawyer Harish Salve pleading India's case in Dominica, they said.

The fresh development seems to indicate that India stands a chance to be heard and make a legal attempt to bring the fugitive diamantaire back to the country and face a

### **Babu in MP** who flagged 'graft' claims threat to life

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY **BHOPAL, JUNE 18** 

The young IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh, Lokesh Kumar Jangid, who was served a showcause notice by the state government over his leaked conversations with the higher-ups, on Friday, claimed that he had received an anonymous call on Signal app threatening him and his

family. The 2014 batch IAS officer of MP cadre has reported the matter to DĜP Vivek Johri, seeking police protection for him and his family.

In a complaint to the DGP, he said that he had received the call at 11.50 pm asking him to go on leave for six months if he wanted his as well as

his family's safety.
Mr Jangid, who was upset for being transferred nine times in 54 months, had a spat with a senior IAS officer in the private WhatsApp group of IAS officers' association — leading the state government to serve him a showcause notice— had earlier requested a deputation to Maharashtra.

# Covid rules' flouting to hasten 'third wave': HC

■ Continued from Page 1

Union health minister Harsh

Health ministry officials said that it is not necessary that children will be disproportionately affected in the third wave as a fresh serosurvey shows seropositivity was almost equal in all age groups. The WHO-AIIMS survey shows seropositivity in persons below and above 18 years of age is almost equal. In persons above 18, the seropositivity rate is 67 per cent, while it is 59 per cent in persons below 18. In urban areas, it is 78 per cent in persons below 18 and 79 per cent in those above 18.

In rural areas, the seropositivity rate is 56 per cent in persons below 18 and 63 per cent in persons above 18. "The information shows children were infected but it was very mild. Only isolated cases of infection may occur in children during the third wave of Covid-19," said Dr Paul.

He also said that studies show that the chances of hospitalisation are 75-80 per cent less in vaccinated individuals. The possibility of such individuals needing oxygen support is around eight per cent and the risk of ICU admission is only six per cent for

vaccinated persons.

Dr Naveet Wig, chairman of the AIIMS Covid task force, warned that the virus has not been eradi-

"If the third wave of Covid comes, whom will we blame? We

have to keep our strategy of test positivity rate of less than one per cent in each district and 50 per cent of Covid ICU beds should

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged people to stay cautious, stressing the virus is 'still amongst us" and the possibility of it mutating was also there. He launched a customised crash course programme that aims to skill and upskill over one "Covid warriors" across "In the second wave of coronavirus, we saw what kind of challenges the ever-changing form of this virus can bring before us. We have to further enhance the preparedness of the country to meet the challenges " the Prime Minister said.

The "Customised Crash Course for Covid-19 Frontline Workers" aims to skill and upskill over one lakh "Covid warriors". Training will be given to them in six customised job roles: home care supbasic care support, advanced care support, emergency care support, sample collection support and medical equip-

ment support. The World Health Organisation, meanwhile, accepted Bharat Biotech's Expression of Interest (EoI) for Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin and scheduled a pre-submission meeting on June 23, a step that will take the vaccine maker closer to a Emergency Use Listing (EUL).

### Row over Cal HC judge ■ Continued from Page 1

Justice Kaushik Chanda has

appeared for the Bharatiya Janata Party before the Calcutta high court. And now he has been assigned to hear the Nandigram election case. One big coincidence?"

Before becoming a judge, Mr Chanda, sources said, was appointed by the BJP govern-ment at the Centre as its additional solicitor general in the state for his success as a lawyer in the cases against the TMC government over its allowance to imams and the cancellation of Union home minister Amit Shah's rally at Esplanade.

Later Sanjay Basu, one of the CM's lawyers, wrote to the acting high court chief justice, Justice Rajesh Bindal, seeking

transfer of the election petition from Justice Chanda's court to another judge. A group of lawyers wearing black badges also took out a protest rally at the high court premises in the afternoon.

They sought no politicisation of the judiciary. The BJP was stumped by the sudden volley of attacks by the TMC till Mr Ghosh broke his silence and countered the ruling party's claims, but he could not deny his past association with the judge.

In Berhampore in Murshidabad, the Midnapore BJP MP said: "The TMC is playing dirty and politicking on the issue. It published my photos, which are three-four years old, with Mr Chanda.

### TMC plans to challenge BJP narrow win in 4 Bengal seats

■ Continued from Page 1 Majumdar of the BJP over 2,004 votes at Bongaon South. At Goghat, Biswanath Karak of the BJP won by 4,147 votes over Manas Majumdar, a former MLA of the TMC.

At Moyna, former cricketer Ashok Dinda of the BJP defeated Sangram Kumar Dolui of TMC by 1,260 votes. Alleging malpractices in the counting of votes in the four key seats, the TMC on Friday filed its election petition under

the Representation of the People Act, which will come up for hearing on July 15. Justice Subhasis Dasgupta directed the preservation of all documents within this peri-

While the ruling party's legal move is likely to leave the BJP cornered amid the threat of defection by its MLAs, it however did not complain of any foul play earlier in the counting of votes in the four seats, except in Nandigram.

### **4-time Assam Cong MLA quits**

■ Continued from Page 1 decision to switch over to BJP. He said that the party also ignored his advice against any tie-up with the AIUDF and paid for it in the April-May

polls in Assam, in which

the BJP was reelected.

"Rahul's decision to ally with AIUDF was a blunder and I had opposed it tooth and nail. The Congress is governed by a few senior leaders and there is no chance for the vouth in the party, neither at the Centre nor in state... I felt like the Congress does not want the youth to grow. It does not want to promote voung leaders from backward classes like tea garden workers or tribals, so I decided that I will quit the Congress," Mr Kurmi said.

The Congress leader warned that a few more MLAs are planning to leave the grand old party. "I was the only MLA representing the Congress in the tea community. My departure shall leave a huge void in the party as far as tea votes are concerned," he said, adding, "I did a lot for Congress, even slit my palms to draw the attention of the leadership, but these things have no value in Congress," he said.

# 3 activists to stay on bail

■ Continued from Page 1 UAPA could only be invoked in

respect of activities impacting the defence of the country, Mr Mehta told the court that in last year's violence in northeast Delhi, 53 people had lost their lives and over 700 were injured.

He argued that if the protest in the northeast Delhi last year was on the "perceived belief" that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was against a particular community, then "the lady who assassinated a former PM" also did it on the belief that injustice was done to a particular community.

In its bail order, the high court noted that the prosecution has only made inferences about the three activists, using "hyperbolic verbiage" "Allegations relating to inflam-

matory speeches, organising of chakka jam, instigating women to protest and to stockpile various

articles and other similar allegations, in our view, at worst, are evidence that the appellant participated in organising protests, but we can discern no specific or particularised allegation, much less any material to bear out the allegation, that the appellant incited violence, what to talk of committing a terrorist act or a conspiracy or act preparatory to the commission of a terrorist act as understood in the

UAPA," the high court said. The solicitor general also took exception to a paragraph of the high court judgment which reads: We are constrained to express that it seems, that in its anxiety to suppress dissent, in the mind of the State, the line between the constitutionally guaranteed right to protest and terrorist activity seems to be getting somewhat blurred. If this mindset gains traction, democracy would be in

# Low turnout in Iranian polls

■ Continued from Page 1

be the first serving Iranian President sanctioned by the US government even before entering office over his involvement in the mass execution of political prisoners in 1988, as well as his time as the head of Iran's internationally criticised judiciary — one of the world's top executioners.

It also would put hardliners firmly in control across the Iranian government as negotiations in Vienna continue to try to

save a tattered deal meant to limit Iran's nuclear programme at a time Tehran is enriching uranium at its highest levels ever, though still remains short of weapons-grade levels. Tensions remain high with both

the US and Israel, which is believed to have carried out a series of attacks targeting Iranian nuclear sites as well as assassinating the scientist who created its military atomic programme decades earlier.

### SHORT TAKES

### **Drunk man climbs**

atop mobile tower

New Delhi: The Delhi police came to the rescue of a person who climbed a TV mobile tower in Pushp Vihar on Friday. According to the police, at around 11.23 am, a PCR call was received at the Saket police station that one person had climbed a TV mobile tower at the Asian Market, Sector 3, in Pushp Vihar. On reaching the spot, it was found that a 20-yearold man had climbed up the TV tower and was not coming down despite requests. Ambulance and fire brigade were called at the spot but he did not come down. In the meantime, his parents came there and he was identified as Satish Kumar, a resident of Sainik Farms, the police said. Satish's father said that he had left his house around 5 pm on Thursday and had not returned since then. Satish works as a private labourer and is an alcoholic. After about an hour, he came down and was found to be under the influence of alcohol. He has been sent for medical examination, the police said.

### **Man strangled to**

death, 2 arrested

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man, along with his associate, was arrested by the Delhi police for allegedly strangling a man to death over some monetary issue and later dumping his body in Kanjhawala. The accused persons have been identified as Deepak Dabas (32) and Vishal (24). The latter has been arrested for giving shelter to the accused just after the incident, the police said. According to the police, on Saturday, a PCR call was received at the Kanjhawala police station regarding a dead body found behind a temple in Garhi Rindhala. Following this, a team rushed to the spot where the deceased's body was found. Thereafter, a personal search of the deceased was carried out. The accused disclosed that he had some monetary issue with the deceased.

### **UG & PG exams to** be online in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government on Friday announced that the final vear or final semester examinations for both undergraduate (UG) and post graduate (PG) students will be conducted online. State higher education minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said that the examinations will be conducted by July-August this year. The concerned university and autonomous colleges have been asked to finalise the dates for the examinations. Speaking to reporters after meeting with vice chancellors (VCs) of different universities, Dr Sahoo informed that the decision to hold online examinations was taken following suggestions by the VCs. "The UG, PG final year or final semester examinations will be conducted online," Dr Sahoo said.

### **SC TO HC: POSTPONE HEARING IN NARADA CASE TRANSFER**

**PARMOD KUMAR** 

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Calcutta high court to defer hearing on June 22 and 23 by a 5judge bench on a plea by the CBI to transfer the Narada scam case, allegedly involving several ruling Trinamul Congress (TMC) leaders, pending a hearing by it (the top court) on the appeals of the West Bengal government and its law minister Moloy Ghatak. The hearing by the top court will take place on June 22. Mr Ghatak has moved the top court against the high court order refusing to take their reply affidavits on record in

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Narada case. A bench of Justice Hemant Gupta and Justice V. Ramasubramanian adjourned the hearing asking both Mr Ghatak and the West Bengal government to serve the copies of their petitions at the office of solicitor general Tushar Mehta, who had appeared for the CBI. The appeals are against the high court's June 9 order, refusing to take on record their affidavits.

the transfer plea filed by the

# Sonowal in Delhi amid talk of rejig in Modi's Cabinet

Ex-CM likely to meet few top BJP leaders

New Delhi, June 18: Sarbananda Sonowal is in the national capital to meet senior BJP leaders, sources said

His arrival in New Delhi on Friday afternoon comes amid speculation of an intending reshuffle in the Union Cabinet and possible induction into it. Mr Sonowal was chief minister of the BJPled Assam government from 2016 till last month.

Even though the BJP-led alliance returned to power, Mr Sonowal was not made chief minister and was replaced by Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Mr Sonowal is likely to meet a few top BJP leaders, the sources said. He met defence minister

Rajnath Singh at a dinner hosted by Assam governor Jagdish Mukhi on night Guwahati.

Mr Sarma was also present at the dinner held at the Assam Raj Bhavan.

There has been speculation that Mr Sonowal, who belongs to Assam's indigenous Sonowal Kachari tribe, was called by the party leadership to the national capital for consultations ahead of a reshuffle of the Narendra Modi Cabinet.

There were reports that Mr Sonowal is one of the top contenders for a post in the Cabinet. Mr Sarma said recently that before he was given the state's top post, BJP president



J.P. Nadda had said that Sonowal would be given a new responsibility, without specifying what that could be.

As Mr Sonowal ran a government successfully for five years and helped the party returned to power, there is a possibility of him being "suitably rehabilitated" by the party, the sources said.

Even Mr Modi had acknowledged his contribution to the party and the government. 'My valued colleague

@sarbanandsonwal was at the helm of a propeople and pro-development administration over the last five years. His contribution towards Assam's progress and strengthening the party in the state is immense, Mr Modi tweeted on May 10. the day Mr Sarma was sworn in as the chief min-

Among those who could be inducted into the Modi cabinet include Congress-BJPturned leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Modi, representatives from BJP allies JD-U, Apna Dal (S) media reports said. — PTI

■ Net platform claim it follows own policy irks MPs

# Indian law supreme, not your policy, Twitter told

New Delhi, June 18: comply with the new IT Amid a tussle between the Union government and Twitter over the new IT rules, members of a parliamentary panel on Friday strongly objected to Twitter India officials' observations that they abide by their policy and categorically told them that the rule of land is supreme.

According to sources, members of the parliamentary panel on information technology also asked Twitter why it should not be fined as it has been found "violating" rules of the country. Earlier this month, the Centre issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last

chance to "immediately"

rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act.

The parliamentary standing committee on information and technology, chaired by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, had last week summo-ned Twitter over issues related to misuse of the platform and protection of citizens' rights.

