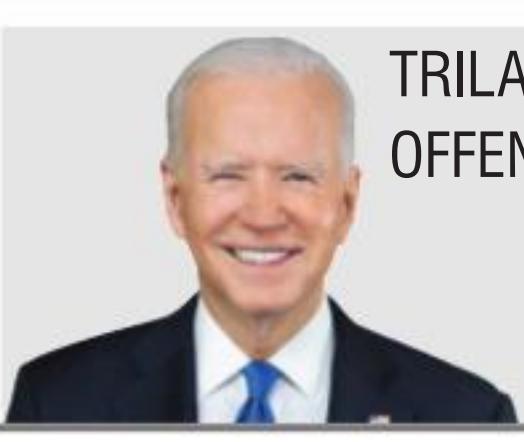




DIANA LEGACY
LINGERS AS FANS
MARK HER 60TH
BIRTHDAY

P10

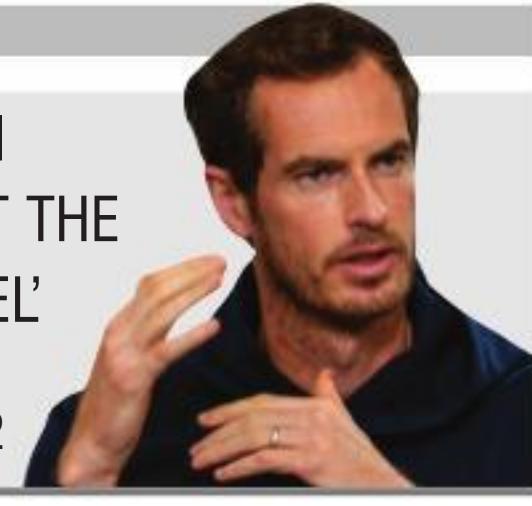


TRILATERAL
OFFENSIVE



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION
STAKEHOLDERS' MEET
SOON TO DISCUSS
AUTO GROWTH

P8



MURRAY 'CAN
STILL PLAY AT THE
HIGHEST LEVEL'

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Heat wave condition at isolated places. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 42 and 29 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 78% Min: 25%
TEMPERATURE
Max: 43.0°C (+ 6) Min: 27.4°C (-1)
SUN RISES SUN SETS
05:27 hrs 19:23 hrs
MOON RISES MOON SETS
23:54 hrs 11:52 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A health worker collects swab sample for Covid-19 testing at a centre, Jhunjhunu, in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ SNS

Jaishankar didn't meet Taliban: India on Tuesday rejected reports that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had held a meeting with a Taliban delegation during his recent visit to Qatar. "We have seen social media reports claiming that EAM has met certain Taliban leaders. Such reports are completely false, baseless and mischievous," sources said.

Twitter booked over child pornography: The Delhi Police has registered an FIR against Twitter for allegedly allowing access to child pornography on the platform on a complaint by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), officials said on Tuesday.

Rly projects: Indian Railways is ready to award 58 critical and 68 most-critical projects worth more than Rs 1,15,000 crore in the next few years, despite Covid-19 challenges. Last year, 29 critical projects were commissioned.

PM to chair council of ministers meet today

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a meeting of the Union council of ministers on Wednesday, which is likely to discuss the Covid situation and may also review functioning of few ministries, sources said on Tuesday.

The meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday evening, the sources said.

The work done by the Road and Transport Ministry and Civil Aviation and Telecom ministries may be reviewed in the meeting, the sources said.

A wider discussion on the Covid-19 situation is also likely during the meeting, they said.

The meeting is being held a week after Prime Minister Modi held meetings with ministers both Cabinet and Minister of State rank in different groups to review the performance of their respective ministries.

NIA to probe drone attack on Jammu airport

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The National Investigation Agency was on Tuesday given the charge of investigation into the drone attack on the Jammu air force station.

The decision to hand over the probe into the first-of-its-kind terror attack at the Indian Air Force station was taken by the ministry of home affairs. The investigation into the attack on the Jammu air force station has been handed over to the NIA, an MHA spokesperson said.

The meeting is being held a week after Prime Minister Modi held meetings with ministers both Cabinet and Minister of State rank in different groups to review the performance of their respective ministries.

These meetings were held at the Prime Minister's official residence and BJP president

Modi meets Shah, Rajnath & NSA Doval

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Tuesday and discussed "futuristic challenges" in the defence sector, sources said.

They also discussed various other aspects, including equipping security forces

JP Nadda was present in most of these meetings.

Political observers and BJP insiders feel the council of ministers meeting assumes significance as it is being held at a time when political circles are abuzz with speculation of a Cabinet expansion and reshuffle.



with modern equipment and involving more youth, start-ups and the strategic community in the field.

The meeting came against the backdrop of the first-of-its-kind terror attack using drone at an Indian Air Force station in Jammu.

Significance as it is being held at a time when political circles are abuzz with speculation of a Cabinet expansion and reshuffle.

Follow IT rules, court orders: Parl panel tells Facebook, Google officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 29 JANUARY

Facebook and Google representatives Tuesday deposed before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology over the issue of social media misuse, with sources saying they were told to comply with the new IT rules, government instructions and court orders.

The panel, chaired by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, had asked them to appear in-person.

While from Facebook its country public policy director Shrinath Thukral and general counsel Namrata Singh

deposed, Google was represented by its country head (government affairs and public policy) Aman Jain and director (legal) Gitanjali Duggal.

The agenda of the meeting was to safeguard citizens' rights and prevent the misuse of social/online news media platforms.

The sources also said the representatives were convened that there are loopholes in their existing data protection and privacy policy mechanism, and were asked to put in place stringent safeguards to protect data privacy and security of their users.

The sources said that Tharoor expressed concern about

the privacy of women users of social media platforms. He said he has also received complaints from several women MPs in this regard.

The Parliamentary Committee on IT will also summon representatives of YouTube and other Social Media Intermediaries in the coming weeks over the issue.

The two IT giants' representatives were called days after Twitter officials deposed before the panel.

In the last meeting, several members of the panel had categorically told Twitter that the rule of land is supreme not the social media platform's policies.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

India has indirectly raised the recent drone attacks on the IAF station at Jammu in the United Nations, warning global community against the possible use of weaponised drones for terrorist attacks on strategic and commercial assets.

"Being a low-cost option and easily available, utilisation of aerial/sub-surface platforms for sinister purposes by terrorist groups such as intelligence collection, weapon/explosives delivery and targeted attacks have become an imminent danger and challenge for security agencies worldwide," said VSK Kau-

SC terms as 'unpardonable' Centre's apathy over NDUW

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Tuesday termed as unpardonable the Centre's apathy and lackadaisical attitude towards creating National Database for Unorganised Workers (ND-UW) and ordered its commencement by 31 July so that all migrant workers are registered this year and welfare measures extended to them during Covid distress.

The top court issued a slew of directions to authorities on a plea of three activists seeking welfare measures for migrant workers and ordered states and Union Territories (UTs) to frame schemes for providing free dry ration to them till the pandemic lasts, while the Centre will have to allocate additional foodgrains.

A bench comprising justices

Ashok Bhushan and M R Shah also ordered that the states, who have not yet implemented 'One Nation One Ration Card' scheme are directed to implement the same by not later than 31 July.

The Centre pointed out that Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Assam and Delhi have not implemented the scheme.

The top court referred to its order of 21 August 2018 directing the Labour ministry to make available a module to states and UTs for the registration of unorganised workers and said the stand taken by the Centre does not commend us.

When the unorganized workers are waiting for registration, the apathy and lackadaisical attitude by the labour and employment ministry is unpardonable. The non-action of the ministry is strongly

disapproved, it said.

The bench also directed the labour secretary to ensure that NDUW portal is finalised and implementation of the portal commences on or before 31 July and sought a compliance report within a month thereafter.

The top court directed the department of Food and Public Distribution to allocate and distribute foodgrains as per demand of additional foodgrains from the states for disbursement of dry food grains to migrant labourers.

The top court said that the fundamental right to life under Article 21 may include this right as well. States, UTs and the Licence Holders or contractors were directed to cooperate with the Centre to complete the registration of migrant workers and unorganized labourers for welfare schemes.

Parl Monsoon session likely from 19 July

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Parliament's Monsoon session is likely to start on 19 July and conclude on 13 August and is likely to have around 20 sittings, sources said on Tuesday.

The Monsoon session of Parliament usually commences in the third week of July and concludes ahead of Independence day.

A recommendation about the duration of the session has been made by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, the sources said.

All Covid related protocols will be followed within the Parliament complex during the session, the sources said, adding that it is hoped that all those entering the complex have taken at least first dose.

Spreading terrorist propaganda through use of "indulging video games" was another strategy that was deployed by terrorist groups during the pandemic.

It is imperative for countries to adopt a multi-pronged approach to tackle the global threats emanating out of misuse of new technologies particularly aiming towards terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The world must remain united against tendencies of labelling of terrorism based on terrorist's motivations especially those based on religion, and political ideologies. This will certainly divide us and weaken our fight against terrorism," he added.

India raises Jammu drone attack at United Nations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

mudi, special secretary (internal Security) in the ministry of home affairs while addressing the second high-level conference of the heads of counter-terrorism agencies of the UN member states.

The world, he said, has witnessed the use of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) by terrorists to smuggle weapons across borders.

His comments came days after the drone strike at Jammu air base on Sunday.

Preliminary investigations have pointed to the involvement of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in the drone strike.

Indian troops thwarted attempts by two more drones on the intervening night of Sun-

day and Monday in the Ratnachak-Kaluchak military area in Jammu.

Kaumudi observed that the misuse of internet and social media for terrorist propaganda, radicalisation and recruitment of cadre, new payment methods and crowdfunding platforms for financing of terrorism and technologies for terrorist purposes have emerged as significant threats of terrorism.

Internet and social media platforms have turned into indispensable resources in the toolkit of global terrorist groups (GTGs) for terrorist propaganda and conspiracy theories aimed at sowing hatred in societies and offer additional

radicalisation opportunities, he added.

"Continuing progress in evolving technologies, viz. Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, 'Deep fakes', Blockchain, Dark-web, etc., are fraught with the risk of being abused by terrorists. Already, crypto-currencies, virtual assets, crowd-funding platforms are helping terrorist financing, owing to the anonymity and un-traceability nature of these technologies," the official said.

He said Covid-19 and the subsequent isolation have further accentuated the impact of the internet on people making them vulnerable to radicalisation and recruitment by terrorist groups.



We have farmers, that's why we don't go hungry

ANIT THAPA, LEADER, GORKHA JAN MUKTI MORCHA (BINYO TAMANG FACTION)

IN HIS GREETINGS ON 'ASHAR PANDHRA' THE PADDY-PLANTING MONSOON FESTIVAL

101 new virus cases, 4 deaths in Capital; positivity rate 0.15%

Centre urged to replenish Delhi's jabs stock to enable it to maintain high vaccination rate

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The number of new Covid-19 cases in the national capital today rose to 101 from yesterday's 59, which was its lowest rise this year.

Delhi's Covid positivity rate climbed to 0.15 per cent from yesterday's 0.10 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The count of fresh coronavirus-related deaths logged in the city was 4 whereas its fatality count was 2 yesterday. The city's Covid toll mounted to 24,971, the health bulletin said.

The fresh infections were

detected out of a total of 66,397 tests, including 42,973 RT-PCR tests, according to the bulletin.

There were 1,531 active cases in Delhi now—the lowest since 1 March, when the count was 1,404 active cases—and the number of patients under home isolation was 456, the bulletin stated.

The city's Covid caseload increased to 14,34,094, even as over 14 lakh patients reportedly recovered from the disease so far.

Of the 21,886 hospital beds meant for coronavirus patients in the national capital, as many as 20,925 were said to be vacant. The number of containment zones in the city stood at 1,643, the bulletin

added.

The city had been recording less than 100 infections in recent few days. On Sunday, the national capital identified 89 cases with a positivity rate of 0.12 per cent and four deaths while on Saturday it reported 85 cases and 9 fatalities.

Meanwhile, to ensure that the 'high-speed vaccination' process continues, the Delhi government today urged the Centre to replenish the Covid vaccine stock in the national capital before the current stock runs out.

As on this morning, Delhi had a stock of 5.25 lakh vaccines including 3.75 lakh doses of Covishield and 1.5 lakh doses of Covaxin.

"This stock will last for two days in Delhi because vaccination is now happening at a very high speed," AAP MLA Atishi said.

"We request the central government to provide more vaccines to Delhi before the existing stock for two days gets over so that the ongoing high speed vaccination in Delhi does not stop," she said.

Issuing the daily vaccination bulletin, the MLA from Kalkaji said a total of 75,43,765 doses of vaccines have been administered in Delhi, out of which, around 17 lakh people have got both doses.

"Recently, since the gap between the two doses of the Covishield vaccine was increased, the number of people

getting their second dose had reduced. But now, for many of those people, it's time to get their second dose, so they are now stepping out and getting vaccinated," she said.

"Delhi's per day vaccination capacity is 2.15 lakh, and we hope that this is going to increase with time," Atishi said.

She added that the Delhi youths have contributed towards the increase in the vaccination rate in the city.

Of the over two lakh people who got vaccinated on Monday, around 1.5 lakh were in the 18-44 years category, and over 35,000 doses were administered to those above 45 years, who got their second shots.

5 Covid patients at Ganga Ram Hospital suffered rectal bleeding due to CMV infection, 1 dies

PTI

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Five COVID-19 patients have suffered cytomegalovirus-related rectal bleeding at a leading private facility here during the second wave of the pandemic, hospital authorities said on Tuesday and claimed it was being reported for the "first time" in immunocompetent persons.

These patients face the problem on an average 20-30 days after the diagnosis of Covid-19, doctors at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said.

Until now it affected only immunocompromised patients, post-transplant, cancer, AIDS, etc., but this is the "first time in India" that cases of CMV-relat-

ed rectal bleeding in Covid immunocompetent patients have been reported, a spokesperson of the hospital said.

According to Prof Anil Arora, chairman, Institute of Liver Gastroenterology and Pancreaticobiliary Sciences at the hospital, "During the second wave of the pandemic, in April-May, we have seen five cases of CMV infection in otherwise immunocompetent patients with COVID-19."

These patients presented with pain in abdomen and bleeding during stool discharge. None of them had other predisposing immunosuppressed states accounting for this viral infection, he said.

Covid infection itself and the medicines used for its treatment (like steroids), do suppress the immunity of patients and make them susceptible for uncommon infections with varied presentations, the hospital said in a statement.

"One such opportunistic infection is from CMV. Cytomegalovirus exists in 80 to 90 per cent of the Indian population in asymptomatic form as our immunity is strong enough to make it clinically asymptomatic. Clinical presentation with symptoms secondary to CMV, is usually seen in patients whose immunity is compromised," it said.

But in these five cases, all patients presented with low lymphocyte count (6-10 percent as against a normal of 20 to 40 per cent), indicating Covid-induced suppression of immunity predisposing them to symptomatic reactivation of CMV infection, doctors said.

"Two of them had massive bleeding, one requiring emergency life-saving surgery in the form of removal of right side of the colon, while one of them succumbed due to massive bleeding and severe Covid-19 chest disease," the hospital said.

Other three patients were successfully treated with antiviral therapy with ganciclovir, said Arora. "Cytomegalovirus colitis was confirmed by PCR testing for CMV viremia and tissue biopsy from the large intestine which showed intranuclear inclusion bodies which was further confirmed to be due to CMV infection by the specific immunohistochemistry stains," said Dr Sunila Jain, senior consultant pathologist, at the hospital.

In such cases a high index of suspicion and timely intervention in the form of an early diagnosis and effective antiviral therapy can save many a precious lives, opined Dr Praveen Sharma, senior consultant, gastroenterology department at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI (Testamentary Intestate Jurisdiction)
Citation U/283, Indian Succession Act, 1925
In the matter of Test Case No. 13/2021
Manorama Masih
— Petitioner
Versus
State & Ors.
— Respondents

To, All Concerned,
In the matter of estate of Late Sh. Daniel Budh Masih, s/o Late Sh. Budh Masih, r/o 24-C, Janyug Apartments, Sector 14 Extn., Rohini, Delhi.

Whereas Smt. Manorama Masih, d/o Late Sh. Daniel Budh Masih, s/o Sh. Dennis David, r/o 24-C, Janyug Apartments, Sector 14 Extn., Rohini, Delhi, 110085, has filed a petition under Section 236 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for the grant of Probate/Letters of Administration of last and final handwritten Will dated 08-05-2021, executed by Sh. Daniel Budh Masih, deceased.

And whereas the aforesaid case is fixed for hearing on 30-07-2021 at 11:00 a.m. before the Joint Registrar (Judicial) of this Hon'ble Court. This direction is issued in terms of Section 236 of the said Act to all persons claiming to have any interest in the properties of the said deceased to come to this Court, file objections, if any and take part in the proceedings on the date specified above for the grant of Probate/Letters of Administration.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court, in terms of the order dated 31st day of May, 2021. Deputy Registrar for Registrar General Seal of the Court

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the Members of The Bengal Club Limited will be held through video conferencing or other audio-visual means on Friday, 23 July, 2021 at 5.30 p.m. in compliance with the applicable provisions of Companies Act, 2013 read

with the General Circular No. 20/2020 dated 5 May, 2020 and General Circular No. 10/2021 dated 23 June, 2021 issued by the Government of India.

(a) The business will be transacted through ballot which shall be conducted both through electronic remote voting (remote e-voting) process prior to the AGM and through the special electronic voting process available online during the AGM.

