



Court in Dominica will hear plea on Choksi's deportation today

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BRICS will assist India in fighting virus: Chinese Minister Wang Yi

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Pope updates canon law to address paedophilia by priests

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Mithali says it'll be good to have continuity in Test cricket

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NEARBY



Lowest hospitalisations in Delhi in two months

NEW DELHI

The Capital on Monday reported the lowest number of COVID-19 patients being hospitalised in the last two months – 182 – as compared to 1,993 admissions on a single day on April 29 during the 61-day upsurge of the second wave of pandemic.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Apex court stays order on oxygen concentrators

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed a Delhi High Court verdict that declared the levy of Integrated Goods and Services Tax on oxygen concentrators imported for personal use or as a gift as a violation of the fundamental right to life. The court issued a formal notice on an appeal by the Union Finance Ministry.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

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OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 5

CBSE, CISCE scrap Class XII exams after review by PM

Central Board will compile results as per objective criteria, says PMO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Class XII examinations of the Central Board of Secondary Education have been cancelled, following a review meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening.

"In view of the uncertain conditions due to COVID and the feedback obtained from various stakeholders, it was decided that Class XII Board Exams would not be held this year. It was also decided that CBSE will take steps to compile the results of class XII students as per a well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner," said a statement from the Prime Minister's Office issued after the meeting.

However, in case some students wish to take the exams, such an option would be provided to them by CBSE, as and when the situation becomes conducive, said the statement. The same option was offered last year as well.

Following the meeting, the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations also decided to cancel

Taking no chances

- Assessments will be made as per well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner
- CBSE will give students the option to take exams later when situation becomes conducive
- JEE, NEET not discussed at review meeting

Assessment method

CBSE is yet to announce its alternative assessment method. A senior CBSE official told *The Hindu* that one option being considered is grading based on the student's internal assessment and practical exam scores from Class XII, rationalised according to analysis of the school's mark distribution in

its Class XII examinations.

The issue of all India professional entrance tests such as JEE and NEET was not discussed at the meeting, according to officials present.

At the review meeting, attended by senior Cabinet Ministers and Education Ministry officials, a detailed presentation was made on consultations held so far and views received from all stakeholders, including State governments.

"After extensive consultations, we have taken a decision that is student-friendly, one that safeguards the board exams over the last three years. Another option would be grading based on the student's final exam scores from Class IX, X and XI."

health as well as future of our youth," Mr. Modi tweeted after the meeting.

States opinion

Although some State governments, including Delhi and Maharashtra, had called for the exams to be cancelled, most States had favoured holding a truncated version of the exams, with objective-type question papers. About 14 lakh students had registered to write the examination, which was originally scheduled to be held in May.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Taking a breather



Much-needed break: Healthcare workers relaxing outside the Regional Eye Hospital, which has been converted into a COVID-19 Hospital, in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. With cases declining sharply, only five patients are now under treatment at the hospital. ■ K. R. DEEPAK

Give details on scheme for orphaned children, says SC

Centre promises to share mechanism of PM-CARES aid

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union government informed the Supreme Court on Tuesday that the "modalities" of a PM-CARES scheme to fund the education and welfare of children orphaned by the pandemic "need to be worked out". The government's explanation in the court came in response to queries on why the scheme was still not available in the public domain.

"We do not know how many children will be beneficiaries or how the Government of India is going to im-

plement the scheme announced on Friday," the court's *amicus curiae*, advocate Gaurav Agrawal, stated. He said the "scheme was not available, except in press notes". The Centre has said it would support the education of the children and set up a ₹10 lakh corpus fund for them.

From what he could gather, the scheme would help COVID-19 impacted children continue their education. It would fund educational requirements, in the form of uniforms, textbooks, etc. The scheme would also offer

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Delhi HC questions Centre on not prioritising youth for vaccination

'They are the ones who will take the country forward'



Beneficiaries above 18 years of age waiting for their first dose of COVID vaccine in west Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday questioned the Centre's vaccination policy for not prioritising the younger population over older people, saying "it is the younger people who are the future of this country".

Justice Vipin Sanghi said, "I can speak for myself ... You have announced the vaccination policy for 18- to 44-year-old persons now but you don't have vaccines. Then why do you have to announce and make a declaration when you don't have the vaccines?"

"We have to invest in the future and we are sidelining them. So many young people have lost their lives. It is the younger people who are the future. We are on our way out. I don't understand this policy at all," he said.

The Bench pointed out that many young persons have succumbed to COVID-19 during the second wave as they were not prioritised in the vaccination policy.

"The 80-year-olds aren't going to carry this country

Odisha, Jharkhand want Centre to procure jabs

Cite poor response to global tenders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHUBANESWAR/ PATNA

Days after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan urged the Chief Ministers to come together to persuade the Centre to procure and distribute COVID-19 vaccines free for the whole nation, Odisha and Jharkhand have also called for centralised procurement.

Both underline the fact that vaccine manufacturers outside India are unwilling to deal directly with the States.

After receiving a lukewarm response to its global tender, the Odisha government said on Tuesday that it would be better if the Centre took the responsibility of dealing with the vaccine manufacturers. It said a major hurdle in procurement was the issue of indemnity sought by global manufacturers such as Pfizer and Moderna. According to officials, only the Centre can assure indemnity.

According to the State government, manufacturers were willing to deal only with federal-level Central procurement, at this stage. Global vaccine manufac-

turers would require the Central government's statutory clearances for supplying to the States, said Odisha Health and Family Welfare Minister Naba Kisor Das in a letter to Union Health and Family Affairs Minister Harsh Vardhan on Tuesday.

Flexibility of coverage

In his letter of May 31 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren urged him to provide "free vaccines for beneficiaries of all age groups". He also requested that the State be given the "freedom to define priorities for vaccination coverage".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Stand unchanged, says Sidhu after meeting Congress panel

Former Punjab Minister, Chief Minister at loggerheads

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu appeared on Tuesday before a three-member committee set up by the party to address factionalism in Punjab and asserted that his stand remains unchanged.

Mr. Sidhu, who has been openly attacking Chief Minister Amarinder Singh over a Special Investigation Team (SIT) report on the incidents of Guru Granth Sahib desecration in the State, said "truth can be disturbed, but not defeated".

"I came here on the call of the high command and apprised them of the state of affairs in the party. I have brought the voice of the people of Punjab from the grassroots level to the party high command," he told reporters after meeting the committee members for over an hour and a half.

The three-member panel formed to broker peace between different factions in Punjab's democratic right that goes to the government must return to the people in any form," the Congress leader said. "I have told the truth inside in a bold voice.



Navjot Singh Sidhu coming out of Congress 'war room' in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ PTI

affairs Harish Rawat and former MP J.P. Aggarwal.

Told the truth'

"My stand is and will remain the same and unchanged. Punjab's democratic right that goes to the government must return to the people in any form," the Congress leader said. "I have told the truth inside in a bold voice.

The voice of Punjab's truth and its rights have been conveyed to the high command. We have to defeat all anti-Punjab forces."

"The power of the people must return to the people. Every Punjabi must be made shareholder in Punjab's progress ... *jittega Punjab, jittega har Punjabi* [Punjab will win, Punjabi will be victorious]," he added.

For several weeks now, the cricketer-turned-politician has been attacking the Chief Minister for allegedly not doing justice to those who were involved in the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib in Bargi. He also lashed out at the government for failing to indict the Parkash Singh Badal-led Akali Dal government in the 2015 Kotkapura firing incident after protests erupted over the sacrilegious issue.

Since Monday, the panel has been meeting party MLAs in batches of 25. It plans to meet the Chief Minister before submitting its report to Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Cleric held for molesting minor girl

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 48-year-old cleric was arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a 10-year-old girl inside a mosque in North East Delhi's Harsh Vihar, the police said.

A senior police officer said that they received an information on Sunday following which a case on charges of rape and under relevant sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act was registered.

The police said that the girl used to go to the mosque to learn Koran from the accused.

On Sunday, he allegedly sexually assaulted her. Upon returning home, she told her mother about the incident after which the mother informed the police.

The officer said that the accused was arrested on Monday from Ghazibabad's Loni and produced before the court after which he was sent to 14-day judicial custody.

The police said that the girl was counselled and is stable.

Mercury dips after overnight thunderstorm

Heavy downpour causes waterlogging, gusty winds uproot several trees; Delhi records lowest-ever temperature in June

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Temperatures fell by up to 10 degrees Celsius after a thunderstorm lashed the Capital on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday.

The city recorded 15.6 mm of rainfall between midnight and 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday. The heavy downpour caused waterlogging across Delhi and gusty winds uprooted several trees.

15-year record

According to the meteorological department, the minimum temperature on Tuesday settled at 17.9 degrees Celsius, 10 notches below normal. The maximum temperature was 33.6 degrees Celsius, which is seven degrees below normal. The all-time lowest June minimum temperature so far was 18 degrees Celsius, recorded on June 17, 2006.

The weather observatory at Safdarjung recorded 15.6 mm of rainfall till 8.30 a.m., the Lodhi Road observatory 13.2 mm, Palam 16.4 mm and Ayanagar 6.8 mm.

The weatherman has forecast more rain on Wednesday.



Welcome showers: An uprooted tree at Pitampura; a waterlogged road near Daula Kuan in New Delhi on Tuesday after a thunderstorm lashed the Capital at night on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Welcome showers: An uprooted tree at Pitampura; a waterlogged road near Daula Kuan in New Delhi on Tuesday after a thunderstorm lashed the Capital at night on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The Delhi government's Public Works Department (PWD), which has jurisdiction over most arterial roads in the city, received 40 waterlogging complaints. The first complaint was logged at 7.35 a.m. on Tuesday, said a PWD official.

The spokesperson for the New Delhi Municipal Council

said no waterlogging was reported in the area but 17 complaints were logged regarding uprooted trees. The three civic bodies also reported trees being uprooted. The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) stated eight trees were uprooted in the Najafgarh zone, 16 in the southern zone, three in the

central zone and eight in the west zone.

The North Corporation reported five incidents of wall collapse, two cases of damage caused to buildings and waterlogging at three locations in addition to the felling of 41 trees.

According to the Delhi Traffic Police, no major vehi-

icular congestion was reported due to the weather conditions. A senior Traffic Police officer said they received one waterlogging call and seven calls related to uprooted trees. The officer said that waterlogging was reported on the Mehrauli-Badarpur Road at the underpass near the railway crossing, "but it

did not lead to any traffic congestion as the water was cleared in time".

"Uprooting of trees was reported from Tughlak Road, Akbar Road, Kingsway Camp, Safdarjung Enclave, Rajghat and Najafgarh Road but it had no impact on traffic movement," the officer said.

DU will follow CBSE mechanism for merit list this admission season: V-C

'Common entrance test can be implemented if govt. approves'

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

With the CBSE examination getting cancelled, Delhi University Vice-Chancellor P.C. Joshi on Tuesday told *The Hindu* that whatever mechanisms the CBSE compiles for merit lists will be followed for admissions this year.

Mr. Joshi added that the common entrance test can be implemented if the Ministry of Education approves the same.

"Whatever merit system

will be followed by the university. One thing that DU will not compromise with is merit. The admissions committee will decide on a course of action soon. If the Ministry approves the CUET [Central Universities Common Entrance Test] then that can also be implemented," said Mr. Joshi.

Further the V-C added, "We support the government's decision and the safety of students is of utmost importance. We look forward to the decision taken by the CBSE regarding the declaration of the results."

Jyoti Arora, principal of Mount Abu Public School said, "This decision is unusual and has been taken by considering the uncertainty of present times. The decision to consider physical and mental health of students as top-most priority is welcomed. I am sure the CBSE will soon come up with a well-defined objective criteria in the interest of students all across India."

Cancelling Class 12 exams a 'big relief', says Kejriwal

Decision cleared uncertainty: Sisodia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday termed the cancellation of Class 12 board exams a "big relief", after the Centre announced its decision to this effect amid the pandemic.

"I am glad 12th exams have been cancelled. All of us were very worried about the health of our children. A big relief [sic]," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asserted that the decision was taken in the interest of students, by putting an end to their anxiety, as well as those of parents and teachers.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, and has been against the idea of conducting the ex-

ams, said: "I am happy that the never-ending Class 12 for 1.5 crore students of the country will finally end."

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by the PM, in which it was decided that the CBSE will take steps to compile the results of Class 12 students as per a well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner.

HC seeks reply on plea for beggars ban

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday sought response from the city government and police on a petition seeking to restrain begging at traffic junctions and markets to prevent COVID-19 spread as many of the beggars and vagabonds do not wear masks or maintain social distancing.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh asked the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board to also respond. Advocate Narender Pal Singh, in his plea, claimed that it is a sorry state of affairs to see mushrooming of beggars who touch cars at traffic lights "without sanitising their hands" and therefore, stand a chance of getting infected or becoming carriers of the virus.

Police suspend arms licences of Sushil, Kalra

They are facing criminal charges

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Tuesday said it has suspended the arms licences of wrestler Sushil Kumar and businessman Navneet Kalra following criminal charges levelled against them.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Licencing) O.P. Mishra said the notices were issued on Monday.

"We have suspended their arms licences with immediate effect. The process of cancellation of their licences has been initiated. We have done it on the basis of reports by investigating agencies in the criminal cases recently registered against them," Mr. Mishra said, adding that both accused were served notices to explain why their licences should not be cancelled.

We have done it on the basis of reports by investigating agencies in the cases registered against them

O.P. MISHRA
Joint Commissioner of Police (Licencing)

Mr. Kumar was arrested for his alleged involvement in the murder of fellow wrestler Sagar Dhankar at Chhatrasal Stadium. He is currently in police custody.