Twitter India's public policy manager Shagufta Kamran and legal coun-sel Ayushi Kapoor deposed before the panel

Members of the panel asked some tough and

vaccination. The Delhi

government will train

5,000 youths to assist doc-

tors and nurses as part of

preparations for a possi-

ble third wave. The health assistants or community

nursing assistants will be

imparted a two-week

basic training in nursing

and lifecare that will start

from June 28 in batches of

In May, the Delhi gov

ernment had set up a 13-

member committee to

prepare an action plan for

a third wave of Covid-19.

500 candidates.

searching questions to Twitter India officials but there answers lacked clarity and were ambiguous, sources said.

They strongly objected to the observation of Twitter India officials that its policy is on par with the rule of land and categorically told them "rule of land is supreme, not your policy", sources said. Twitter and the Centre have been at loggerheads over several issues for the last few

months.

The site had faced backlash when it briefly removed the "blue tick verification badge from the personal account of vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu. — *PTI* 

165 new Covid

### Kejriwal, Baijal discuss plan to check 3rd wave

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, JUNE 18** 

Lieutenant-governor Anil Bajial and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal held a meeting on Friday to discuss the roadmap and an action plan to tackle a possible third wave of Covif-19 infection in the national capital.

A state-level task force, more healthcare staff and a special task force for treatment of children are part of the Delhi government's action plan to deal with the third wave, the chief minister's office tweeted

During the meeting, the

cases in Delhi in 24 hours New Delhi: As Delhi L-G and the CM also discussed bed and oxygen management, availability of drugs and Covid-19

continues to unlock the national capital on Friday reported 165 new cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours. On Friday, the Delhi high court also took cognizance of the overcrowding of the market subsequentbreaching the Covid-19 protocol. According to the

health bulletin, the positivity rate dipped to 0.22 per cent, with 14 deaths in the same period, the overall death count of the national capital has reached 24,900.

### 2 boys hurt after car-hit, accused arrested

New Delhi: Two minor boys were allegedly hit by a car while they were playing in outer Delhi's Sultanpuri area, police said on Friday. The children, aged five

and three, were admitted at Safdarjung hospital. One of them has been discharged from hospital while the other is still under treat-ment. The accused, Sakir, has been arrested.

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Rani Kumari, D/o Parmanad Paswan, R/o: RZF-904/11, Lala Bahadur Shastri Marg, Raj Nagar-II, Palam Colony, New Delhi has been missing since 11.05.2015 from her house from the area of P.S. Palam Village, New Delhi. In this regard a case FIR No. 312/15 dated 19.06.2015 has been lodged at PS Palam Village, New Delhi. The description of the missing girl are as under:

Age: 13 years(on date of missing), Sex: Female, Height: 5'1" Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Hair: Black, Built: Thin, Wearing: Light Green colour T-shirt and light red colour jeans. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the

Website: http//cbi.nic.in E-Mail ID - cic@cbi.gov.in Fax No. 011-24368639 Ph. Nos.: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/681/SW/2021

will be as under

SHO P.S. Palam Village, New Delhi Ph.: 011-9818469302

### **NORTHERN RAILWAY** OFFICE OF Principal Chief Materials Manager Headquarters Office, Baroda House, New Delhi-110001 Mail ID: salenr365@gmail.com

No: 117/S/Auction Programme/Sale/2021-22 Extra date in Auction Program of Northern Railway Following extra dates of the auction program for the month of June 202

SNo.	Depots/Depot	Extra date for e-auction	Timing
1	Alambagh/Lucknow 0522-2451257	30.06.2021	11.00
2	Sr.DMM/FZR 01632-244154	30.06.2021	12.00
3	Sr.DMM/UMB 0171-2611203	30.06.2021	10.00
4	Sr.DMM/MB 0591-2413141	30.06.2021	12.00
5	Sr.DMM/DLI 011-23365311	30.06.2021	14.00

All other auction dates advised earlier will remain same. For further details regarding e-auction please visit Railway website. 'www.ireps.gov.in'

(Prankur Gupta) Dv. CMM/S&P

₹50 21.94

₹ 23.02

₹ 45.30

For Principal Chief Materials Manager 1346/2021

ग्रेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

नहाप्रबन्धक (अभियन्त्रण) ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण द्वारा मुख्य

कार्यपालक अधिकारी, ग्रेटर नोएडा की ओर से ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या-

जी०एम० / (अभियन्त्रण) / 2021 / 236 दिनांक 16 / 06 / 2021 के माध्यम से उल्लेखित

क्रम संख्या-01 से 24 पर अंकित कार्य की ई-निविदायें आमन्त्रित की जाती हैं। समस्त

नियम व शर्ते ग्रेटर नोएडा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट www.greaternoidaauthority.in प

ई-निविदा लिंक एवं ई-पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है किसी

परिवर्तन, संशोधन व अतिरिक्त सूचनाओं के लिए उक्त वेबसाईटें देखते रहें।

नौएडा–ग्रेटर नौएडा एक्सप्रेसवे पर कैश वैरियर की रिपेयरिंग तथा

ग्राम तुगलपुर (फेस-2) में 6% आबादी भूखण्डों का विद्युतीकरण एवं

सैक्टर के.पी.—5 में खेड़ा चौगानपुर रोटरी एवं 24 मी0 चौड़ी रोड के

कार्य का नाम/वर्क सर्किल

स्ट्रीट लाईट का कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल-ई०एण्ड०एम०-2)

सैक्टर चाई—4 में गेट का कार्य । (वर्क सर्किल—4)

# Top AstraZeneca official backs India's 12-16 week vaccine gap

tion is unvaccinated and,

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, JULY 18** 

AstraZeneca's chief investigator and director of Oxford Vaccine Group, Prof Andrew Pollard, has endorsed India's 12-16 week gap for Covishield vaccine. He, however, refuted claims that a single dose of the vaccine is likely soon.

In an interview to journalist Karan Thapar, Prof Pollard said a vaccination policy that aims to vaccinate the largest number of people in the quickest possible time with at least one dose makes sense in the present circumstances in India, where the vast majority of the popula-

AGE CORRESPONDENT

Congress general secre-

Rajasthan Ajay Maken on Friday dismissed

reports that senior lead-

ers of the party did not

meet the party's Rajasthan strongman

He called Mr Pilot,

who was removed as the deputy chief minister

and the state party chief after he rebelled against

chief minister Ashok

Gehlot last year, an

asset and a star cam-

paigner. In the last cou-

ple of days political

activities have heated

up in Rajasthan with

Mr Pilot demanding that the high powered

committee made by the

high command take a

stand on his and his

Mr Maken further added that Congress

leader Privanka Gandhi

Vadra, who Mr Pilot is

in touch with, has been

out of Delhi for the last

10 days. He added Mr

Pilot is also in constant

talks with him and

another top leader K.C. Venugopal. "It is not

possible that he (Pilot)

has sought time for

meetings and did not

supporters' demands.

Sachin Pilot.

in-charge

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 18** 

Cong top brass

Pilot, says Maken

Calls leader an asset, star campaigner

in touch with

therefore, unprotected at a time when the Delta variant is a widely spreading and increasing threat. Prof Pollard also said that a simple and straightforward comparison between the vaccination policy in Britain and India does not make a sense because of the different circumstances in the two coun-

Prof Pollard said that in a situation of vaccine shortage it makes sense to ensure a measure of protection for the widest number of people rather than provide a better level of protection for a smaller number of people. He explained this by

get it." Mr Maken said

the work is on to fill the

vacant nine Cabinet

berths and to make

chief minister, state

party chief, and other

leaders for the appoint-

ments,"he said, adding

they were talking to everyone. "After the

political crisis last year.

our effort is that every

caste and regional equa-

tions are considered,

he responded when

asked about the expan-

sion and other appoint-

ments. Mr Maken urged

party legislators aga-

inst going public with

should understand the

Congress was born out of sacrifice," he said.

He added discipline will

be considered whenever

political appointments

and cabinet expansion

are done. He claimed

that all is well in

their grievances.

"Every

seniority,

legislator

of Congress,

section,

future

"I am speaking to the

political appointments.

saying that one dose of the AstraZeneca/ Covishield provides above 70 per cent protection against serious illness and hospitalization which has to be the main concern. One should not be deterred or deflected by the fact that one dose provides only 30 per cent protection against symptomatic illness.

Prof Pollard also said that Britain reduced the gap between two doses of AstraZeneca at a time when a substantial proportion of the British population was already vaccinated. Therefore, the situation permitted a reduction in the gap. In India the converse is the

### **Owner of Baba** Ka Dhaba in hospital after bid to end life

Bhaskar Hari Sharma New Delhi, June 18

owner of South Delhi's "Baba ka Dhaba", Kanta Prasad, allegedly attempted suicide and has been admitted to the Safdarjung Hospital, the police said on Friday.

Mr Prasad (81) attempted suicide on Thursday. The reason behind his extreme step is not yet known, it said. Hospital sources said he

is on ventilator support in the ICU. He is critical but stable.

Thursday, around 11.15 pm, information was received from the Safdarjung Hospital that Prasad was admitted there. The police reached the hospital and collected the MLC (medico-legal case), which states intake of alcohol and sleeping pills as the cause of unconsciousness," DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said. The statement of Mr Prasad's son Karan was recorded.

sumed alcohol with sleeping pills," the police said, adding that further inquiry is underway. Speaking to reporters, Mr Prasad's wife said she

"He said his father con-

has "no idea" what her husband consumed. "I am clueless about what happened to him. I was at the dhaba," she

02462/02461 SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI KATRA - NEW DELHI -SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI KATRA AC SPECIAL Train No.: 02462 Train No.: 02461 STATIONS ARR. DEP. ARR. DEP. 23:00 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra 06:10 23:24 23:26 Udhampur 05:06 05:08 03:55 00:30 00:40 03:47 Jammu Tawi 02:15 02:20 Pathankot Cantt. 02:00 02:05 04:05 04:10 00:22 Jalandhar Cantt 00:17 05:05 05:15 Ludhiana 23:20 23:30 07:00 07:10 Ambala Cantt. 21:40 21:50 09:45 New Delhi 19:05 DATE OF RUN: 02462 from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra from 01.07.2021 & 02461 from New Delhi from 02.07.2021 to till further advice. 02029/02030 NEW DELHI - AMRITSAR JN. - NEW DELHI

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that

Railways have decided to change the timings of the following

Special Trains effective from the dates shown as under:-

SHATABDI SPECIAL						
Train No.: 02029		1	I STATIONS ↑	Train No.: 02030		
ARR.	DEP.	*	SIATIONS		ARR.	DEP.
	07:20		New Delhi		22:50	
09:41	09:43		Ambala Cantt.		20:28	20:30
10:02	10:04		Rajpura Jn.		19:52	19:54
11:08	11:11		Ludhiana		18:50	18:55
11:40	11:42		Phagwara		18:14	18:16
12:06	12:08		Jalandhar City		17:53	17:56
12:38	12:40		Beas		17:18	17:20
13:30			Amritsar Jn.			16:50
DATE OF RUN: 02029 from New Delhi & 02030 from Amritsar Jn. from						

SARAI RUHILLA DURUNTO EXPRESS SPECIAL					
Train No.: 02265			Train No.: 02266		
ARR.	DEP.	<b>♦</b> STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
	22:20	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	03:55		
02:37	02:47	Ludhiana	23:20	23:30	
07:15		Jammu Tawi		19:15	
DATE OF RUN: 02265 from Delhi Sarai Rohilla from 02.07.2021 &					
02266 from Jammu Tawi from 03.07.2021 to till further advice.					

02005/02006 NEW DELHI - KALKA - NEW DELHI

02265/02266 DELHI SARAI ROHILLA - JAMMU TAWI - DELHI

SHATABDI SPECIAL						
Train No.: 02005			Train No	.: 02006		
ARR.	DEP.	<b>▼</b> STATION:	°	ARR.	DEP.	
	17:15	New Delhi		10:15		
18:18	18:20	Panipat		08:50	08:52	
19:00	19:02	Kurukshetr	а	08:08	08:10	
19:50	19:53	Ambala Car	tt.	07:33	07:38	
20:31	20:38	Chandigar	h	06:45	06:53	
21:15		Kalka			06:15	
ATE OF RUN: 02005 from New Delhi from 21.06.2021 & 02006 Kalka						
rom 22.0	om 22.06.2021 to till further advice.					

02011/02012 NEW DELHI - KALKA - NEW DELHI SHATABDI SPECIAL					
Train No.: 02011		I STATIONS ♠	Train No.: 02012		
ARR.	DEP.	<b>▼</b> STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	
	07:40	New Delhi	21:50		
08:43	08:45	Panipat	20:22	20:24	
09:25	09:27	Kurukshetra	19:38	19:40	
10:20	10:22	Ambala Cantt.	19:03	19:08	
10:57	11:05	Chandigarh	18:15	18:23	
11:40		Kalka		17:45	
DATE OF RUN: 02011 from New Delhi & 02012 Kalka from 21.06.2021 to till further advice.					