(b) Remote e-voting shall commence on 20 July, 2021 at 9.00 a.m. and shall end on 23 July, 2021 at 4.00 p.m. Remote voting shall not be allowed beyond the said date.

(c) Members who are yet to register their e-mail address with the Club, are requested to contact the front desk or send an email to Club at communication@thebengalclub.com to register their e-mail address.

(d) All members who have cleared on or before 17 July, 2021 their Club bills up to the month of May 2021 shall be eligible to vote at the meeting.

(e) Details of remote e-

voting may be had from the Notice dated 28 June, 2021 calling the AGM and sent to all members of the Club @ www.thebengalclub.com

(f) Members shall be able to login and vote at the AGM with the meeting ID and password which shall be shared by the Club.

(g) Members may participate in the AGM even after exercising their right to vote through remote e-voting but should not vote again, and if they do so the same shall be invalid.

(h) In case of any query / grievance with respect to e-voting, members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and Remote E-voting User Manual for Shareholders available under the Downloads section of NSDL's e-voting website or contact Mr. Amit Singh, Central Manager / Mr. Palavi Mhatre, Manager, NSDL, Trade World, "A" Wing, 4th Floor, Kamala Mills Compound, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400013 at Telephone No. 022-24994545 or Toll Free No. 11800 1020 990 / 1800 22 44 30 or at E-mail:

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Mrs. Manju Beri, w/o Late Arun Kumar Beri, r/o Flat No. 1302, Tower 14, Lotus Boulevard, Sector 100, Noida, Uttar Pradesh has entered all relatives with her son Karan Beri and his wife Manisha, Kohli Beri (d/o Ramesh Kohli) as they have become disloyal to her and also disowned them from all her movable & immovable properties with immediate effect. My client shall not be responsible for any transaction with them.

Jayesh K Unnikrishnan
Advocate

422, New Lawyers Chambers, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi-110001

Mob: 8800641010

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Project Investigator

I, JACINTA Maria Joseph, D/o, late Christy Joseph shall henceforth be known as Maria Joseph, D/o, late Christy Joseph, vide Affidavit No. 57AB 028808 sworn before the Notary Public K.P. Mazumder at Kolkata dated 02.06.2021.

I, SANTAK PROSAD MITRA, son of Sri PROKASH KUMAR MITRA, in my passport my father's name has wrongly been recorded as PROKASH MITRA being passport number U8428591. In the strength of Barrister C.J.M. First Class Court affidavit, everybody known as PROKASH KUMAR MITRA and PROKASH MITRA is the same and one identical person.

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All other stations in India - Re. 1

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RANCHI
11/C, Road#1, Ashoknagar, Ranchi - 834 002
Fax: (0651



Shootings had started mid-June... bringing smiles on the faces of countless artistes & technicians, but the sudden halt has tossed them into an uncertain situation

AS ARTISTES' BODY URGES TECHNICIANS, PRODUCERS OF BENGALI SOAPS TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES OVER WAGE ALLOCATION

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

03

Concerned over Delta Plus, Pb CM extends curbs till 10 July

More relaxations such as opening of bars, pubs will however kick in from 1 July in Punjab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 29 JUNE

With cases of Delta Plus variant coming to light, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday ordered extension of the Covid restrictions imposed in the state till 10 July, with certain more relaxations including opening of bars, pubs and ahatus at 50 per cent capacity to kick in from 1 July.

The Skill Development Centres and Universities have also been allowed to reopen with the condition that their staff and students have taken at least one dose of the Covid vaccine.

Announcing the relaxations at a high-level Covid review meeting, the CM made it clear that the bars, pubs and ahatus would have to strictly maintain social distancing protocols, and waiters should have taken at least one dose of the Covid vaccine. He also made it clear that it would be the responsibility of their owners to ensure that the conditions are met.

Expressing satisfaction over the decline in Covid positivity rate in the state to less



than one per cent with overall fall in active cases, Capt Amarinder noted that the positivity rate in some districts still remained over one per cent. Further, the finding of

Delta Plus variant was a matter of concern, making it essential to continue with the curbs, he stressed.

The month wise whole genome sequencing has

shown that more than 90 per cent virus is a variant of concern, with the original virus having been practically replaced by variants, disclosed the CM. Two cases

(Ludhiana and Patiala) have shown Delta plus variant, while in May and June the Delta variant was most prevalent, he pointed out.

Of the 198 contacts of the

Ludhiana patient traced and tested, one was found positive and the sample has been sent for genome sequencing, while in the Patiala case, for which the genome sequencing report was received on 26 June, the process of tracing is going on. The chief secretary, Vini Mahajan, said genome sampling of as many as 489 samples (including 276 sent in April, 100 in May and 113 in June) were still pending with the central lab. She also clarified that the Delta Plus variant was found in samples sent by the state govt in May, whose results were given by the Union government's labs recently. The head of the Punjab Covid-19 task force, Dr KK Talwar, told the meeting that it was very difficult to predict the third wave due to mutation, with the Delta Plus variant already reported from 12 countries and 52 cases in Maharashtra. Urging extreme caution, he said it was necessary to see how the mutant behaves. As of now, the existing vaccines were showing effectiveness against the present variants, he said.

On the Black Fungus (Mucormycosis), the CM said it was unfortunate that 51 people had died due to black fungus in the state.

Pb runs out of Covid vaccines, CM asks Centre for more jabs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 29 JUNE

With Punjab running out of Covishield vaccine on Tuesday and with a Covaxin stock of just 112821 doses, Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh today demanded supply of more vaccines by the Centre to vaccinate the entire 18-45 population to complete the vaccination of all eligible persons in the next two months.

Even as he ordered opening of the vaccination to the entire population in the 18-45 age group, subject to availability, the CM said the efforts would remain focused on covering the categories prioritised earlier.

His government had set a target to immunise all eligible in two months, followed by the second vaccine dose as per schedule, he added. Currently, 4.8 per cent of Punjab's eligible population is fully vaccinated, with Mohali leading the chart in both one and two doses.

Taking stock of the vaccination progress and status in Punjab at a Covid review virtual meeting, the CM said the state government had already vaccinated more than 62 lakh eligible persons and had been utilising the stock without any wastage. However, he noted, that there is a gross shortage of vaccines, with no stock of Covishield in the state as of today, and only a small stock of Covaxin available.

Pointing out that the state

had been repeatedly taking up the issue of inadequate doses with the government of India, Amarinder said this has assumed critical importance as Punjab has slowly been opening up sectors conditional to stakeholders having taken at least one dose.

Health minister Balbir Sidhu questioned the larger number of doses received from the Centre by BJP-ruled states like Haryana and Gujarat.

Citing a Punjab Police study showing 98 per cent protection among police personnel after two doses of vaccination, CM Amarinder Singh on Friday asked the health and medical education departments to continue monitoring the vaccine efficacy in the light of the new variants of concern.

So far, around 79000 Punjab Police personnel had been vaccinated, of which 57 per cent had received the second dose. The study, conducted by Dr Rajesh Kumar, between 3 February to 28 June, showed of the total deaths in this period, 15 were of those not vaccinated at all, nine of those who had received one dose, and only two who were fully vaccinated, disclosed DGP Dinkar Gupta.

The CM also directed the concerned departments to drive a campaign to encourage vaccination, testing and help in case of micro-containment zones. These should be activated in all urban and rural areas, he stressed.

Kejriwal pledges 300 units free power to all in Pb if AAP wins 2022 polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 29 JUNE

Even as the Opposition Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Tuesday charged that far from giving any relief to the common man through subsidised power, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) would even do away with the 200 unit per month free power provided to the poor if elected to power in Punjab, AAP's national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal today said that all the existing electricity schemes will continue in Punjab and that Punjabis will

rather get 300 units per month for free. The AAP is the principal Opposition party in the Punjab Assembly, even as the state is ruled by the Congress.

In a statement, clarifying "the misconception being spread by the Opposition parties", Kejriwal today announced 24-hour uninterrupted power supply and 300 units of free electricity per month to all domestic consumers in Punjab, on formation of the AAP government in 2022 Assembly elections.

All other non-beneficiaries who do not receive any electricity benefits currently will

get 300 free units per month. If this category consumes more than 300 units per month, then they will have to pay for the whole consumption. For example, if the non-beneficiary category consumes 350 units per month, then they will have to pay for 350 units.

SAD leaders, Bikram Singh Majithia and Dr Daljit Singh Cheema, however, said Kejriwal was trying to introduce a "flop model" which, they charged, had already failed in Delhi. Majithia also presented power bills of Delhi consumers and said the same show they were charged Rs 5.30 per unit

for bills slightly above 200 units and not extended any benefit of subsidised power. They also castigated the Delhi CM for trying to "lie his way out" of the press conference by stating that farmers in Delhi were "probably" given free power when this was not the case and they were charged astronomical fixed charges.

The SAD leaders said the Delhi CM clearly admitted that the party's promise of 300 units per bill cycle free power facility would only be applicable in case the consumption was less than 300 units.

Himachal CM asks officials to crack down on illegal mining



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 29 JUNE

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday directed the government officials to take stringent action against those who are involved in illegal mining in the state.

Nuh has reported only 24 malaria cases in the year 2020 as compared to 942 cases in the year 2019 which shows a reduction of 97 per cent in the malaria cases in the district. During the year 2021, no case of malaria has been reported in Nuh district till June 14 which shows that district Nuh has reached malaria free stage.

The spokesman said that in the first phase of malaria-free Mewat campaign, mass screening was done in 79 villages under four high risk primary health centres namely Ujina, Sudaka, Bai and Nuh with a target of 1.34 lakh people and in the district approx.

limit of Municipal Corporation/Committees, one kilometre from Nagar Panchayat without NOC from the concerned corporation/committee.

Similarly, no mining lease was being granted within 200 metre from any water supply and irrigation scheme and within 200-500 metres upstream and downstream of the bridge, the CM said.

After a meeting to review issues related to mining in the state, Thakur said Swan river in Una district and Mand area in Kangra district were more prone to illegal mining.

To check illegal mining

and transportation of minerals, the state government had established five check posts at Garget, Pandoga, Bathri, Polian and Mehatpur in Una district. It was unfortunate that still illegal mining was going on and violators were bypassing these check posts, he added.

Thakur stated that the state government had decided to not allow mining lease within 2 kilometres from the

at the same time, steps should also be taken to allow scientific mining for construction purposes as well as other developmental works.

Thakur added that the government would also consider creating more mining check posts in border areas of the state.

Additional chief secretary, industries Ram Subhag Singh assured the CM that effective steps would be taken for checking illegal mining and systematic and scientific mining would be ensured.

HP Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu said that more legal powers must be delegated to police personnel to address illegal mining.

State industries minister Bikram Singh, chief secretary Anil Khachi, additional chief secretaries Manoj Kumar and JC Sharma, principal secretary KK Pant, director industries Rakesh Prajapati and other senior officers also attended the meeting.

Centre, Haryana govt to set up Kurukshetra virtual museum

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 29 JUNE

In collaboration with the Centre, the Haryana government would set up a world-class virtual museum in Kurukshetra highlighting references to Mahabharata and Gita. Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, held a meeting with Union minister of state for tourism Prahlad Singh Patel in New Delhi regarding the progress of various tourism projects in Haryana. During the meeting, discussions were held on Kurukshetra, Adi Badri, Rakhi-garhi, Science City, Adventure Tourism and other important issues.

Speaking to reporters, Khattar said the Union minister of state for tourism has agreed on several projects and important points. The Union minister of state for tourism,



Prahlad Singh Patel said a world-class virtual museum with references to Mahabharata and Gita will be joint-

ly developed in Kurukshetra by the Union ministry of tourism and the government of Haryana.

'Not a single malaria case in Nuh this year'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 29 JUNE

As a result of the Malaria Mukt Mewat campaign, conducted in two phases under the Malaria Control Programme to make Nuh malaria-free in Haryana, not a single case of malaria has been reported in the district during the year 2021 till 14 June, which shows that district Nuh has reached the malaria free stage. While giving this information on Tuesday, a spokesperson of the health department said that before the Malaria Mukt Mewat Campaign, from the year 2015 to the year 2018, malaria cases in district Nuh were more than one per thousand population (Annual Parasitic Incidence-APi) i.e.

in the year 2015 it was 5.07 and in 2018 it was 1.42. In addition, areas under a total of seven primary health cen-

tres were highly affected by malaria. He said that after the implementation of this programme, the API in district Nuh was reduced to 0.68 in the year 2019 and 0.02 in the year 2020.

Nuh has reported only 24 malaria cases in the year 2020 as compared to 942 cases in the year 2019 which shows a reduction of 97 per cent in the malaria cases in the district. During the year 2021, no case of malaria has been reported in Nuh district till June 14 which shows that district Nuh has reached malaria free stage.

The spokesman said that in the first phase of malaria-free Mewat campaign, mass screening was done in 79 villages under four high risk primary health centres namely Ujina, Sudaka, Bai and Nuh with a target of 1.34 lakh people and in the district approx.

Woman converts to Islam on her free will, faces threats; moves HC for protection

PTI
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

A woman has approached the Delhi High Court seeking protection for herself and her family claiming that they are facing life-threats and being witch hunted by the UP police, media and vigilante groups after her wilful conversion from Hinduism to Islam.

The woman, who is working in Delhi and belongs to Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, sought protection from the Delhi Police Commissioner on June 27 in Delhi and since June 23, when she was in Shahjahanpur, she started getting calls from media persons requesting a meeting which she refused.

The woman, in her plea, said she gave a complaint to the Delhi Police Commissioner on June 24, seeking immediate intervention for her protection with regard to her conversion to Islam on her own free will and without any threat or coercion from anyone but no action has been taken on her complaint yet.

There is no other option other than approaching this court for immediate directions to stop the harassment of the petitioner, said the plea, filed through advocate Kamlesh Kumar Mishra and Nitin Kumar Nayak.

It sought to direct the authorities to ensure that the woman is not taken away from Delhi by force or coercion by any government agency or person and she and her family be granted protection and not harassed or interrogated regarding her conversion.

The plea further sought direction to the media not to publish or broadcast any malicious content regarding her and not to divulge her personal details and also remove the contents already shown.

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BSP PRESIDENT MAYAWATI
TARGETING YOGI ADITYANATH GOVERNMENT IN UTTAR PRADESHThe Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



A vendor carries blankets on his motorcycle for sale after further ease in Covid-induced lockdown restrictions in Chikmagalur, on Tuesday. ■AGENCY

Ammunition manufacturing unit in HP: An ammunition manufacturing facility for tanks and artillery guns will be set up in Himachal Pradesh, a official said on Tuesday. He said a MoU worth Rs 5,000 crore was signed on Tuesday between the government and SMPP Pvt India Ltd in the presence of CM Jai Ram Thakur in Shimla. ■SNS

Corbett opens for tourism: The Corbett Tiger Reserve was opened on Tuesday for round-the-year tourism. Five ranges of the reserve including Garjia, Bigrani, Dhara-Jhiria, Dheela and Pakhran were opened this afternoon for day visits for the whole year, Corbett's Director Rahul said. Around 50 bookings made for the day safaris on the inaugural day, he said. ■PTI

Money laundering case: Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh did not appear before the ED in connection with a money laundering case on Tuesday, citing Covid and his old age, and requested for a virtual interaction on a day suitable for the central agency. ■PTI

Air pollution from sugar mills: Noting that huge air pollution is caused by sugar mills at various locations in Uttar Pradesh resulting in unchecked degradation of environment, the National Green Tribunal has directed the UP pollution control board to undertake special drive for remedial measures. ■PTI

Delhi girl receives Diana Award



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DELHI, 29 JUNE

A 17-year-old girl from New Delhi has received the Diana Award in memory of Princess Diana.

Mahira Jain, has founded 'FunWagon', an academic enrichment enterprise especially built for children between ages 6 and 16. The objective is to conduct fun, interactive excursions through tours both in person and virtually. FunWagon has organised various excursion including the National Museum, Lodhi art district, India Gate and Gandhi Smriti.

In their endeavour, they have worked with more than 1,500 students and have created a 30-page original curriculum, based on the heritage of India.

The FunWagon curriculum has now been adopted by over 11 NGOs across India, some which are AAROHAN, My Perch and Lotus Petal Foundation.

During the lockdown, FunWagon had conducted its activities online and held Zoom webinars where participants were taken on virtual tours of the Lodhi art district, the Mahabaliupuram temples and the Amer Fort. Mahira has also created a Virtual Walkthrough series on her YouTube channel for her audiences to be immersed in the history, culture and architecture of Delhi.

A recipient of several awards like the 2021 Pramerica Awards, and the Social Innovation Challenge by IIT (BHU) Varanasi, Mahira most recently founded CulturALL, an initiative which aims to increase access to cultural education for children from all backgrounds.

SC: Implement 'one nation, one ration card' scheme by 31 July

Asks Centre to provide dry ration for free among migrant workers till pandemic situation continues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE



Villagers stand in a queue to collect relief material in Howrah district of West Bengal on Tuesday. ■AGENCY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed states and Union Territories to implement the 'one nation, one ration card' scheme by 31 July, while asking the Centre to provide dry ration for free distribution among migrant workers till the Covid situation continues.

A bench of justices Ashok Bhushan and M R Shah issued a slew of directions on a plea of three activists seeking directions to the Centre and states to ensure food security, cash transfers and other welfare measures for migrant workers who faced distress again due to curfews and lockdowns in various parts of country during the second wave of Covid.