Mr. Kalra was arrested for alleged black marketing and hoarding of oxygen concentrators. Over 500 concentrators were found at his restaurants in central Delhi and a godown in south Delhi.

He was arrested after being on the run for eight days. The businessman was granted bail last week by a local court.

Plea challenges ICMR advisory on RT-PCR test

HC seeks reply from Centre, Delhi govt.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday sought response from the Centre and Delhi government on a petition challenging the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) advisory barring a repetition of the RT-PCR test on those who tested positive for COVID-19.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh also issued a notice to the ICMR and sought their stand on the petition filed by advocate Karan Ahuja.

Mr. Ahuja said he and his parents had tested positive for COVID-19 on April 28 and remained under home isolation for a period of 17 days as per the home isolation guidelines issued by the Delhi government.

He said the Civil Defence

guards deployed outside his house asked for a negative COVID-19 report to allow him and his family to step out of the house even to get essential items.

When Mr. Ahuja and his parents went to the nearest dispensary in Sultnampuri to get tested again on May 18, the medical staff present at the counter refused to test them, citing orders not to test those who had tested positive.

The petitioner challenged the May 4 ICMR advisory, claiming it to be a violation of his fundamental rights.

"This particular recommendation in the advisory has led to a virtual blanket ban on COVID-19 testing among patients who have already tested positive, which has led to several complications," the petition said.

PRESS NOTICE SHORT TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, JSV Division Jubbal invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through offline process :-

SN	Name of work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Earliest Money (in Rs.)	Time	Last date of sale from Division office/Opening Date
1	Providing LWSS/GWSS to various Hab under GP Darkot, Gareog, Bagdohem, Thanda and Pandli to cover FHTC of LO house hold under JMM SJM KKH Job-3rd (GP Darkot and Tharda)	₹ 4,99,919	₹ 10,000	3 M	Last Sale of tender form is upto 04/06/2021 Date of receiving of tenders from contractors upto 03/00 PM of 05/06/2021
2	Providing FHTC to LO house hold under JMM SJM KKH Job-3rd (GP Darkot and Tharda)	₹ 3,75,721	₹ 7,550	3 M	Date of opening of tenders 10/06/2021 at 03:30 PM

The tender form and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website www.hppjph.org or office of the Executive Engineer up to date specified above.

Executive Engineer
J.S.V. Division, Jubbal.

HP / 1129/21-22

HIM SOOCHNA EVAM JANSAMPARK

e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)				
The Executive Engineer HPPWD Rampur Division on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering, system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.				
Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost	Starting Date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money
1	CIO link road from Shanadar to Sharaikoli Km. 0/000 to 9/500 (SH- F/C, Rwall & B/wall CD works, P/L, G.S.B, WBM G-II, WBM G-III, Premix carpet, C/O V-shape drain, essential parapets, P/F sign boards, Km, stone and dumping structure in Km, 5/000 to 9/500) under NABARD RIDF-XXV.	3,22,56,371/-	14.06.2021	6,45,000/- 21.06.2021
The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in . Executive Engineer, Rampur Division (B&R), HPPWD, Rampur Bushahr, On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh				

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT				
*** Notice Inviting Tender ***				
Sealed item rate tender on form No. 6 & 8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, HP PWD Division Tanda at Nagrota Bagwan on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following work from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HP PWD (B & R) whose registration stood renewed as per revised rules so as to reach in his office on or before on 23.06.2021 up to 11:00 A.M. And the same shall be opened on the same day at 11:30 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender form can be obtained from his office on cash payment (non refundable) on 22.06.2021 up to 4:00 P.M. and the application for issue of tender form shall be received on 21.06.2021 up to 12:00 noon. The applications for issue of tender forms accompanied with enlistment letter or renewal letter and the earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificates/Saving Account of the Post Office / Time Deposit account/FDR in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, HP PWD Division Tanda at Nagrota Bagwan. The conditional tender and the tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days.				
Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time limit
1	Construction of link road from ITI Sarotari to Lahru in G.P. Sarotari in Distt Kangra (HP) (SH-Providing and cement concrete pavement between Km 0/100 to 0/450)Under MGSY	331764/-	6650/-	Two months
2	Construction of link road to Saheed Anil Kumar House in G.P. Thana Khas in Distt Kangra (HP) (SH-Providing and laying cement concrete pavement various reaches between Km 0/700 to 0/800) and construction of causeway at RD 0/610 & 0/690 and C/O road side drain)	14748/-	2950/-	Two months
3	Construction of link road village Haushi to Uperi Kothi in G.P. Kangra (HP) (SH-Providing and laying metallica & Tarring in KM 0/500 to 0/800 and construction of causeway at RD 0/610 & 0/690 and C/O road side drain)	436559/-	8750/-	Three months
4	Construction of link road NH-88 to Gujjar Basti in G.P. Balugloa in Distt Kangra (HP) (SH-Providing and laying cement concrete pavement on various reaches between 0/400 to 0/400).	372619/-	7500/-	Three months
5	Construction of Hall near Shiv Mandir Lakhmandih in Distt Kangra (HP)-Balance work of building portion etc.; (Deposit Work)	242462/-	4250/-	Three months
6	Restoration of rain damages on Tang Ramchand Baldrar Jassour road in Distt Kangra (HP) SH-C/O Edge wall at RD 4/60 to 4/650 and Providing and laying cement concrete pavement on various reaches between 4/570 to 4/685).	378828/-	7700/-	Three months
Terms & Conditions:-				
1. The contractor/firm should be registered as or dealer GST No.				
2. The intending contractor / firm have to produce the copy of latest enlistment and renewal enlisted in HPPWD.				
3. If any of the date mentioned above happened to be Gazetteed Holidays the same shall be processed on next working day.				
4. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.				
5. The Contractor will have to submit affidavit along with application for issue of tender that he has not more than two works in hand.				
6. Next tender will be issued only after completion of previous works in hand.				
Executive Engineer H.P.P.W.D. Tanda Division at Nagrota Bagwan				
(On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh)				

HP / 1153/21-22

(HIMSUCHANA AVAM & JAN SAMPAK)

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य भिशन, मध्यप्रदेश (लोक स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, मध्यप्रदेश शासन) 8, अरारा लिंस ओल्ड जैल रोड, भोपाल-462004									
विज्ञापन									

	Timings
DELHI	
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 02	
RISE 05:24 SET 19:16	
RISE 00:49 SET 12:10	
THURSDAY, JUN. 03	
RISE 05:24 SET 19:16	
RISE 01:23 SET 13:07	
FRIDAY, JUN. 04	
RISE 05:24 SET 19:16	
RISE 01:53 SET 14:00	

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 34 18
Safdarjung 34 18
Palam 32 20

Delhi Palam Today
36°C A pleasant morning and warm day likely to prevail with cloudy sky. Rain and thunderstorm likely at some places.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
37°C A comfortable morning and hot day. Thunderstorm may occur at few places.

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IN BRIEF

Delhi govt's 'Operation SHIELD' failed: BJP

NEW DELHI
The BJP on Tuesday alleged that "Operation SHIELD", which the Delhi government had launched to confront the first wave of the virus in the Capital, had failed in front of the second wave. Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said, under the initiative, the Delhi government had imported 10 sanitisation machines from Japan. "I want to ask where these machines with big photos of Mr. Kejriwal are now..." Mr. Bidhuri asked.

NDMC takes preventive measures against dengue

NEW DELHI
The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) Chairman Dharmendra on Tuesday gave directions to intensify preventive operations against vector-borne diseases and anti-larva activities. The civic body said that there have been only two cases of dengue till now this year.

Ganga Ram Hospital starts MAC treatment

NEW DELHI
Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on Tuesday started administering monoclonal antibody cocktail (MAC) to COVID patients, the facility said. The hospital is administering a combination of casirivimab and imdevimab to consenting patients with mild symptoms at high risk.

Delhi reports lowest hospitalisations due to COVID-19 in over two months

From nearly 2K on April 29, the number of admitted patients came down to 182

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI
The Capital on Monday reported the lowest number of COVID patients being hospitalised in the last two months – over 10 times lesser compared to the peak of single-day hospital admissions recorded towards the end of April.

At 182, single-day COVID hospital admissions were the lowest on Monday compared to 294 on April 1 during the ascension of the second wave in the city.

34 discharged every hour
According to Delhi government records, 44 COVID patients were admitted to hospitals and 34 discharged every hour during the 61-day upsurge of the second COVID wave. Officials said the second wave seems to be at an



Scene outside the Lok Nayak Hospital on Tuesday.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

end.

Between April 1 and May 31, a total number of 65,762 COVID patients or 1,078 per day were admitted to city hospitals while 51,004 or 836 per day, were discharged, according to the records.

As the second wave got more virulent on a daily basis, it had peaked at 1993 admissions on a single day on April 29 when the total number of hospital beds in the city stood at 21,152.

After a slight increase on May 25, with 388 admissions compared to 382 on May 24, the number of hospitalisations has been consistently going down for the last 4 days.

These stood at 229 on May 28, 228 on May 29, 237 on

May 30 and 182 on May 31.

While as many as 333 patients were discharged on Monday, the number of patients discharged on May 28 was 581, 619 on May 29 and 425 on May 30. The number of patients being discharged, as *The Hindu* has reported, had peaked only in mid-May – with 1,384 patients leaving hospitals on May 13.

This peak in the number of patients being discharged, according to records, also marked the first time during the 61-day period that the number of patients being released overtook the number of those being admitted: 1,384 discharges were recorded against 1,366 admissions.

COVID admissions to hospitals had, so far, remained in three digits only between April 1 and April 12 when 932 admissions took place.



People queue up for vaccination without following social distancing in Ardas Nagar on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Positivity rate remains below 1% for 2nd day

City sees 623 fresh cases and 62 deaths

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 623 fresh COVID-19 cases in 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,26,863, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

The test positivity rate (TPR) fell to 0.88%, which means that less than one person out of 100 people taking COVID tests is now positive for the virus. The TPR was 0.99% on Monday and this is the second consecutive day, the figure is below 1%.

The test positivity rate (TPR) fell to 0.88%, which means that less than one person out of 100 people taking COVID tests is now positive for the virus. The TPR was 0.99% on Monday and this is the second consecutive day, the figure is below 1%. The TPR was as high as 36% on April 22 and has been coming down since then. Also, 62 deaths were reported and the total

number of deaths stood at 24,299.

A total of 70,813 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said. Of the total cases, 13,92,386 people have recovered and there are 10,178 active cases. Also, out of the total 24,752 hospital beds for COVID-19, 82.2% of beds were vacant. At the peak of the second wave in April, only 5.6% of beds were vacant on many days.

Atishi on shortage

"There are no vaccination doses available for the youth. Until the next installment of vaccines arrives on June 10, vaccination for the youth stands closed...," said AAP leader Atishi said.

Govt. allows home delivery of alcohol via mobile apps, websites

Facility yet to start; no licence issued for the same: spokesperson

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has allowed home delivery of alcohol through mobile apps and websites under the amended excise rules, but the option is yet to start in the city.

"Licence in Form L-13 for home delivery of Indian liquor and Foreign Liquor by ordering through mobile app or online web portal," said the Delhi Excise (Amendment) Rules, 2021, published in a gazette notification on Monday.

"The licensee shall make delivery of liquor at the residences only if order is received through e-mail or by Fax (not on telephone) and no delivery shall be made to any hostel, office, and institution

DELHI EXCISE RULES, 2010
The licensee shall make delivery of liquor at the residences only if order is received through e-mail or by Fax (not on telephone) and no delivery shall be made to any hostel, office, and institution

in the city, according to officials. "The licensee shall make delivery of liquor at the residences only if order is received through e-mail or by Fax (not on telephone) and no delivery shall be made to any hostel, office, and institution," stated the Delhi Excise Rules, 2010.

The Delhi government spokesperson clarified that no new license has been issued for home delivery of alcohol.

"L-13 is an existing license that has been amended. No license for L-13

or home delivery of license has been issued," the spokesperson said.

BJP lashes out at govt.

The BJP hit out at the decision and said that the Chief Minister couldn't give free medicine and ration but is serving liquor at the doorstep.

"It would have been better if Kejriwal had rather concentrated on toning up the healthcare system so that scores of people would not have died during the pandemic, running here and there for treatment. The government just sat lazily doing nothing as people did not get oxygen or doctors help even while treating at home. If only the government had thought of it, these things could have been delivered to them at home," said Delhi BJP President Adesh Gupta.

The Delhi government did not issue any details on the specifics of home delivery of liquor.

The Delhi government did not issue any details on the specifics of home delivery of liquor.

Hospitals ramping up infrastructure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Hospitals across Delhi have started ramping up infrastructure to ensure availability of essential equipment, drugs and ICU beds for children as part of their plan to tackle a possible third wave of COVID.

The Delhi government has set up a task force to suggest measures to protect children from the third wave. Most of the hospitals are focussing on ramping up their ICU beds and facilities for children, amid fears that the third wave might be fatal for them.

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Doctors of different hospitals across the country observed Tuesday as "black day" against comments made by Baba Ramdev, said Federation of Resident Doctors' Association (FORDA). The doctors protested by wearing a black band at hospitals.

FORDA said the resident

doctors protested against the "illogical, unscientific, demeaning and derogatory statements" made by Ramdev against modern medicine, its practitioners and the COVID-19 vaccination drive. The organisation said they will take the fight ahead if Ramdev does not apologise or authorities fail to take any punitive action against him.

THE HINDU

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

'49 North body employees died due to virus from April till now'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Tuesday said 49 employees of the civic body died due to COVID between April and May.