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	नजदीक सीवरेज सिस्टम का कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल–सीवर)	लाख
4.	सैक्टर पी-3, पी-4 में लगे पेड़ पौधों एवं लॉन (पार्क एवं सैन्ट्रल वर्ज) के तथा हट, पाथवे बाउन्ड्रीवाल, ग्रीन बैल्ट की बारबेड वॉयर फैंसिंग का तीन वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल-उद्यान)	ৰূত 153.24 লাভ্ৰ
5.	ग्राम मायचा में 10% आबादी भूखण्डों का विकास कार्य (अवशेष कार्य–2) । (वर्क सर्किल–7)	ক্ত0 220.41 লাख
6.	सैक्टर ईकोटेक—11 के साथ 60 मी0 चौड़ी पेरिफेरल रोड का अवशेष रिसरफेसिंग कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल—7)	ক্ত০ 204.95 লাম্ভ
7.	ग्राम थापखेड़ा के 4%, 6%, 10% आबादी भूखण्डों का विकास कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल—6)	रू0 264.29 लाख
8.	ऑटोमेशन बेस्ड वॉटर सप्लाई (जोन—1) में ट्यूब—वेल राइजिंग मेन एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन। (वर्क सर्किल—जल)	आईटम रेट
9.	ऑटोमेशन बेस्ड वॉटर सप्लाई (जोन–2) में ट्यूब–वेल राइजिंग मेन एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन। (वर्क सर्किल–जल)	आईटम रेट
10.	ऑटोमेशन बेस्ड वॉटर सप्लाई (जोन–3) में ट्यूब–वेल राइजिंग मेन एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन। (वर्क सर्किल–जल)	आईटम रेट
11.	सैक्टर-16 (औद्योगिक) की 45 मी० चौड़ी रोड की स्ट्रीट लाईट का कार्य । (वर्क सर्किल-ई०एण्ड०एम0-2)	ক্ত0 38.95 লাख
12.	ग्राम साकीपुर में अवशेष विकास कार्य । (वर्क सर्किल—5)	ক0 97.17 লাভ্ৰ
13.	ग्रेटर नौएडा में विभिन्न स्थानों पर इन्स्टीट्शनल डारेक्शन साइनेज बोर्ड लगाने का कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल–5)	ক্ত 103.98 লাভ্ৰ
14.	सैक्टर टैकजोन–4 में 60 मी0, 45 मी0 एवं 30 मी0 चौड़ी रोड के साथ ड्रेन को ऊँचा उठाने का कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल–3)	रू0 192.44 लाख
15.	ग्राम बिसायच में इण्टरलॉकिंग टाईल्स एवं नाली का अवशेष कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल–8)	रू0 199.00 लाख
16.	पल्ला ग्रेटर नौएडा एवं देहरा (गाजियाबाद) में डब्ल्यू.टी.पी. की न्यू इनटेक बाउन्ड्रीवाल का अवशेष कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल-जल)	रू0 122.44 लाख
17.	ऑटोमेशन बेस्ड वाटर सप्लाई (जोन—4) में ट्यूब—वेल राइजिंग मेन एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन। (वर्क सर्किल—जल)	आईटम रेट
18.	ऑटोमेशन बेस्ड वाटर सप्लाई (जोन—5) में ट्यूब—वेल राइजिंग मेन एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन। (वर्क सर्किल—जल)	आईटम रेट
19.	ऑटोमेशन बेस्ड वाटर सप्लाई (जोन—6) में ट्यूब—वेल राइजिंग मेन एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन। (वर्क सर्किल—जल)	आईटम रेट
20.	ग्राम देवला में डी.एस.सी. रोड से पक्षी विहार तक सी.सी. रोड एवं आर.सी.सी. ड्रेन का निर्माण। (वर्क सर्किल–3)	रू० 105.79 लाख
21.	ग्राम पतवारी में 6% आबादी भूखण्डों का अवशेष विकास कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल-3)	रू0 679.91 लाख
22.	सैक्टर-3 के पॉकेट-बी, सी, डी के पार्क, 10 मी0 चौड़ी ग्रीन बेल्ट एवं 12 मी0 चौड़ी ग्रीन बेल्ट रोड साइड का उद्यानिक विकास तथा सिविल कार्य सहित तीन वर्ष के अनुरक्षण का कार्य। (वर्क सर्किल-उद्यान)	रू0 283.63 लाख
23.	ग्राम पतवारी के 8% आबादी भूखण्डों का अवशेष विकास कार्य।	₹0 905.56

क्रमांक 1 से 4 तक की निविदाओं को 22.06.2021 से 01.07.2021 तक, क्रमांक 5 से 10 तक की निविदाओं को 22.06.2021 से 06.07.2021 तक, क्रमांक 11 से 16 तक की निविदाओं को 25.06.2021 से 05.07.2021 तक एवं क्रमांक 17 से 24 तक की निविदाओं को 25.06.2021 से 08.07.2021 को सायं 5:00 बजे तक अपलोड किया जा सकता है उक्त प्राप्त ई-निविदाओं की प्री-क्वालिफिकेशन दिनांक 05.07.2021, 07.07.2021 08.07.2021 एवं 12.07.2021 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे खोली जाएगी। महाप्रबंधक (अभियन्त्रण)

ऑटोमेशन बेस्ट वॉटर सप्लाई (अवशेष कार्य) में ट्यूब—वेल राइजिंग मेन

एवं क्लोरिनेशन इत्यादि कार्य का 3 वर्ष तक अनुरक्षण एवं संचालन।

(वर्क सर्किल-जल)

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### SHORT TAKES **VERBAL TRUCE BETWEEN FRANCE, TURKEY: PARIS**

Paris: A "verbal ceasefire" is in place between France and Turkey after months of rancorous exchanges that strained the relations of the NATO allies, the French foreign minister said on Friday.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his counterpart Emmanuel Macron met on the sidelines of the NATO summit this week, following the rows on international crises such as Libya, Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh that led to bitter personal diatribes from the Turkish leader.

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told BFM television that he welcomed the change in tone but said it had to be matched by more concrete steps from Ankara.

"There is a kind of verbal ceasefire. That's good but it's not enough," he said.

### **UK 'ASHAMED'** AT POOR RAPE **CONVICTION RATES**

London: Britain's government has apologised to rape victims for declining conviction levels, with senior Cabinet ministers saying they're "deeply ashamed" by the downward trend in bringing sexual offenders to justice.

The government's Rape Review, published Thursday, said the situation was "totally un-acceptable" and that authori-ties are determined to change it.

Figures from the Crown Persecution Service showed that 1,439 suspects were convicted of rape or lesser sexual offenses in England and Wales in 2020 — the lowest level since records began — despite reports of rape to police almost doubling since 2015.

Of an estimated 128,000 reported cases of rape or attempted rape each year, just 1.6 per cent result in a charge. The review said it found no one specific cause for the over-

all drop in prosecutions.
"These are trends of which we are deeply ashamed. Victims of rape are being failed,"
Justice Secretary Robert
Buckland, Home Secretary
Priti Patel and Attorney
General Michael Ellis wrote.

### **INDIA NAVY DENIES** IT HAD ATTACKED **LANKA FISHERMEN**

Colombo: India on Friday rejected as "blatantly false" the local media reports about the Indian Navy's alleged assault on a group of Sri Lankan Iisnermen, saying no such incident has taken place.

A group of 13 local fishermen claimed that they had ventured into the sea on May 7 onboard trawlers "Thushan 1" and "Thushan II" and were physically assaulted by the Indian Navy in the international waters around Diego Garcia on June 4. "They demanded drugs from

us even after we told them that we were only fishermen," two

fishermen said.
Responding to their claims, the Indian High Commission here denied that the fishermen had been assaulted by the Indian Navy. "Media reports on June 17 stating that a group of Sri Lankan fishermen was attacked physically by the Indian Navy are blatantly false. We deny any such incident having taken place," the High Commission said.

### **CHINA IS 'PACING CHALLENGE' FOR U.S.: DEF SECY**

**Washington:** China is a "pacing challenge" for America, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has said, asserting that it is "really important" for the US to focus more on creating opportunities to better partner with its allies and partners in the strategically vital Indo-Pacific region.

Austin told members of the Senate Appropriations Committee during a hearing on 2022 Budget Request for the Defense Department Thursday that China was his

"priority focus" China is, in fact, our pacing challenge and it is my priority focus. You've seen that quite frankly through our actions. My first overseas trip along with Secretary Blinken was over to the region," he said. Indo-Pacific

'You saw me stand up a China task force that has helped to focus the efforts of the department on making sure that we are doing the right things to create the capabilities and develop the operational concepts that we need to be successful. You've seen that through quite frankly our actions," he said.

# Delta variant becoming globally dominant: WHO

**Geneva, June 18:** The Delta variant of Covid-19, first identified in India, is becoming the globally dominant variant of the disease, the World Health Organisation's chief scientist said on Friday.

Soumya Swaminathan also voiced disappointment in the failure of CureVac's vaccine candidate in a trial to meet the WHO's efficacy standard, in particular as highly transmissible variants boost the need for new, effective shots.

Britain has reported a steep rise in infections with the Delta variant, while Germany's top public health official predictit would rapidly become the dominant variant there despite rising vaccination rates.

The Kremlin blamed a surge in Covid-19 cases on reluctance to have vaccinations and "nihilism" after record new infections in Moscow, mostly with the new Delta vari-ant, fanned fears of a third wave.

"The Delta variant is well on its way to becoming the dominant variant globally because of its increased transmissibility," Swaminathan told a news conference.

Coronavirus variants were cited by CureVac umented at least 13 variants circulating within its

**COVID CASES IN MOSCOW TRIPLE, FAN ZONES SHUT** 

Moscow, June 18: New coronavirus infections hit a pandemic high in on Monday, tripling in just weeks and forcing Russia's capital to close its Euro fan zone and extend other curbs. Some 9,056 new cases

were recorded in the megapolis of 12 million in the past 24 hours, up from 3,000 two weeks ago and a new daily record since the Covid-19 pandemic began in early 2020, according to official statistics.

Faced with the spike, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin, who has been rolling out restrictions for nearly a week, said that the city would limit gatherings and close the Euro 2020 fan zone outside of the Luzhniki sta-

ny this week reported its vaccine proved only 47 per cent effective at preventing disease, shy of the WHO's 50 per cent bench-

The company said it doc-

Given that similar mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and BioNTech and Moderna posted efficacy rates topping 90 per cent, Swaminathan said the world had been expecting more from CureVac's can-

"Just because it's another mRNA vaccine, we cannot presume all mRNA vaccines are the same, because each one has a slightly different technology," Swaminathan said, adding the surprise failure underscored the value of robust clinical trials to test new products.

WHO officials Africa remains an area of concern, even though it accounts for only around 5 per cent of new global infections and 2 per cent of deaths. New cases in Namibia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Rwanda have doubled in the last week, WHO emergencies programme head Mike Ryan said, while vaccine access remains miniscule.

"It's a trajectory that is very, very concerning," Ryan said. "The brutal reality is that in an era of multiple variants, with increased transmissibility, we have left vast swathes of the population, the vulnerable population of Africa, unprotected by



The pro-democracy paper increased its print run to 500,000 copies on Friday, a day after police arrested five top editors and executives and froze \$2.3 million in assets linked to the media company.

# 'Apple Daily' increases print run after arrests

### Editors held on suspicion of foreign collusion

Hong Kong, June 18: Hong Kong pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily* on Friday increased its print run to 5,00000 copies as residents showed support for the beleaguered press freedom a day after police arrested five top editors and executives and froze \$2.3 million worth of ass-ets on national security

The raid on the paper's offices followed by the arrests on Thursday marked the first time the sweeping national security law, which Beijing imposed on Hong Kong last year, was used against the media, one of the symbols of civil liberties in the semi-autonomous city that don't exist elsewhere in China. Police said the editors

were arrested on suspi-

• FRONT PAGE of Friday's edition splashed images of the five editors and executives led away in handcuffs. Police also confiscated 44 hard drives worth of news material. cion of foreign collusion to endanger national secu-

cles that authorities said had called for international sanctions against China and Hong Kong. With anti-government protests silenced, most of the city's prominent prodemocracy activists in jail and many others fleeing abroad, people snapped up copies at newsstands and

rity, based on over 30 arti-

in convenience stores. "There are lots of injustices in Hong Kong already. I think there are a lot of things we cannot do anymore," said resident Lisa Cheung. "Buying a copy is all what we can do. When the law cannot protect Hong Kong people anymore, we are only left to do what we can."

The front page of Friday's edition splashed images of the five editors and executives led away in handcuffs. Police also confiscated 44 hard drives worth of news material. A quote from Cheung Kimhung, the arrested CEO of Apple Daily's publisher Next Digital, said "Hang

in there, everyone." Another resident, William Chan, said he bought a copy of the paper as a show of support. resident,

"It was such a groundfreedom of the press," he

State Department spok esman Ned Price said that the US strongly con-demned the arrests and called for the immediate release of the five arrested. He also called for Hong Kong authorities to stop targeting independent and free media.

"We are deeply concerned by Hong Kong authorities' selective use of the national security law to arbitrarily target inde-pendent media organizations," Price said, adding that the suspected foreign collusion charges appear to be politically motivated.

we exchanging views with foreigners in journalism should never be a crime, he said.

**NEPAL PREZ SAYS** 

**SC CAN'T REVERSE** 

Kathmandu, June 18:

Asserting that the House

of Representatives was

dissolved as per the con-

stitutionai provisions.