The bench has said ONORC scheme is for welfare of poor citizens as it allows migrant workers to get ration at the place of their work in other states as well where their ration cards are not registered.

The bench directed the Centre to develop a portal with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) for registration of unorganised sector workers for granting them the benefits of welfare schemes by 31 July.

It also directed the states, UTs to run community kitchens for migrant workers till the Covid pandemic continues. It asked the Centre to keep allocating foodgrains to the states, UTs for distribution among migrant workers for free till the pandemic situation exists. The state governments and the UT administrations shall bring a scheme to provide dry ration to migrant workers by 31 July and such a scheme will remain till Covid situation continues, the top court said.

Right to life under Constitution may be interpreted to include right to food, says SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Taking note of basic global concept on food security, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said in the absence of explicit provision for it, the fundamental right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution may be interpreted to include the right to live with human dignity, having right to food and other basic necessities.

The Right to Life as guaranteed by Article 21 gives the right to every human being

The bench directed states and UTs to register all establishments and contractors under the Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service Act) 1979.

Activists Anjali Bharadwaj, Harsh Mander and Jagdeep Chhokar had filed a plea seeking implementation of welfare measures for migrant workers and provide

to live a life of dignity with access to at least bare necessities of life. To provide food security to impoverished persons is the bounden duty of all States and Governments, the top court observed while issuing a slew of directions on a plea of three activists.

The activists-Anjali Bharadwaj, Harsh Mander and Jagdeep Chhokar had sought implementation of welfare measures for migrant workers who faced distress again due to curfews and lockdowns in various parts of the country during the second wave of Covid.

There has been worldwide awareness regarding the right to food for human beings. Our country is no exception. Lately, all Governments have been taking steps and taking measures to ensure that no human being should be affected by hunger and no one dies out of hunger. The basic concept of food security globally is to ensure that all people, at all times, should get access to the basic food for their active and healthy life.

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Trilateral offensive

On the face of it, Sunday's airstrikes under the direction of President Joe Biden, were directed at facilities used by Iran-backed militia groups. But the offensive cannot but convulse Iraq and Syria near the border between the two countries, indeed the home of ISIS. Pentagon's Press Secretary, John Kirby, claimed the militias were using the facilities to launch unmanned aerial vehicle attacks against US troops in Iraq. As it turned out, the US military targeted three operational and weapons storage facilities ~ two in Syria and one in Iraq. This indubitably is a direct assault on territories in the two countries that have become the bedrock of militant nationalism of the Islamist variety. The Pentagon described the airstrikes as "defensive," saying they were launched in response to attacks by Iran-backed groups. "The United States took necessary, appropriate, and deliberate action designed to limit the risk of escalation, but also to send a clear and unambiguous deterrent message," Mr Kirby said. Sunday's strikes mark the second time the Biden administration has taken military action in the region. In February, the US launched airstrikes against facilities in Syria, near the Iraqi border, that it said were used by Iranian-backed militia groups. A lethal cocktail had thus been brewing for a while. It is, therefore, a three-pronged offensive. President Biden said Iran should view his decision to authorize US airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten US interests or personnel. "You can't act with impunity. Be careful," Mr Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send. The Pentagon claimed those strikes were in retaliation for a rocket attack in Iraq in February that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a US service member and other coalition troops. At that time, Mr Biden said Iran should view his decision to authorize US airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten US interests or personnel.

On Sunday, Mr Kirby said Mr Biden "has been clear that he will act to protect US personnel. Given the ongoing series of attacks by Iran-backed groups targeting US interests in Iraq, the President directed further military action to disrupt and deter such attacks." The Pentagon spokesman added: "As a matter of international law, the United States acted pursuant to its right of self-defence. The strikes were both necessary to address the threat and appropriately limited in scope." The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, said in a statement Sunday that the US airstrikes "appear to be a targeted and proportional response to a serious and specific threat," adding that "protecting the military heroes who defend our freedoms is a sacred priority." President Biden's three-pronged offensive is likely to impinge on multilateral geostrategy. In America's reckoning, the certitudes of international law

Pakistan fails test

Pakistan has failed the FATF test yet again and will remain on the terror watchdog's grey list for some time yet. The country to the west of the Radcliffe Line has missed its exclusion from the Paris-based FATF (Financial Action Task Force) by a whisker. Friday's announcement that the country had complied with 26 of the 27 items listed in the action plan that was formalised in June 2018 is explicit on the point that it will remain on what they call the "increased monitoring list" ~ also referred to as the grey list ~ even after it addresses the remaining provision. The decision is doubtless a setback for the government in Islamabad not the least because the global financial watchdog has imposed a new list of six action items on Pakistan which it said were identified by its regional partner, the Asia Pacific Group (APG), in 2019. According to the FATF's official statement, for Pakistan to be delisted, it will have to largely address all items in the new action plan in addition to the only remaining item in the original plan. The country is fighting a losing battle against FATF whose decision has raised doubts on the integrity of the financial watchdog. Questions have been raised in Pakistan over the rationale of retaining the country on the grey list when it had already implemented 26 of the 27 action plan items given by the FATF. Jamaat-i-Islami Central Vice President Mian Aslam suspected a global conspiracy behind the FATF decision and asked the government of Imran Khan to not surrender its freedom. Strident critics of the decision have called the entity a "tool weaponised against Pakistan", indeed as "a tool of geopolitical pressure". The official Twitter account of former President, Gen (retd) Pervez Musharraf, said the FATF was being used to "blackmail" Pakistan.

The provision that has not been addressed is a critical one though and relates to the need to demonstrate that terror-financing investigations and prosecution target "senior leaders and commanders of UN-designated terrorist groups". In the reckoning of the FATF president, Marcus Pleyer, it is a pivotal issue that Pakistan must of necessity address. He said after the plenary meeting that there was a "high level commitment" by Pakistan to address "strategic deficiencies". In a message conveyed to Pakistan, the FATF authorities have asserted that the country's delisting will happen only after it complies with all the items on the agenda in both the action plans. FATF has called upon Pakistan to strategically identify the deficiencies. These include the imperative to demonstrate that assistance is being sought from foreign countries to implement counter-terror strategies. India has repeatedly emphasised on the need to implement UN resolutions and targeted sanctions against UN designated terrorist individuals and entities. Delinking Pakistan from money laundering and terror financing is still a long way away.

Planetary Boundaries ~ II

The Planetary Boundaries define, as it were, the boundaries of the 'planetary playing field' for humanity if major human-induced environmental change on a global basis is to be avoided. Transgressing one or more PBs may be highly damaging or even catastrophic



Continuing from yesterday, the third Planetary Boundary we must consider is ozone depletion.

Gradual thinning of Earth's ozone layer in the upper atmosphere caused by the release of chemical compounds containing gaseous chlorine or bromine from industry and other human activities. The thinning is most pronounced in the polar regions, especially over Antarctica. Ozone depletion is a major environmental problem because it increases the amount of UV radiation that reaches the earth's surface, which increases the rate of skin cancer, eye cataracts, genetic and immune system damage. Where were we in 2015? Depletion was still safely inside the boundary except over Antarctica where during spring levels it dropped to 200 DU (Dobson Units). As a result of continued international cooperation on this issue, the ozone layer is expected to recover overtime.

The fourth PB is pollution caused by excessive flow of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P). The biogeochemical cycles of N and P have been radically changed by humans as a result of many industrial agricultural processes. N and P are both essential elements for plant growth, so fertilizer production and application are the main concern. Farmers use nitrogen and phosphorous and other nutrients in farm soils to ensure decent production. Problem is that much of the fertilizer is not taken up by plants. A portion of the unused fertilizer returns to air and the other portion is carried down to pollute water bodies including groundwater. Nutrients give rise to 'algal bloom.' When these algae die, they are consumed by bacteria, which in turn deplete oxygen in

the water giving rise to hypoxic dead zone and killing the fish and other marine life. This process of 'eutrophication' is already occurring in many countries.

The fifth PB arises from the overuse of freshwater resources. In the planet more than 97 per cent of water is salty, 2 per cent is fresh in the form of snow and ice, and only one per cent is left for humans. Water is finite. Of the total amount of freshwater that humans use, about 70 per cent goes to agricultural production and about 20 per cent is used in industry. And the remaining 10 per cent is for households. Humanity is now using so much, especially for food production purposes, that many parts of world societies are depleting their critical sources of freshwater. Groundwater depletion is now a worldwide phenomenon. Freshwater scarcity will be exacerbated by countless other problems. The PB of freshwater will pose a major crisis for the many regions of the world in the decades to come. By 2050 about half a billion people are likely to be subject to water-stress.

The sixth PB is land use. Humanity uses a massive amount of land to grow food, graze animals, produce timber and other forest products, and expansion of expanding cities. Many regions of the world that were once dense forests are now farmlands or cities. Such deforestation adds CO₂ to the atmosphere. Human land-use change is causing a massive disruption to ecosystems and species survival

in many parts of the world. Status as in 2015: 62 per cent of the land system has been changed.

The seventh PB is biodiversity. Biodiversity not only defines life on the planet, but also contributes in fundamental ways to the functions of ecosystems, the productivity of crops, and ultimately to the health and survival of humanity. We depend on biodiversity for our food supply, our safety from many natural hazards. When biodiversity is disturbed, the ecosystem changes markedly, usually in adverse ways. Humanity is massively disrupting biodiversity. The National Geographic reports: 'More than 99 per cent of all organisms that have ever lived on Earth are extinct.'

Many species are declining in numbers, genetic varieties, and resilience. The history of life on earth has included at least five periods during which huge numbers of species vanished forever, primarily due to changes in climate and sea level. Some scientists worry that a sixth extinction has begun because of humanity's gross misuse of the earth's resources. The status as in 2015: biodiversity has dropped to 84 per cent in parts of the world such as Africa.

The eighth PB is called aerosol loading. When we burn biomass, hydrocarbon fuels, coal, forests and crop waste etc. small particles called aerosols are put into the air. We have more than doubled the global concentration of these aerosols since pre-industrial times. Very small particles less than 2.5 micrometers in

diameter can cause life-threatening lung diseases. Aerosols can have an indirect effect on climate. Status as in 2015: within limit.

The ninth PB is chemical pollution. Industries and mining not only use land and water for their processing but also add a tremendous load of pollutants back into the environment. Pollutants are deadly for humans and as well as other species.

The PBs define, as it were, the boundaries of the 'planetary playing field' for humanity if major human-induced environmental change on a global basis is to be avoided. Transgressing one or more PBs may be highly damaging or even catastrophic. It is estimated that humanity already transgressed three PBs: climate change (1st), rate of biodiversity losses (7th) and changes to global nitrogen cycle (4th). Many environmentalists alarmed by humanity's trespassing of PBs have concluded that economic growth must end now. Most importantly, it is also argued that by choosing the appropriate technologies we can achieve continued economic growth and also honour the PBs for sustainable development. Most environmental economics studies the question of how to use the various kinds of incentives ~ both market based and socially based ~ in order to reduce externalities. However, growth of material well-being per person is best protected if the astounding rise in global population is brought under control this century through a voluntary reduction of fertility rates to their replacement rate or below, thereby leading to a peak and then gradual decline in the global population during the twenty-first century.

(Concluded)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Not quite enough

SIR, The stimulus package to the tune of Rs 6.28 lakh crore announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is not overwhelming. When our country was gradually limping back to normalcy, the sudden arrival of the second wave has definitely dealt a body blow to the economy.

Owing to state imposed restrictions on movement and business, consumption and livelihoods are affected once again. Reviving our activities and achieving a growth in our economy will depend on the efficacy of the vaccination drive and how we overcome the next waves of infection.

Till now we have not started the inoculation of

those under 18, a precursor to opening up schools and educational activities, and hence have excluded a large section from the safety net. This will take time, considering our population. Meanwhile economic activities can't be put on hold.

In this uncertainty and gloom either private investment or FDI can revitalise the sagging economy. The government's recent push for monetary and sectoral stimulus through disbursement of loans from banks against assured government guarantee is not effective. The recent stimulus focuses on tourism and hospitality whereas many other sectors are stagnating.

It is high time the gov-

ernment provided stimulus through large scale investment projects. Keeping aside fiscal parameters for the time being, the government should lay stress on growth, liquidity and consumption. Large spending through contracts, logistics upgradation and mega infrastructure projects will pave the way for an upsurge in the economy. Only then will demand and consumption increase. As things stand, many sectors risk getting destroyed.

Yours, etc., Chanchal Nandy, Durgapur, 29 June.

NOT A DEMOCRAT

SIR, In his letter of 23 June, Mr Narayan Chandra Ghosh referred to Gandhiji as a thorough democrat. But if we look at his life and activi-

ties, we find many aberrations. The most glaring is the Haripura Congress incident. Gandhi backed another candidate for Congress presidency and Subhas Bose became the opposing candidate.

Bose won the election and became Congress President. Unlike a true democrat, Gandhi could not stomach the setback and made that famous statement - "Sitaramaiah's defeat is my defeat."

He deftly created a situation whereby the elected president was unable to form a working committee and ultimately was eased out of the Congress Party - the price of going against the wishes of Gandhi.

With Rabindranath, his relation was ambivalent. He had no feelings about the artistic and creative Rabin-

dranath and tried to impose his beliefs. This was very graphically captured in the description of his visit to Santiniketan by Syed Mujtaba Ali in 1927-28. Gandhi was a great mass leader, the only mass leader India produced in recent ages. But he was never a democrat.

Yours, etc., Swapan Kumar Ray, Kolkata, 26 June.

COMMENDABLE

SIR, This is with reference to the report, 'India overtakes US in total number of inoculations', published in *The Statesman* today. This is most certainly a very big achievement by our country.

The world's largest vaccination drive started on January 16 this year and even midway through the drive, there were huge ques-

tion marks on the administration's capability to handle such an enormous exercise. There had been great criticism of the manner in which this inoculation drive was initiated as also the distribution of doses to states and UTs.

In spite of these odds, the vaccine manufacturers and the government have done a remarkable job by administering over 32.36 crore doses till date, overtaking the US which started its inoculation drive on 14 December 2020. India has definitely shown to the world her capacities and capabilities in dealing with an unprecedented pandemic.

Compliments to each and every person involved in this massive exercise. Yours, etc., Anupam Neogi, Kolkata, 29 June.

A FATHER REMEMBERED

SIR, 'Remembering my father' by Rup Narayan Das on Father's Day (Now and Again, 20 June) made me nostalgic about my father who passed away on 4 January 1992 after suffering about two months from stomach cancer.

A matriculate (class X pass) who was sound in English, my father instilled in me the virtue of good handwriting in childhood. I learned the alphabet with slate-pencil writing and would erase a letter until perfect. I practised handwriting with an ink-pen, writing within the lines in an exercise book.

Once, just learning to read, I asked my father to buy Hansikhusi - a book of rhymes in Bengali by Jogindranath Sarkar. Having found a new rhyme book with colourful illustrations, I read it again and again. In class I-II, when I drew Nawab Sirajdulla with colourful sketch-pencils, father was delighted.

I felt unspeakable joy going to Belda - five-six-km away from my village, Dhalbelun, in West Midnapore - for Durga Puja shopping with father, bicycling through the sandy-soil-path scattered with wet paddy straw, emanating a characteristic smell in the autumn. While suffering from stomach cancer, constantly vomiting dark foul-smelling watery substances, unable to swallow a drop of water or fruit juice, let alone food, he enquired about the result of my class X pre-test exam, "Who did stand first?" I replied, "Aparna Jana - son of Harekrishna Jana." He encouraged me for the final board exam.

One night father said a chariot was coming to take him, and insisted my mother accompany him. Another night, at around 2 am, father blessed me and my elder brother. After my pre-test and three months before the board exam, my father breathed his last in front of my mother and me on a winter afternoon at Belda Rural Hospital.

I miss my father. If alive, he would have been about 90 now. What would have been our relationship - hostile or friendly? What would he advise me? How would have I treated him? Such questions come to my mind when I reminisce about my father.

Yours, etc., Dr Samares Kumar Das, Jalukie, Nagaland, 26 June.



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

ASIAN VOICES

60-year-old weds a minor

The news published in *The Daily Star* yesterday of a 60-year-old union parishad (UP) chairman forcefully marrying a minor girl, aged only 14, is an example of how corrupt public officials defy the law of the land recklessly and with impunity. The 14-year-old had eloped with a boy, another teenager, and the couple was caught after the girl's father lodged a complaint. The UP chairman arbitrated and his solution was to marry the child himself by recording a false date of birth in the marriage register. Thus, the chairman violated a number of laws. Not only did he violate the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 that prohibits child marriage, he also committed fraud and violated the Marriage Registration Act. Although he later "divorced" her, this hardly absolves him of committing these crimes.

Unfortunately, as obvious as it is that the UP chairman has abused his power, it seems he also has enough clout for the local administration to be hesitant about taking any action against him. When contacted, the local Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) said that they will take necessary actions only after directives are received from higher authorities and a proper investigation is conducted. The same goes for the local police, as the local Officer-in-Charge (OC) said that no one has issued a complaint yet, so they can't

The Daily Star
take action against the culprit of a child marriage. The fact that the chairman married a minor is not enough for him to be arrested. Such double standards when it comes to crimes committed by public officials are aplenty, but they are nonetheless reprehensible and must be discarded.