Mr. Prakash made the comment while visiting the

Ghaziabad residence of Dr. A.K. Bahl, who was serving at the civic body's Hindu Rao Hospital in the Anesthesia Department before contracting COVID and losing his life in the line of duty, to pay his last respects.

"The North body is doing

every possible bit for the families of those who died due to COVID while performing their duties. As many as 49 employees in different categories of sanitation, engineering, health, education and other departments of the corporation died from April till now," he said. The families of such employees, he said, will be offered jobs and compensation out of the fund created for the purpose as per policy and such cases will also be sent to the Delhi government for compensation of ₹1 crore each.

Pay salaries and pensions, HC tells North corporation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the North body commissioner to make an endeavour to comply with the judicial orders to clear arrears of salaries and pension of its serving and retired staffers of all categories, saying it is not acceptable that a poor employee is not paid dues.

The court also said may be the corporation needs to rationalise its staff strength and undertake a review and conduct an audit as it could be over-staffed or carrying a baggage of past.

"We are sure you are aware of the situation that employees are not getting their salaries. This is completely unacceptable that a poor employee is not paid salary. If somebody has to take a cut, let it start from the top. Senior officers can take 50% of their salaries. Are you getting your full salary?" a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh asked North body commissioner who was present in the hearing in pursuance to court's earlier direction.

The court asked the commissioner to file an affidavit in two weeks in response to a plea seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against the authorities for failure to comply with the order to pay salaries and pensions of employees and retirees and listed the matter for July 8.

Govt. of Bihar

Bihar Medical Services & Infrastructure Corporation Limited
4th floor State Building Construction Corporation Limited.
Hospital Road, Shastri Nagar, Patna 800023
Phone/Fax: +919471009193, +919471009074

SHORT TENDER NOTICE
Tender for rate contract and supply of Drugs for different healthcare facilities of state of Bihar

Notice Inviting Tender Ref No.: - BMSIC/DRUGS/21-06
(Only through E-Tender on website: -www.eproc.bihar.gov.in)

Bihar Medical Services and Infrastructure Corporation Limited (BMSICL) invites E-Bids from the interested parties for "Tender for rate contract and supply of Drugs for different healthcare facilities of state of Bihar", vide Notice Inviting Tender No.- BMSIC/DRUGS/21-06. Detailed tender document containing eligibility criteria, selection mechanism, other terms and conditions are available on the website www.eproc.bihar.gov.in.

Tender Schedule

Tender Reference No.	BMSIC/DRUGS/21-06
Date and time for downloading of bid document	Upto 16 th June 2021 till 1800 Hrs.
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting	08 th June 2021 at 14:30 Hrs. in Conference hall BMSICL, 4 th Floor, BSBCL, Hospital Road, Shastri Nagar
Last date and time of submission of online bids	17 th June 2021 by 18:00 Hrs.
Last date and time for submission of original bid documents with EMD and Tender Fees	18 th June 2021 till 14:00 Hrs.
Date, Time and Place of opening of Technical Bid	18 th June 2021 (at 15:00 Hrs.) on the website of www.eproc.bihar.gov.in in the office of BMSICL
Date and time of opening of Financial Bids	To be announced later on www.bmsicl.gov.in and www.eproc.bihar.gov.in
Validity of Tender	180 Days
Cost of the tender document	Rs. 10000/- (Ten Thousand only) Non-refundable.
Bid Processing Fee	Rs 1180/- (One thousand one hundred eighty only) Non-refundable.

प्रिवेट जानकारी के लिए state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है।

GM (Procurement)
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ENTERPRISE CONNECT

BHEL supplies critically required Medical Oxygen in fight against covid 19

The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has rapidly developed into an unprecedented crisis for the nation, and in the midst of this grave national crisis, BHEL has been working on war footing to do its bit for the country and fellow citizens. BHEL's plants, located at Bhopal and Haridwar, have responded to the situation with all possible resources at their command for supplying medical oxygen in and around their vicinity.BHEL Haridwar was having a capacity to produce 24,000 CuM oxygen per day for captive use through internal pipelines. Seeing the acute shortage of medical oxygen in the country during mid-April, the plant created cylinder filling capacity for over 3,000 cylinders per day in a record time of just one week along with putting in the entire logistics & manpower, working day and night for handling over 3,000 cylinders a day. This plant has so far filled almost

Farmers block JJP MLA Babli's vehicle in Haryana

They were protesting against farm laws

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A group of farmers on Tuesday blocked Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) MLA Devender Babli's vehicle at Tohana in Fatehabad, Haryana, shouting slogans and raising black flags as a mark of protest against the Centre's farm laws.

The JJP is a coalition partner of the BJP in the Haryana government.

While the MLA alleged that the farmers smashed his vehicle's windscreen, the farmers said Mr. Babli hurled abuses and instigated the protesters. The police said the MLA was on his way to a hospital at Tohana to attend an event when a group of protesters surrounded the vehicle and shouted slogans.

The MLA and the protest-

ers exchanged heated words during the incident. Talking to presspersons, Mr. Babli said farmers did not involve themselves in such a kind of protests, adding that certain anti-social elements were behind the attack.

Boycott of legislators

Farmer outfits have announced that all legislators, including those from the BJP, the JJP and other Independents, who have been favouring the Centre's farm laws would be boycotted and not be allowed entry into villages across the State.

Bratiya Kisan Union (Chadun) president Guram Singh said the BJP-JJP MLAs were trying to instigate farmers and Mr. Babli's visit was the latest in the series.

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

An audit of the COVID-19 vaccines will be conducted in Rajasthan to ensure that the doses are not wasted.

The exercise is being undertaken following reports of alleged wastage of vaccines, though the State government has claimed that the vaccine wastage was limited to 2%, which was below the national average of 6%.

With 1.70 crore people in the State having received the vaccine doses, Rajasthan had remained a front-runner in vaccinating the beneficiaries and was among the leading States where the wastage was very low, Medical and Health Minister Raghu Sharma said here on Tuesday.

Mr. Sharma said there was

zero vaccine wastage in the inoculations for the people in the age group of 18 to 44 years. "We have placed a special emphasis on the quality of vaccination processes. I have directed my department to do a thorough quality check of the vaccination being carried out in the State," Mr. Sharma said in a letter shot off to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in response to his communication asking for a probe into the issue of vaccine wastage.

The Minister termed the report cited by Dr. Vardhan as false and said the matter had been thoroughly enquired by his department's officers, who had found it was not based on facts. "Sometimes it happens that after

opening the vial, the unused doses have to be discarded due to safety concerns. It leads to some amount of wastage," he said.

'Wastage within limit'

The wastage rate in Rajasthan was well within the limit permitted by the Centre, said the Minister. Dr. Vardhan had cited a report of about 500 vials found in the waste bins, into which he had sought an investigation.

As part of the audit exercise, the Chief Medical and Health Officers in all districts will ensure inspection of vaccination centres once every week and pay attention to the inoculations as per the "queue dynamics", after which the proper entries will be made in the software.

Hearing a petition on May 28 of 10. Powermen Union, Chandigarh, which has challenged the decision of the privatisation of electricity in Chandigarh, Justices Jitendra Chauhan and Vivek Puri observed, "The proposed action of privatisation is in direct conflict with the nation's agenda 'Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikas'. We feel that privatisation is not a panacea for all the ills and privatisation with

Report cited by Vardhan about wastage is false, says Minister

HC flags Chandigarh's power privatisation bid

It is in direct conflict with nation's agenda'

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has asserted that the Chandigarh administration's proposed action of electricity privatisation is in direct conflict with the nation's agenda 'Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikas'.

Hearing a petition on May 28 of 10. Powermen Union, Chandigarh, which has challenged the decision of the privatisation of electricity in Chandigarh, Justices Jitendra Chauhan and Vivek Puri observed, "The proposed action of privatisation is in direct conflict with the nation's agenda 'Sab Ka Saath Sab Ka Vikas'. We feel that privatisation is not a panacea for all the ills and privatisation with

blind motive of so-called efficiency falls flat as this department is not only a profitable one but also time and again matched the high standards of customers' satisfaction and has a big role in maintaining the City Beautiful."

'Undue hurry'

"With great pain and anguish, it is recorded that we are unable to reconcile with the fact that when the whole world is grappling with the deadly virus, when there is no oxygen, no ICUs, a long queue at cremation grounds and no place in the hospitals, the undue hurry on the part of the administration to hand over the profit-making department to the private entity at this stage of the history and in this situation of crisis faced by the entire mankind, seems to be misplaced," added the judges.

NSCN(I-M) using new outfit as front in Assam'

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN (I-M) could be using a new extremist group as a front for extortion in Assam, officials of security forces engaged in counter-insurgency operations said.

A combined team of the Assam police, paramilitary forces and the Army have been probing a possible nexus between the NSCN (I-M) and the Dimasa National Liberation Army (DNLA) after the latter's "army chief" Minom Phunglisa was caught a few months ago.

'Arms for money'

Phunglisa is alleged to have told his interrogators that the NSCN (I-M) was helping the DNLA with arms, training and shelter near Nagaland's Dimapur town in exchange for a share of money collected as "taxes" from contractors, traders and timber dealers in Assam, primarily the adjoining hill districts of Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong.

He also named NSCN (I-M)'s "brigadier" Chiplemi Shimrang as having offered weapons and explosives to the DNLA, which was formed before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls for securing a separate State for the Dimasa community.

The security forces followed this lead, gathered intelligence in Nagaland and tracked the movement of people suspected to be DNLA members. This culminated in the May 23 encounter in which six DNLA members were gunned down "when challenged" at Dugudisha in Karbi Anglong district.

A seventh DNLA member named Mushrang escaped from the encounter site toward Nagaland.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

Jai Shree Krishna



Pujyashree

PREMA PANDURANG

12th June 1945 - 1st June 2021

Adveshta sarvabhananam maitrah karuna eva cha
Nirmamo nirahankarah samaduhkhasukhah kshami ||13||
Santushtah satatam yogi yatatma
Drdhanischayah
Mayyarpitamanobuddhiyod madbhaktah sa me priyah ||14||
- Bhagavat Gita Chapter XII (verses 13 & 14)

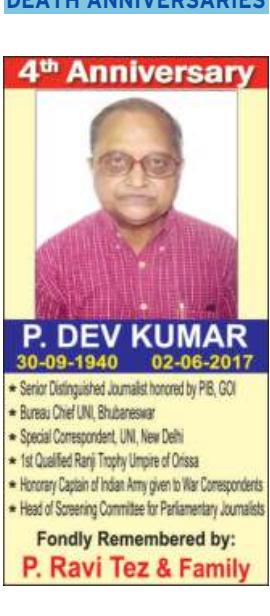
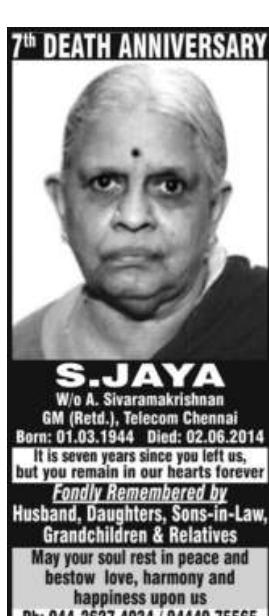
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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



DEATH

OBITUARY

07/05/1932 01/06/2021

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THE HINDU

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WESTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM TO E-AUCTION SALE PROGRAM

Additional e-Auction Sale program

during June, 2021 P. Way and other Various Scrap

Please refer to e-Auction Sale

Notification No. S III/ Auction

Programme-1/JUNE-2021 Dated

15/05/2021, following additional e-

Auction Sale program for disposal of P. Way and other Various Scrap

material will also be held in June, 2021 for ADI Division:

Additional e-Auction program of

June, 2021: 11/06/2021 Division :

ADI Divisional officer in Charge :

Sr. Divisional Materials Manager

-AD1 Contact No.: 07922205888

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IN BRIEF



Former Chief Secretary of A.P. dies of COVID-19

HYDERABAD
Former Chief Secretary of combined Andhra Pradesh S.V. Prasad passed away on Tuesday at a private hospital here after battling COVID-19. He was 69. He was admitted along with his wife and two sons a couple of days ago for COVID-19 treatment. He served as the Chief Secretary from 2010 for two years when K. Rosaiah was the Chief Minister.

A.P. releases ₹1,497.62 cr. for disbursal of pension

GUNTUR
Social security pensions were on Tuesday disbursed at the doorstep of the beneficiaries by a team of ward / village volunteers in Andhra Pradesh. Earlier, the State government had released ₹1,497.62 crore for the purpose. A total of 2.66 lakhs volunteers were on job for disbursing pensions to 61.46 lakh beneficiaries across the State.

Biggest lot of Sputnik vaccine lands in India

27.9 lakh doses arrive in Hyderabad in third consignment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

A specially chartered freighter aircraft landed in Hyderabad airport with the single largest consignment of Sputnik V vaccines from Russia to India early on Tuesday.

GRMR Hyderabad Air Cargo (GHAC) handled the shipment on freighter RU-9450, which touched down at 3.43 a.m. While GHAC has already handled several import shipments of vaccine prior to this, Tuesday's shipment of 56.6 tonnes is the biggest import shipment of COVID-19 vaccines handled in India till date. This shipment completed all processes and was dispatched to Dr. Reddy's Labs in less than 90 minutes, an official spokesman said.

This is the third consignment of Sputnik V vaccines from Russia – the first was for 1.5 lakh doses, second



Shot in the arm: The Sputnik V vaccine consignment at the Hyderabad airport on Tuesday. ■ PTI

60,000 and now 27.9 lakh doses. Another 50 lakh doses are expected this month, making Dr. Reddy's Labs ready to roll out the vaccine for administration.