Nepal's President Bidya

Devi Bhandari has told

the Supreme Court that

it cannot overturn her

decision on the matter

or subject it to a judicial

DISSOLUTION

### **UK Conservatives lose** safe seat in major upset London. June 18: Britain's ruling Conservative

party suffered a major upset in a by-election result announced on Friday, losing a safe seat it had held for nearly 50 years. Prime Minister Boris

Johnson's party lost in the contest to elect an MP for Chesham and Amersham — prosperous commuter towns in Buckinghamsnorthwest of The centrist Liberal Democrat candidate, Sarah Green, won more than 56 percent in a constituency that had been held by the Tories

since it was set up in its

current form in 1974. The Times newspaper said the defeat raised questions over the Conservative strategy of focusing efforts on seizing seats from the main opposition Labour party, rather than on defending traditional Tory seats, known as the "Blue Wall" due to the party's logo

Johnson's party in May won a by-election in the traditional Labour-voting Hartlepool, adding another parliamentary seat in

**AFTER RAMPAGE** 

**BEAR KILLED** 



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson assists in an engine repair at the Automotive shop during a visit to Kirklees College Springfield Sixth Form Centre in Dewsbury, northern England on Friday.

northeast England to and plans to build more those they secured in the houses in rural areas. last general election in December 2019, when Brexit was the main issue.

Dems campaigned activeand in Chesnam Amersham, tapping into local opposition to controversial projects in the area, with leader Ed Davey visiting 16 times, *The Times* said.

The *BBC* said voters this time round focused on local issues: the controversial construction of a high-speed rail link through the constituency

through British politics' The pro-European Lib and proved the "blue wall can be smashed by @lib-

The contest was trigby the death in April of former govern-ment minister Cheryl Gillan, who had held the seat for 29 years.

Peter Fleet, a former motor industry executive who was bidding to replace her, called the result "very disappoint-

# Ultraconservative cleric Raisi leads Iran poll race

Tehran, June 18: Iranians many for a brighter future" of the Iranian peovoted on Friday in a presi-future. dential election in which ultraconservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi is seen as all but certain to coast to victory after all serious rivals were barred from running.

After a lacklustre campaign, turnout was expected to fall to a new low in a country exhausted by a punishing regime of US economic sanctions that has dashed the hopes of

Avatollah Ali Khamenei. cast the first vote in Tehran and then urged eligible voters to follow (1930 GMT).

"The sooner you per-

Iran's nearly 60 million suit before the scheduled close of polls at midnight

form this task and duty, the better," said the 81-year-old, stressing that voting "serves to build the

future. ple. Pictures of often flag-The supreme leader, waving voters dominated state TV coverage, but away from the polling stations some voiced anger at what they saw as a stagemanaged election.

'Whether I vote or not, someone has already been elected," scoffed Tehran shopkeeper Saeed Zareie about the pre-election vetting that barred all but seven of the more than 600

President Bhandari, at the recommendation of Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli, dissolved the lower house for the months on May 22 and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19.

Prime Minister Oli is currently heading a minority government after losing a trust vote in the House.

President Bhandari, Prime Minister Oli and Speaker Agni Sapkota separately presented their clarifications in writing to the apex court on the government's May 21 decision,

The Khadmandu Post reported. Constitutional Bench on June 9 had asked them to furnish their clarifications in writing.

# War, crisis refugees double in decade: UN **IN JAPAN CITY**

Tokyo, June 18: Hunters shot and killed a brown bear in northern Japan on Friday after it rampaged through a city, injuring four people including a soldier and lumbering across busy

The city of Sapporo tweeted that the bear had been "exterminatwith a local television station saying hunters had shot the bear.

Earlier, dramatic news footage showed the bear bounding along a residential street, crossing a busy road and clawing at the gates of a military barracks, alarmed troops to scatter. One soldier was injured in the bear's rampage in the city, which will host the Olympic marathon and racewalking events in

August. Another victim was mauled by the bear after it attacked him from behind, TV footage showed. The person was taken away on a stretcher.

The rampage prompted local school closures and the cancellation of several flights at a small regional airport, NHK

reported. government Earlier. spokesman Katsunobu Kato told people in the Hokkaido region to be on alert.

Geneva, June 18: Despite cent of humanity uprootthe Coronavirus pandemic, the number of people ed and displaced.

fleeing war and persecution continued rising last year, with global displacement climbing to over 82 million — double the fig-ure a decade ago, the UN said on Friday.

A fresh report from the refugee agency showed global displacement figures swelled by around three million in 2020 after an already record-breaking year in 2019, leaving a full one perThe report highlighted

how drawn-out crises like in Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen were continuing to force people to flee, while eruptions of violence in places like Ethiopia and Mozambique were causing surging displacement.

The fact that the numbers rose for the ninth straight year was all the more devastating because Covid-19 restrictions had been expected to limit displacement.

During the pandemic, "everything else has stopped, including the economies, but wars and conflict and violence and discrimination and persecution, all the factors that pushed these people to flee, have continued," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi said.
The UN agency found

that by the end of 2020, a record 82.4 million people were living as refugees or asylum seekers, or in so-

live close to a century,

according to a study in

ing big lines on a specific

coelacanth scale. But the

ment within their own countries, up from some 40 million in 2011. Nearly half under 18

A full 42 percent of the world's displaced are girls and boys under the age of The tragedy of so many

children being born into exile should be reason enough to make far greater efforts to prevent and end conflict and violence," Grandi said.

Some 26.4 million people were living as refugees at the end of 2020, including

5.7 million Palestinians. Some 3.9 million Venezuelans were also displaced beyond their borders without being considered refugees, while 4.1 million people were registered worldwide as asylum

seekers.

But while both refugee and asylum seeker numbers remained relatively flat from 2019, the number of people displaced within their own countries surged by more than two million to 48 million, the

**ENDANGERED | SPECIES | Coelacanths, which have been around for 400M years were thought extinct** 

# Weird 'living fossil' fish lives 100 years

Washington, June 18: The coelacanth — a giant weird fish still around from dinosaur times can live for 100 years, a new study found.

These slow-moving, people-sized fish of the deep, nicknamed a "living fos-sil," are the opposite of the live fast, die young mantra. These nocturnal fish grow at an achingly slow pace.

Females don't hit sexual maturity until their late 50s, the study said, while male coelacanths are sexually mature at 40 to 69 And maybe of all, strangest

SCIENTISTS CALCU-LATED fish's age by counting big lines on a specific coelacanth scale. **But French scientists** found they were missing smaller lines that could only be seen using polarised light – the technique used to figure

researchers figure pregnancy in the fish lasts about five years. Coelacanths, which have been around for 400 mil-

lion years, were thought

cial fish.

Thursday's Current out the age of commer-Coelacanths are so endangered that scientists can only study specimens already caught and dead. In the past, scientists calculated fish ages by count-

extinct until they were found alive in 1938 off they were missing smaller South Africa. Scientists lines that could only be seen using polarized light — the technique used to long believed coelacanths live about 20 years. But by figure out the age of comapplying a standard technique for dating commermercial fish. Study co-author Bruno cial fish, French scientists calculated they actually

Ernande, a marine evolutionary ecologist at France's marine research institute, said polarized light revealed five smaller lines for every big one. The researchers concluded the smaller lines better correlated to a year of coelacanth age and that indicated their oldest specimen was 84 years old.



A coelacanth in a museum in France. It is believed they can live for a 100 years.



# THE ASIAN AGE

19 JUNE 2021

# CBSE formula less than perfect, but does the job

he Supreme Court has accepted the 30:30:40 formula for assessing Class 12 students of CBSE and CISCE as recommended by education experts. Principally, there can be no such thing as an absolutely objective system to judge the academic work of young students. But, given the circumstances the country is in thanks to successive waves of the coronavirus pandemic, little else could have been done except find a reasonably acceptable formula that would take care of the assessment

There is one fundamental flaw in this 30 (Class 10 marks): 30 (Class 11 marks): 40 (Class 12 unit and term exams besides practicals) formula and that is equating Class 10, in which students take a public examination and Class11 in which students are known to be less than serious because they only take tests conducted by schools and would normally have no bearing on where they go on their scholastic route through university

It is arguable whether 40:20:40 would have made for better criteria but then even the top court did not seem to take time to size up the formula offered and agreed straightaway to the

criteria offered

It is arguable whether 40:20:40 would have made for better criteria but then even the top court did not seem to take time to size up the formula offered and agreed straightaway to the criteria offered as assessment of students' performance over three years. So, for better or for worse, the evaluation will begin in the given format.

There are bound to be anomalies as cases emerge from among 15 lakh students who are in these streams of study. Numerous other state boards would have to decide soon too on how they will go about marking students' academic performance as many of them have abandoned thoughts of holding the exams. The top court has taken upon itself to decide on whether four states wishing to go ahead with Class 12 exams can be allowed to do so.

How objective the assessment will be is open to question though the system of evaluation is theoretically better because it is based on performances over three years. This is, however, bound to throw up riddles and local school committees proposed by CBSE will have their task cut out. They will also have the discretion to take all assessments or just the pre-boards tests or even a combination of them, making

The idea of a common entrance test being planned for entry to universities, as distinct from professional courses in engineering and medicine for which elite institutions hold their own entrance tests like JEE and NEET, may further complicate matters. The sheer diversity of curriculums among so many state boards competing with the all-India ones, like CBSE, makes it an onerous task to find an acceptable test format to judge young people facing their first big tests.

In these extraordinary, even desperate times, when the world has been dealt such a blow through the coronavirus pandemic, desperate remedies have to be sought. But there is no judging how much students from disadvantaged sections of society or the ones residing in remote areas have suffered in coping with online classes in the last year in which they may have had to do with unequal resources in terms of smartphones, devices and connectivity. Lakhs of students may be left dissatisfied with the way their work is assessed but the evaluation brooks no delay.

### Grace needed in Lakshwadeep

The unilateral acts of the administration in Lakshadweep, an archipelago of 35 tiny islands of approximately 70,000 people, have been going on despite an appeal by the people residing on the island and outside. The latest in the series, initiated by administrator Praful Khoda Patel, is the move to acquire pieces of private land for development works even without giving notice to the owners under the draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021.

Mr Patel, a BJP politician who was appointed the administrator in December, has been introducing administrative measures that seek to upset and undermine the way the island has been run and the people have lived there. The draft of the three new regulations — the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation (PASA), the Animal Preservation Regulation, and the Panchayat Regulation are under the consideration of the Union home ministry. It is ironic that the administration is going ahead with its plans based on these draft laws even as the Kerala high court, which has territorial jurisdiction on the island, has in netitions against them say ring they have not been final A group of retired senior civil servants, in a recent letter to Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, reminded him of the need to be sensitive to the sentiments of the people while implementing projects there. There are no two opinions on the need for the Union government to show some extra care and attention on the island, which holds geostrategic importance for the country. It goes without saying that any such step must be taken in such a way that the islanders feel more confident and comfortable. Mr Patel's actions, unfortunately, are to the contrary. The government must realise that the mighty Indian state need not use the extra-strong arm of the law to deal with peace-loving people who have one of the lowest crime rates in the country. It must show grace, instead.

### THE ASIAN AGE

KAUSHIK MITTER

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Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg. New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301 London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ. RNI Registration number: 57290/94



BoJo, Dombo & Carrie: The 'weird' trio at 10 Downing St

"Tolerance is an annoying virtue; Forgiveness can never hurt you

- From **The Proverbs of Bachchoo** 

n the neighbourhood in which I grew up in Pune, there was, at the end of Synagogue Street — you guessed it — a synagogue! Made entirely of red brick with a Gothic tower it was known locally as Lal

Our immediate neighbour was a Parsi gentleman who, among other things, published an anonymous rag sheet imaginatively called *Synagogue* ni Searchlight — that's Parsi Gujarati with two English words.

It was a gossip sheet with articles about which girls were seen cycling with boys of a different religion, which family was going bankrupt because the male breadwinner was earning no bread and still gambling on cotton figures, which couple had a foul shouting match over the wife's certain adul-

My grandfather, the head of our

the Searchlight and against all gossip and, I suppose, instilled in me a suspicion of it and an inclination to shut my

of following mamawaji's banning principle, I am eagerly enjoying a very public, very significant political row based entirely on gossip. I excuse myself with the contention that this gossip holds the future of the government of the UK in suspense, if not in peril, and it embarrasses persons I regard as on the opposite side to myself in every ideoduced his pregnant fiancé, Carrie Symonds. As PM now, he appointed

ernment and his health secretary Matt Hancock faltered in several ways lockdowns were introduced too late, the equipment for keeping hospital staff, including doctors and nurses, protected was not commissioned and distributed as it should have been, contracts for testing and tracing the plague were handed out to cronies of the government without adequate scrutiny or being subject to tender. The test and trace programme was an abject failure, if not a complete non-starter... and the

One assumed at the time that Dombo was part of all these plans and failures as he was BoJo's right-hand man. In this role he had, before and during the plague, exhibited his weirdo tendencies. He publicly said that he was recruiting advisers and operatives to the government who were, in his own

It now transpires, or did a few months

his bags. He took his documents, his exchange of phone texts with the Prime Minister and others, his notes of meetings at the heart of the British government, his memories of what went on in committees into which he had intruded and a pailful of vengeful bile and intent.

He told the press that BoJo had, against urgent advice, delayed the lock-

He was called then to give evidence to a parliamentary committee about his take on the preparations for Covid-19. He spoke to them for seven hours, repeatedly saying that BoJo was not fit for the job and that Matt Hancock had repeatedly lied to Parliament and ought to have been sacked for deceit, if not for total incompetence. Mr Hancock denied all of it and demanded written proof from Dombo.