A UNICEF report on October 7, 2020, highlights that Bangladesh has the highest rate of child marriage in South Asia and ranks first among 10 countries in the world that have the highest number of child marriage. Bangladesh is a signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), which include ending child marriage by 2030. However, these incidents all over the country are testament to the fact that little is being done to eliminate child marriage once and for all. In fact, the pandemic has caused more and more girls to be married off as schools are closed and families are facing increased financial hardship. We are relieved that the High Court has ordered the authorities to conduct three separate inquiries into the allegations. The government must do much more to protect the rights of girls. It must make sure birth certificates are not falsified to legitimise child marriages, and it must do away with the provision in the law that has created legal loopholes that allow child marriages under "special circumstances".

tion marks on the administration's capability to handle such an enormous exercise. There had been great criticism of the manner in which this inoculation drive was initiated as also the distribution of doses to states and UTs.

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Compliments to each and every person involved in this massive exercise.

Yours, etc., Anupam Neogi, Kolkata, 29 June.

T S HAOKIP

Financial inclusion, in its narrowest connotation, is generally presumed as an endeavour that provides people, especially those in the hitherto unbanked region, a bank account. However, mere possession of a bank account cannot bring wonders. What is critical is the facilities endowed to individuals having a bank account. Direct Cash Transfers have considerably controlled the leakage of funds meant for targeted beneficiaries. Also, the poor can have access to insurance products with nominal premiums through their bank accounts. Also, saving habits could be inculcated, encouraged, and improved. Most importantly, financial inclusion will have its impact when credit facilities to the poor see a considerable improvement both in quantity and quality.

In one of my field visits to a tribal village in Andhra Pradesh, when I was interning with SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty) in 2010, I had spoken to a woman as part of my survey on the performance of Self-Help Groups. The woman said, "My husband worked in a factory but after his health deteriorated, he could not continue his work." She expressed her helplessness in feeding her three children with the meagre wage she earned.

"Then I shared my problems with members of our SHG. As advised, I would apply for the loan to our SHG and though there were other members who required the money, my case was considered and we were chosen to receive the loan. We bought an autorickshaw for my husband and now we have come above the poverty line," she added. "So, it was financial assistance that helped you?" I asked. She agreed and elaborated that most poor people irrespective of their livelihoods would need it to cross the poverty line.

The success story of the Pudup Sangams or the Women SHGs in AP has been the role model behind the National Rural Livelihood Mission. Under this mission, nationwide efforts have been undertaken by the Ministry of Rural Development to build, manage and empower women Self-Help Groups. Though the women's groups in AP have enough corpus to lend to their members, SHGs in other states depend on financial institutions like banks and NBFCs to finance their projects. Banks, especially public sector banks, have played a pivotal role in financing SHGs thus far. The crux is to

Financial inclusion vital for poverty eradication



financially assist SHG members who would invest money in income-generating assets that would provide them support to come out of poverty.

Apart from financing SHGs, banks have played a commendable role in funding the financial requirements of agriculture and allied activities. Designated as priority sector for banks, there is a stipulated percentage of the Annual Net Bank Credit (ANBC) which is allotted to agriculture and allied activities. Notwithstanding the inability of farmers to repay the loans during bad seasons and the politics involved with farm loan waiver, there are thousands of success stories of farm loans.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan yojana, which earned the Government of India (Department of Financial Services) a Guinness world record for the maximum number of accounts opened in a week, has raised many debates on its effectiveness in poverty reduction. While some are of

the opinion that the mere opening of an account does not contribute to the betterment of the poor, others feel that erstwhile financially illiterate people have become financially literate by not only familiarising themselves with the basic norms of banking but by also practicing it. Those in favour argue that saving habits have been inculcated and people have become aware of financial products like credit/loans for farmers etc. What is arguably one of the best benefits of the poor having a bank account, apart from availing credit, is its complementary assistance for the Direct Benefits transfer scheme to be successfully implemented, thereby avoiding the leakage of crores of rupees intended for farmers.

It is no secret that the poor are entrapped by money lenders with exorbitant rates of interest. People who depended on the outcome of annual crops and seasonal employment, while having pressing require-

ments like medical and food expenses and occasional needs for marriages and functions, were compelled to reach out to money lenders. The improvement in financing from banks has considerably reduced these needs.

There is still scope for improvement to bridge the gap between the poor and banks as far as availing credit is concerned. While the concern of poor people is the cumbersome documentation, banks have their own concerns about the creditworthiness of the poor. Most of the finance that banks provide is based on the business assumption that repayment will be made on time. To ensure that the poor do not default, it is important that the credit availed is used for income-generating assets. Thus, sincere inspection work on the part of bankers could help do away with documentation concerns by making the process of credit delivery to the poor more friendly.

Are we then to conclude that having a Bank account will transform a poor family's fortunes overnight? It is often said that poverty eradication needs a multi-dimensional approach and that the poor have the ability and knowledge to come out of poverty. From the many testimonies of the poor, it is evident that financing is one of the most important tools for rural development.

It will of course require many other efforts like ensuring basic necessities - good roads, electrified houses, drinking water, etc. And while we acknowledge the rights of the poor to decide on how best they could develop, financial inclusion in its real sense will continue to be the one precious tool that is indispensable in the fight against poverty.

The writer is a freelance contributor and author. He is a former development professional and has served as a consultant in the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Challenges ahead for Bangladesh

M SYEDUZZAMAN

Graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) group to developing country status is a milestone in Bangladesh's development journey, and it will certainly improve the country's image globally. In the UN system, countries are ranked as poor, LDC, developing and developed. According to the World Bank, however, the classifications are LDC (Bangladesh entered this group in the 1972-75 period), Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC), Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC), and Developed Country. The criteria on which these rankings are made are Per Capita Income, Human Development Assets Index and Economic Vulnerability Index (population size, national disaster incidence and handling).

After satisfactorily achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Bangladesh was included in the LMIC group and its place there was confirmed in 2018. The second confirmation requirement has been met, and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will make their recommendation in June 2021. This will then be endorsed by the UN General Assembly in September 2021. Due to the pandemic, however, the normal three-year period of transition will be extended by two years and formal graduation to the status of a Developing Country will be in 2026. Bangladesh currently hopes to enter the UMIC group in 2031, and the

Government's ambition is to reach Developed Country status in 2041.

Given the background of a poverty-stricken country in 1971-72, Bangladesh was able to join the group of LDCs by 1975 and move forward due to its effective use of available foreign assistance in its early years, increase in agricultural productivity, permitting the use of surplus labour for industries and services, gradual move towards a market economy (but the public sector retaining "commanding heights") in the areas of infrastructure development and promotion of services, promoting the emergence of entrepreneurial spirit (such as the growth of the RMG sector), and human development measures (food security, health, education, and moving towards reducing gender disparity).

Bangladesh's achievement of MDG targets in 2015 was an indication of its progress. There are two things in particular that helped in making this possible: having the Constitution of independent Bangladesh - which Bangabandhu Mujibur Rehman finalised on 4 November 1972 and which was approved by the Jatiya Sangshad in December 1972 - as the basis for its economic policies; and demographic transition at lower levels of income - an achievement of Bangladesh that is considered to be unique by many economists.

At the outset of the First Five-Year Plan, when asked about his top priority in its implementation, Bangabandhu told journalists, "I

have no 'number one' priority but I have a joint first priority - food self-sufficiency and population control."

We have to remember that worldwide, trade is a key tool of development that has led to globalisation. However, after graduating to a Developing Country, Bangladesh will have to face some challenges in this area. For instance, Bangladesh can no longer enjoy duty-free and quota-free export, and will face duties and reduced benefits of export to countries in the European Union. Rules regarding trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) may also be tightened by importers of goods from Bangladesh. Terms of foreign aid (from bilateral-multilateral sources) may become harder, and subsidy and cash assistance to exports may not be acceptable by some importing countries. Sometime in the past, Bangladesh was an "International Development Association (IDA) only" country, and Bangladesh was also borrowing from the World Bank on harder terms. After graduation, the benefits Bangladesh enjoys of being an IDA only country will also decline.

Similar changes will be taking place with other multilateral aid agencies. Bangladesh has to look for free trade agreements, such as the one between Vietnam and the European Union. Bangladesh will also have to make better and more efficient use of economic zones and export processing zones (EPZs), preferably with the diversification of exports.

In the areas of economic man-

agement, the mixed economy system will have to continue with the public sector taking the "Commanding Heights" for infrastructure development, implementation of fast-track projects, and strengthening and expanding the public-private-partnership system. Additionally, the revenue-tax/GDP ratio needs to go up, and policy reforms and investments will also be needed for greater ease of doing business. There must also be a focus on improving competitiveness, keeping in view competitive advantages such as wage levels and the faster processing of investment proposals. Moreover, the productivity of all sectors - agriculture, industry and services - must be increased.

By taking proper actions regarding these issues, Bangladesh can attract quality foreign direct investment (FDI), along with growing private investment, which has been at a stagnating level for the past few years. The investment policy is supportive of FDI, and according to media reports, some South-East Asian and Middle Eastern countries have shown interest in investing in Bangladesh, especially in the Special Economic Zones and EPZs.

But to continue on the development highway as a developing country, Bangladesh needs to turn our attention to several areas. Firstly, the country needs to improve the quality of education through the modernisation of tertiary education, link education and industries, and put emphasis on skills development, in a

bid for increasing productivity. It is also important to ensure good governance with accountability and acceptance of responsibility. This extends to the need for strengthening institutional arrangement for administration by government ministries. The country must also focus on strengthening the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) for public investments, ensure zero cost and time overruns, and practice suitable quality control of such investments.

The Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has said that credit for the graduation goes to the people. Going forward, I would suggest that the government pursue some specific objectives such as arresting the growing disparity between the rich and the poor (in terms of wealth and income), reducing the inequality in provision of health services, arresting corruption at all levels of public service, and avoiding the growth of, and ultimately eliminating, the "politically protected" groups in business (which hurt many vulnerable groups in different areas of the economy).

Finally, the most essential pre-conditions for continuing on the highway of growth and development, to reach the Upper Middle-Income Group by 2031, and the Developed Country Group by 2041, will be political stability, macroeconomic stability, annual reviews of the performance of the Eighth Five-Year Plan, and putting great emphasis on the objectives of the Constitution of 1972, for ensuring justice and equity.

The Daily Star/ANN

NO 28958

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

If there is any educated Indian who is still hesitating as to the morale of the non-cooperation movement it is to be hoped that he will study the communiqué which has just been issued by the United Provinces Government with reference to the destruction wrought by non-cooperating incendiaries in the forests of the Kumaon Division. From this it appears that, owing to this propaganda, 250,000 acres, or more than half the total protected area, has been devastated by fire, that the yield from the resinous area this year will probably be not more than a quarter of last year's output, that thousands of hill people who gain their livelihood by tapping and other operations under the Forest Department will be thrown out of employment, and that several lakhs of rupees, which would otherwise have been paid in wages, will be lost. It is impossible not to be struck by the analogy between this conspiracy and the incendiary madness which has been so rife in Ireland, culminating in the destruction of the Customs House at Dublin. It adds another link to the long chain of historical proof that anarchical principles are irreconcilable with non-violent methods or constructive activity, and that sooner or later every member of the community will rue the day when they were given a hearing.

NEWS ITEMS

CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The second meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education was held at Simla. Recommendations of the Board are at present before the Government of India. A variety of questions had been suggested for consideration of the Board. Among those actually discussed at its last meeting were the use of mental intelligence tests and the introduction of vocational studies into the general curriculum. When dealing with the latter subject the Board was assisted by representatives of the Agricultural and Public Works Departments of the Government of India. The Board, which consists of educationists of experience from different parts of India, is able to bring to the consideration of problems submitted to it a judgment based not only on professional knowledge but also on acquaintance with educational developments in the different Provinces.

THE LATE JAM SAHIB OF LAS BELA

Karachi, Je 29
The late Jam Sahib of Las Bela died at Quetta on Sunday evening. His body was conveyed with the usual ceremony to Karachi to be taken to Bela for burial. The body was received at the cantonment station by Mir Ayub Khan, of Las Bela, an uncle of the late Jam Sahib, two brothers of the late Sahib, State officials, people from Kohistan, Kotri, Khairpur and Malir, all the leading Baluchis in Karachi and many subjects of Las Bela residing in Karachi. The funeral procession, the largest ever seen here, was followed by an immense crowd right up to the Chakwara. From there the coffin was taken in a motor lorry to Hub and thence on the shoulders of men up to Bela.

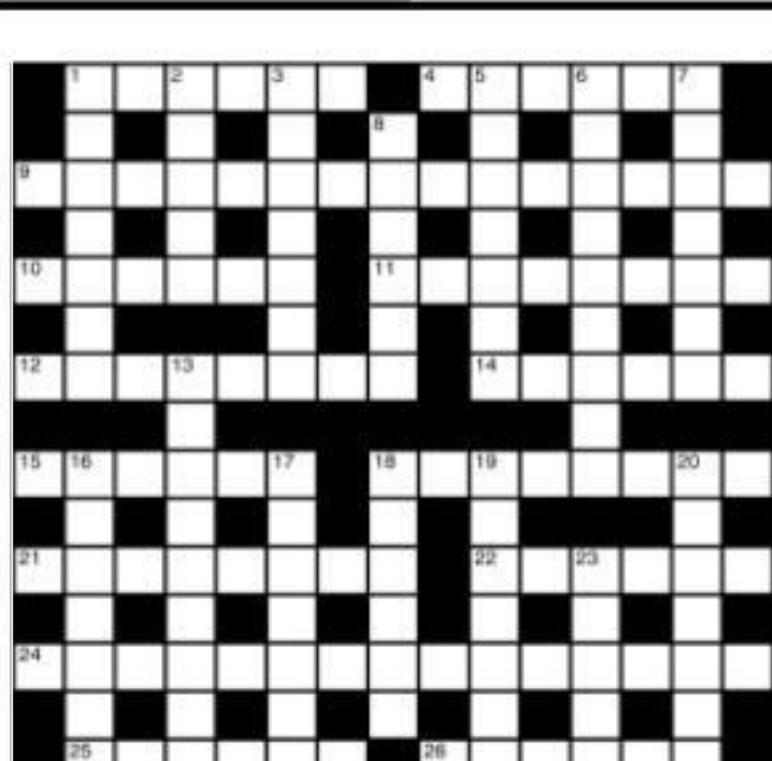
PUNJABIS WAYLAID BY WAZIRS

Peshawar, Je 29
A party of seven unarmed sepoys of the 29th Punjabis who were exercising mules on the high road on June 22, were waylaid by a large gang of Wazirs, and the men and mules were abducted, one sepoy who resisted being killed. It is a considerable time since an outrage of this sort occurred on the Kohat-Kurrum road. A similar incident is reported to have occurred in the Tochi five days earlier, a watering party with an unarmed escort of Militia being ambushed. In this case two Militia men and a mule driver are believed to have been killed, while the rest of the party and all the animals were successfully carried off to Khost. The recalcitrant Abdullai Mahsuds have been undergoing a new experience - the shelling of their chief town, Makin, from a distance of 4 miles by 6-inch howitzers.

ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO DERAIL A TRAIN

Dacca, Je 29
In connection with the criminal case, under Section 26 of the Railway Act, in which Babu Dinabandhu Das, Stationmaster of Khanabari Railway station, is charged with an attempt to derail the 3 Up train on the Bhairab-Tangi Section of the A.B. Railway, Mr. S.N. Haldar moved the District Judge of Dacca to set aside the order of the Sub-divisional Officer of Narainganj cancelling the bail of Rs 100 which was previously granted by the Sub-divisional Officer of Narainganj. After hearing counsel the District Judge passed orders upon the Sub-divisional Officer to show cause why bail should not be granted to the accused whose application would be considered after this had been shown.

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

DOGFISH	STOMACH					
V	R	A	S	H	O	O
MENU	NAPKIN	RING				
R	I	G	I	T	S	
NECTAR	LUSCIOUS					
A	I	L	T	F	M	
STAGPARTY	LIVER					
R	H	E				
SCRAP	CELANDINE					
A	V	C	B	L	E	
ESCALOPE	DIGEST					
S	D	U	A	E	R	
TABLELINEN	ICED					
V	A	I	S	T	L	G
MARXIST	KELLOGG					

ACROSS

- 1 Rancour in African country church (6)
- 4 Dog born with attractive feature (6)
- 9 It is what it is (8,7)
- 10 Sound system bent trees round (6)
- 11 Dead fish taken in to be cooked (8)
- 12 Substantial clubs on Greek island (8)
- 14 Relaxed look at wicket by opener (3-3)
- 15 Craving beer at last in the present time (6)
- 18 Create case for trade after classes (8)
- 21 Soldier retreats to Ur breaking

DOWN

- 22 Competition caught up with Bond (3-3)
- 24 Lunch packed with punch? (7,8)
- 25 Banknote left in tray emptied (6)
- 26 Outlaw keeping old brother in line (3,3)
- 1 Virtuoso left band — no piano turning up (7)
- 2 Failure more relaxed missing an Oscar (5)
- 3 Pardon prisoner executed (7)
- 5 After training Rosa and Leo can type (7)
- 6 Oil source seen in Van Gogh's art? (9)

- 7 Set out to stop honest administrator (7)
- 8 A Liberal by coastal area in recess (6)
- 13 Vehicle black and dirty not an eyecore (9)
- 16 At sea the rain warrants cover for head (7)
- 17 Excursion allowed for one child in three? (7)
- 18 The fat of the land do we hear? (6)
- 19 Party enforcing six-pack ban? Impossible (2,3,2)
- 20 Really small marrow finally included in stew? (7)
- 23 Wartime captive meeting monarch might (5)

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



A number of reforms undertaken by the government in the last one year are expected to spur investment, including foreign investment.