Sputnik V vaccine requires specialised handling and storage, requiring to be kept at a temperature of -20°C. GHAC has been working closely with the experts from the customer's supply chain team, officials from Customs department and

other stakeholders over an extended period of time to ensure that the necessary infrastructure and handling processes are fully in place at the Air Cargo Terminal.

Pharma companies based in Hyderabad are expected to produce or import over 3.5 billion doses of different varieties of COVID vaccines over the next couple of years and GHAC has been gearing up on all fronts to handle the surge in vaccine shipments.

Pakistan repatriates Hyderabad techie

He was held for illegally crossing border

ABHINAY DESHPANDE
HYDERABAD

A Hyderabad-based software engineer, who was arrested by Pakistan's Bahawalpur police two years ago for illegally entering that country, was repatriated through the Attari-Wagah border on Monday.

The techie, Vaindham Prashanth, 31, along with Durmi Lal, a farmer from Madhya Pradesh, was arrested in the Cholistan desert area in Bahawalpur, Punjab province, Pakistan.

The police registered an FIR against them under the Pakistan (Control of Entry) Act on November 14, 2019. They had crossed the border without any identification papers and proper documents, according to the FIR.

The Madhapur police brought Mr. Prashanth here on Tuesday afternoon, after he was set free. Cyberabad Police Commissioner V.C. Sajjanar produced him at a media conference where

the latter turned emotional and said he never expected to return home. He said he read books in jail and picked up Hindi.

On April 11, 2017, Mr. Prashanth boarded a train to Bikaner and crossed the border illegally by jumping the fence. After walking deep into Pakistani territory, he was apprehended and sent to jail.

The Pak. authorities suspected him to be a spy but later believed his story that he was trying to reach Switzerland to meet his online girlfriend. Mr. Prashanth surfaced in Pakistan after having gone missing for two years.

"I am very happy I have come back home after more than four years," were Mr. Prashanth's first words after entering the Indian territory. He said he was in love with a girl living in Switzerland, but did not wish to discuss it saying it was his personal matter.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, West Bengal, Sikkim, Odisha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Delhi, Uttarakhand, Nagaland, Manipur, Bihar, Jharkhand, central Maharashtra, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	36...	27.6...	20.9...	Kozhikode	23...	31.6...	23.9...
Ahmedabad	...	37.5...	26.8...	Kurnool	...	38.6...	28.0...
Aizawl	11.4...	27.0...	17.5...	Lucknow	...	34.4...	27.3...
Altafabad	...	36.2...	29.0...	Madurai	...	40.2...	27.2...
Bengaluru	...	32.0...	21.1...	Mangaluru	1.7...	30.8...	23.9...
Bhopal	...	40.0...	25.9...	Mumbai	48...	33.7...	27.0...
Bhubaneswar	...	37.7...	26.6...	Mysuru	...	33.1...	21.6...
Chandigarh	22.6...	31.9...	17.9...	New Delhi	16...	33.6...	17.9...
Chennai	...	38.5...	29.6...	Patna	14.6...	34.0...	23.2...
Coimbatore	...	33.8...	23.0...	Port Blair	...	31.9...	25.6...
Dehradun	9...	31.5...	19.7...	Puducherry	...	39.4...	26.4...
Gangtok	...	33...	20.4...	Pune	40...	34.7...	22.9...
Goa	15...	32.6...	25.9...	Raipur	...	42.0...	29.0...
Guwahati	24...	29.8...	24.4...	Ranchi	...	35.0...	24.5...
Hubbali	...	29.0...	22.0...	Shillong	36...	23.1...	16.6...
Hyderabad	...	37.4...	25.6...	Shimla	31...	21.4...	10.9...
Imphal	7...	29.7...	22.1...	Srinagar	1.8...	26.1...	13.4...
Jaipur	...	36.0...	25.5...	Thiruvananthapuram	7...	32.4...	22.5...
Kochi	27...	31.2...	24.0...	Tiruchi	...	41.1...	27.4...
Kohima	3.4...	25.8...	16.0...	Vijayawada	...	40.7...	28.8...
Kolkata	4...	36.5...	27.2...	Visakhapatnam	12...	36.4...	24.8...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	32	43	21	52	—	■
Bengaluru	.5	37	70	44	41	■
Chennai	90	.7	34	36	43	■
Delhi	.4	44	67	139	152	■
Hyderabad	.2	88	16	36	50	■
Kolkata	10	18	21	69	70	■
Lucknow	12	53	98	168	112	■
Mumbai	42	.12	31	38	70	■
Pune	.6	12	80	.57	47	■
Visakhapatnam	—	—	23	—	—	—

Yesterday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government has permitted the prosecution of five police officers arraigned as accused in the custodial death of Rajkumar in the Nedukandam police station in 2019.

Great hardship

The order had put the petitioner and other inhabitants in great hardship since it would delay the processing of the evacuation request, endangering the lives of patients.

Earlier, patients in critical condition used to be airlifted as soon as the medical officer of the respective islands made a request to the Health Services Director functioning in Kavaratti.

It directed the State police chief to dismiss the officers from service.

In an action taken report

tabled in the Assembly on Tuesday, the government said it had accepted and acted upon the recommendations of the K. Narayana Kurup probe commission.

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhawadi, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 209, indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Gadig, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 10.

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

Orders it to submit them within 10 days

K.C. GOPAKUMAR

KOCHI
A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Tuesday directed the committee constituted by the Health Services Director, Lakshadweep, for recommending medical evacuation of patients from various islands, to formulate guidelines on the method and manner of its functioning.

The Bench comprising Justice A. Muhammed Mustaque and Justice Kauser Edappagath also ordered

Class XII exams crucial for students: State govt. to HC

PIL petition challenges the decision to cancel Class X exams

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI
The Bombay High Court will continue hearing on June 3 the plea challenging the Maharashtra government's decision to cancel board exams for Class X.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) petition filed by professor Dhananjay Kulkarni challenging the decision by the Secondary School Certificate Board. The PIL sought a direction from the court to hold the exams and not mark students without assessment. There are several interveners in the matter defending the stand of the State on not

holding the exams.

In the last hearing, the court had asked the State to file an affidavit listing reasons for holding board exams for Class XII and cancelling those for Class X.

In an affidavit filed on May 31, the Maharashtra government defended its stand and said, "HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) examination is a more important milestone in the education of students as their careers depend on it." On holding exams for Class X and not Class XII, the State said, "The stage at which two examinations are to be undertaken by the students in their overall career, the consequences and effects of undergoing the

situation was different this year. The court interrupted him and said, "You think the situation is better? Corona is targeting young people. If the State thinks it is not wise to hold the exams, we do not have the power to strike that decision."

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Tenuous revival

Creating jobs and boosting incomes, along with vaccination, can sustain the economy

The national income estimates released by the NSO posit an economy that appears to have found some footing in the January-March quarter before the pandemic's second wave hit. GDP expanded by 1.6% in the final quarter of the last fiscal, an acceleration from the 0.5% growth in the preceding three-month period, that marginally softened the extent of the full-year's record contraction to 7.3%. The Centre had earlier projected full-year GDP to contract by 8%. There was a 3.7% growth in fourth-quarter gross value added, with all but two of the economy's eight broad sectors posting expansions. Mining and quarrying and the worst-hit contact-intensive omnibus services category of trade, hotels, transport, communications and broadcasting contracted 5.7% and 2.3%, respectively. Still, the pandemic's crushing impact over the preceding three quarters meant that only the agriculture, forestry and fishing and the utility services recorded full-year growth. On the expenditure side, private consumption spending appeared to have rebounded to growth for the first time in four quarters, posting an expansion of 2.7% that moderated the full-year's contraction to 9.1%. And gross fixed capital formation, a proxy for private investment, jumped 11% in the three-month period, most likely helped in fair measure by an increase in capital spending by the Government.

The NSO data, however, needs to be seen in perspective. With the ground having shifted since March with the surge in COVID-19 infections, it is vital to correlate the figures with on-the-ground information. Manufacturing GVA appeared to have gained some traction in the last quarter (a 6.9% expansion), following a return to growth in the September-December period after five straight quarters of contraction. Disappointingly, IHS Markit's Manufacturing PMI survey for May showed the key sector facing the prospect of stagnation as weakening demand pushed increases in new orders and output to 10-month lows. Similarly, the fiscal 2020-21 provisional estimates for private consumption spending – the bulwark accounting for over 50% of GDP – showed the expenditure figure at ₹75.6-lakh crore, its weakest level in three years. Here again, the Refinitiv-Ipsos Primary Consumer Sentiment Index for May, showed consumer confidence had tumbled by 6.3 percentage points from April as fears over the pandemic's impact depressed respondents' outlook on all four fronts including jobs and personal financial conditions. With unabated job losses pushing overall unemployment to a one-year high of 11.9% in May, as per CMIE data, and rural areas ravaged, only an accelerated nationwide vaccine roll-out and direct job and income boosting measures can prevent the economy from backsliding again.

When two is too little

China's demographic interventions have had unintended social, economic consequences

Six years after abandoning the "one child policy" of 1979, China's Communist Party has now introduced a "three child policy". The move is to "improve China's population structure, actively respond to the ageing population, and preserve the country's human resource advantages", the party's Politburo said on May 31. The once-in-a-decade population census, released on May 11, may have prompted the latest change, recording 12 million births in 2020, the lowest since 1961. The census said there were 264 million in the 60 and over age group, up 5.44% since 2010 and accounting for 18.70% of the population. After the one child policy, China's fertility rate fell from 2.75 in 1979 to 1.69 in 2018. Monday's announcement is as much an acknowledgement as may ever come of the unintended consequences of deeply intrusive family planning measures, going back even before 1979, to Mao's "later, longer, fewer" campaign, which itself, ironically, followed his exhortations to have more children to build the workforce. The party officially still defends the one child policy – that it prevented an additional 300 million births. Yet, the urgency of recent measures suggests otherwise, as China grapples with both an ageing and deeply gender-imbalanced population, and demographers' worst fears of countries getting old before they get rich.

In 2013, China allowed couples to have a second child if either parent was an only child, with the two child policy introduced in 2015. Explaining why the measures did not boost birth rates, economists Jin Zhangfeng, Pan Shiyuan, and Zheng Zhijie wrote last year the two child policy "substantially increase[d] the number of second-child births" among those "less sensitive to child-rearing costs" but "substantially decrease[d] the number of first-child births" attributing it to rising costs. "Other developing countries, even without China's stringent child-limitation policies, have also experienced declines," they argued, suggesting "policy makers should give priority to reducing the child-rearing costs borne by prospective parents rather than simply relaxing or even abolishing birth quotas". The latest announcement did acknowledge those broader structural problems, pledging to reduce families' spending on education. It is, however, by no means an abandoning of China's family planning policies. The entrenched – and widely reviled – family planning bureaucracy remains in place, and this week's statement underlined that the "current reward and assistance system and preferential policies" for those following rules continue. Even leaving aside the strong moral argument against intrusive family planning – enforcement has meant forced abortions, sterilisations, and other abuses, some of which are still being reported in parts such as the Muslim-majority Xinjiang region – China's experience is a reminder of the unintended social and economic consequences of state-led demographic interventions.

COVID diplomacy 2.0, a different order of tasks

Indian diplomacy will have to handle the fallout of the vaccine collapse and bio-research regulations



SUHASINI HAIDER

timely manner, and with success.

Handling vaccine shortages

The rest of the year, if not much of 2022 will focus on bringing in vaccines. The shortage of vaccines in the country has arisen from three factors: the failure of the Government to plan and place procurement orders in time; the failure of the two India-based companies to produce vaccine doses they had committed to, and the MEA's focus on exporting, not importing, vaccines between January and April this year. The challenge now for diplomats has been made all the more imperative by these failures, and much harder, as the visit of the External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, to Washington last week showed. With the companies manufacturing AstraZeneca and Sputnik-V stretched as far as future production is concerned, and Chinese vaccines a non-starter given bilateral tensions, it is clear that the Narendra Modi government is looking to the U.S. to make up the shortfall.

The aim is to do this in several ways. These include requesting the U.S. to share a substantial portion of its stockpile of AstraZeneca doses and to release more vaccine ingredients which are restricted for exports; to buy more stock outright from the three U.S. manufacturers, Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, and to encourage production in India of these vaccines. On each of these issues, the MEA has had to negotiate a difficult route. The U.S. government is holding up its AstraZeneca exports until its own United States Food and Drug Administration approves them; while it has released a small amount (20 million doses) of vaccine ingredients and components, it has not changed the policy yet. Production of Johnson & Johnson single-dose vaccines in India, as had been announced during the Quad summit (<https://bit.ly/3ySd12>), will take some time. And as they were originally meant for distribution in South East Asia, it is unclear how many will be provisioned for India.

Even buying vaccines directly



will need nimble negotiations as the U.S. companies seem set on getting both an indemnity waiver from India as well as Emergency Use Authorisation prior to supplying them. While the government has relaxed its rules for American and other foreign manufacturers, waiving the need for bridge-trials prior to clearance, these demands will need considerable backtracking from firmly held principles. The Government may also need to make a U-turn from its publicly announced policy that States in India will need to negotiate purchases directly, as the U.S. manufacturers want centralised orders, with payments up-front. Diplomats working to help tie up contracts have their work cut out as time is of the essence for India to complete its vaccination goals ahead of a possible third wave of the pandemic.