This week Dombo released the content of several WhatsApp exchanges with BoJo, who replies to him calling Mr Hancock "totally f--- ing hopeless!" In a later exchange, again fatally critical of Mr Hancock, BoJo says: "I can't think of anything except taking Hancock off and putting Gove on." Mr Hancock remains

There are 6,984 more words to Dombo's released text. He threatens more devastating revelations from his time at the heart of Britain's government. Please, can they be juicily, fatally about other ministers? Can't





# Twitter vs Govt: Free speech, interrupted...



Shashidhar Nanjundaiah

witter, micro-blogging giant, is no longer the hubless network of global chatter that its model would appear to indicate. After it failed to appoint a fulltime officer in charge of compliance in India, its country managing director will be criminally liable for inflammatory or hateful remarks on the platform. In real terms, this means that the social media platform will now be responsible for what the Twitterati say. Not complying with one of the rules mandated by the Indian government has cost Twitter dearly, as it lost the very legal cover that would have enabled it to be treated as an intermediary. Intervention itself could come in the way of intermedi-

Social media platforms have claimed to be comoff intermediaries. Section 79 of the Information Technology Act offers a legal shield so long as Twitter remains an intermediary — when it does not initiate message transmission, does not select the receiver, and does not modify the message. The loss of the "safe haroffered under Section 79 — perhaps the first such experience in the world — means that the essence of the business model of the social media has come crashing down. As with any house of cards, this crash was just waiting to happen. Arguably, a company's vulnerability is at its peak when a nation's political values are being rewritten.

A newspaper editor's job is to act as a "gatekeeper", assigning various pages, positions, lengths and levels of prominence to news stories. Unlike a legacy edi-

of the road? tor, a social media platform does not edit the content of what we write. It is far more democratic in that way than a newspaper. The role of social

the way algorithms are written, or the level of engagement, or other protocols, there is a process of message prioritisation that essentially means one message can attain more visibility than another. Syllogistically, assigning prominence to some content over other content

should be seen as a form

of editorial intervention.

This form of editoriali-

media intermediaries in

the current framework is

not quite as simple, but

whether they are completely hands-off is

debatable. Whether in

sation, however indirect and driven mainly by those who wrote the programmes, means that the social media business model that is fed to us that the social media is truly a free marketplace of ideas — should be questioned. Users may assume that because of the sheer volumes, their posts have the same chance of visibility and impact as their neighbour's. Have social media platforms been transparent with us about how it all really works, and whether it is simply an organic process like Darwin's theory of natur-

But the concern for the billions of social media users is much larger. Regulation comes at the price of more, not less, intervention. Liberal policies in a democracy implicitly must assume one factor that really is debatable: "fairness". If a government tangles with private players and creates a shield of opacity from regular folks, it is unfair to the spirit of democracy. In the same spirit, is it fair to hold a company responsible for what its users do? After

al selection?

employees of the company. Would the police charge the bicycle manufacturer for a rider who chooses to ride illegally on the wrong side

The difference is that in a social media model, the company and the user are bound by a trapezelike relationship, bound to each other for a critical moment of *usage*. So, could the answer be an openly stated pre facto intervention? The problem with taking responsibility for content someone else creates is that any damage can only be mitigated after it is done. We may not have reached the stage of being able to prevent an impending message in time (although efforts in that direction could be ongoing). But if it were and Twitter did intervene before a tweet goes public, it would still lose its status as an intermediary. Perhaps as a first step in a precautionary method, Twitter could filter out the bots and fake profiles. Flagging posts for dubious content was always a great idea, but can it be pre facto and more transparent? If intervention is

editorial job then be limiting posts?

It will be naïve to assume that everything will go according to the *spirit* of the law. Twitter will now be an easier target for those who find a post inconvenient, and when users find that their legal responsibility is indirect at best, one wonders whether bad content will be prone to sink even further. In the Ghaziabad incident on the heels of the loss of Twitter's indemnity, the Uttar Pradesh police named the company and

needed, should Twitter's

**Governments that** promote nationalistic narratives, and the societies that are hegemonised into those narratives, prefer images, walls and controls. The new rule is a flag-bearer of that philosophy.

First Information Report, accusing it of circulating a fake video. This means that the police has assumed a broader scope of culpability, holding both the plat-

form *and* its users liable. Twitter may therefore need a new operational model. Twitter's India experience also could fortify the brewing idea that after decades of enjoying the status of being the most unregulated and unfettered among modern media technologies, the social media's growth may be cooling off. A report pre-dicted these trends from nearly three years ago: An Oxford University-Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's Digital News Report had reported back in 2018 that for the first time since the phenomenon began, among users in 37 countries across continents (not including India, albeit), the dependence on social media for news consumption had showed a decline.

It is indeed "astounding", as information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad pointed out, that an entity that projects itself as the flag-bearer of free law. That observation, however, should apply to governments and private corporations alike. Governments that promote nationalistic narratives, and the societies that are hegemonised into those narratives, prefer images, walls and controls. The new rule is a flag-bearer of that philosophy. Now we can expect less inconvenient chatter from the Twitterati. Free speech is illusory anyway, and if social media giants were to deny that any form of control exists, whether political or not, it would be a little rich These platforms have been our public dhobi ghats for dirty linen. But it seems that is not how

The writer has headed private schools of media and communications. and is a proponent of

### **LETTERS**

### **MAHANT A MAVERICK**

The 2017 UP elections brought Yogi Adityanath into prominence. His saffron-clad clout prevailed over any ideas BJP might have had for anointing a regular party man CM. The larger-than-life image that that the Yogi managed to create for himself in these four years cannot be wished away. He was not a cultivated RSS cadre man either. He has been a MLA from 1998, more on his standing as a religious head. The pandemic nonplussed him as much as it did all other CMs. But then the Yogi stepped on many toes. The RSS and the BJP may well be uncomfortable with his style but any newer equation to the 2022 UP elections stays tied to the Mahant of Gorakhpur.

### R. Narayanan Navi Mumbai

### **SAY NO TO COLA** CRISTIANO RONALDO'S recent discarding of Coke at a press conference and opting for water instead sends the right message to football fans. In an era of indiscriminate endorse-

ments and rampant financial covetousness, this is an important gesture that breaks the norm. Since the Coca-Cola has been involved multiple controversies connected to depletion of groundwater, ill-treatment of workers, racism and so on. Drinking high amounts of Coke can also damage your health. Cheers to Ronaldo for his spirit and indepen-

> **Chanchal Nandy** Durgapur

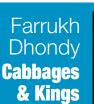
### **SAVE BUXWAHA**

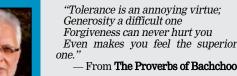
dent mindset.

THE SHIFTING OF the economy from an agricultural to an industrial and commercial one has ruined the environment. The Buxwaha jungles in Madhya Pradesh is again under threat of being wiped out. The gov-ernment has bid the land believed to be sitting on a diamond mine to the Aditya Birla Group. Over two lakh trees will be cut down. The race to becoming developed is not going to be won at the cost of mother nature. It's a shame that the government pays lip service to this cause but in reality sides with capitalists.

Aman Jaiswal New Delhi

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.





household, declared himself against

ears and mind to it. But now, gentle reader, after decades logical divide.

So, listen closely: When Boris Johnson won the leadership of the Tory Party, or wrested it from Theresa May, he called upon one Dominic Cummings to prepare his election strategy. This Dombo is a weird character and was a leading ideologue and strategist of the 2016 campaign in favour of Brexit. He carried this strategic stance into BoJo's election campaign with the simple slogan "Get Brexit Done". Among other factors, including the fumblings of the Labour Opposition on the issue, this propelled BoJo to victory and into 10 Downing Street. Into this august

address the twice-divorced BoJo intro-Dominic as his chief adviser.

The Covid crisis came. BoJo, the gov-

bodies just piled up. words "weirdos and misfits". (So why didn't you apply? — Ed . Sirji, Kyon garib aadmi ki mazaak ouda rahen?

ago, that the two unelected adjuncts BoJo had imported into 10 Downing Street were — how to put it — incompatible? Carrie was whispering in one ear and Dombo in the other — and they were, one can now deduce, saying opposite things. Dombo introduced his own team into the fray and Carrie likewise prevailed on BoJo to import her friends into influential positions at the helm of the government. Dombo's team referred to Carrie as "Ms Nut Nuts". Carrie's term for Cummings, if she has a derogatory one, remains undisclosed. Matters, so to speak came to a head,

or at least to the metaphoric decapitation of one or two. Dombo lost out to Ms Symonds, known to the press after her demand that the PM's flat be redecorated to the tune of over £200,000, as Carrie

Antoinette. Dombo packed his bags and left Downing Street. But he didn't just take down, using the phrase "let the bodies

# quick BITES

INDICATO	RS	%
Sensex	52,344.45	0.04
Nifty 50	15,683.40	-0.05
S&P 500*	4,185.22	-0.87
Dollar (₹)	73.87	0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18	0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,460▲188	0.40
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	73.51	0.59
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.006	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.460	-0.051
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

### Shareholders of Videocon firms to get 'nil' money

Shareholders of two listed companies of Videocon Group will receive "nil" money at the time of delisting, as the liquidation values of the two firms are not even sufficient to cover outstanding debt. Videocon Industries Ltd and Values Industries Ltd will be delisted as part of the resolution plan. There will be no offers to any shareholders of the two companies at the time of delisting, the firms said in a public notice.

### Forex reserves rise \$3.07 bn to record \$608.08 bn



The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by \$3.074 billion to reach a record high of \$608.081 billion in the week ended June 11, the latest RBI data shows. The reserves had increased by \$6.842 billion to \$605.008 billion in the previous week ended June 4. Foreign currency assets rose \$2.56/ billion to \$563.45/ billion in the latest week. The gold reserves rose by \$496 million to \$38.101 billion.

# Wipro to roll out salary hikes for Jr staff from Sept.

Wipro said it will give wage hikes to junior employees with effect from Sept. 1. "Wipro Limited will initiate merit salary increases (MSI) for all eligible employees up to Band B3 (Assistant Manager and below), effective September 1, 2021. In January 2021, the company had announced salary hikes for eligible employees in these bands. who form 80 per cent of the company's workforce," Wipro said in a statement.

# **IDBI** Bank invites bids to divest

IDBI Bank plans to divest its 19.18 per cent stake in Asset **Reconstruction Company Ltd** (Arcil) and has invited bids from interested parties. Arcil was incorporated in 2002 and is owned by banks like SBI, IDBI, ICICI, PNB and strategic foreign investors such as Avenue India Resurgence Pte Ltd. Since its inception, Arcil has resolved over Rs 78,000 crore worth of NPAs acquired from Indian banks and financial institutions.

K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: Kaushik Mitter. RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or

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### ■ 100 commodity players get notice

# **EOW summons** brokers again

tion on trade modification details of all their clients,

broker and client ledger

accounts, client settle-

ment account details,

banking details, broker-

age earned, client PAN and KYC, visits to ware-

houses and a host of other

According to a director

of one of the brokerage

firms, there is nothing new in this case. "EOW

teams keep changing, and

whenever a new team

takes charge, they come

and ask us the same ques-

tions and ask for the same documents. We have sub-

mitted the same replies

and proofs at least three

times in the past," he told

functional details.

SANGEETHA G with agency inputs CHENNAI, JUNE 18

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Mumbai Police has served summons to directors of nearly 100 commodity bro kerage firms who are alleged to have been involved in the 2013 payment default case of the National Spot Exchange Limited (NSEL).

These brokerage firms, which are accused of having indulged in financial irregularities and sus-pected forgery with their trading clients, have an estimated outstanding receivables of over Rs 4,200 crore in the case.

The brokerages include Motilal Oswal Commodities Brokers, Anand Rathi Commodities, Systematix Commodities, Way2Wealth Commodities, India Commodities Infoline

Progressive Comtrade. Five brokerage firms with the maximum amount of receivables Anand Rathi Commodities, India Infoline Commodities, Geojit Comtrade, Systematix Commodities and Motilal Commodities

Others with significant receivable amounts include Philip Commo-dities India, Emkay Comtrade, JM Financial Comtrade, Ventura Commodities, Arihant Futures and Commodities, SPFL Commodities, Brokers, Commodity

Financial Chronicle.
The brokerage firms have been denying any wrongdoing on their part from the beginning and claimed that the development will not affect their functioning.

Nirmal against some of these bro-Bank Commodities, India Nivesh Commodities and Suresh kers in the NSEL case, declaring they were "not fit and proper" to continue Rathi Commodities. They have been asked to as a commodity broker following a report of EOW and NSEL complaint. personally depose before the EOW with informa-

EOW's forensic report in 2015 accused many bro-kers of misguiding their trading clients, routing their money through benami accounts and indulging in various other wrongdoings, including under the pretext of loans against securities in violation of securities laws.

The brokers challenged Sebi orders before the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT). The had approached the SAT. Calling itself an affected party, the NSEL alleged that the regulator had failed to consider all the allegations and material in its complaint against brokers.

However, the tribunal refused to admit NSEL's plea, prompting the bourse to seek the intervention of the Supreme Court, pursuant to which the SAT was asked to allow the NSEL to present

# Co-founder quits Grofers as Zomato circles it again

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 18

While talks with Zomato on funding and acquisition are still on, Grofers co-founder Saurabh Kumar has quit the com-

pany.
"I have been reflecting on my life and personal ambitions for some time. And my decision to step away is the outcome of that. I want to wander again," Saurabh Kumar said in an e-mail sent to the employees of Grofers.