K V SUBRAMANIAN
CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER

THUMBNAILS

Bharti investment: Bharti will invest an additional \$500 million (over Rs 3,700 crore) into OneWeb, to become the largest shareholder in the satellite communications company that billionaire Sunil Mittal-run Bharti Group along with the UK government had rescued from bankruptcy last year. The investment is a result of exercise of a "call option" by Bharti. On completion of the transaction and with Eutelsat's \$550 million investment, Bharti will hold 38.6 per cent. The UK government, Eutelsat and SoftBank will each own 19.3 per cent, OneWeb said. The transaction is expected to be completed in the second half of 2021, subject to regulatory nod.

Mastercard investment: Mastercard on Tuesday announced a strategic equity investment in Instamojo, full-stack digital solutions provider for MSMEs. This investment is aimed at empowering millions of MSMEs and gig workers by providing easy to use solutions that will help them to rapidly digitise such as setting up online stores, equipping with digital payment acceptance capabilities and reach out to customers, said a Press release.

PCRA initiative: Giving fillip to its efforts towards energy conservation, Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA), a government advisory body under the aegis of the ministry of petroleum and natural gas, has developed a new gas stove for domestic piped natural gas (PNG) consumers. The new gas stove will reduce the consumption of the domestic piped gas and bring down the monthly bills by up to 25 per cent, said the association.

Toshiba awarded: Toshiba Water Solutions Private Limited (TWS) announced that Japan Construction International Award was conferred upon Salori Sewage Treatment Plant in Uttar Pradesh by the ministry of land, infrastructure, transport and tourism (MLIT) of Japan. The design, build, operate & maintain and transfer of the project and related facilities were undertaken by TWS, according to the company.

IRCTC profit: Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) on Tuesday reported a 23 per cent decline in its profit after tax to Rs 103.78 crore for the March 2021 quarter. The company had reported a profit after tax (PAT) from continuing operations of Rs 135.14 crore for the corresponding quarter a year ago.

BMW 5 Series: The new BMW 5 Series has been launched in India on Tuesday. Locally produced at BMW Group Plant Chennai, the car is available in one petrol (BMW 530i M Sport) and two diesel variants (BMW 530d M Sport and BMW 520d Luxury Line).

Stakeholders' meet soon to discuss auto growth

Heavy industries & public enterprises ministry will convene a meeting: Javadekar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

The heavy industries and public enterprises ministry will soon convene a stakeholder meeting to discuss ways for fast-track growth of the automobile industry, including vehicles, Union minister Prakash Javadekar said today.

He also said with the development of NATRAX (National Automotive Test Tracks) Indore facility, domestic vehicles will no longer need to be sent abroad for testing.

Now many countries which do not have this kind of facilities will send their vehicles to India instead of Europe or the US because the 11.3-km high-speed track at Indore is the fifth largest in the world, but largest in Asia and more equipped than facilities in China and Japan, the minister said.

"We will arrange a stakeholder dialogue very soon to think about both the topics - further acceleration for high growth of the automobile industry and what is the way forward for fast tracking and fast growth of e-vehicles."

PUSHING GROWTH



"We will arrange a stakeholder dialogue very soon to think about both the topics ~ further acceleration for high growth of the automobile industry and what is the way forward for fast tracking and fast growth of e-vehicles."

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR, UNION MINISTER

forward for fast tracking and fast growth of e-vehicles," the heavy industries and public enterprises minister said while inaugurating the Indore facility. Javadekar added that many ideas are floating around on e-vehicles and there are newer solutions coming up, "so we will hold stakeholder consultation in both the areas very soon".

Speaking at the event, former Mahindra and Mahindra MD Pawan Goenka said in spite of the Central and state governments' initiatives to facilitate transition to e-vehicles, it is happening at a very slow pace and there is a need for stakeholder consultation to

fast-track the transition. "We cannot afford the slow pace at which the transition is happening today," he said.

Goenka also said the auto industry today in India is bruised as even before the pandemic, it was almost stagnant for five years.

Again, there is a need for a stakeholder meeting to see what needs to be done to get the industry back on the growth path as the industry is important for economic growth. Since the launch of the Automotive Mission Plan (AMP) 2016-26, he said, a lot has changed and "I would request the department that with the help of industry and

experts, you revisit that plan and come out with a new plan for 2026 with an aim of doubling the auto industry size, doubling employment, doubling tax revenue and creating lot of exports for India".

Further talking about NATRAX Indore, secretary in the heavy industries ministry, Arun Goel said this is a centre of excellence for vehicle dynamics.

The high-speed track shall carry out development and homologation tests for all kinds of vehicles, including maximum speed of 375 km/hr, he said, adding a wide variety of tests can be done like maximum speed, brake performance, constant fuel consumption, emission test, high-speed handling and durability testing. The track can be used for testing high-end cars and for racing also.

The project NATRAX is being built under NATRIP (National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project) of the heavy industries ministry. NATRAX is one of the automotive testing and certification centres in India.

FM holds review meeting on infra, capex plan by CPSEs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman today held a virtual meeting with senior government officials to discuss the infrastructure road map ahead.

During the meeting, the minister discussed capital expenditure (capex) plans of ministries and their CPSEs, status of implementation of Budget announcements and measures to expedite infrastructure investment.

While addressing the meeting, the minister emphasised that enhanced capex will play a critical role in revitalising the economy post-pandemic and encouraged the ministries to front-load their capital expenditure.

The finance minister also

requested the ministry to aim at achieving more than their capex targets.

The Budget for financial year 2021-22 provided a capital outlay of Rs 5.54 lakh crore, a sharp increase of 34.5 percent over the Budget Estimate of financial year 2020-21. However, the efforts from the budgetary side to increase the capital expenditure have to be complemented by the public sector enterprises," said the Union finance minister.

This was the 6th review meeting by the finance minister with the ministries/departments on the infrastructure roadmap ahead. While reviewing the progress, Sitharaman asked the ministry of housing and urban affairs to expedite the capital expenditure and make efforts for front-

loading it.

The ministry of steel was asked to front-load capex and facilitate private investment by providing support and removing bottlenecks.

The ministry of petroleum and natural gas was asked to expedite monetisation of assets during FY2021-22. She also asked the ministries to take up regular reviews of sector-specific projects with the concerned state governments for effective implementation of the same.

The finance minister also added that the ministries also need to explore public private partnership (PPP) mode for viable projects and asked the ministries and their CPSEs to ensure clearance of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) dues by 31 July 2021.

and microfinance institutions for loans they extend to the pandemic-hit sectors, totals up to Rs 6.29 lakh crore together with the previous such packages.

Assuming equal distribution of the new announcement of Rs 1.10 lakh crore, with 50 per cent and 75 per cent guarantee cover and a risk weight of 100 per cent, banks may have a capital relief of around Rs 7,500 crore that can further generate credit of around Rs 70,000 crore to banks, says a report.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday announced Rs 1.5 lakh crore of additional credit for small businesses, more funds for the healthcare sector, loans to tourism agencies and guides, and waiver of visa fees as part of a credit-led package to support the pandemic-hit economy.

The financial package, mostly made up of government guarantees to banks

Rs 1.23 lakh crore which will be around 0.6 per cent of the GDP, SBI chief economist Soumya Kanti Ghosh said in the report.

Monday's announcement broadly emphasises four sectors - health, tourism, MFIs and agriculture. The other measures announced finetune the scope of the already existing arrangements, he said.

Under the credit guarantee schemes to further the flow of credit to the weaker sections of the society, guarantees will be provided to banks for loans to new or existing NBFC-MFIs or MFIs for lending up to Rs 1.25 lakh to around 25 lakh small borrowers.

Interest rate on such loans will be capped at MCLR plus 2 per cent.

Though most of the latest announcements are part/extension of the past packages, overall, this is a timely relief to the sectors/segments that were impacted most by the second wave of the pandemic.

The Rs 50,000-crore guarantee cover package to boost the medical infrastructure in underserved areas across the 124 aspirational districts, can lead to the overall improvement in human development, the report said.

At present, as per MSME website, 124 districts are recognised as aspirational districts. Maximum loan size under the scheme is kept at Rs 100 crore with interest rate cap of 7.95 per cent and guarantee duration of three years.

Reliance signs pact to invest in Abu Dhabi

NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE

Reliance Industries has signed a pact to invest an undisclosed amount in a petrochemicals hub in Abu Dhabi.

A company statement said the oil-to-telecom conglomerate will join Abu Dhabi National Oil Co's Ruwais project.

"Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) today announced that Reliance has signed an agreement to join a new world-scale chlor-alkali, ethylene dichloride and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) production facility at TA'ZIZ in Ruwais, Abu Dhabi," the statement said.

The statement, however, did not give details of the investment made.

"The agreement capitalises on growing demand for these critical industrial raw materials and leverages the strengths of ADNOC and Reliance as global industrial and energy leaders."

The project will be constructed in the TA'ZIZ Industrial Chemicals Zone, which is a joint venture between ADNOC and ADQ," the statement added.

PTI

Sebi approves slew of measures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE



Markets regulator the Securities and Exchange Board of India today approved a slew of measures, including amendments to norms related to independent directors and the introduction of a framework for accredited investors.

Among other proposals, the watchdog has decided to allow resident Indian fund managers to be constituents of foreign portfolio investors and also amend mutual fund rules to provide for the investment of a minimum amount as "skin in the game" in the schemes by asset management companies (AMCs) based on the risk associated with such schemes.

At present, the requirement is an investment of one per cent of the amount raised in a new fund offer (NFO) or an amount of Rs 50 lakh, whichever is less.

These decisions were taken by the Sebi board at its meeting held today.

Accredited investors could be individuals, HUFs, family trusts, sole proprietorships, partnership firms, trusts and body corporates based on financial parameters, Sebi said in a statement.

To provide easy access to investors to participate in public/rights issues by using various payment avenues, Sebi has decided to permit banks, other than scheduled banks, to register as a banker to an issue.

The entities, other than banks, will be specified by the regulator from time to time.

book will be levied Rs 40 plus GST; 25-leaf cheque book at Rs 75 plus GST and emergency cheque book will attract a charge of Rs 50 plus GST for 10 leaves or part thereof, SBI said. "However, senior citizen customers are exempted (on cheque book services)," said the state-owned lender.

BSBD accounts can be opened by any individual after valid KYC (know-your-customer) documentation.

Such accounts are primarily meant for poorer sections of society to encourage them to start saving without any burden of charges or fees. According to a study revealed by IIT-Bombay in April this year, SBI earned over Rs 300 crore by way of imposing service charges on nearly 12 crore BSBD account holders during 2015-20.

SBI to charge for cash withdrawal beyond four free transactions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 29 JUNE



REVISED CHARGES

SBI will charge Rs 15 plus GST per cash withdrawal for transaction at bank branches, SBI ATM or from other bank's ATMs beyond 4 free cash withdrawals.

With respect to cheque book services, first 10 cheque leaves will be free of cost in a financial year.

Thereafter, 10-leaf cheque book will be levied Rs 40 plus GST; 25-leaf cheque book at Rs 75 plus GST.

BSBD account holders.

SBI said it will charge Rs 15 plus GST per cash withdrawal for transaction at bank branches, SBI ATM or from other bank's ATMs beyond 4 free cash withdrawals.

Non-financial transactions and transfer transactions will be free of cost at branches, ATM, CDM (cash dispensing machines) for the

erred beyond 4 free cash withdrawal transaction (including ATM and branch)," SBI said.

With respect to cheque book services, first 10 cheque leaves will be free of cost in a financial year.

Charges will be recovered beyond 4 free cash withdrawal transaction (including ATM and branch)," SBI said.

With respect to cheque book services, first 10 cheque leaves will be free of cost in a financial year.

Thereafter, 10-leaf cheque

book will be levied Rs 40 plus GST; 25-leaf cheque book at Rs 75 plus GST and emergency cheque book will attract a charge of Rs 50 plus GST for 10 leaves or part thereof, SBI said.

Government think tank Niti Aayog has suggested 100 per cent income tax exemption for donations and provision of working capital loans with lower interest rates for not-for-profit hospitals to strengthen healthcare services in India.

In a report titled "Not-for-Profit Hospital Model in India", the Aayog also pitched for involving high performing hospitals in public private partnership (PPP) models for managing primary health care (PHCs), operations of government facilities and PSU hospitals.

It also pointed out that most of the not-for-profit hospitals reported long-pending reimbursements for the treatment of government scheme beneficiaries, which remain uncleared despite persistent follow-ups.

"The timely release of these funds can be a substantial boost to their working capital for operations," the report said.

It also suggested developing a mechanism to incentivise super-specialists to work in remote areas.

According to the report, the government can consider the provision of working capital loans with lower interest rates, which would be more financially viable for not-for-profit hospitals and would assist in adequate cash flows during times of need.

The Niti Aayog report also stressed on the need for developing mechanisms to rank not-for-profit hospitals on a performance index, creation of a rating scale based on the volume of services utilised annually, the extent of charity work done, impact on the community health indicators of the location, operational efficiency, and self-sufficiency.

asaviour have in focus the 2018 Press Note 2 that mandated e-commerce market players cannot sell their own products directly or indirectly. Indian retailers accuse Amazon and Flipkart of using their wholesale units to sneakily sell their products. Both companies denied wrongdoing.

Denials from Amazon carry little credibility given its murky reputation and its founder Jeff Bezos accumulating wealth estimated to be an obscene \$177 billion. Bezos earns \$149,353 (Rs 1,10 crore) each minute of the day, ostensibly by using dubious practices that earned Amazon label as the world's "No.1 Evil company", followed by Facebook, Alphabet (Google), Palantir Technologies, Apple, Microsoft,

Twitter, ByteDance, Exxon Mobile. The Slate Magazine's list of 30 most "evil" technology companies in January 2020 that Amazon headed was compiled with inputs from journalists and academics of leading American universities, including Berkeley, Columbia, New York, Boston, Virginia, the Stanford Internet Observatory and the Open Markets Institute. Amazon also has well-documented close ties to the US Central Intelligence Agency.

"Amazon's real focus is not e-commerce but surveillance capitalism," said Christy Hoffman, general secretary of Switzerland-based UNI Global Union representing over 20 million workers worldwide.

Stormy conflicts loom in 'evil' e-commerce world of Amazon and Co

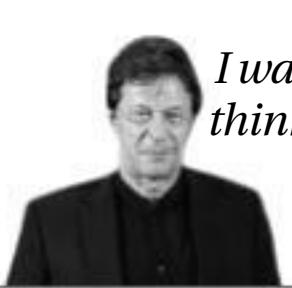
RAJA MURTHY

MUMBAI, 29 JUNE

Union commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal reading the riot act to Amazon and Co heralds stormy conflict between the traditional retail industry and e-commerce, and between domestic and foreign online giants. At stake is India's powerful retail sector that Forrester Research estimates will be worth \$1.3 trillion by 2025, up from \$0.7 trillion in 2019.

The eye of the storm is new draft e-commerce rules for domestic and foreign entities, with the new measures being to protect consumer interests, the Central government said. American lobbyists decried it as "protectionist".

Many of these large e-commerce companies have come into India and very blatantly flouted laws of the land," minister Goyal said on Saturday. "I have had several engagements with these large companies, particularly the American ones, I can see a little bit of



I want originality in our film industry and for it to bring a new way of thinking.

PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN
COMMENTING ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021

09

Former SAfrican president sentenced to 15 months in jail

Jacob Zuma, is accused of enabling the plunder of state coffers during his stay in office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JOHANNESBURG, 29 JUNE



South Africa's former president Jacob Zuma was on Tuesday sentenced to 15 months in prison by the apex court which found him guilty of contempt after he failed to appear before an inquiry probing wide-ranging allegations of corruption during his tenure. Zuma, 79, is accused of enabling the plunder of state coffers during his nearly nine-year stay in office from 2009 to 2018. Zuma was not in court for the ruling and has been given five days to hand himself in at a police station. If he fails to do that the police minister must order his arrest.

In a strongly worded majority judgment handed down on Tuesday morning by Justice Sisi Khampepe of the Constitutional Court, she described Zuma's statements as "outlandish" and intolerable. "The

Constitutional Court can do nothing but conclude that Mr Zuma is guilty of the crime of contempt of court," judge Khampepe said.

The court also said that the sentence could not be suspended. The Commission of Enquiry, which is investigating allegations of corruption and bribery at state and parastatal institutions, had asked that Zuma be sent to prison for two years. Zuma has repeatedly said that he would rather go to jail than cooperate with the Commission.

The Constitutional Court holds that it is disturbing that (Zuma), who twice swore allegiance to the Republic (of South Africa), its laws and the Constitution, has sought to ignore, undermine and in many ways destroy the rule of law altogether, the judge said.

"His attempts to evoke public sympathy through

unfounded allegations fly in the face of reason and are an insult to the Constitutional dispensation for which so many women and men fought and lost their lives. The majority finds itself faced with little choice but to send a resounding message that this kind of recalcitrance and defiance is unlawful and will be punished, Khampepe said. The judge said it was important for the sentence to be effective to maintain the public's confidence in the judiciary.

A minority judgment by two judges on the seven-member panel agreed that Zuma was in contempt of court but said that a punitive sentence would be inappropriate, as the Commission should refer Zuma's contempt to the Public Prosecutor's office. Zuma, who was ousted as President just a few months before his second term ended three years ago by his own African National Congress party, is also facing other

criminal charges that have been going on for over a decade.

He is required to hand himself over within five days to the police station at either his rural homestead in Nkandla or in central Johannesburg, where he also has a home.