Patents, diplomatic fallout

Nor will the promise of patent waivers, from India's joint proposal at the World Trade Organization (WTO) reap early benefits, despite support from world leaders such as the U.S., Russia and China. As Mr. Modi during his virtual summit meet with European Union leaders in early May, or as diplomats negotiating to bring Quad partners Japan and Australia, and BRICS partner Brazil on board have found, many countries are still holding out on the idea of freeing up intellectual property rights on vaccines for three years. That could ultimately hold up proceedings at the WTO, as it works by consensus.

The third big challenge for Indian diplomacy is to manage the

fallout of the vaccine collapse. Domestically, the Government has defended its decision to export more than 66 million vaccines doses to 95 countries between January and April this year, pointing out that only 11 million were grants from India, 35 million were commercial exports and 20 million were sent as part of the global COVAX coalition commitments. Its adding that all exports were stopped as soon as cases in India began to soar is an argument that does not wash internationally. Both India's neighbours and partners in Africa as well as global agencies depending on India for vaccines have been left in the lurch by the Government's failure to balance its vaccine budget.

Perhaps the most egregious case is that of Bhutan and its vaccine drive which depended entirely on India's promise of vaccines for its whole population. In March, once India completed delivery of the first batch, of 550,000 Covishield doses, Bhutan completed the administration of the first dose to 93% of its population in a record 16 days. Two months later, Bhutan does not have any vaccines to complete the second dose and has been left requesting other countries for vaccines so it does not miss the deadline amidst a rising number of cases there. Others in the neighbourhood and further afield have fully-paid-up-but-unfulfilled orders. It is no surprise that each of India's neighbours has now sought help from China and the U.S. to complete their vaccination drives. Making amends and regaining trust for India's vaccine and pharmacy exports in the future is going to be a challenge left to the MEA and its missions in several capitals.

Tracing virus pathways

Finally, as more waves of COVID-19 are being speculated, it is becoming increasingly clear that there must be a fuller understanding of what caused it, and India, as one of the worst pandemic-hit countries, must be at the forefront of demanding accountability. Eighteen months, 170 million cases

(<https://bit.ly/3uElFAd>) and over three million deaths later, the World Health Organisation (WHO) which studied "pathways of emergence" of SARS-CoV2 in Wuhan, listed four possibilities: direct zoonotic transmission, an intermediate host, cold chain or transmission through food, or a laboratory incident. While WHO has concluded that the fourth pathway is "extremely unlikely", scientists and agencies around the world are now calling for more research and transparency from China, particularly over the activities at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Beijing appears adamant on blocking these studies and even the U.S. appears to have dragged its feet on a conclusive finding, possibly because the U.S. National Institutes of Health had funded some of the Wuhan Institute's research, and its Office of the Director of National Intelligence decided last year to discount the "lab-leak" theory (<https://bit.ly/2TokFml>).

On regulations

India, which has now begun to speak up on the issue, must call for a more definitive answer and also raise its voice for a stronger convention to regulate any research that could lead, by accident or design, to something as diabolical as the current pandemic. Towards that end, it is necessary to revamp the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (formally known as The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction) to institute an implementation body to assess treaty compliance, and build safer standards for the future. With its seat at the UN Security Council as non-permanent member and its position on WHO's Executive Board, India could seek to regain the footing it has lost over the past few months of COVID-19 mismanagement, by taking a lead role in ensuring the world is protected from the next such pandemic.

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Breaking the cycle of child labour is in India's hands

Though the pandemic has amplified its contributing factors, policy and programmatic interventions can save children



DAGMAR WALTER

The true extent of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child labour is yet to be measured but all indications show that it would be significant as children are unable to attend school and parents are unable to find work. However, not all the factors that contribute to child labour were created by the pandemic; most of them were pre-existing and have been exposed or amplified by it.

What the data show

As the world enters the third decade of the 21st century, 152 million children around the world are still in child labour, 73 million of them in hazardous work. A Government of India survey (NSS Report No. 585, 2017-18, Statement 3.12, p.35) suggests that 95% of the children in the age group of 6-13 years are attending educational institutions (formal and informal) while the corresponding figures for those in the age group of 14-17 years is 79.6%. Hence, a large number of children in India remain vulnerable, facing physical and psychological risks to a healthy development.

The Census of India 2011 reports 10.1 million working children in the age group of 5-14 years, out

of whom 8.1 million are in rural areas mainly engaged as cultivators (26%) and agricultural labourers (32.9%). While multiple data vary widely on enrolment/attendance ratios in India, UNESCO estimates based on the 2011 Census record 38.1 million children as "out of school" (18.3% of total children in the age group of 6-13 years). Work performed may not appear to be immediately dangerous, but it may produce long-term and devastating consequences for their education, their skills acquisition, and hence their future possibilities to overcome the vicious circle of poverty, incomplete education and poor quality jobs. A Rapid Survey on Children (2013-14), jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and UNICEF, found that less than half of children in the age group of 10-14 years have completed primary education. These remain challenges we must overcome.

A decrease in India

One piece of good news is that child labour in India decreased in the decade 2001 to 2011, and this demonstrates that the right combination of policy and programmatic interventions can make a difference. Policy interventions such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005, the Right to Education Act 2009 and the Mid Day Meal Scheme have paved the way for children to be in schools along with guaranteed wage employment (unskilled) for rural families. Concerted efforts towards



convergence of government schemes is also the focus of the implementation of the National Child Labour Project. Ratifying International Labour Organization Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 in 2017, the Indian government further demonstrated its commitment to the elimination of child labour including those engaged in hazardous occupations.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment-operated online portal (www.pencil.gov.in) allows government officials, law enforcement agencies and non-governmental organisations to share information and coordinate on child labour cases at the national, State and local levels for effective enforcement of child labour laws. While child labour has declined during the past decade globally, estimates indicate that the rate of reduction has slowed by two-thirds in the most recent four-year period. These positive and negative trends have to be taken into account when developing India's policy and programmatic response during and after the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The economic contraction and lockdowns ensuing from the pandemic have affected all countries in Asia, leading to income reductions for enterprises and workers, many of them in the informal economy. The large number of returned migrant workers has compounded the socio-economic challenges. India experienced slower economic growth and rising unemployment even before the pandemic. Subsequent lockdowns have worsened the situation, posing a real risk of backtracking the gains made in eliminating child labour. With increased economic insecurity, lack of social protection and reduced household income, children from poor households are being pushed to contribute to the family income with the risk of exposure to exploitative work.

Challenges in education

With closure of schools and challenges of distance learning, children may drop out leaving little scope for return unless affirmative and immediate actions are taken. As many schools and educational institutions are moving to online platforms for continuation of learning, the 'digital divide' is a challenge that India has to reconcile within the next several years.

The NSS Report No. 585 titled 'Household Social Consumption on Education in India' suggests that in 2017-18, only 24% of Indian households had access to an Internet facility, proportions were 15% among rural households and 42% among urban households. The An-

nual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020 survey highlights that a third of the total enrolled children received some kind of learning materials from their teachers during the reference period (October 2020) as digital mode of education was opted for.

The challenges are significant and manifold but it is not impossible to meet them if the right level of commitment among all the relevant stakeholders and the right mix of policy and programmatic interventions are present. It is through strategic partnerships and collaborations involving government, employers, trade unions, community-based organisations and child labour families that we could make a difference building back better and sooner. As we reinforce the commitment to protect children from unacceptable forms of work, our focus to mitigate the aftermath of the pandemic also remains. We need a strong alliance paving our way towards ending child labour in all its forms by 2025 as countries around the world have agreed to in Sustainable Development Goal 8.7.

We – governments, employers, unions, civil society organisations and even individuals – must rise and pledge to 'Take Action against Child Labour' as a part of the UN's declaration of 2021 as the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. Our actions today will determine the future of children tomorrow.

Dagmar Walter is Director, International Labour Organization India Country Office

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Court and COVID policy

The Supreme Court's rap on the Government's knuckles over its confused vaccine policy is spot on (Inside pages, "Policy should be clear, flexible: SC", June 1). With GDP contracting due to the pandemic, the Government will do well to quickly procure vaccines and for free. Immunisation in the rural areas has to be ramped up quickly without having to register on CoWIN which may not be feasible due to the digital

divide (Inside pages, June 1). Finally, all talk about 'vaccine interchangeability' and single-dose efficacy is superfluous till the vaccine shortage issue is addressed and everyone above 18 is immunised quickly.

Dr. THOMAS PALOCAREN,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

■ The top court questioning the central government on its dual price vaccination policy, vaccine procurement by States on their own through global tenders and digital registration for

vaccine jabs are genuine points which every right-thinking Indian has on his mind. India is one of the best countries which has a robust immunisation system in place, which has central procurement and with one of the best preventive strategies to face epidemics. The central government instead of reinventing the wheel should utilise its existing robust immunisation system and preventive strategies to face the COVID-19 pandemic.

T. KALASH DITYA,
Hyderabad

Crimes of the past

The report on the remains of children being found in a former school in Canada was chilling. But it is also a season of repentance for

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the story titled "Pace of vaccination suggests complete immunisation unlikely by year end" (June 1, 2021), Dr. Chandrakant Lahariya, epidemiologist, had been wrongly referred to as former consultant to the World Health Organization. He was not a consultant. It should have been "formerly with the WHO."

In the article titled "Lakshadweep - Between the sea and a hard place" (Profiles, May 30, 2021) – a reader pointed out – the reference to Ubaidulla's landing following a shipwreck on the shores of Amini in AD 7 is wrong. It should have been 7th century AD.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28563000 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kastur Building, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com.

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for all countries to own up to past mistakes.

SARADA SIVARAM,
Ernakulam, Kerala



What explains the surge in FDI inflows?

Unprecedented short-term foreign portfolio investments are entirely responsible for the surge



R. NAGARAJ

Total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow in 2020-21 is \$81.7 billion, up 10% over the previous year, reported a recent Ministry of Commerce and Industry press release. It further added, "Measures taken by the Government on the fronts of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country." The short press release highlighted industry and State-specific foreign investment figures without detailed statistical information.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin, which was released a week earlier, has the details. They are conceptually more transparent and consistent. The table below summarises the main headings for 2019-20 and 2020-21 and the percentage growth rate.

What accounts for gross inflow? "Gross inflows/gross investment" in the RBI report is the same as "total FDI inflow" in the press release, identical to the Commerce Ministry's estimate. The gross inflow consists of (i) "direct investment to India" and (ii) "repatriation/disinvestment". The disaggregation shows that "direct investment to India" has declined by 2.4%. Hence, an increase of 47% in "repatriation/disinvestment" entirely accounts for the rise in the gross inflows. In other words, there is a wide gap between gross FDI inflow and direct investment to India.

What is repatriation? Why is it so significant? FDI inflow increasingly consists of private equity funds, which are usually disinvested after 3-5 years to book profits (per its business model). In principle, private equity funds do not make long-term greenfield investment.

Similarly, measured on a net basis (that is, "direct investment to India" net of "FDI by India" or, outward FDI from India), direct investment to India has barely risen (0.8%) in 2020-21 over the last year.

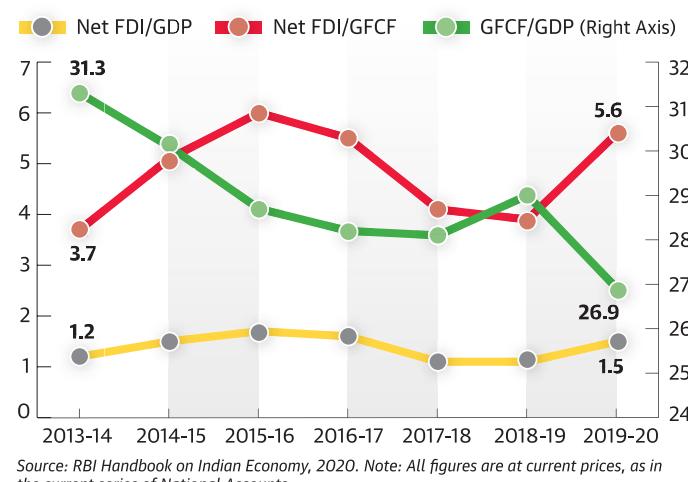
What then accounts for the impressive headline number of 10% rise

Foreign investment into India

Item No	No Investment category	2019-20	2020-21	Growth rate (%)
1	Gross inflows/Gross Investments (Items 3+5)	74,390	81,721	9.9
2	Foreign Investment Inflow (Items 4+7)	44,417	80,209	80.6
3	Direct investment to India (Items 4+6)	56,006	54,665	-2.4
4	Net Foreign direct investment (Items 3-6)	43,013	43,366	0.8
5	Repatriation/Disinvestment	18,384	27,056	47.2
6	FDI by India (Outward FDI)	12,993	11,299	-13.0
7	Net Portfolio investment	1,403	36,843	2526.0
7.1	(of which) Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs)	552	38,097	6801.6

Source: Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, May 2021, Table No. 34

Net FDI as ratios of GDP and fixed investment



in gross inflow? It is almost entirely on account of "Net Portfolio Investment", shooting up from \$1.4 billion in 2019-20 to \$36.8 billion in the next year. That is a whopping 2,526% rise. Further, within the net portfolio investment, foreign institutional investment (FIIs) has boomed by an astounding 6,800% to \$38 billion in 2020-21, from a mere half a billion dollars in the previous year.

So, the mystery of the surge in gross FDI inflows is solved. It is entirely on account of net foreign portfolio investment. What is portfolio investment, and how is it included in FDI inflow? FDI inflow, in theory, is supposed to bring in additional capi-

tal to augment potential output (taking managerial control/stake). In contrast, foreign portfolio investment, as the name suggests, is short-term investment in domestic capital (equity and debt) markets to realise better financial returns (that is, higher dividend/interest rate plus capital gains). But the conceptual distinctions have blurred in official reporting, showing an outsized role of FDI and its growth in India.