Co-founder and CEO of Grofers Albinder Dhindsa, in a blog post, confirmed that Kumar will no longer be involved in day-to-day responsibilities at Grofers. However, he will continue to be a board member and a shareholder at the company. "This is the end of an era for Grofers," he said.

"Over the last six months, SK had been vearning to invest in his

own personal evolution -to grow beyond a growth driver to become a designer, enabler and coach. And diving deeper has convinced him that this is another area he can have a huge impact on, if he can build on it from scratch," he added.

According to reports, food delivery app Zomato is once again in acquisition talks with Grofers. Talks had failed last year. This time Zomato may lead a \$100 million funďing round in Grofers first. After BigBasket getting acquired by Tata Digital, another leading player in the online grocery business, Grofers, has become

a hot property.

Kumar and Dhindsa had started Grofers in 2014. Along with BigBasket, Grofers developed the egrocery business in India and helped the segment touch a turnover of \$3 billion. The segment is now expected to grow at a com-

Saurabh Kumar

pound annual growth rate of 59 per cent to \$18 billion Amazon, Flipkart, Tatas and Reliance getting into the segment. Around 130 million households are already using e-grocery platforms or are willing to try, and this has created an addressable market of a whopping \$293 billion. The pandemic saw the gross merchandise value e-grocers growing multi-fold.

The phenomenon of cofounder leaving a startup is not new. In 2018, Pankaj

Chaddah, co-founder of Zomato, left the company. In 2019, Urban Ladder cofounder Rajiv Srivatsa stepped down from active leadership. Smruti Parida and Deepak Dhar of NestAway and Delhivery's Mohit Tandon and Bhavesh Manglani also left their startups.

"There are several opportunities in the digital space and a co-founder leaving the start-up in search of new opportunity is not a new thing. But then, there will be a dominant co-founder who would most probably be the face of the company. Investors too recommend that there should be a first among equals. Sometimes, the vision of the company also changes as it evolves over the time and new investors come Naturally, some of the cofounders would want to

explore new things," said Arun Natarajan, founder of Venture Intelligence.

# Hyundai to begin third production shift

MICHAEL GONSALVES

Hyundai, India's second biggest car maker, says the demand for cars in India is steadily rising, by about 75 per cent in June itself, as it plans to start three shift production at its factory in Chennai from the present two shifts to reduce waiting period of more than four months for its models.

The Korean automaker introduced the new Hyundai Alcazar SUV, with introductory prices for the 2.0-litre petrol version starting at Rs 16.30 lakh, and the 1.5-litre diesel version at Rs 16.53 lakh pan-India showroom.



Hyundai, also India's biggest SUV maker, is betting big on its Alcazar SUV, confirmed bookings of which crossed 4,000 in less than a month with down payment of Rs 25,000. The Hyundai Alcazar competes with the three-row SUVs like the MG Hector Plus, Tata Safari and the Mahindra XUV500. This segment is set to become even more competitive with the arrival of the new Mahindra XUV700, which that replaces the current XUV500, later this year.

'We have already seen demand for cars rising by 75 per cent in June itself," Tarun Garg, director, sales at Hyundai Motor India told *Financial* Chronicle. He said this demand would continue in July and August as people preferred personal mobility to be safe from Covid pandemic. Garg said 45 per cent of the company's total sales now come from SUVs.

# Assam set to offer ₹8,250 crore relief to microfinance customers

In 2019, markets regula-tor Sebi had passed orders

**SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, JUNE 18

The Assam government on Friday has decided on a Rs 8,250-crore package for the microfinance customers in the state. This will provide much-needed relief to the microfinance institutions (MFI), which had seen stressed assets touching new highs due to uncertainties around the state's Microfinance Bill and loan waiver promises.

The package will work at three levels. It envisages complete waiver of loans customers whose revenue sources have been hit by the pandemic. This apart, incentives will be provided to delinquent customers to bring them back to the credit cycle. Part of the package will also reward the prompt pavers by providing addi-

tional credit of Rs 25,000. "The cost of the package for the government can go up to Rs 8,250 crore. The state has a total microfinance portfolio of Rs 12,000 crore. Of this, Rs



3000 crore are non-performing assets as on March 2021," Manoj March Manoj Nambiar, chairperson of MFIN told Financial Chronicle after meeting the state government offi-

The package was one of the election promises made by the ruling party in the recent elections. Along with the election promise, the uncertainties around the Microfinance Bill had shot up delinquencies in the states to new highs.

According to CRIF High delinquencies beyond six months have been rapidly increasing from 1.3 per cent in March 2020 to 6.5 per cent in up to 13.6 per cent by

P. Satish, executive director of Sa-Dhan finds that microfinance collections in Assam nave been getting affected for the past couple of years due to different developments. In October 2019, protests

against micro lenders in some districts had started affecting the asset quality the entire state. Citizen-ship Further. Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens protests too had hit collections.

By March 2020, the country went into lockdown and then the moratorium was announced. In December, the state government came up with the Microfinance Bill, which stipulated micro lenders to collect dues only at gram panchayat offices or public places. Thereafter, during the elections, the political parties promised waiver of micro loans, which has taken the delinquencies

# Centrum-Bharat Pe bid for PMC Bank gets RBI nod

**FALAKNAAZ SYED** 

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday gave its inprinciple approval to Centrum Financial Services for the takeover of scam-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank. The financial services company Centrum Financial will be allowed to set up a small finance bank (SFB) with the takeover of PMC Bank.

"The RBI has today decided to grant "in-principle" approval to Centrum Financial Services Limited (the applicant) to set up a small finance bank under general "Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector" dated December 5, 2019," said the apex bank in a statement.

'This "in-principle" approval has been accorded in specific pursuance to the Centrum Financial Services Limited's offer dated February 1, 2021 in response to the Expression Interest notification dated November 3, 2020 published by the Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative



added the RBI.

"The RBI would consider granting a licence for commencement of banking business under Section 22 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, on being satisfied that the applicant has complied with the requisite condi-tions laid down by RBI as "in-principle" part of approval," it said

In December 2020, Bharat Pe and Centrum Group were among the four groups that had made submissions to the RBI for the acquisition. While Centrum Group is co-promoted by Jaspal Bindra, a former Standard Chart-ered banker, BharatPe is a thirdparty unified pay-ments interface (UPI) player. Both may own equal stakes in the venture, according to

Asutosh Mishra, head of research at Ashika Stock Broking said, "The RBI has resolved the issue in the ossible way and pro tected the interest of all depositors. However, we will have to wait and see as to how Centrum recovers the dues of PMC from the defaulters, how it normalises the operations of the scam-hit bank and grows the business.

On September 23, 2019, the RBI had superseded the board of PMC and placed it under regulatory restrictions, including putting a cap on withdrawals by its customers, after detection of certain financial irregularities and hiding and mis-reporting of loans given to realtor HDIL.

Cash withdrawals were initially capped at Rs 1,000 per account initially but relaxed to Rs 100,000 by June last year. Depositors had held several protests demanding their money back. PMC's exposure to HDIL was over Rs 6,500 crore or 73 per cent of its total loan book size.

### KIMS SUBSCRIBED 3.86 TIMES, DODLA DAIRY 45.61 TIMES

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, JUNE 18

Hyderabad-based Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences' (KIMS Hospitals) Rs 2,144-crore initial public offering (IPO) was fully subscribed on the final day of bidding on Friday.

The public issue was subscribed 3.86 times. The qualified institutional buyer (QIB) portion was subscribed 5.26 times, the non-institutional portion was subscribed 1.89 times and retail portion was subscribed 2.9 times, according to sources close to the merchant bankers.

Earlier the company had allotted shares worth Rs 955.69 crore to the anchor investors.

Hyderabad-Another based company Dodla Dairy's Rs 520 crore IPO was subscribed 45.61 times on the final day of bidding.

The QIB portion was subscribed 84.88 times, the non-institutional portion was subscribed 73.26 times and the retail portion was subscribed 11.34 times.

Earlier the company had allotted shares worth Rs 156.05 crore to the anchor

# stake in Arcil

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### **SREI EQUIPMENT TO** GET ₹2,200 CR FROM **SINGAPORE FIRM**

New Delhi, June 18: Srei Equipment Finance on Friday said Singaporebased Makara Capital Partners Pte Ltd has shown interest to invest up to Rs 2,200 crore by picking up equity and other securities in the company.

"This is to inform that the Strategic Coordination Committee has received a term sheet from Makara Capital Partners Pte Ltd (Makara), Singapore indicating interest for the investment of an aggregate amount of Rs 2,200 crore by way of subscription to equity shares and other securities of the company," Srei Equipment Finance, a fully owned subsidiary of Kolkata-based Srei Infrastructure Finance, said in a regulatory filing through its listed parent company.

## **COST | OF SILENCE** Total price tag of menopause could be over \$810 bn a year Millions of women quit over a physical reason

It's not every day that a FTSE 100 boss tells you about her nightly

But for 45-year-old Liv Garfield, the chief executive officer of British water utility Severn Trent Plc, it's a way to demystify a natural phenomenon affecting menopausal women—a growing cohort at companies around the world. With menopause driving scores of women out of the workforce each year, addressing it is

essential, says Garfield.
"To not employ swathes of women from 45 to 60 has got to be a real issue -- otherwise you're missing all the insight from that particular generational category," she said in an interview. Her company was among the pioneers of "menopause education"

Symptoms of meno-pause start

have no issues or mild ones. For others, the effects can be debili-

account for 11 per cent of the workforce in the Group of Seven most-industrialised nations.



in women between the ages of 45 55.Menopause—which begins when a woman has gone 12 months without a menstrual period-can bring hot flashes, night sweats, loss of sleep and mood swings. That can lead to Some governments and compaembarrassing episodes in front of colleagues, reduced ability to concentrate and even erratic behaviour. Some women will

Women in this age group

Globally, menopause-related productivity losses can amount to more than \$150 billion a year, according to Reenita Das, a partner and senior vice president for healthcare and life sciences at consulting firm Frost & Sullivan. Plug in the additional costs to the healthcare system and the total price tag of menopause could be higher than \$810 billion, she said. Das said those numbers will continue to rise, with about a quarter of the world's female population turning menopausal

nies are beginning to take note. The UK is leading the way, with menopause landing on the Bank of England's radar. Governor Andrew Bailey said in April that menopause can no longer be ignored. On Wednesday, Labour lawmaker Carolyn Harris called for a "menopause revolution" with an all-party parliamentary

group set up to overhaul 'menopause rights, entitlements and education.

The economic impact during the pandemic on this group of women was worse than in any major crisis period since the 1980s, a report by the Resolution Foundation think tank found. Even before the pandemic, menopause was driving some women out of the workforce. A 2019 survey -released in Mayby the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Develop-ment (CIPD), a London-based association for human resource management professionals, reckoned almost 900,000 wom-en in the UK left their jobs over an undefined period of time because of menopausal symptoms. Left unsupported, women will be leaving "at the peak of their experience" and will "impact productivity," said

— Bloomberg

### **INDIA PESTICIDES IPO FROM JUNE 23**

**RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, JUNE 18

Lucknow-based Pesticides, manufacturer of agrochemicals announced a Rs 800-crore initial public offering in the price band of Rs 290 to Rs 296 per equity share of Re 1 face value. The public offer opens on June 23 and

closes on June 25. The IPO consists of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 100 crore and an offer for sale of equity shares worth Rs 700 crore, by the selling shareholders.

sole Indian agro-chemical manufacturer of fungicide technicals Captan and Folpet, besides Thiocarbamate herbicide. It also manufactures Cymoxanil, used to manufacture fungicides that control downy mildews.

India Pesticides is the

### Quick passes -



Belgium supporters hold a banner paying tribute to Christian Eriksen prior to the Euro champi onship Group 'B' match between Denmark and Belgium at the Parken stadium in Copenhagen, on Thursday.

### **Eriksen released** from hospital

Christian Eriksen was dis-Ocharged from the hospital on Friday and immediately went to visit his Denmark teammates nearly a week after suffering cardiac arrest during a European European

Championship match. The Danish football federa tion wrote on Twitter that Eriksen was released from the Rigshospitalet in central Copenhagen after a successful operation. The federation previously said Eriksen would be fitted with an ICD, an implantable device that can function as both a pacemaker and defibrillator.

The operation went well, and I am doing well under the circumstances," Eriksen was quoted as saying in the tweet.

The 29-vear-old Eriksen has been in the hospital since collapsing on the field during his team's opening Euro 2020 match against Finland on Saturday. His heart stopped and he had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator. -AP

### Sergio returns for Spain, Poland clash

Spain will get thier most experienced player back at the European Championship on Saturday.

The Spanish football federation said Sergio Busquets tested negative for Covid-19 on Thursday, so he will be allowed back with the team after being in isolation since testing positive on June 6.

The Barcelona midfielder will be in Seville for Spain's match against Poland on Saturday, though he is not likely to play after not practicing regularly while in isola-

Spain opened their Euro 2020 campaign with a 0-0 draw against Sweden in Group 'E' while Poland lost to Slovakia

The focus on Spain at La Cartuja Stadium will be on Alvaro Morata while Poland's path to victory will likely have to go through Lewandowski, who hasn't fared well with his national team at major tournaments

### Benzema to bolster France vs Hungary

Karim Benzema's return speeds up France's attack and has taken some pressure off the defense.