Civil society organisations have welcomed Zuma's sentencing. "This now paves the way for the Commission to carry out its tasks effectively and to now call people to account and if they fail to do so, they will likely face the same sentence," said Shan Balton, Executive Director of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.

"This is a major step to bring those who have also been involved in corruption to book for abusing billions of funds which could have improved the lives of our citizens who are suffering from poor health, education and housing for so long," Balton said.

New Israeli foreign minister lands in UAE on first state visit



ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, 29 JUNE

The ministry described it as a historic visit to the Gulf kingdom. Press access to the embassy opening in Abu Dhabi was strictly limited to state-linked Emirati media.

Israel and the UAE established full diplomatic relations last year under the Trump administration, after the two countries signed the U.S.-brokered Abraham Accords.

The UAE was joined by Bahrain in normalizing ties with Israel, becoming the third and fourth Arab states to sign peace deals with the Jewish state, after Egypt and Jordan. In the nine months since the two countries signed the normalization agreement at the White House, Israel

and the UAE have signed extensive trade and cooperation deals, and bilateral trade is already expected to have exceeded \$354 million. More than 200,000 Israeli tourists have traveled to the UAE, the Foreign Ministry said.

Lapid took office as Israel's foreign minister after Israel's new government was sworn in earlier this month. The Yesh Atid party leader struck a power-sharing deal with Naftali Bennett, who became Israel's prime minister at the head of a coalition of eight diverse parties, ranging from Jewish ultranationalists to a small Islamist party.

Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Lior Haiat told reporters after Lapid had departed for Abu Dhabi that the pace of bilateral cooperation between the two countries has been unprecedented. "There's been years of under-the-radar relations between Israel and the UAE, and we are now enjoying the fruits of the infrastructure of peace that we've built in the last decades," Haiat said.

Americans apologize to Tokyo court for role in Ghosn escape

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, 29 JUNE

Two Americans charged in Japan with helping Nissan's former chairman, Carlos Ghosn, jump bail and escape Japan for Lebanon apologized Tuesday in a Tokyo court.

"I deeply regret my actions and sincerely apologise for causing difficulties for the judicial process and for the Japanese people. I'm sorry," Michael Taylor, a former Green Beret said, bowing and holding back sobs.

Taylor, on trial in Tokyo Dis-

trict Court with his son Peter, said in response to questioning by his lawyer and by prosecutors that he had been misinformed by Ghosn and his wife, Carole Ghosn.

Carole Ghosn told Taylor her husband was tortured and grilled in solitary confinement, he said. Ghosn also said he was being mistreated, Taylor said. Taylor said he has been well treated in Japan. "I didn't know much about Japan. All I know is that the Japanese are the friendliest people I've ever bumped into," he said.

At the outset of their trial

earlier this month, the Taylors indicated they weren't fighting the allegations, in Japan's equivalent of pleading guilty. They were arrested in Massachusetts last year and extradited to Japan in March.

Peter Taylor, who allegedly met with Ghosn to plan the escape, also apologised to the court for the trouble he had caused. "I must apologise to the people of Japan," Peter Taylor said.

After more than 400 days in jail, I have had a lot of time to reflect. I take full responsibility and deeply apologise. I am sorry," he said.

Ethiopia announces unilateral ceasefire in Tigray

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
ADDIS ABABA, 29 JUNE

The Ethiopian government has announced a unilateral ceasefire in the country's conflict-hit Tigray state. The Ethiopian government, in a statement published late Monday night by state-affiliated Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), said the move followed a request by the Tigray regional state interim administration, reports Xinhua news agency.

The unilateral ceasefire is said to facilitate humanitarian assistance, peaceful

livelihood in the region as well as agriculture activities amid the approaching rainy season.

The Ethiopian government has been undertaking military operations against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which used to rule the regional state. "Fighters loyal to the TPLF, who are

presently dispersed in the desert will return to peace if conditions are made conducive for it, the Ethiopian government has accepted the Tigray interim administration's request for ceasefire positively," the statement read.

"For the farmer to till the land peacefully, for the aid work to be distributed free from military pressure, for TPLF remnants to return to peaceful road, an unconditional unilateral ceasefire has been declared from June 28 to last until the end of farming season," the statement added.



civil war.

Like Mao, Xi is not bound by term limits and, at 68, will likely remain in office for years to come. While repressing any sign of political oppo-

sition at home and promoting an anti-corruption campaign, he has advanced an increasingly assertive foreign policy that seeks to command control over the South China

Sea, intimidate Taiwan into accepting Beijing's control, and join with Russia in challenging U.S. influence in international affairs.

China's Communist Party now boasts almost 92 million members, just over 6 per cent of the country's population of 1.4 billion. The vast majority of government officials and leaders of state industry are party members, providing what the leadership hails as a source of social cohesion in contrast to partisan divides in the U.S. and elsewhere. Alongside the anniversary celebrations, the party has been giving heavy coverage in the

entirely state-controlled media to racial inequality and other social problems in the West. That appears to reflect confidence in its ability to deflect heavy criticism over China's detention of more than 1 million Uyghurs and a crackdown on freedom of speech and political opponents in Hong Kong.

In his speech, Xi said party members should lead the drive for China's great rejuvenation, a reference to his agenda for China to retake its centuries-old role as a regional and international power in culture, economics and military power.

China's leader Xi hands out medals amid party celebrations

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, 29 JUNE

Amid celebrations over the centenary of the ruling Communist Party, Chinese President Xi Jinping has awarded loyal party members with medals and called for adherence to Marxism.

Xi's speech at a ceremony Tuesday follows a lavish celebration at Beijing's Olympic stadium on Monday night emphasising China's rise to economic and political prominence following reforms enacted more than 40 years ago.

While unleashing private industry, the ruling party has

maintained an iron grip on political power, along with preferential policies toward state-run companies.

All party comrades should take their faith in Marxism and the socialism with Chinese characteristics as their life's purposes, Xi said in his address to medal winners. Celebrations conclude with a commemoration Thursday at Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Over his nine years as party head, Xi has established himself as China's most powerful ruler since Mao Zedong, who founded the People's Republic in 1949 after defeating Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists amid

civil war.

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sition at home and promoting an anti-corruption campaign, he has advanced an increasingly assertive foreign policy that seeks to command control over the South China Sea, intimidate Taiwan into accepting Beijing's control, and join with Russia in challenging U.S. influence in international affairs.

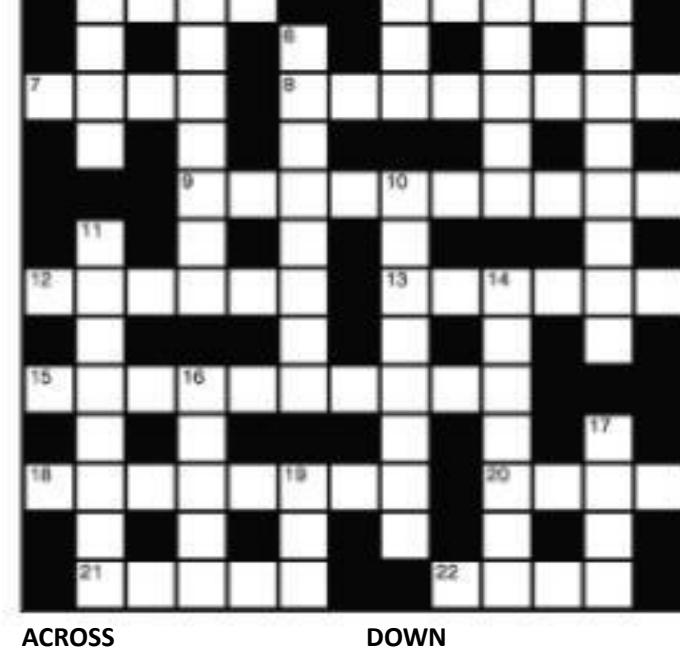
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LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Sprain (4)
3. Command (5)
7. Couch (4)
8. Unable to move (8)
9. Temperature controller (10)
12. Product of conception (6)
13. Turn down (6)
15. Sloe (10)
18. High award (8)
20. Belch (4)
21. Step (5)
22. A long time (informal) (4)

DOWN

1. Chesspiece (4)
2. Section of a book (7)
3. Unit of resistance (3)
4. Liabilities (5)
5. Dependence (8)
6. Eradicated (5,3)
7. Unstated (8)
10. North American beetle (4,3)
11. Monkey (8)
14. Genetic copy (5)
17. Eye part (4)
19. Append (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

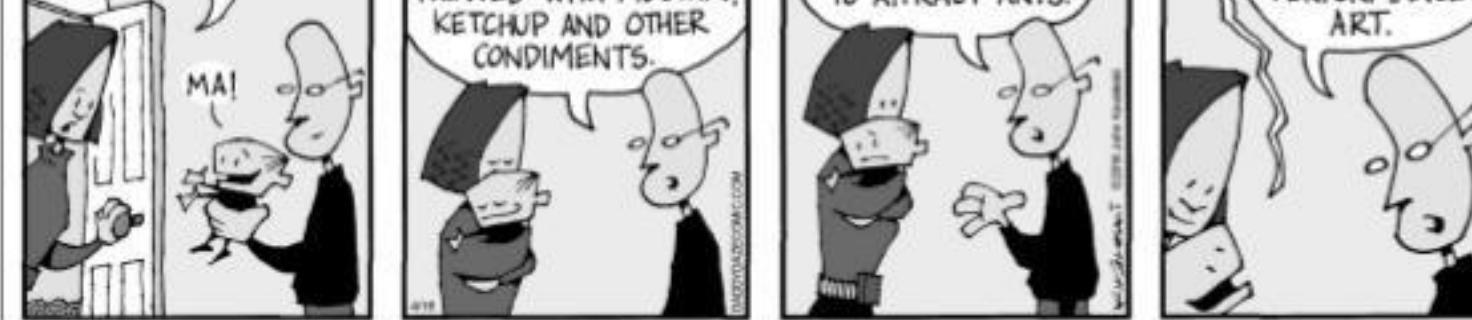
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



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

NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Roadways Inquiry

Toll Free Nos. 180012511

FLIGHT INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

23868326, 23865181

PAR SCORE 70-80

Deen Dayal Upadhyay

FOUR RACK TOTAL

25496320, 25494403

Difficulty Level

Guru Tegh Bahadur

SCRABBLE® BRAND

23717473, 23253530

Scrabble®

23864470

RACK 1

23868626

RACK 2

23864470

RACK 3

23868626

RACK 4

23864470

Scrabble®

23864470

*I was going to the airport, fuelled the car up with fuel, went in, 30 seconds later, A\$200 it cost me, because I didn't wear one of these (masks).*

AUSTRALIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BARNABY JOYCE

AFTER BEING FINED A\$200 (\$151) FOR FAILING TO WEAR A FACE MASK

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	27 H
HONG KONG	31	28 H
TOKYO	24	19 H
LONDON	19	12 H
DUBAI	40	31 S
SAN FRANCISCO	18	14 H
NEW YORK	36	23 S
MOSCOW	21	16 R

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

THUMBNAILS



A police officer is engulfed in flames after he was hit with a petrol bomb during an anti-government protest triggered by proposed tax increases on public services, fuel, wages and pensions in Bogota, Colombia, on Monday.

AP

Russia records highest daily virus death toll: Russian authorities have reported 652 new coronavirus deaths on Tuesday the highest daily tally in the pandemic. The new record comes as Russia struggles to cope with a surge in infections.

AP

Production on 'Knives Out 2' underway in Greece: 'Knives Out 2', the much-anticipated sequel of the hit 2019 murder mystery, has begun production in Greece, director of the film Rian Johnson has announced. Johnson took to Twitter to share an update on the film.

AP

Florida building collapse toll reaches 11: The death toll from collapse of a building in the US state of Florida has increased to 11, Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniel Levine Cava said. Total tally stands at 136 now.

AP

Biden conveys unwavering support for Israel's security

Biden and Israeli counterpart Reuven Rivlin also discussed 'many challenges facing the region'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON, 29 JUNE



the region."

Regarding opportunities to enhance peace and stability in the Middle East region, Biden expressed his strong support for the normalisation of relations between Israel and other countries in the Arab and Muslim world.

He also assured President Rivlin that the US remains determined to counter Iran's malign activity and support for terrorist proxies, which have destabilising consequences for

strengthen moderate voices; and promote the cause of coexistence while weakening extremists who advocate for hatred and violence.

Biden also extended an invitation to Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to visit the US, while reaffirming that his administration looked forward to close collaboration with the new government.

Meanwhile, Biden will visit Wisconsin on Tuesday to drum up support for a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package hammered out by a bipartisan group of legislators but still in need of wide support in Congress to become reality.

Biden will speak at a public transit facility in La Crosse, a city in western Wisconsin, highlighting the plan's investment of some \$48.5 billion in public transit to reduce commute times and help reduce emissions, while boosting growth and wages.

He'll talk about local gains from the deal, including funds for electric buses, replacement of some 80,000 lead water service lines in Milwaukee and better access to high-speed internet, a White House official said.

The bipartisan package also includes \$109 billion in funding for roads, bridges and other major projects, including the 1,000 bridges identified "structurally deficient" in Wisconsin, the official said.

Biden will also note that the plan will not hike the gas tax or raise taxes on Americans earning under \$400,000 a year, the official said.

'Won't tolerate nuclear Iran'

WASHINGTON, 29 JUNE

President Joe Biden sought to assure Israel that he would not tolerate a nuclear Iran as he met with outgoing Israeli President Reuven Rivlin on Monday.

"What I can say to you is that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch," Biden said at the White House meeting.

Biden noted that he had ordered airstrikes a day earlier targeting facilities the US military says were used by Iran-backed militia groups near the border between Iraq and Syria.

The rhetoric seemed to underscore that he would remain tough on malign Iran activity even as he seeks a diplomatic track to stem Tehran's nuclear program.

Democrats urged to separate infrastructure bill from reconciliation

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON, 29 JUNE

US Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has urged congressional Democrats to follow President Joe Biden in separating the bipartisan infrastructure bill from a larger reconciliation legislation.

"The President has appropriately delinked a potential bipartisan infrastructure bill from the massive, unrelated tax-and-spend plans that Democrats want to pursue on a partisan basis. Now I am calling on President Biden to engage Leader (Chuck) Schumer and Speaker (Nancy) Pelosi and make sure they follow his lead," McConnell said in a statement on Monday.

"Unless Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi walk-back their threats that they will refuse to send the president a bipartisan infrastructure bill unless they also separately pass trillions of dollars for unrelated tax hikes, wasteful spending, and Green New Deal socialism, then President Biden's walk-back of his veto threat would be a hollow

gesture".

He added that the President cannot let congressional Democrats hold a bipartisan bill hostage over a separate and partisan process.

McConnell's remarks came after Biden clarified on June 26 that he does not intend to issue a veto threat on a bipartisan infrastructure bill if it comes without a reconciliation bill on his other social spending priorities.

On 23 June, Biden announced that he had reached a deal with a bipartisan group of senators on a roughly \$1.2 trillion infrastructure plan over eight years. Some moderate Republicans have voiced support for the infrastructure plan, but opposed Democrats' efforts to move forward a larger reconciliation bill with trillions of dollars in spending and tax hikes on the wealthy. For Democratic leaders, moving both bills through nearly intact is key to passing the bipartisan infrastructure bill in both chambers because progressives don't want to risk having their priorities end up on the cutting-room floor.

No Covid-related deaths in Poland in 15 months



ASSOCIATED PRESS
BERLIN, 29 JUNE

according to Health Minister Adam Niedzielski.

With the new cases, the infection tally increased to 2,878,840.

So far, 11.7 million Poles have been fully vaccinated, giving a vaccination rate of 30.68 per cent.

Poland has been gradually reopening its economy after putting restrictions in place in March due to rising infection numbers, which started to drop as more vaccines were administered.

firefighters.

Australia offers AstraZeneca to all adults to speed up rollout

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CANBERRA, 29 JUNE

blamed on AstraZeneca.

But supply of Pfizer, the only alternative to Australian-manufactured AstraZeneca, cannot keep up with demand.

There's a preference for Pfizer until the age of 60. That's a preference, Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly said on Tuesday.

It's a discussion for doctors to have with their own patients and work through their own risk and benefit in relation to that, Kelly added.

The Queensland state capital Brisbane and surrounding cities will be in lockdown for three days from late Tuesday after the government reported two new Covid-19 infections.

Sydney reported 19 new infections in that east coast city, Perth reported two new cases on the west coast and Darwin reported two new cases on the north coast. Those three cities and their surrounds are already in lockdown.

US announces \$41 million Covid assistance to India

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 29 JUNE

The US has announced an additional \$41 million assistance to help India respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the country's preparedness for the future health emergencies, taking the total aid to more than \$200 million.

In April and May, India struggled with the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic with more than 3,00,000 daily new cases.

Hospitals were reeling under a shortage of medical oxygen and beds.

India came to the assistance of the United States during this country's time of need, and now the United States stands with the people of India as they continue to battle the Covid-19 pandemic, the US Agency for International Development said on Monday.

USAID announced an additional \$41 million in support to help India respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and strengthen the country's preparedness for Covid-19 and future health emergencies.

USAID's assistance will support access to Covid-19 testing, pandemic-related mental health services, timely referrals to medical services, and access to healthcare in

remote areas, the independent agency of the US federal government primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance said.

Through this additional funding, USAID will continue to partner with India to strengthen healthcare supply chains and electronic health information systems, supports vaccination efforts, and mobilise and coordinate private sector relief, it said.