If the deluge of FII inflow did little to augment the economy's potential output, what then did it do? It added a lot of froth to the stock prices.

When GDP has contracted by 7.3%

(as per the official estimates released

last Monday) in 2020-21 on account of the pandemic and the economic lockdown, the BSE Sensex nearly doubled from about 26,000 points on March 23, 2020 to over 50,000 on March 31, 2021. BSE's price-earnings (P-E) multiple – defined as share price relative to earnings per share – is among the world's highest, close behind S&P 500 in the US.

Modest contribution

Thus the surge in total FDI inflow during the pandemic year is entirely explained by booming short-term FIIs in the capital market – and not adding to fixed investment and employment creation.

For years now, the government has showcased the rise in gross FDI inflows as a badge of the success of its economic policies to counter the widespread criticisms of output and investment slowdown and rising unemployment rates (especially during the last year).

As Figure 1 shows, between 2013-14 and 2019-20, the ratio of net FDI to GDP has remained just over 1% (left-hand scale), with no discernible rising trend in it. Likewise, the proportion of net FDI to gross fixed capital formation (fixed investment) is range-bound between 4% and 6% (left-hand scale). These stagnant trends are evident when the economy's fixed investment rate – gross fixed capital formation to GDP ratio – has plummeted from 31.3% in 2013-14 to 26.9% in 2019-20 (right-hand scale). Thus, FDI inflow's contribution to domestic output and investment remains modest.

To sum up, the Commerce Ministry press release claims an unprecedented surge in gross foreign capital inflow of \$81.7 billion in 2020-21, rising 10% over the previous year. The rapid influx is evidence of the success of the economic policies during the pandemic, the government claims. Is it so? Probably not. Unprecedented short-term foreign portfolio investments are entirely responsible for the surge. And within the portfolio investment, FIIs shot up to \$38 billion in 2020-21, from half a billion-dollar the previous year. The flood of FIIs has boosted stock prices and financial returns. These inflows did little to augment fixed investment and output growth.

R. Nagaraj is Visiting Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum

A fatal war on transparency

Official secrecy on pandemic policies aggravates a crisis



ANIKET AGA & CHITRANGADA CHOUDHURY

In August 2020, the Modi government constituted the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVCV) as a nodal agency on all matters related to vaccine administration and rollout. Asked under the Right to Information (RTI) Act for details of the NEGVCV's meetings, the Health Ministry, which anchors the expert group, replied that it does not know where the concerned documents are. Asked for the dates and minutes of meetings of other task forces constituted to deal with the pandemic, Dr. Nivedita Gupta of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) denied the request with this bizarre logic: "The information is not in the public domain".

Asked for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ICMR and Bharat Biotech for the rollout of Covaxin, she gave the same response. Like the ICMR, the NIV too refuses to disclose the MoU with Bharat Biotech, and the full extent of public investment into Covaxin's research and development. Similarly, asked for details of the research collaboration with Bharat Biotech, and investment of public funds in Covaxin, the ICMR too denies information, calling the request "an unwarranted invasion of privacy". Meanwhile, Covaxin has reached private hospitals as among the most expensive vaccines in the world, at over ₹1,200 a dose. And the ICMR is earning 5% royalties on the vaccine. This and other scraps of information are public only thanks to the Supreme Court hearing a suo motu PIL on the pandemic. The government's summary dismissals not just violate citizens' fundamental right to information but also push RTI requests into an appeal process that can take over two years. Time and resources go waste as citizens have to approach Information Commissions and High Courts to access basic information.

Information blackhole

Effective planning and administration cannot occur in the dark, and experts attribute the death toll and suffering to mismanagement and lack of preparation as much as the virus itself. Official secrecy is undermining the capacity of scientists, public health and policy experts to provide timely feedback and suggestions to the government. Such is the information blackhole that over 900 scientists have appealed to the Prime Minister for access to information and data. But little has changed.

The Supreme Court should order the government to suo motu disclose information related to COVID-19 policies, in line with Sections 4 and 7 of the RTI Act, which deal with proactive and urgent disclosures with consequences for life and liberty. Writing about famines in colonial India, Amartya Sen argued that mass hunger and death do not occur where information flows freely. Ditto for pandemic management.

Aniket Aga teaches at Ashoka University; Chitrangada Choudhury is a journalist on the editorial board of Article 14

The economic toolkit revealed

With monetary policy having run its course, fiscal policy alone can spur the economy

PULAPRE BALAKRISHNAN

Reading the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s annual report for 2020-21, the economist is driven to rethink why India today needs its central bank more than ever before. So, what would be the direction from which these thoughts are likely to flow? Most likely it will be the one suggesting that perhaps the RBI is to be desired more for its role as a source of unbiased and reliable information on the economy than its potency in driving it. The former is not a trivial presence at all, especially at a time when citizens are sceptical of the independence of government agencies originally intended to be free from its influence, leave alone a stranglehold. The annual report is a splendid document. The information presented in it enables us to understand which economic policy can move the economy even as it shows that the RBI's own capacity in this task may currently be limited. This by itself is vital guidance at this moment, though the RBI may not read the situation in the same way as others do.

A coherent story

In the annual report we find data on the movement of three variables over the past year, namely, interest rates, inflation and credit flow. Helpfully, in some cases the data are exactly for one year commencing March 27, 2020, a few days after the nationwide lockdown was announced. So, we are able to track the path of the variables of our interest since. Together they tell a coherent story.

And what is that story? First, it is one of the very active use of monetary policy to stave off the negative impact of the lockdown. The RBI immediately lowered the interest rate in its command, the repo rate, in fact more than once, and has held it since. Then it attempted to influence the long-term rate of interest through targeted long-term repo operations (TLTROs) in order to encourage investment. It enhanced liquidity by lowering the cash reserve ratio. Finally, in sync with the credit guarantee available under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme of the Government of India, the on-tap TLTRO

scheme was expanded to cover 26 stressed sectors. These amounted to a combination of incentives, enabling measures and safety nets revolving around credit. India's monetary authority cannot be faulted for the speed with which it acted, which was markedly different from what was seen on the fiscal front.

A limited policy

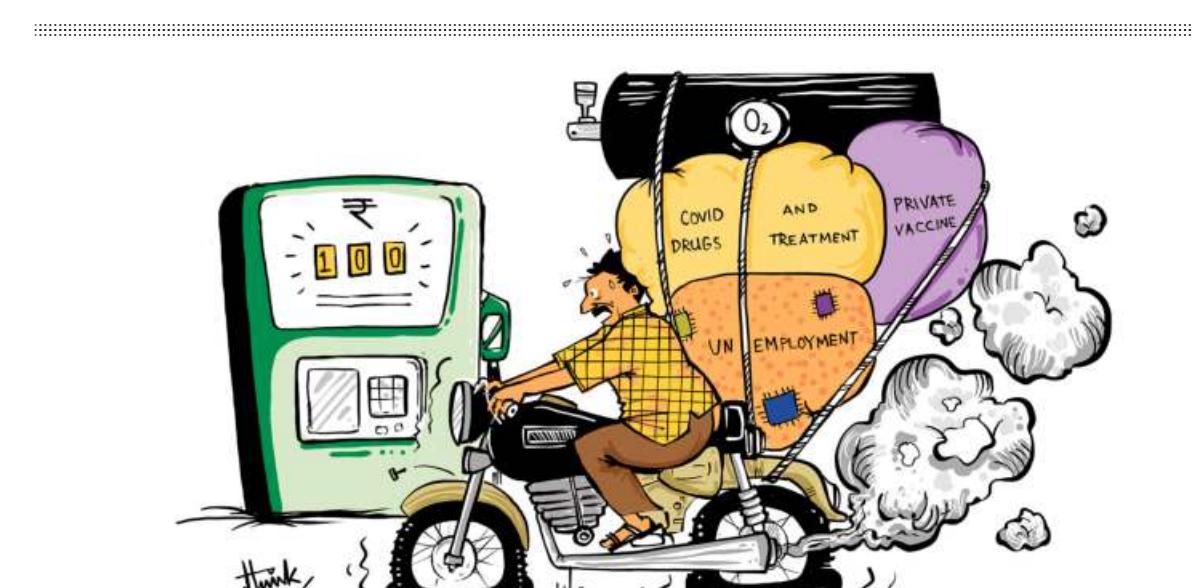
The second part of the story is that these thoughtful monetary policy actions were not successful in spurring the growth of credit, and thus economic activity. In the following year, credit growth slowed further, remaining barely positive for industry, a sector highly dependent on bank credit. To get the picture, non-food credit to this sector grew by a mere 0.4% in 2020-21.

To understand this outcome we do not have to seek very far. It is not as if the reduction in the central bank's interest rate actions did not have an impact on commercial bank lending rates, which too declined for all the sectors of the economy. Thus, the so-called 'transmission' mechanism worked. That it did not spur credit growth though is to be seen in the light of experience gained from episodes when aggregate demand collapsed. The lockdown did set off such a movement. We see replicated in India the global history of the Great Depression of the 1930s and the Great Recession of the 2000s when monetary policy was ineffective, as animal spirits, at least among investors outside the stock market, were bearish.

However, in the case of inflation, again meticulously documented by the RBI, India's experience stands out. Here, after the lockdown and contrary to the global pattern, the inflation rate has risen well beyond the target, leaving in doubt the ability of monetary policy to control it.

The contribution of the RBI, through its admirably transparent annual report, is to have laid bare the economic toolkit at our disposal. It is plain that monetary policy has run its course. Fiscal policy alone can spur the economy now.

Pulapre Balakrishnan teaches economics at Ashoka University



DATA POINT

Waning differentially | Even as the second wave of COVID-19 cases is on the wane across the country, the decline in the positivity rate (number of positives identified in 100 tests) has not been uniform across the rural and urban districts. While only 27% of urban districts had more than 10% positivity rate by the end of May, 30%-56% of non-urban districts recorded the same. By the end of May, the positivity rate of many rural districts was two to three times more than their capital districts, where most cases were recorded during the pandemic peak.

By Vignesh Radhakrishnan and Suman Sen

■ POSITIVITY ANALYSIS | In the first week of May, 87% urban districts had more than 10% positivity rate. By the last week of May, this reduced to 27%. However, 56%, 46% and 30% of semi-urban, semi-rural, and rural districts, respectively, continued to record >10% positivity rate by the end of May.

■ DISTRICT DATA | The chart shows the positivity rate of all rural **O** and urban **X** districts in the last week of May for select States. Semi-urban and semi-rural districts are not represented in the graph.

1 In about 10 rural districts of the north-eastern region, the positivity rate exceeded 20%. In Tripura's Dhalai district, it was around 40%.

2 In the rural districts of Bhadrak and Dhenkanal in Odisha, the positivity rate was around

District	< 10% positivity	> 10% positivity	< 10%	> 10%
Rural	34%	66%	70%	30%
Semi-rural	15%	85%	54%	46%
Semi-urban	8%	92%	44%	56%
Urban	13%	87%	73%	27%

ASSAM
MANIPUR
MEGHALAYA
MIZORAM
TRIPURA
NAGALAND
ODISHA
RAJASTHAN
KARNATAKA
TAMIL NADU
MAHARASHTRA
JAMMU AND KASHMIR
WEST BENGAL

3 In Rajasthani's Alwar district, it was 33%. Put together, in 10 rural districts from these two States, the positivity was >20%.

4 In Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the gap in the positivity rate between the capital district and other districts widened by the end of May. At least 11 rural districts in Karnataka had a higher positivity than Bengaluru Urban. At least 13 rural districts each in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra had a higher positivity rate than Chennai and Mumbai.

5 In J&K and West Bengal, even by the end of May, the capital districts had a higher positivity rate than the rural districts.

FROM PAGE ONE

CBSE, CICSE scrap Class XII exams after review

Faced with the second wave of the pandemic in April, the Centre then cancelled Class X exams and postponed Class XII exams, promising a review of the situation by June 1.

A large section of students and parents had called for Class XII exams to be cancelled, and took their

plea to the courts as well. On Monday, the Centre told the Supreme Court it would announce a decision by Thursday. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who had advocated for cancellation, congratulated "students of class 12 for making your voices heard" in a tweet.

TMC, BJP spar over notice to ex-Chief Secretary

However, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari of the BJP, demanded action against Mr. Bandopadhyay and targeted the Chief Minister, accusing her of trying to "destroy India's federal structure". "Theatre of the absurd is playing out in West Bengal. For the sake of her own ego, to destroy India's federal structure and protect the Chief Secretary for his indiscipline, (non-MLA) CM @MamataOfficial. Didi is bringing disrepute to the

CM office and the Constitution of India," Mr. Adhikari said on social media.

It was the presence of the Nandigram MLA at the meeting called by the Prime Minister to review the situation on May 28 in the aftermath of Cyclone Yaas that had irked the Chief Minister.

Ms. Banerjee had repeatedly raised the point that from a PM to a CM meeting, the agenda was changed, and BJP leaders and Union Ministers were made to join the meeting.

'Give details on scheme for orphaned children'

The court asked Ms. Bhati to detail the mechanism for identifying the beneficiaries of the scheme and the method to monitor the flow of benefits to the children.

The court further agreed with Mr. Agrawal's suggestion to initially focus on the welfare schemes available for COVID-19 orphaned children in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. Mr. Agrawal explained that these States were ahead in their compilation of data about children orphaned by COVID-19 and he would start with them

while giving other States time to compile information within their own jurisdictions. The court is hearing an application filed by Mr. Agrawal, who placed on record a report in *The Hindu* about the plight of children in the pandemic.