The French team will be going for a fourth consecutive clean sheet with Benzema playing when they face Hungary in Budapest on Saturday at the European Championship. A win will put France into the next round after it opened with a 1-0 vic-

tory over Germany. Hungary lost to Portugal 3-0. Les Bleus look sharper with Benzema, who has slotted in effortlessly since returning to the national team after nearly six years out following a fallout with coach Didier Deschamps amid a sex tape scandal. He has replaced Olivier Giroud, who plays more with his back to goal. Benzema's technique and reading of the game help him click with Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann. The trio are working for and with each other, forming a marauding front unit that stops opposing teams from passing out quickly from the back.

Hungary will need to tighten up against France and press in all areas of the field to stop their opponents from getting a grip on the game.

### Live on

**Group Stage:** Hungary vs France from 6.30 pm; Portugal vs Germany from am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

# DUTCH DOMINATE Neymar reigns to flatten Peru

# Depay, Dumfries score as Netherlands advance

time, the Netherlands never looked like throwing away their two-goal lead. Memphis Depay and Denzel Dumfries scored a goal in each half as the Dutch comfortably beat Austria 2-0 Thursday to advance to the Round of 16 the European

Championship.
"We showed some different qualities today," Netherlands' coach Frank de Boer said.

"Defensively we were

Netherlands 2

(Memphis Depay 11-pen, Denzel Dumfries 67)

Austria

much better than (against) Ukraine," he added.

Depay sent a penalty kick low into the corner in the 11th minute for his 27th goal in 66 international matches. Dumfries then scored his second goal of the tournament following his late winner against Ukraine in the 67th after an unselfish pass from PSV Eindhoven teammate Donyell Malen.

A foul by Austria captain David Alaba on Dumfries earned the Dutch penalty at the Johan Cruyff Arena, although only after referee Orel Grinfeeld had a second look at the incident on a screen.

The Netherlands are playing at a major international football tournament for the first time in seven years and qualified for the knockout stage with a game to spare. The Dutch, whose only major tournament victory came at the European Championship, finished



Owen Wijndal (right) of the Netherlands challenges Austria's Aleksandar Dragovic during their Euro Group 'C' match at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam on Thursday.

third at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Austria rarely threatened to equalise against a well-ordered defense led by Matthijs De Ligt on his return from a groin injury.

The closest Austria came was a long-range shot by Alaba in the 82nd minute. The team had slightly more possession than the Netherlands but only man-

aged one shot on target in the entire game. Austria were playing without Marko Arnautovic. The forward was handed a one-match

ban by UEFA for insulting a North Macedonian player in the teams' Euro 2020 incident The opener. soured Austria's first victory at a major tournament in 31 years and their first ever at the European

Championship. Dumfries' goal and overall performance again vindicated De Boer's decision to ditch the traditional Dutch system of four defenders, three midfielders and three forwards in favor of three defenders, five mid-

fielders and two forwards. Dumfries is a wing back who can sprint up the right flank and cause problems in the opponent's

penalty area. The Dutch also led 2-0 in their opening match on Sunday, but Ukraine scored a pair of goals level at 2-2. Dumfries scored the winner in the

85th minute on that day. The Netherlands will play their final Group 'C' against North Macedonia on Monday, also in Amsterdam. Austria will face Ukraine in Bucharest.

# **SWEDEN RIDE ON FORSBERG**

**GOAL TO WIN** 

Saint Petersburg, June 18: Emil Forsberg's secondnaii penaity seated Sweden a 1-0 win over Slovakia in Saint Peters burg on Friday as the Scandinavians moved top of Euro 2020 Group 'E'.

Janne Andersson's men, who played out a goalless draw with Spain in their opener, now look set to reach the knockout stage for the first time since 2004. A point in their final game against Poland at the Krestovsky Stadium on Wednesday would be enough to be sure of a top-

**Sweden** 

(Emil Forsberg 77-pen)

Slovakia

two finish in the group. Both sides had spells of pressure in the first half without creating many chances, perhaps in the knowledge a point would a reasonably good

Ondrej Duda made space for a shot shortly after the break, but fired over the crossbar.

It was Sweden who almost made the breakthrough twice before the hour mark, as Newcastle stopper Dubravka tipped Augustinsson's header and Marcus Danielson nodded over from the resulting corner. — AFP

Sao Paulo, June 18: Brazil changed half of their start-ing lineup to face Peru in their second Copa America match and still cruised to a 4-0 victory. It was the Selecao's ninth

consecutive victory, and another display that suggests the tournament hosts are the favourites to defend their South American title. Defender Alex Sandro,

Neymar, midfielder Everton Ribeiro and strik-er Richarlison scored the goals at the Nilton Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro. The result puts Brazil atop the Group 'B' standings with six points. Colombia is two points behind after their 0-0 draw

with Venezuela. As coach Tite promised, Brazil are using the Copa America to prepare for next year's World Cup in Qatar. Six players who missed the 3-0 win against Venezuela were in the starting lineup against

Peru. Goalkeeper Alisson, defenders Marquinhos and Renan Lodi, midfielders Casemiro and Lucas
Paquet plus forward
Richarlison were out of the
starting team. In their places, Ederson, Thiago Silva, Alex Sandro, Fabinho, Everton and Gabriel Barbosa started. Brazil opened the scoring

in the 12th minute after Gabriel Jesus crossed and Sandro hit it home from close range.

Everton Ribeiro and Richarlison stepped in, and Brazil appeared more assured in the second half. In the 68th minute, Neymar received the ball at the edge of the Peruvian

box and beat goalkeeper

**Brazil** 

(Alex Sandro 12, Neymar 68, Everton Ribeiro 89, Richarlison 90+3)

Peru

Pedro Gallese with a low crossed shot.

Peru stepped up the pressure, but Brazil moved fur-ther ahead in the 89th when Ribeiro scored from close range, his first for the national team. Richarlison scored the last goal of the

### **NEYMAR COUNTS DOWN** TO PELE'S RECORD

Neymar might not win three World Cups in his career like Pele did, but he is closing in as the top goal scorer ever for Brazil's national team.

He reduced the gap to nine after Brazil's victory over Peru.

Official statistics from FIFA, football's international governing body, put Pele in No.1 spot for Brazil with 77 goals. Neymar has 68 after he netted the Seleo's second against

"It is obvious for me that this is a great honor, to be a part of Brazil history," a tearful Neymar said in an interview full of squeaky tones and long pauses after Brazil's victory at the Nilton Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

"To be very honest, my dream was to play for Brazil, wear this shirt. I never imagined I would get to these numbers," star footballer of Brazil further added.



Brazil's Neymar (left) and Renato Tapia of Peru vie for the ball during their Copa America match at Nilton Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Thursday.

### Colombians held to a goalless draw Rio De Janeiro, June 18:

Venezuela held out under intense pressure in a fractious local derby against Colombia to secure their first point at the Copa America after a 0-0 draw in America aitei a con Goiania on Thursday.

Controlled Wuilker

Farinez made a string of fine saves, particularly in the closing stages, to keep out the Colombians, who saw a late Miguel Borja goal ruled out for offside. Colombia also finished the game with 10 men after Luis Diaz was sent off deep

into injury time. Earlier, Venezuela's Jose Martinez got away with a yellow card after striking Mateus Uribe — who was also booked for protesting - in the face, although he

was not looking at the

Colombian when he did so

Venezuela were still severely depleted from a Covid outbreak in their camp that deprived the

team of eight players in their 3-0 defeat to hosts Brazil on Sunday.
The point put Colombia where

Venezuela

Colombia

point.

Colombia finished the

game with 23 shots to just

two — including none on target — from Venezuela

but the "Red Wine" held

out for a much needed

top of Group 'B' ahead of Brazil's clash with Peru power-packed Selecao cruised to an emphatic 4-0 victory.

— AFP

## Belgium down hapless Denmark Greece in 2004

Jan Vertonghen (in white) of Belgium fights for the ball with Denmark's Yussuf Poulsen during their Euro Group 'B'

Copenhagen, June 18: Kevin De Bruyne inspired Belgium to a 2-1 victory Denmark Copenhagen on Thursday, securing them a place in the Euro knockout stage as fans and players showed their support for Christian Eriksen.

Yussuf Poulsen gave the hosts a second-minute strike. lead, but De Bruyne came The off the bench at half-time after 10 minutes — a referto make his first appearance of the tournament after injury and teed up applause for the Denmark Hazard to midfielder, who suffered a equalise before scoring cardiac arrest in his

**Belgium** 

match at Parken stadium in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Thursday.

(Thorgan Hazard 54, Kevin De Bruyne 70)

Denmark

(Yussuf Poulsen 2) the winner with a fine

The match was paused ence to Eriksen's number for a minute's team's game against Finland last weekend. Just after a minute, Pierre-Emile

picked up a misplaced pass by Jason Denayer and found Poulsen who took the ball inside the box and fired across Thibaut Courtois into the bottom corner. At one minute and 39 seconds, it was the second

fastest goal in European

Championship history,

Kirichenko's goal after 67

seconds as Russia beat

trailing only

eventual

Belgium coach Roberto Martinez said his team was overwhelmed by the Hojbjerg atmosphere. Belgium started with De Bruyne, Eden Hazard and Axel Witsel on the bench, but Martinez sent them all

into action after the break and their presence made all the difference. Lukaku, who scored twice as Belgium swept Russia aside 3-0 in the Group 'B' opener, was also at the origin of Belgium's

second goal.

### Germany eye comeback against Portugal five difference European win ahead of their last

champions

Dmitri

Munich, June 18: Portugal have the European Championship's all-time leading scorer in Cristiano Ronaldo.

Germany have a team full of players who have never even scored once at the continental tournament. They will come up against each other on

Saturday. Ronaldo scored two late goals in a 3-0 victory over Hungary on Tuesday to become the tournament's

record holder with 11 career goals. Germany, meanwhile, tried and tried but failed break through France's defense in a 1-0

With no goals scored and no points in the standings, pressure is Germany to do much better before the team's final Group 'F' match against Hungary, also in Munich. Defending champion

Portugal can secure a spot

in the Round of 16 with a

group game against World Cup champion France.

Germany had more possession and its players ran more than France, with 10 attempts on goal compared to their opponents' four. But France always looked more dangerous and had two goals ruled out in close offside calls. Germany lack an outand-out scorer in the mold

of Ronaldo, who is the first

player to have scored in

Championships, or Poland forward Lewandowski, who broke the Bundesliga's record for goals scored last sea-

Germany have players that can score goals, however, including Thomas Muller, Kai Havertz, Ilkay Gundogan and Serge Gnabry. Low brought on Timo Werner, Leroy Sane and then Kevin Volland in the match against France

in what looked a desperate attempt for a goal, but none made any difference. Muller, recalled for the tournament after scoring 11 league goals and setting up 21 more for Bayern Munich last season, has now played 12 tournament

games without scoring. The Germans also failed to make the most of their set pieces, with two good kick opportunities and five corners all going to waste.

SHORT TAKES

### Milkha Singh's oxygen level dips

**Chandigarh:** Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh as developed a fever and his oxygen saturation level has also dropped as he battles to regain his health, after a bout with Covid-19, in the Intensive Care Unit of the PGIMER hospital here on Friday. The 91-year-old, who tested negative for Covid-19 on Wednesday and was shifted to the general ICU, is being closely monitored by a team of doctors. "He suddenly developed a fever Thursday night and his oxygen saturation levels dipped. A team of doctors is monitoring him," PGIMER sources said on Friday. Milkha had been "stable before this. "It's been a slightly rough day for Milkha Ji. But he is battling away," read a statement from his family. - PTI

### **England enforce**

### follow-on on Day 3

Bristol: The Indian women's cricket team was 83 for one at tea after being forced to followon by England women on the third day of the one-off Test

here on Friday. Debutant Shafali Verma (55 batting) once again looked in great touch but other opener Smriti Mandhana (8) departed

Deepti Sharma (18 batting) was the other unbeaten batter at

Earlier, resuming at overnight score of 187 for 5, India were all out for 231 in their first innings, 165 runs short of England's first innings score of 396. - PTI

Brief scores: England women 396/9 decl. vs India women 231 & 83/1 in 24.3 overs (Shafali Verma batting 55; Katherine

### **Juventus legend Boniperti no more**

Rome: Giampiero Boniperti, for decades Juventus' record goalscorer who went on to become president of the Turin giants, has died at the age of 92, the club announced on Friday. "This is the news we never wanted to give you. Today, June 18, 2021, we bid farewell to Giampiero Boniperti, who passed away in Turin at the age of 92," Juventus said. It described him as "an indeli-ble figure", adding: "Thanks for everything. Rest in peace, Presidentissimo." Striker Boniperti joined Juventus in 1946, becoming the top scorer in Serie A in 1947/8 when he was barely 20, going on to win five Scudetti with his teammates in the black and

white iersevs. With Welshman John Charles and Argentine-Italian Omar Sivori, Boniperti formed a formidable attacking "Magic Trio" at the club. — AFP

### **Hyderabad FC** rope in D'Silva

Hyderabad: Indian Super League side Hyderabad FC have signed young striker Aaren D'Silva on a three-year deal ahead of the new season. the club announced on Friday. The deal will see the 23-yearold attacker stay at the club till the end of 2023-24 season. Hailing from a sporting family,

Goa-born Aaren has been involved in professional football since a young age. He spent over four years learning his trade at the SESA Football Academy

The youngster also featured for Dempo SC in the under-19 I-League and Santa Cruz club of Cavellosim in 2016-17 season of

the Goa Pro League. "I am really excited to be a part of Hyderabad FC. I want to be a part of the squad, and work hard to make a name for myself at HFC," Aaren said. - PTI

### **Bucks ease past Nets in playoff**

Los Angeles: Khris Middleton and Giannis Antetokounmpo combined for 68 points as the host Milwaukee Bucks led wireto-wire on Thursday to beat the Brooklyn Nets 104-89 in game six of their NBA playoff series. Middleton had a playoff career high 38 points, 10 rebounds and five assists while Antetokounmpo scored 30 points and grabbed 17

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C - 9 Sector - III, Noida - 201301.

rebounds for the Bucks. - AFP

Editor - Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 57290/94, Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00



India's Mohammed Shami (second from right) and Wriddhiman Saha (right) walk with members of the team support staff along the boundary after rain delayed start of the first day of the WTC final at the Ageas Bowl in

# **RAIN RUINS PLAY**

### WTC final starts with washed out first day

Southampton, June 18: The eagerly-awaited opening day of the World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand was rained out here on Friday, which is set to bring the reserve

day into the equation.
As per ICC playing conditions guidelines for the WTC final, if required the reserve sixth day can now come into effect with six hours of play lost on Day 1 itself.