USAID has contributed more than \$200 million for India's Covid-19 relief and response efforts since the pandemic began, including more than \$50 million in emergency supplies and training for more than 214,000 frontline health workers on infection prevention and control, benefiting more than 42 million Indians, according to a media release.

Russia targets investigative journalists with raids

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 29 JUNE



ties to organised crime. It was unclear, however, why Badanin's deputy, Rubin, was targeted by the police.

Russian authorities have turned up the pressure on independent news media in recent months.

Two popular independent outlets, Meduza and VTimes, have been designated "foreign agents" a label slapped on groups, news outlets or individuals that receive foreign funding.

The designation implies additional government scrutiny and has a strong pejorative connotation that could discredit those that receive it. VTimes shut down this month after being added to the list of "foreign agents," while Meduza launched a crowdfunding campaign.

Authorities said that at least two out of three raids were connected to a defamation case over a 2017 documentary Badanin and Zholobova worked on, about a St. Petersburg businessman with alleged

Greek construction worker arrested for Picasso work theft

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ATHENS, 29 JUNE

Today, a treaty banning landmines has 164 signatories.

Those touched by the life of the preschool teacher turned princess remembered her ahead of what would have been her 60th birthday on Thursday, recalling the complicated royal rebel who left an enduring imprint on the House of Windsor.

Diana had the emotional intelligence that allowed her to see that bigger picture but also to bring it right down to individual human beings, said James Cowan, a retired major general who is now CEO of The HALO Trust.

She knew that she could reach their hearts in a way that would outmaneuver those who would only be an influence through the head. Diana's walk among the landmines seven months before she died in a Paris car crash is just one example of how she helped make the monarchy more accessible, changing the way

the royal family related to people.

By interacting more intimately with the public, kneeing to the level of a child, sitting on the edge of a patient's hospital bed, writing personal notes to her fans she connected with people in a way that inspired other royals, including her sons, Princes William and Harry, as the monarchy worked to become

a female in cubist style was donated to Greece in 1949 with a dedication in homage to the Greek people for their resistance against the German-led occupation in World War II.

This painting is of special importance and emotional value as the great painter personally dedicated it to the Greek people for their struggle against fascist and Nazi (occupying) forces and bears his hand-written dedication.

That is why this painting was impossible not only to sell but even to put on display as it would be immediately identified as being stolen from the National Gallery in Athens. They were recovered, wrapped in plastic sheets and hidden in a dry river bed outside Athens after the suspect was detained for questioning.

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Speaking with the far side

The unseen part of the Moon is not in radio contact

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

From Earth, we can see only one face of the Moon. That is because the Moon, unlike Earth, turns around on its axis only once every 28 days, the same time as it takes to go around the Earth. The result is that although all parts of the Moon get to point towards the Sun over the "lunar day", the face that is pointed towards Earth is always the same.

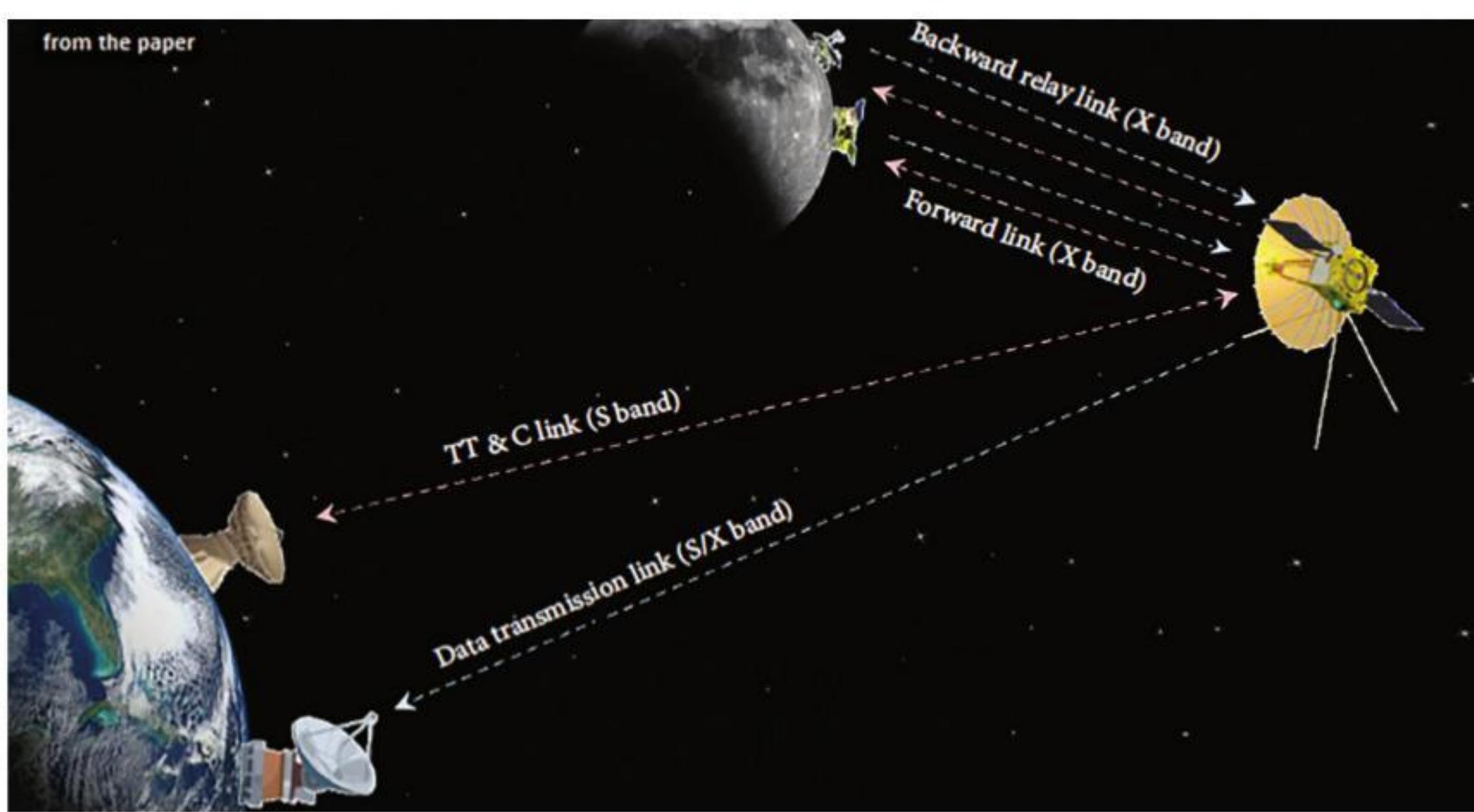
The face of the Moon that we see has hence been extensively studied by telescope. And several probes, including manned missions, have landed on this face of the Moon. A reason for that is we can make good use of a probe or manned mission to the parts that we are able to see. Another reason is that radio communication with the Moon needs to be through "line of sight". As that is not possible on the far side, missions to that side were not attempted.

There is interest, of course, in the far side of the Moon, which has been mapped, so far, with the help of satellites that were placed in orbit around the Moon. And a special interest has been that a mission to the far side could remedy a current deficiency. The deficiency is that we have studied only the surface of the Moon, and hardly have an idea about its internals. As bore holes are typically good for a few metres, we could do better if we start the bore hole at the bottom of a natural depression, say one caused by an asteroid strike. And this is where the far side can help – the deepest depression on the surface of the Moon is located on the far side.

The Chinese Lunar Exploration Programme took the first step by landing Chang'e 4, a robotic spacecraft, on the far side of the Moon in January 2019. The lander carried Yutu-2, a robotic, lunar rover, which could identify the mineral content of the bottom of the crater, to look for traces of what may lie deeper there.

But how could the landing of Chang'e 4 be managed, Yutu-2 controlled, and data brought back to Earth, without a radio link? Lihua Zhang, from the DFH Satellite Company Limited in Beijing, describes in the American Association for the Advancement of Science journal, *Space: Science and Technology*, the arrangement for "relay communication" that was put in place before Chang'e 4 was launched. DFHSat is a professional company, a part of the policy of including private participation in aerospace innovation. The company, which is under the Chinese Academy of Space Research, provides space communications services worldwide and has arranged the launch of scores of satellites.

The solution provided to Chang'e 4 was to place Queqiao, a radio repeater satellite, in the proximity of the Moon, so that it was constantly in "line of sight", both with Earth and the far side of the Moon, as shown in the picture. And how did the device stay in this position, with respect to the Moon, while it moved in its orbit around Earth? Well, because of the interplay of combined gravitational forces of the Earth and Moon, which pro-

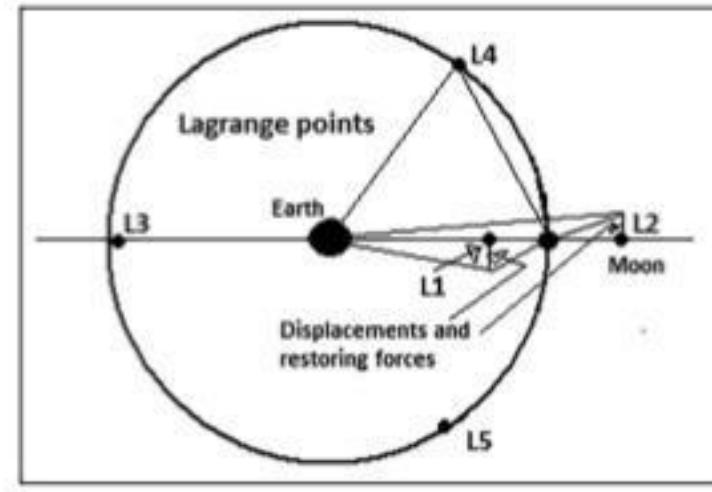


vided special places where the satellite was stationary, with respect to the Earth-Moon positioning.

In effect, the device is also in orbit around Earth. But as it is farther away from Earth than the Moon, it should follow a slower orbit and fall behind. This is corrected, however, by the gravitational pull of the Moon, which speeds up the orbit to be as fast as its own orbit. And the device is in orbit around the Moon too but moving around it at the same speed as its rotation, so that it always faces the same side of the Moon's surface. And to maintain its position, it is helped by the gravitation of the Earth, in addition to that of the Moon.

In cases of pairs of objects, like the Earth and Moon, there are a handful of special points where the gravity of one object just compensates the gravity of the other. One such point, shown as L1 in the diagram, would lie directly between the two objects, and we can see that it would be nearer the smaller of the two objects. Another point, shown as L2, would be beyond the smaller object. At L2, the tendency of the device to fly away from Earth as its pull is weaker, is compensated by the pull of the Moon, which adds to the Earth's pull. L3 is the third point, which is on the opposite side of the Earth. And then there are L4 and L5, which are on either side, kept at their distance from Earth or the Moon because of their relative motion.

The relative motion of a pair of objects, one object in orbit around the other, is the classical problem of the Earth and Moon, which was solved by Isaac Newton. If we introduce a third object, with all three objects interacting, however, the problem becomes impossible to solve. Except that if the third object is so small that its effect on the other two can be ignored, then, a solution is possible. This is what is done when considering the



radio repeater device, which is minuscule compared to the Moon or Earth. This case had first been worked out by the mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange, and the five points where the third object can be relatively stationary are known as Lagrange points.

The points L4 and L5, are stable, but the others are partially stable, which is to say they move,

and stray from the Lagrange point. The DFHSat team placed Queqiao at L2, which is a partially stable point. The satellite hence moves in an unstable orbit, over an area called a "halo". And hence needs to periodically correct its position. The movement away from L2, however, makes it possible for Queqiao to be in "line of sight" of Earth as well as the surface of the far side of the Moon for most of the time.

The paper by the DFHSat scientist explains that Queqiao uses a pair of antennae and separate channels of communication – one for control of the lander and rover on the surface of the Moon, and another for transmission of the data collected. Thanks to Queqiao, a great deal of data has been collected over the two years that Chang'e 4 has been in position. There are plans for more exploration and a role for radio links like this, particularly in a plan to study the terrain at the south pole of the Moon.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

LOOKING AHEAD WITH PURPOSE

Boasting about the scientific heritage of times past will dampen advancement today

BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Every civilisation in the world boasts of a great scientific heritage. They make tall claims about great discoveries made by their forefathers and such claims are often validated through certain stories or archaeological evidence. People today get so carried away by those claims that they think their predecessors were great scientists, only based on certain assumptions.

As someone born in the late 1970s, I have seen the vast changes brought about by science and technology in every segment of society. During my childhood, cattle were used to plough fields but for a child born in 2021, that would seem like a fictional tale, much like what we hear in "heritage stories". Similar is the case of bullock carts, which were abundant on our roads as a transport system till the late 70s. There were workshops to service those carts and owning one was a status symbol.

One should only look at how technology has transformed entertainment. From soundless motion pictures we now have interactive movies in 7D technology. When we were children, we used to have movie shows in schools with huge projectors and large rolls of film. But today we can project a movie with a hand-held device.

In medical diagnostics, the changes have been unimaginable. Time was when it took a couple of days to get the analysis of a routine blood work. These days, everything is automated and even a full body scan can be conducted within minutes. Even the role of doctors has been redefined from that of a diagnostic professional to an interpreter.

During our school days, teachers used to tell imaginative stories of sending letters between relatives living on different planets. But today that has almost become reality as scientists are striving hard to establish space colonies within this decade. Amazon co-founder Jeff Bezos and his brother Mark will board the first crewed space flight from his rocket company Blue Origin on 20 July this year marking a new era in space travel.

The global pandemic that struck us last year

has sped up change in human civilisation with a new culture of social distancing and virtual communication emerging. Gone are the days when children could not see their beloved friends across the world thanks to social media.

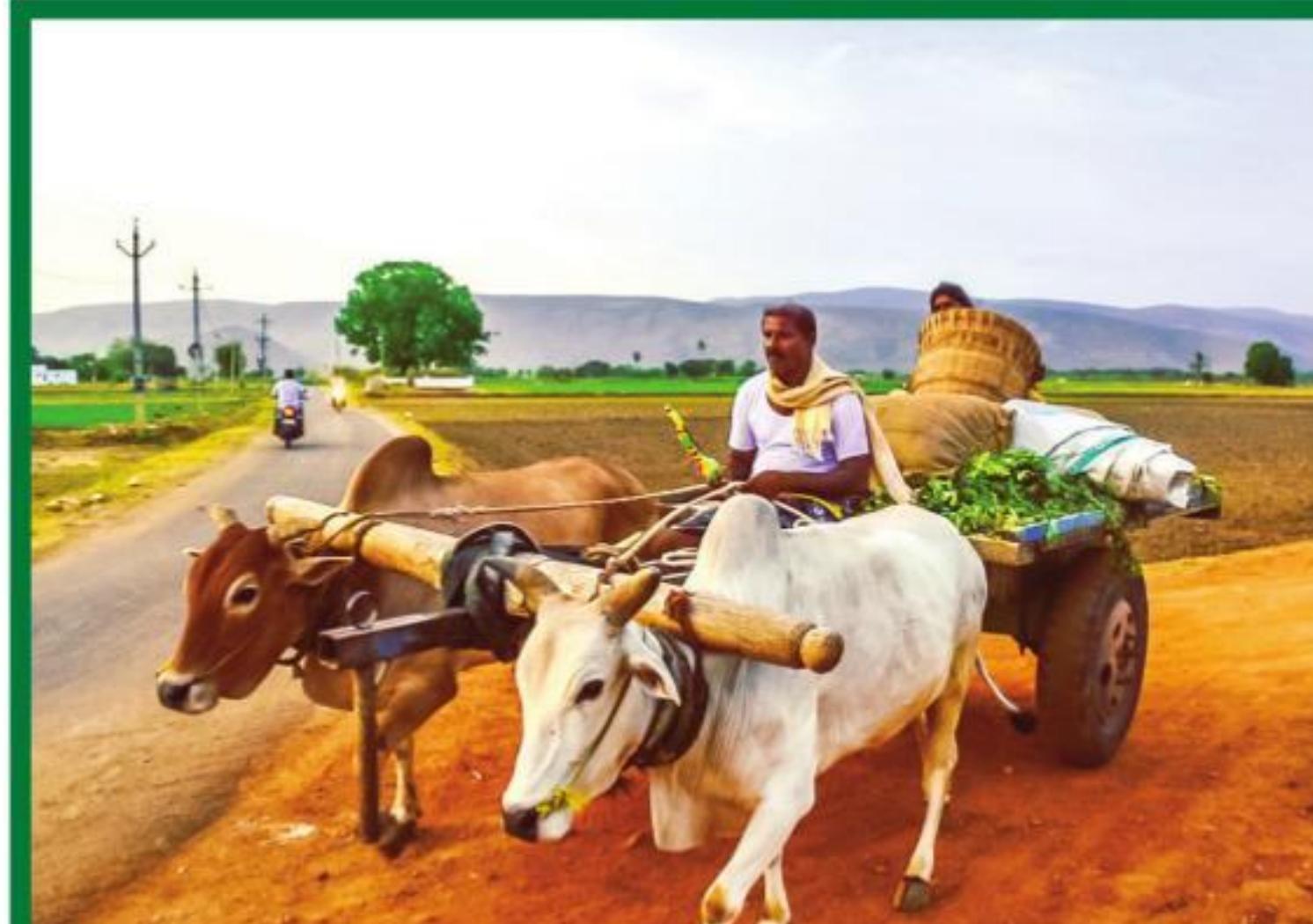
Human civilisation is at the crossroads. At one end we have a generation who are surrounded by technological innovations and on the other, we have a fluid society of middle-aged people desperately looking for space in the changing world.