He said the pandemic had wreaked havoc on the lives of many children who have either lost both parents or guardians to the virus. Quoting the newspaper report, he said there had been a marked increase in child trafficking, especially of girls. The government had an obligation to protect children, he added.

IMD increases monsoon rain outlook to 101%

Rainfall over the northwest would be 'normal' though this is a wide range from 92-108% of the LPA and that in the southern peninsula 93-107% of its normal.

Seasonal rainfall is most likely to be below normal over the northeast (<95%) and above normal over central India (>106%), the update noted.

"This year we expect a good monsoon and especially over the core agricultural region," M. Mohapatra, Director General, IMD, said at a press conference on Tuesday.

The latest global model forecasts say the sea surface temperatures at the Equatorial Pacific conditions are unlikely to significantly rise. There are also 'negative' IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole)

conditions over the Indian Ocean during the monsoon season. Put together, they mean that these larger climate factors are, as of now, unlikely to have a significant influence over the prevailing monsoon. "As sea surface temperature (SST) conditions over the Pacific and the Indian Oceans are known to have strong influence on the Indian monsoon, IMD is carefully monitoring the evolution of sea surface conditions over these Ocean basins," the statement said.

The monsoon was to have arrived in Kerala on May 31 but the IMD, on May 30, said its advent would be delayed to June 3 because wind-speeds and cloud formation over the Kerala coast hadn't picked up yet.

Odisha, Jharkhand want Centre to procure jabs

On the issue of asking States to procure vaccines on their own, Mr. Soren said it "stands against the principle of co-operative federalism". Mr. Soren said, "It is requested to provide to the State free vaccines for all age groups and also give us freedom to define priorities for vaccination coverage," adding, "this would help in achieving the target of full vaccination in a timely manner."

While the Naveen Patnaik government said it did not want free vaccines for the 18-44 age-group, it also demanded flexibility in distribution as it planned to do away with online registration issues to help the poor and people in rural areas. Mr. Soren also highlighted

the difficulties in procuring vaccines. "Jharkhand is putting all efforts to procure directly from the available manufacturers. However, the supplies against the orders placed continue to remain extremely limited and it ultimately depends on allocations made by the Central government," he said.

Echoing the lukewarm response from suppliers, Odisha Minister Das said, "There has been limited response to the [State's global] tender ... The Serum Institute and Bharat Biotech have not participated in the pre-bid meeting. It is understood that at their present capacity they won't be able to provide vaccines on a scale required by the States."

The Act has been extended across the country till June 30 and it is enforced by the Home Ministry.

The officer, by abstaining himself from the review

BRICS will help India in fighting COVID-19, says China Minister

Foreign Ministers express 'grave concern' over the impact of the pandemic

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

NEW DELHI

The Foreign Ministers of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) grouping on Tuesday expressed "grave concern" with regard to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing a virtual meeting, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed solidarity with India over the recent surge in COVID-19 cases, and said the grouping was ready to assist the country to fight the pandemic "as long as needed".

The Ministers also agreed on reforming the multilateral system, which was the "first time" that such a consensus was reached, sources said.

"The Ministers expressed grave concern over the continuing public health, societal and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic globally. They expressed condolences for lives lost and pledged solidarity with the affected families," a statement issued after the meeting said.

The gathering described



Coming together: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar at the BRICS 2021 Foreign Ministers meeting. •PTI

the pandemic as one of the most serious challenges before the world, while also highlighting the importance of "respect for territorial integrity" and the "sovereign equality" of states.

In his comments, Mr. Wang said, "At this trying time, China stands in solidarity with India and all the BRICS countries. As long as it is needed by India, I believe that all BRICS partners, including China, will provide further support and assistance at any time. We are fully confident that India will certainly overcome the pandemic."

Welcoming the participants, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recollects the journey that the BRICS Foreign Ministers had undertaken since their first meeting in New York in 2006. India is the Chair of BRICS for 2021, when the organisation completes its 15th year of existence.

A joint statement issued after the meeting called for "equitable" access to vaccines, medicines and technologies as well as equipment to deal with the pandemic.

"The Ministers reaffirmed the need to use all relevant measures during the pandemic, including supporting ongoing consid-

eration in the WTO [World Trade Organization] on a COVID-19 vaccine intellectual property rights waiver and the use of flexibilities of the TRIPS [Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights] agreement and the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS agreement and public health," the statement said.

Lt. Gen. Ajai Singh assumed charge as the 16th Commanding-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), the Eastern Army Commanding-in-Chief, the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff and the Director-General of the Assam Rifles.

Ministry statement said.

Lt. Gen. Pradeep Chander Naik took over as the 21st Director-General of the Assam Rifles.

In a series of changes in the Navy, Vice-Admiral Ravneet Singh took charge as the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff from Vice-Admiral M.S. Pawar, who superannuated on May 31.

Vice-Admiral Sandeep Naithani assumed charge as the Chief of Material of the Navy from Vice-Admiral S.R. Sarma, who superannuated on May 31.

Vice-Admiral Sreekumar Nair took over as the Director-General, Naval Projects (DGNP), Visakhapatnam, while Vice-Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi assumed charge as Chief of Personnel.

New chief at Andaman and Nicobar Command

Lt. Gen. Ajai Singh assumes charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Lt. Gen. Ajai Singh

Ministry statement said.

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IN BRIEF



Justice A.K. Mishra appointed NHRC chief

NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday formally appointed Justice Arun Kumar Mishra as the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Justice Mishra's name was recommended by a high-powered selection panel consisting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi; Union Home Minister Amit Shah; Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Harivansh; Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla; and the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge.

IJUL challenges order on citizenship in SC

NEW DELHI

The Indian Union Muslim League (IJUL) has challenged in the Supreme Court a May 28 government order inviting non-Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, residing in India, to apply for citizenship. An application urged the court to stay the order. It said the order delegated the power to grant citizenship by registration and naturalisation to Collectors of certain districts. The Union Home Ministry's order was a clever way to implement the "malafide designs" of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

HC asks AI to reinstate pilots with back wages

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed Air India (AI), the national carrier, to reinstate with back wages several pilots whose services were terminated with effect from August 13. Justice Jyoti Singh gave the direction on petitions filed by over 40 Air India pilots who have been terminated from service.

Many of the pilots had resigned due to non-payment or delayed payment of their salaries. They later withdrew the resignations before the six-month notice period was over.

Weather delays rescue in Meghalaya coal mine

GUWAHATI

Rain and slushy conditions have delayed the rescue operation at a coal mine in Meghalaya, where a dynamite blast led to the flooding of a pit trapping five labourers more than 500 ft below. The incident happened on Sunday. Four of the trapped labourers - two unidentified - are from Assam and one is from Tripura. "We have requisitioned a crane the miners were using for the rescue personnel... We have also placed pumps to drain out the water from the mine, but the weather is playing spoilsport," an official said.

DM Act is of 2005 vintage, was first enforced during pandemic

Centre issued notice to ex-Bengal Chief Secretary under it

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Hours before he retired on May 31, former Chief Secretary of West Bengal Alapan Bandyopadhyay was served a show-cause notice by the Union Home Ministry under Section 51 of the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005, punishable by imprisonment of up to two years or a fine or both.

The Section pertains to "punishment for obstruction" for refusal to comply with a direction given by the Central government.

EXPLAINER



Alapan Bandyopadhyay

meeting taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at cyclone-affected Kalakunda in West Bengal on May 28, "has acted in a manner tantamount to refusing to comply with lawful directions of the Central Government and is thus violative of Section 51 (b) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005," the notice to Mr. Bandyopadhyay said.

The Section prescribes "punishment for obstruction" for refusal to comply with any direction given by or on behalf of the Central government or the State government or the National Executive Committee or the State Executive Committee or the District Authority under the Act.

It says that violation shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term that may extend to two years".

Earlier use

Through the particular provision, the Home Ministry made spitting in public a punishable offence in April last year. The guidelines issued by the Ministry under the DM Act, binding on the States, made "wearing of face masks in public places mandatory". On March 30, 2020, when thousands of migrants gathered at the Anand Vihar railway station in Delhi due to the sudden announcement of the nationwide lockdown, two Delhi government officers were suspended and two others were served show-cause notices by the Centre under the Act for dereliction of duty.

Replacement level fertility

'China's population norms serve as warning for India'

Need to focus on stabilisation: experts

JAGRITI CHANDRA

NEW DELHI

China's decision to relax its two-child norm and allow couples to have three children must serve as a warning for India that coercive population strategies can be counter-productive, say experts.

After enforcing one-child and two-child policies to control its population over the past four decades, China on Monday announced that it will allow couples to have a third child as it stares at a fast ageing population. India, on the other hand, has been toying with the idea of population control measures through a two-child norm, which found a mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech two years ago.

"India can learn from China's failed experience of enforcing coercive population policies. Population control measures, however stringent, have landed China in a population crisis and in India it will be worse," says Poonam Muttreja of the Population Foundation of India. "We will end up with the same issues of an ageing population and very few people to take care of them in another three decades. In Sikkim and Lakshadweep, we are already facing the same challenge of an ageing population, shrinking workforce and an increase in sex



India has been toying with the idea of population control measures.

selective practices given that they have low fertility rates.

India has long been concerned about curbing population "explosion", but needs to focus its attention on population stabilisation instead. "India has done very well with its family planning measures and now we are at replacement level fertility of 2.1, which is desirable. We don't need any coercive measures. But we need to sustain population stabilisation because in some States, including Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala and Karnataka, the total fertility rate is way below replacement level, which means we will experience in 30-40 years what China is experiencing now," says Niranjana Saggurti, Director, Population Council of India.

Replacement level fertility is the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next.

A ND-NDE



'2020-21 darkest economic year in 4 decades'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The financial year of 2020-21 has been the 'darkest' year of the economy in the past four decades and the Narendra Modi government should heed the advice of economists to avoid its repeat, the Congress said on Tuesday.

Separately, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said on Twitter, "PM's hall of shame – Minimum GDP. Maximum Unemployment".

"The current state of the economy is no doubt largely due to the impact of the pandemic but it has been compounded by the ineptitude and incompetent economic management of the BJP-led NDA government," said former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. He alleged that advice of economists had been rebuffed, world-wide experience ignored, suggestions on cash transfers and fiscal expansion were turned down and 'hollow packages' like Atmanirbhar fell flat.

"We had pointed out that what the economy needed was a strong dose of stimulus, including increased government expenditure, direct transfers of cash to the poor and liberal distribution of free rations. Our pleas fell on deaf ears, and the result is a negative growth of 7.3%," he added.

Mr. Chidambaram said many industry bodies, including the CII and FICCI, had pleaded for fiscal expansion, including cash transfers to the poor, and cited the RBI's monthly review flagging the 'demand shock' and its consequences.

Congress CMs question exclusion from GoM

The group will discuss GST waiver on COVID-19 essentials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Chief Ministers of the Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have questioned the Union government's decision not to include Finance Ministers from the Congress-ruled States in the Group of Ministers (GoM) formed to examine the issue of GST exemption to COVID-19 relief material.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma is the convenor of this eight-member committee. The other members are Ministers from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot wrote on Twitter, "The Union Government has set up a GoM following the GST Council Meeting of May 28th, 2021. A deliberate



Ashok Gehlot

attempt has been made to keep the principal Opposition party, the Congress, that has three members in the GST Council out of the GoM."

'It's deliberate'

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said the exclusion of the Congress was against the spirit of cooperative federalism.

"Congress-ruled States are also part of the GST Council, so why have they been omitted out of this committee," he asked.

It was "deliberate" and to ensure that the Centre got to have its way, he alleged.

Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal has been one of the first leaders to raise the necessity of holding a GST Council meeting to rationalise the tax on supplies needed for the pandemic. West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra, too, had raised this issue. Both have not found space in the committee. The Ministers of the Congress-ruled States had recently proposed that for all goods needed to deal with COVID-19, the GST should be only 0.1%.

The GoM has to examine GST waiver for vaccines, medicines, medical-grade oxygen, pulse oximeters, test kits, hand sanitiser, oxygen therapy equipment, ventilators, and so on. It has to submit a report by June 8.

Panel had warned MHA on Lakshadweep

Congress leader Anand Sharma urges the Home Minister to intervene

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary panel on Home Affairs, headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma, had warned the Union Home Ministry to ensure that any decision on the development of Lakshadweep is taken after consultations with all stakeholders and elected representatives.

Mr. Sharma said in his letter to the Home Minister that the Parliamentary Panel, in its report tabled in March this year, had pointed out that while the development of the islands was necessary, decision-making should follow a thorough process.

The latest rules, framed by the Lakshadweep administrator, Praful K. Patel, have put the island dwellers in a tizzy.

Among his many deci-

The MHA may take up matters of structured planning and overall economic development with the UT administration, agencies concerned, member of Parliament of the UT and other elected representatives. This will also help in finding a way forward and amicable solution to the developmental problems of the UT

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE



sions are banning the sale and consumption of beef and relaxing restrictions on liquor.

"The MHA may hold periodic meetings on development of Lakshadweep as it is a highly eco-sensitive region. The MHA may take up matters of structured planning and overall economic development with the UT administration, agencies concerned, member of

Parliament of the UT and other elected representatives. This will also help in finding a way forward and amicable solution to the developmental problems of the UT," the standing committee had said in its report.

Mr. Sharma has urged the Home Minister to intervene. "The Ministry of Home Affairs may urgently appoint a panel of experts to examine all the developmental issues,

instead of leaving it entirely to the administration," he wrote.