There was forecast of rain and thundershowers and the heavens opened up last evening with

**MAX FASTEST** 

IN FRENCH GP

**FREE PRACTICE** 

Le Castellet (France), June 18: World champi-

onship leader Max Verstappen set the quick-

est time in practice for the

French Grand Prix at

Circuit Paul Ricard on

Friday but the Red Bull

driver was only marginal-

ly faster than the two

The Dutchman was just

0.008 seconds ahead of

Valtteri Bottas, who had

topped the first session, with Lewis Hamilton only

Verstappen improved

his time in the second ses-

sion with a switch to soft

tvres while Bottas set his

best time on the medi-

"It's been a good end to

"It's still really difficult

the day and we improved

well,'

around here as the track

is so open and it's quite

windy which means it

isn't always easy to nail

the lap.
"It's hard to say where

we will be tomorrow

(Saturday) and you never

know what people will find overnight." — AFP

Verstappen.

0.253secs off the pace.

Mercedes cars.

outfield, even the best drainage system couldn't have possibly forced some action on the opening day of the World Test Championship final in Southampton.

With puddles forming throughout the

tinuing till afternoon.
With puddles forming throughout the outfield, even the best drainage system couldn't have possibly forced some action

relentless downpour con-

on the opening day. Umpires Michael Gough and Richard Illingworth, after multiple inspections, called off the game

that keeping things "sim-

ple and realistic" against

a quality side like New

Zealand should be the

way to go for the Indian

team in the Word Test

Championship final, the

opening day of which has already been affected

Rohit, who will be open-

ing for the first time in

England, is also confi-

dent of tackling the New Zealand attack, having

faced it enough in the

"I have played those

guys and know about their strengths and weaknesses. It will all

boil down to what the

conditions are, what sort

of situation the team is

in, whether we are bat-

ting first or second,' Rohit told *Star Sports.* 

The marquee game's

"All that will count and

it's important not to over-

think. Against a quality

side, it is also very

important to keep things simple, and realistic,"

out here on

opening session was

rained

Friday.

shorter formats.

by a heavy downpour.

at 7:30 pm IST (3 pm local

While there has been talk about Southampton being the preferred venue, it has been learnt that BCCI was taken into confidence by both the ICC and England and Wales Cricket Board before they finalised the venue which also has a

India should be simple and

realistic playing NZ: Rohit

national schedule.

**FINCH SAYS IPL RETURN WILL** 

Sydney, June 18: "Surprised" to see some of his

teammates withdraw from the country's upcom-

ing white-ball tours, limited overs skipper Åaron

Finch feels Australian players will have a hard time to justify their participation in the second half of the postponed IPL 2021, given the hectic

The country's seven top cricketers including the likes of David Warner, Pat Cummins, Glenn

Maxwell, Jhye Richardson, Kane Richardson, Marcus Stoinis and Daniel Sams have pulled out

from the upcoming West Indies series for varied

reasons and also said that they won't be visiting

While it had been a "long term plan" for Warner

and Cummins to miss the winter tours of the West

Indies and Bangladesh (if confirmed). Finch said

"The other guys – I was a little bit surprised," Finch told *cricket.Com.Au* on SEN Radio.

Asked about his teammates who requested not to

be considered for the tours, Finch said: "I think

they would find it hard to justify going back and

five days.

Bangladesh if that tour is confirmed.

he understands his teammates decision.

playing that second half of the IPL.

said the senior opener.

A white ball superstar,

Rohit loves the tradition-

al format for the chal-

lenges that it poses for

sustained periods of play.

"You are challenged for

**BE TRICKY FOR OZ PLAYERS** 

five-star facility within the premises, helping create a tight bio-secure bubble.

The English weather is known to be fickle and in any case, there was no guarantee that the match being played at any other venue would have not led to a wash-out on the first day. In the last five years, England has hosted 32 men's Test matches and only as many as four have ended in draws which is an indication that even if rain plays spoilsport, the final will go the distance.

# **THIEM FOLLOWS**

Paris, June 18: US Open Thursday Thiem on joined Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal in withdrawing from the Tokvo Olympics. World number five Thiem said he wanted concentrate Wimbledon and then defending his only Grand

"Hi everybody, I have on Twitter.

"For me, like all athdecision

the coming weeks, give my best at Wimbledon."

MEN'S HOCKEY

**OSAKA PULLS** 

**OUT FROM** 

WIMBLEDON

Los Angeles, June 18:

Japanese star Naomi Osaka has withdrawn

agent confirmed Thursday, weeks after the

world number two pulled

out of the French Open citing her struggle with

Wimbledon this year,"
Osaka's agent Stuart
Duguid said. "She is taking some personal time
with friends and family.
"She will be ready for

"She will be ready for

the Olympics and is excit-

ed to play in front of her home fans."

Wimbledon organisers

said the 23-year-old four-

time Grand Slam champi-

on was expected to take

part in the championships, which start on June 28.

"At this point in time she's entered into the

championships and we haven't received confirmation that she won't compete," All England Club chief executive Sally

Osaka has been in the spotlight since withdrawing from the French

Open. She was fined \$15,000 and threatened

she refused to honour mandatory media com-

disqualification from Roland Garros after

Bolton said.

mitments.

Wednesday,

depression and anxiety. "Naomi won't be playing

Wimbledon, her

# Ten to make Oly debut in Tokyo

**Bengaluru, June 18:** India on Friday named 10 Olympic debutants in its 16-member men's hockey squad, which also features seasoned performers like P.R. Sreejesh and Manpreet Singh, for the Tokyo Games to be held from July

Santa to het from outy 23 to August 8. Amit Rohidas, Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Sumit, Shamsher Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Gurjant Singh and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay are the 10 players who will make their Olympic debut in Tokyo.

Besides, the 16-member team also includes six seasoned campaigners like former skipper and goalkeeper Sreejesh, midfield-er Manpreet, defenders Harmanpreet Singh, Rupinder Pal Singh and Surender Kumar and forward Mandeep Singh.

These players were a part of the previous Olympic squad in Rio de Janeiro.

Veteran defender Birendra Lakra , who missed the 2016 Games due to a knee injury, has also been named in the side and is set to make his Olympic

Goalkeeper: PR Sreejesh. Defenders: Harmanpreet Singh, Rupinder Pal Singh, Surender Kumar, Amit Rohidas, Birendra Lakra. **Midfielders:** Hardik Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Nilakanta Sharma, Sumit. Forwards: Shamsher Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Gurjant Singh, Lalit Kumar Upadhyay, Mandeep

debut in Tokyo. The team has only one goalkeeper in Sreejesh, which means promising Krishan Bahadur Pathak missed out on an Olympic berth despite being an integral part of the team in the lead up to the Games.
The notable absentees in

the squad are strikers Akashdeep Singh and Ramandeep Singh, who were a part of the Rio Games team. Even though Manpreet

has been the captain of the side for sometime now, Hockey India hasn't named the leader of the Tokyobound team but it is expected that the ace midfielder will be retained in

# **ROMANIA BANNED FROM**

Lausanne, June 18: Romania has been banned from competing in weightlifting at the Tokyo Olympics over past doping cases, the International Weightlifting

Federation ruled in a decision. The Romanian Weightlifting Federation was issued a one-year ban from competition over five doping cases Those included disqualifications for all four of Romania's weightlifters from the 2012 Olympics after various banned substances were found in later retest ing of their samples.

One of those athletes, Gabriel Sincraian, also lost a medal from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro for another failed drug test.

Romania becomes the fourth country barred from the Tokyo weightlifting competition after Egypt, Malaysia and Thailand, which were also excluded

# **NADAL IN TOKYO OLYMPIC SNUB**

Naomi Osaka

Slam title in New York.

some sad news to share with you all. After talking with my team and analysing the situation I have taken the very difficult decision to withdraw from competing in the Tokyo Olympics," the 27year-old Austrian wrote

letes, taking part in the Olympics and representing my country is a huge honour and that makes tougher. However, 2021 did not start as expected and I don't feel ready to play my best in Tokyo. "My goal is to work hard

02824 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar

### Tokyo volunteers, staff get vaccine Tokyo, June 18: Thousands The International

of Olympic volunteers and officials began receiving vaccines in Tokyo on Friday, five weeks before the Games, as experts warned it would be safest to hold the event without With just over a month

until the July 23 opening ceremony, organisers are in the home stretch and scrambling to finalise virus rules and get participants vaccinated in time. They also face a controversial and difficult deci-

sion over how many domestic fans, if any, will be in the stands for the pandemic-postponed Japanese Olympic ath-

letes have already begun receiving vaccines, and the rollout expanded on Friday to Olympic staff, volunteers and others who will interact with overseas participants. International

Olympic Committee has enough donated Pfizer/BioNTech doses for 40,000 people, including

**Olympic Committee** has donated enough Pfizer/ BioNTech doses for 40,000 people, including airport staff, local media and Olympic referees.

airport staff, local media and Olympic referees. Chika Hirai, director of

doping control for Tokyo 2020, was among those being vaccinated on Friday and said she had some niggling concerns about virus

risks before getting jabbed.
"Now that I will be vaccinated, I will feel a little more reassured doing my

job," she told reporters.
"Many people from abroad, including inspectors from my field, are coming to Japan after having been vaccinated themselves. I feel more relieved that we also won't be the source of the virus spread."

**Date of Cancellation** 

-AFP

# Oosthuizen, Henley share lead as Mickelson struggles

La Jolla (United States), June 18: South Africa's Louis Oosthuizen matched US clubhouse pace-setter Russell Henley for the overall lead when darkness halted Thursday's first round of the US Open, where Phil Mickelson struggled in his bid to complete a career Grand

Oosthuizen, the 2010 British Open champion, made three consecutive birdies to close his first nine after a 10th-tee start, then added an 11foot birdie putt at the fifth to reach 4-under.

That's where he stood when he stopped on the 17th green, level with Henley's four-under par 67, when sunset fell with

A day after his 51st birthday, hometown hero Mickelson stumbled to a 75 with three bogeys in his first six holes.

36 players from the field of 156 needing to finish the opening round Friday after a 90-minute morning fog delay.
"I played nicely, putted

nicely and hopefully just keep the momentum going," Oosthuizen said. World number 18 Oosthuizen, whose five major runner-up finishes since his win 11 years ago include last month's Championship,

sank birdie putts from

just inside 20 feet at 12, another from 19 feet at the par-3 16th, a 25-footer at 17 and a tap-in at 18. World number Henley, an American

who hasn't won a PGA title since the 2017 Houston Open and lacks a top-10 major finish, made three birdies and a bogey on both the front and back nines to set the early pace at Torrey Pines.

A day after his 51st birthday, hometown hero Mickelson stumbled to a 75 with three bogeys in his first six holes. He recovered with a 10-foot birdie putt at the 17th but bogeys at six and seven saw him into the clubhouse eight off the

### **BOXERS HEAD TO ITALY FOR TRAINING AHEAD OF GAMES**

brings a different chal-

lenge, a longer game that

needs patience, you play

in different conditions

Everyday

New Delhi, June 18: Eight August 8.

The team will be based in Assisi till July 10 before coming back to the

### and it's not the easiest, he said.

of India's nine Olympicbound boxers, along with a few sparring partners, will leave for Italy early Saturday morning for a training camp as they gear up for the Tokyo Games from July 23 to

Olympic-bound Five men — Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Ashish Chaudhary (75kg), and Satish Kumar (+91kg) — will be joined by the likes of five-time Asian medallist Shiva (63kg) Strandja Memorial silverwinner former Deepak Kumar (52kg) during the stint.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of passengers that due to operational reason, Railways have decided to extend the cancellation/reduction in frequency of following Rajdhani Special Trains, as per the details given below:-**CANCELLATION OF TRAINS** 

Train No. & Name

					3	
02855 Bhubaneswar - New Delhi Rajdhani Special (Via Sambalpur City, Anara)					26.06.2021	
02856 New Delhi - Bhubaneswar Rajdhani Special (Via Sambalpur City, Anara)					7.06.2021	
REDUCTION IN FREQUENCY / CANCELLATION OF TRAINS						
Train No. & Name	Existing Frequency	Revised Frequency		es of ellation	Days of Cancellation	

Rajdhani Special (Via Tatanagar Jn.) For any kind information such as timings, composition and stoppages enroute passengers are advised to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.

Wed, Thu

Tue, Wed

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.





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