Now, let's undertake a little scientific speculation. Imagine what would happen in the year 3030 when all the advancements we have seen in our lifetimes become part of history. Like what we study in history books about various civilisations today, people of 3030 will boast of the great scientific heritage their forefathers had – they discovered tractors, mobile technology, movies and robots. Some may even proudly declare that their forefather was behind the discovery of a vaccine for Covid-19 that saved humanity from extinction.

In 3030, roads may be flooded with driverless cars. In that generation, can anyone digest the transport system prevailing in 2021? Space travel may become as normal and affordable as air travel today. There may not be any school or college campuses, everything will be virtual, and more Artificial Intelligence-based gadgets will be ruling the education field.

In every civilisation or every generation, we see technological advancements to solve issues prevailing during that time. As cattle ploughing has become extinct, many technologies used by the present generation will become extinct due to varied factors. If somebody makes a comment in 3030 that a community destroyed the unique technology of cattle ploughing by purposefully introducing tractors at the behest of some external force during the 1900s, how would that sound?

Similarly, the knowledge kept within families or sects will vanish in future. Many traditional industries like handicrafts and handlooms have suffered badly due to mechanisation. It's nobody's fault as humans always prefer to lead



an easier life, free of hardship.

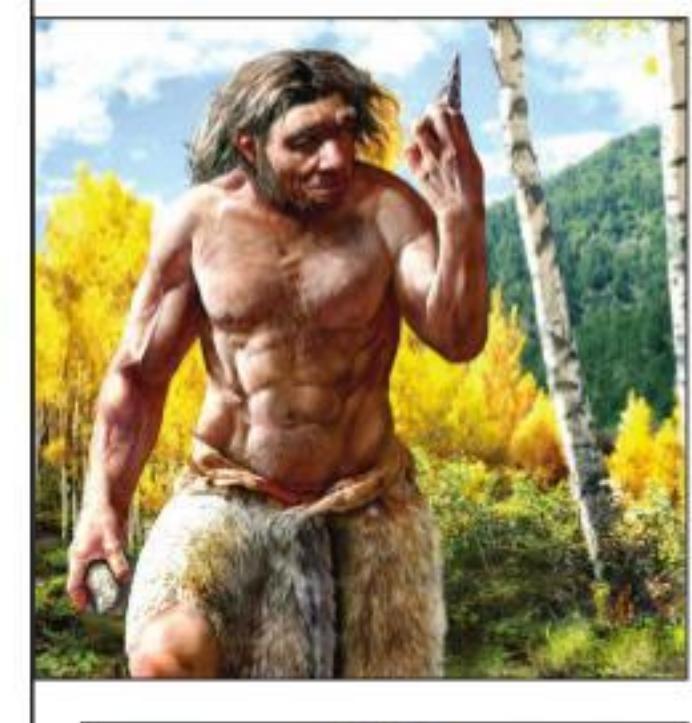
Science is always moving ahead with a progressive mindset. If we keep focusing on heritage, we are in a way hindering the development of our youth. If they keep concentrating on a problem that existed thousands of years ago, science will not progress. Of course, one can get insights from historical facts and find ways to come up with better solutions. But they cannot be the same solutions our forefathers came up with for their society and their time.

We must be smart enough to overcome the threat of a world where machines are going to overpower humans through AI technology in every sphere of life, from education to the job market. For that to happen, creative minds need to be cultivated in our younger scientific community. We must look forward and proceed, not look back and loiter.

The writer is a science communicator and can be contacted at bijudharmapalan@gmail.com

PLUS POINTS

Dragon Man



A new species of ancient humans may replace Neanderthals as our closest relative and potentially rewrite major elements of human evolution, according to scientists.

Dubbed *Homo longi* or "Dragon Man", the species was identified in China from a skull fossil, known as the Harbin cranium, reportedly found in Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang province, in 1933. The Harbin cranium is thought to be more than 146,000 years old and came from a male individual, aged about 50.

Researchers say the skull is big enough to hold a brain similar in size to that of a modern human. But the Dragon Man would have had comparatively larger eye sockets, thick brow ridges, a wide mouth, and oversized teeth.

In their findings, published as three separate papers in the journal *The Innovation*, the experts said the fossil suggests *Homo longi* was closer to modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) than the Neanderthals and points to a new sister lineage.

Xijun Ni, a professor of primatology and paleoanthropology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Hebei GEO University, and author on two of the papers, said, "It is widely believed that the Neanderthal belongs to an extinct lineage that is the closest relative of our own species. Our discovery, however, suggests that the new lineage we identified that includes *Homo longi* is the actual sister group of *Homo sapiens*."

The researchers believe the Dragon Man lived in a forested, floodplain environment as part of a small community. They said he, and the ancient Harbin people, would probably have been "very large in size" and capable of adapting to harsh environments. Ni said, "Like *Homo sapiens*, they hunted mammals and birds, and gathered fruits and vegetables, and perhaps even caught fish." They hypothesise that the Dragon Man's community would have encountered modern humans during his time, which was "a dynamic era of human species migration".

Professor Chris Stringer, research leader at the Natural History Museum in London, and an author on two of the papers, said, "We see multiple evolutionary lineages of *Homo* species and populations co-existing in Asia, Africa, and Europe during that time. So, if *Homo sapiens* indeed got to East Asia that early, they could have (had) a chance to interact with *Homo longi*, and, since we don't know when the Harbin group disappeared, there could have been later encounters as well."

Stringer said, apart from being huge, the Harbin cranium "also shows other features resembling our species", including "flat and low cheekbones with a shallow canine fossa" and a face that looks "reduced and tucked under the braincase".

The researchers said their findings had the potential to rewrite major elements of human evolution and push the common ancestor that modern humans share with Neanderthals even further back in time – roughly 400,000 years earlier than previously thought. Ni said, "The divergence time between *Homo sapiens* and the Neanderthals may be even deeper in evolutionary history than generally believed – over one million years."

"Altogether, the Harbin cranium provides more evidence for us to understand *Homo* diversity and evolutionary relationships among these diverse *Homo* species and populations."

But, although the Harbin cranium has been described by the team as a new species, Stringer said he was in full agreement with his colleagues and thinks the skull bears resemblance to another fossil belonging to *Homo daliensis* – another type of ancient human. He said, "But regardless of that, the morphology of the fossil is very informative about later human evolution."

Stringer said the Harbin cranium may even be a representative of the enigmatic Denisovans – an extinct subspecies of ancient humans – but added it was "something for the next stages of research".

– The independent/agencies





MBAPPE 'IMMENSELY SAD'
Shattered French striker Kylian Mbappé (photo, left) said on Tuesday after his failed penalty against Switzerland cost the world champions a place in the Euro 2020 quarterfinals that it would be "very difficult to turn the page" and that his "sadness is immense".

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Dutee nominated for Khet Ratna: Odisha government on Tuesday nominated ace sprinter Dutee Chard for the Rajiv Gandhi Khet Ratna Award, the country's highest sporting honour. "I'm thankful to Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik for nominating my name for the Khet Ratna Award. May your blessing always be upon me," Dutee said on Twitter.

Aditi qualifies for Olympics: India's top ranked woman golfer Aditi Ashok will take part in her second successive Olympic Games in Tokyo next month after finishing 45th on the qualifying list released on Tuesday. Aditi thus joined Anirban Lahiri and Udayan Mane to make it a team of three to Tokyo.

Shooting World Cup: Tejaswini Sawant and Sanjeev Rajput ended fifth in the 50m rifle 3 positions mixed team event, missing the bronze medal match by a whisker as India endured a medal-less day at the ISSF shooting World Cup in Osijek on Tuesday.

BAI prepares: The Badminton Association of India (BAI) on Tuesday said it has asked its state units to get their players and officials vaccinated for the resumption of the domestic season under strict COVID-19 guidelines.

Morata scores as Spain beats Croatia 5-3 in extra time

AGENCIES
COPENHAGEN, 29 JUNE

Spain first gifted Croatia a bizarre own-goal, then threw away a late 3-1 lead. Alvaro Morata (in photo) made sure it didn't matter in the end.

Morata and Mikel Oyarzabal scored in extra time Monday to give Spain a 5-3 win over Croatia and a place in the European Championship quarterfinals after a wildly entertaining sawmatch at Parken Stadium.

"I've lived through really intense matches as a player and manager but this one genuinely had a bit of everything," Spain coach Luis Enrique said.

It was the second-highest scoring game in the history of the European Championship, trailing only Yugoslavia's 5-4 win over France in the opening game of the inaugural tournament in 1960.

And it had nearly as many momentum shifts as goals.

After Croatia midfielder Mario Pasalic equalized in injury time to cap an improbable late comeback, the much-maligned Morata scored what proved the winner in the 100th minute.

The Spain striker controlled a cross with one deft touch and then sent a rising shot past goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic



for his second goal of the tournament.

Oyarzabal doubled the lead three minutes later, receiving a pass in the middle of the area and holding off a defender before scoring.

Morata had received a torrent of online abuse including death threats after a string of misses during the group stage. But his fierce finish from a tight tangle proved decisive on Monday.

I don't think there's any

coach in the world who wouldn't admire a player like Morata," Luis Enrique said.

He dominates in the air, he scores goals, he is physically powerful. He is a striker we should really value.

Spain had been knocked out in the round of 16 in its previous two tournaments but netted five goals for a second straight game after a slow start with two draws. The Spanish will play Switzerland in the quarterfinals on Friday in St. Petersburg. The Swiss beat World Cup champion France on penalties after also coming from 3-1 down in the final minutes.

Croatia netted three goals for a second straight game but fell well short of replicating its feat of reaching the World Cup final in 2018.

At the start of extra time we had them on the ropes but we failed to score from two good chances. Croatia captain Luka Modric said.

"Then the game turned around and we didn't have the strength to come back."

Not for a second time, anyway.

Spain had led 3-1 in the 85th minute but Mislav Orsic pulled one back after a goal-mouth scramble and Pasalic equalized with a header in injury time.

Spain had dominated the first 20 minutes but goalkeeper Unai Simon was at fault for his team's early deficit after a massive blunder when he failed to control a long back pass. The ball bobbled over Simon's foot and trickled into the net behind him.

We know that's football and that those things happen, Spain captain Sergio Busquets said.

The most important thing is to pick yourself up and show a strong mentality. And I think

both Unai and the whole team did that today.

Spain quickly recovered and Pablo Sarabia equalized in the 38th. Rightback Cesar Azpilicueta then made it 2-1 with a header in the 57th and Ferran Torres doubled the lead when he finished off a quick counterattack with a low shot past Livakovic in the 77th.

It looked like Spain was heading for an easy win before Croatia fought back.

Bye, we had to suffer there," Azpilicueta said.

"It wasn't great to be scored against twice in normal time, but we were the better team in extra time and we deserve to go through."

Croatia's late surge allowed both Morata and Simon to redeem themselves.

The goalkeeper made a crucial save to deny Andrej Kramaric at the start of extra time, then got up and punched the air in celebration.

I think that when we missed that chance at 3-3 in extra time, that was the determining factor, Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic said. I think if we had scored a goal it would have been completely different.

Simon also made a big stop at 3-2 when he got down quickly to make a one-handed save on Josko Gvardiol's shot from just outside the box.

Uruguay wins and puts Chile in Brazil's way at Copa America



AGENCIES
RIO DE JANEIRO, 29 JUNE

Uruguay beat Paraguay 1-0 to finish second in Group A and move into a Copa America quarterfinal against Colombia. The result also left Chile to face defending champion and host Brazil in the next stage.

Edinson Cavani scored from the penalty spot on the hour but substitute Lautaro Martinez restored the three-goal cushion in the 65th from close range.

In the quarterfinals on Friday, Brazil and Chile will meet at the Nilton Santos stadium and Paraguay will take on Peru at the Olímpico Stadium in Goiania. The winners of those matches will meet in the semifinals.

On Saturday, Argentina will meet Ecuador in Goiania and Uruguay and Colombia will face off at the Mane Garrincha Stadium in Brasilia. The winners of those matches will play off for a spot in the final.

Argentina's all-time record with his 148th appearance for the national team, netted the two following goals. The first came from the spot in the 33rd and the second after a beautiful lob over goalkeeper Carlos Lampe in the 42nd.

Erwin Saavedra scored for Bolivia on the hour but substitute Lautaro Martinez restored the three-goal cushion in the 65th from close range.

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At Wimbledon, Murray can still play at the highest level'

AGENCIES
WIMBLEDON, 29 JUNE



as the sound from the stands reached a crescendo.

I'm enjoying it and I can still play at the highest level, Murray said when he resumed speaking.

He's ranked 28th in the world, and I've hardly played any matches. And I beat him.

Sure did. But not without some hitches for the man who has been ranked No. 1 but is currently No. 118 after recently going three months without competing anywhere.

Murray was playing his sixth match of the season, 30 fewer than Basilashvili, whose Grand Slam highlight was a run to the fourth round of the 2018 U.S. Open.

It's been extremely frustrating not being able to get on the court and I've had such little momentum over these last few years. And just kept trying, kept working hard in the gym, kept doing all the right things to get me back in this position, Murray said.

I feel very lucky I get to do it again.

Up 5-0 in the third set, Murray was broken three times in a row and lost seven consecutive games. He twice was one point from winning while ahead 5-3 in that set, before briefly losing his way.

That's never happened to me before in my career, Murray said.

"But there are things that can happen when you haven't played any matches."

He said later he was dealing with fatigue and some doubts that crept into his mind.

There was a break after the third set so the arena's retractable roof could be closed to protect from rain.

Murray said he took a shower and went to the bathroom.

He also regrouped and regained control.

"A lot of players would have capitulated there," Murray said. "I did the opposite of that."

I think making your first Olympic team, particularly as an Australian, we have such a rich history and the Olympics is something I've always dreamt of and obviously super excited to get out there and represent

the U.S. team.

On the men's side, Rafael Nadal and Dominic Thiem also have said they'll skip the trip to Japan, where the Olympics open on July 23. Roger Federer is reserving his decision until after his campaign at Wimbledon.

Some of the highest-profile players in the sport won't be competing in the Tokyo Games, where heavy restrictions will be imposed on athletes and foreign fans have been barred. Serena Williams has announced she won't be in contention for

the U.S. team.

On the men's side, Rafael Nadal and Dominic Thiem also have said they'll skip the trip to Japan, where the Olympics open on July 23. Roger Federer is reserving his decision until after his campaign at Wimbledon.

The Olympics were last year postponed by 12 months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Barty won the French Open and the season-ending WTA Finals in 2019 but missed most of the 2020 season after her semi-final loss at the Australian Open to stay at home during the pandemic.

Barty is planning to play singles and partner Storm Sanders in the doubles competition.

Any opportunity you get to wear the green and gold, I wanted to grab it with both hands, she said. I'm fit, I'm healthy, I'm excited to play doubles with Storm, she's a childhood friend of mine and we've played a lot together. So I'm excited to be able to live out this dream."

Barty commits to Australia's tennis team for Tokyo Olympics

AGENCIES
SYDNEY, 29 JUNE



Top-ranked Ash Barty (in photo) is set to lead Australia's 11-member tennis team at the Tokyo Olympics.

The Australian squad was announced Tuesday, hours before Barty's scheduled first-round match at Wimbledon against Carla Suarez Navarro.

Former U.S. Open champion Sam Stosur was selected to play singles and doubles in her fifth Olympics, while Nick Kyrgios, Alex de Minaur and John Millman were among the men selected for the Australian team.

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Under pressure India eyes aim to level series with fresh approach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
TAUNTON, 29 JUNE



in Arundhati Reddy in her place or get another specialist spinner.

ICC ranking

India captain Mithali Raj has returned to the top five of the latest ICC Women's ODI Rankings for batswomen after topscoring for India with 72 in the series opener against England in Bristol.

The 38-year-old, who has completed 22 years in international cricket, rescued her side from a precarious 27 for two but India's total of 201 for eight was not challenging enough for England, who will be defending their World Cup title in New Zealand next year.

India have only crossed 250 thrice since the 2017 World Cup, something the team has to do on a consistent basis to compete with the likes of England and Australia.

Though Mithali scored a 72 but her strike rate needs drastic improvement and 10 skipper Harmanpreet is desperately seeking some consistency.

"Harman is not due for a big score, she is overdue," said Edulji.

India went in with only one specialist spinner in Ekta Bisht at Bristol besides three pacers.

Pacer Shikha Pandey, who has made a comeback with the UK tour, has looked far from troubling the English batters and could be dropped for the second ODI. Mithali can bring

land, Namibia, Oman and Papua New Guinea, before the play-off stage and the Final on November 14.

"The BCCI will remain the hosts of the event, which will now be held in Dubai International Stadium, the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the Sharjah Stadium, and the Oman Cricket Academy Ground, from 17 October to 14 November 2021," the ICC stated.

The first round of the tournament, comprising the eight qualifying teams, will now be split between Oman and UAE.

Four of these teams will then progress to the Super 12s round where they'll join the eight automatic qualifiers.

The upcoming edition will be the first men's T20 World Cup played since 2016, when West Indies beat England in the final in India.

The eight teams competing in the preliminary stage are Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland, Namibia, Oman and Papua New Guinea, before the play-off stage and the Final on November 14.

"Our priority is to deliver the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 safely, in full and in its current window," said acting ICC CEO Geoff Allardice.

"...the decision gives us the certainty we need to stage the event in a country that is a proven international host of multi-team