'Violation of rights'

The draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation, 2021, which gives unhindered power to the administrator to remove or relocate islanders from their property without their consent and without giving justification for the proposed activities, is another big point of contention. This is a violation, Mr. Sharma said, of "Right to Livelihood," a fundamental right.

"Large scale of acquisitions of land, in total disregard of the interest and demand of the people of the island, will adversely affect their livelihood, particularly of the fishing communities," he wrote.

NGT orders U.P. govt. to take action on illegal sand mining

Panel was hearing a plea pertaining to Hamirpur district

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging illegal sand mining in Hamirpur district, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to take remedial action for the same.

Taking note of an earlier order passed by the Tribunal, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "...this application stands disposed of with a direction to the Chief Secretary, U.P., and District Magistrate Hamirpur, to look into the matter and take remedial action following due process of law."

Earlier, in a similar mat-

The Environment department may also develop an appropriate mobile app for receiving and redressing the grievances

for the State of U.P....may be duly taken into account."

"The mechanism must provide for review at the level of the Chief Secretary at least once in every quarter, in a meeting with all departments concerned in the State. The Chief Secretary, U.P., may ensure further action in the light of the report of the Oversight Committee," the Bench said. The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Suresh Kumar who alleged sand mining in a "submerged water area" in Hamirpur district in violation of existing laws and guidelines.

Swapan Dasgupta back in RS; shameful, says Trinamool

He was forced to resign ahead of the West Bengal election

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A month after his resignation from the Rajya Sabha to contest the West Bengal poll on Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ticket, Swapan Dasgupta was renominated to the House by President Ramnath Kovind to fill the seat that fell vacant after his resignation, for his remaining term till April 24 next year.

Mr. Dasgupta lost the Tarkeshwar seat to his Trinamool Congress rival, Ramendu Sinharay, by a margin of over 7,000 votes.

Mr. Dasgupta was forced to resign after the Trinamool Congress pointed out that he should be disqualified from the Upper House for contesting the election despite being a nominated member.

The government is setting a bad precedent here by throwing all parliamentary norms out of the window

SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY
Trinamool Congress

Tinamool's chief whip in the Rajya Sabha, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, told *The Hindu*, "I do not think it has ever happened in the history of the Rajya Sabha that a person who resigned just a month back is renominated by the President of India. The government is setting a bad precedent here by throwing all parliamentary norms out of the window."

Mr. Ray termed it a

shameful act. "He was sent to West Bengal, protected as a leader of the BJP. After losing the battle now, he is being rehabilitated by the backdoor. The BJP, it seems, does not have educated people to run the show, so they are holding on to the ones they have," he said, adding that it was an insult to the office of the President. "The nominated posts are to be occupied by persons of eminence. And now, the President is forced to nominate a person who fought on a BJP ticket just a month back."

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter, "I think this is the FIRST time since the Rajya Sabha came into being in 1952 that such a thing has happened."

Rajnath speaks to Australian Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India remains fully committed to implementing a comprehensive strategic partnership with Australia and both sides look forward to convening a Ministerial 2+2 dialogue at the earliest opportunity, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday after a telephonic conversation with his Australian counterpart Peter Dutton.

Both Ministers reviewed the defence cooperation between the two countries in the backdrop of the current regional situation and they acknowledged the momentum it had achieved following the upgrade of the partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in June 2020, a Defence Ministry statement said.

The Executive Engineer-2, Lakes Division Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, invites Proposals (Technical and Financial) for appointing Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the projects detailed in the table below.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY - e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No: Re-Tender 13/21-22/SE/PHC/PKD JJM-2020-21-WSS to Kannadi, Kuzhalmannam, Kizhakkanchery, Vandazi, Malampuzha and Muthalamada panchayaths - supplying, laying, distribution system and providing FHTCs, Construction of 7.5 LL, 5.5 LL and 6 LL OHSRs, supplying and laying CWPM, supply and erection of RW and CW pumpset. EMD: ₹500000. Tender fee: ₹16800. Last Date for submitting Tender: 14.06.2021, 03:00pm. Phone: 0491-2544927. Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Sd/-
Superintendent Engineer, PH Circle, Palakkad

RFP document can be downloaded from the TTD's website (www.tirumala.org) from 04-06-2021 to 5.00 p.m. to 19-06-2021 up to 1.00 PM IST. The same shall be deposited in tender box kept in O/o the Superintending Engineer-I, TTD, Tirumala, or on or before 19-06-2021 by 3.00 p.m. IST. For further details contact:

(1) Director, S.V.Gosala: 9849050646 (2) PA to SE-I: 9704678512.

Adv.No.411/D3/CE/TTD/2021-22, Dt: 31-05-2021

Superintending Engineer - I

1 17/SE-1/TTD/2021-22 Request for proposal is invited from the eligible Entrepreneurs, to setup plant, Manufacture & Supply of Panchagavya Herbal products at TTD premises, Tirupati for a period of 10 years on Boot basis.

+ The green panel had said, "The Environment department may also develop an appropriate mobile app for receiving and redressing the grievances

for the State of U.P....may be duly taken into account."

"The mechanism must provide for review at the level of the Chief Secretary at least once in every quarter, in a meeting with all departments concerned in the State. The Chief Secretary, U.P., may ensure further action in the light of the report of the Oversight Committee," the Bench said. The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Suresh Kumar who alleged sand mining in a "submerged water area" in Hamirpur district in violation of existing laws and guidelines.

Earlier, in a similar mat-

TAMIL NADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION

Head Office, 12, THAMBAMMY ROAD, KILPAUK, CHENNAI - 600 010
Ph. No. (044) 28425773 Email id : tnsc.tn@nic.in

CIN : U15137TN1972SC006157

SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

No. QC2/035813/2020 Dated: 01.06.2021

Short Term E-Tender No.: TNCSC/21-22/ET/06

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation invites online electronic tender for THE SUPPLY OF 6,500 NOS. OF LOW DENSITY BLACK POLYETHYLENE COVERS HAVING THE SIZE OF 9.8 X 6.4 X 5.2 METERS WITH 250 MICRON THICKNESS."

Complete Short Term e-tender document can be viewed, downloaded and uploaded through <https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprochome/tncsc> from 02.06.2021 to 14.06.2021.

The bidders have to participate in online bidding only with Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II.

For Registration and further details contact MSTC Limited.

Phone: 25222842/25261910/25261005 e-Mail: mstc@mstcindia.co.in

Last Date for Online Submission : 14.06.2021 up to 2.00 PM

Short Term E-Tender Opening Date & Time : 14.06.2021 at 3.30 PM

DPR/1664/Tender/2021

MANAGING DIRECTOR

No.EE-2(Lakes)/TN-05/2021-22 Date: 01-06-2021

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Two Cover System)

(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

The Executive Engineer-2, Lakes Division Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, invites Proposals (Technical and Financial) for appointing Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the projects detailed in the table below.

SI. No. Name of the Project Project Cost (Rs. in Lakhs)

1. Providing DPR Services for Development and Improvements to Thavarekere Lake 510.00

2. Providing DPR Services for Development and Improvements to Arehalli Lake in Sy. No. 27 and 28 (Call-2) 689.50

Tenders must be accompanied by Earnest Money Deposit Declaration form as specified in the Tender Documents as per G.O. No: FD 675 Expenditure-12/2020 Dated: 22-12-2020

Calendar of Events: (1) Date of Pre bid meeting at the Office of the Executive Engineer (Lakes) on 07-06-2021 at 3:00 p.m. (2) Last Date for Submission of Proposals is 11-06-2021, 4:00 p.m.

(3) Date of Opening of Technical Proposals is 14-06-2021, 11:00 a.m. (4) Date of Opening of Financial Proposals after Approval of Technical Proposals through e-Procurement.

Further particulars can be obtained from the above Office during working hours on working days or from website:

<https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/-, Executive Engineer, Lakes-Division-2, BBMP.

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APATHAMITRA ON 14410

6 Feet

Follow Physical Distancing

Maintain Hand Hygiene

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)
Corporate Office, 2nd Floor, MESCOM Bhavana, Kavoor Cross Road, Bejai, Mangalore - 575004. Ph: 0824-2885795 E-mail: mescom@rediffmail.com

CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

IN BRIEF



HC bats for more security to Poonawalla

MUMBAI The Bombay High Court on Tuesday suggested that the Maharashtra government do a rethink on security for the CEO of vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India, Adar Poonawalla, saying, "He is playing a very substantial role." A Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and Abhay Ahuja was hearing a petition filed by advocate Datta Mani seeking Z plus security for Mr. Poonawalla as he is allegedly being threatened by States and businessmen to supply the COVID-19 vaccine, Covishield. The petition also sought a direction from the court to register an FIR against those threatening Mr. Poonawalla.

Odisha hospital accused of neglecting patients

Bhubaneswar Disturbing photographs of patients, including a woman, lying naked on the floor of a washroom and beds in a COVID-19 hospital in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha have been shared on social media. A delegation of citizens under the banner of 'Ame Mayurbhanj' met Mayurbhanj Collector Vineet Bhardwaj and apprised him of the situation. "We got to know that the condition of patients was extremely distressing in the hospital. There was no one to give care to them," said Bibek Patnaik of the group. Mr. Bhardwaj visited the hospital and said the charge of neglect of patients was not true.

BJP MLA booked for flouting norms

PUNE A BJP MLA from Maharashtra has been booked along with 60 others for violating COVID-19 norms after a video clip of him celebrating and dancing at his daughter's pre-wedding function surfaced online. A case was registered against Mahesh Landge, a two-time MLA from Bhosari in Pune's Pimpri-Chinchwad area, on Monday night. The police said all physical distancing and safety norms were flouted.

Railways sets a record in freight loading for May

NEW DELHI The Railways on Tuesday said it loaded the highest ever freight of 114.8 million tonnes for the month of May. The loading stood at 114.8 million tonnes, 9.7% higher than 104.6 million tonnes in May 2019. "Despite the COVID challenges, freight figures continue to maintain the high momentum in terms of earnings and loading in May. On mission mode, the Railways' freight made the highest-ever loading for May," said a statement by the Ministry of Railways. It also said that a total of 22,916 metric tonnes of liquid oxygen have been delivered to States so far.

NCPCR tracks data on orphans

9,346 children have either lost a parent or been abandoned during pandemic

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI



Harsh truth: Many children are facing personal loss and trauma due to the impact of COVID-19. ■ BISWARANAJ ROUT

Bal Swaraj, an online tracking portal of a national child rights body, shows details of nearly 10,000 children in the country in immediate need of care and protection. They include children aged between zero and 17 orphaned or abandoned during the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) informed the Supreme Court that these children ran a high risk of being pushed into trafficking and flesh trade. It said it had received several complaints of government authorities illegally transferring details of children to private entities and NGOs.

A Bench of Justices L. Narasimha Rao and Aniruddha Bose is *suo motu* examining ways to protect children who have suffered personal loss and trauma due to the pandemic.

"The cataclysmic COVID-19 pandemic devastated the vulnerable sections of society... there are a number

of children who have become orphans due to the demise of either the breadwinner of the family or both their parents," the court's *amicus curiae*, advocate Gaurav Agrawal, said.

Immediate care

On May 28, the Bench directed the Centre to state welfare measures for the children orphaned by the pandemic. The NCPCR, represented by advocate Swapna Chaturvedi, and the States were asked to compile data identifying children in need of immediate care. Dis-

trict authorities were asked to immediately cater to the basic needs of food, shelter and clothes to orphaned and abandoned children. "The district authorities are directed to upload the information of children who have become orphans after March, 2020 on the portal 'Bal Swaraj' before tomorrow evening [May 29]," the Bench had ordered.

Bal Swaraj records the details of 9,346 children who are in need of care and protection as of May 29. Of this, children who have lost either parent are 7,464, those or-

phaned and abandoned are 1,742 and 140 respectively. The portal shows that children aged between eight and 13 form the highest age bracket who are in dire need of help. There are 3,711 of them.

The NCPCR affidavit also provided Statewise data on the total number of children orphaned, abandoned or having lost a parent since March 2020 when the pandemic first hit the country. Interestingly, West Bengal authorities have provided the details of only one child while Delhi has listed only five children on the NCPCR portal as of May 29.

District authorities of Uttar Pradesh have listed 2,110 children orphaned, abandoned or lost a parent. Tamil Nadu lists 159 children, Kerala 952, Bihar 1,327, Maharashtra 796, Karnataka 36, Andhra 116, Haryana 776, Jammu and Kashmir 375 and Gujarat 434, among other States as of May 29.

The NCPCR said the uploading of data on the Bal Swaraj portal was an ongoing process.

Govt. nod to resume supply of oxygen for industrial use

Home Ministry says needs of hospitals must also be met

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government has temporarily permitted the resumption of oxygen supply for industrial use by several sectors, including firms producing oxygen cylinders, copper, aluminium, steel as well as exporters and food processing units.

Infrastructure projects and micro, small and medium enterprises have also been allowed to use liquid oxygen.

In April, as the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic surged, the Centre had invoked the Disaster Management Act to limit oxygen supplies for industrial use, and subsequently strengthened the curbs by directing all oxygen stocks to be diverted for medical purposes.

On Monday, the Home Ministry informed the Commerce and Industry Ministry that it may allow usage of liquid oxygen to specified industries on temporary basis



Small reprieve: Infrastructure projects and MSMEs have been allowed to use liquid oxygen on a temporary basis. ■ FILE PHOTO

subject to ensuring adequate supply of liquid medical oxygen to hospitals and other medical purposes as per demands of States and Union Territories.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had urged the Home Ministry to consider resuming oxygen supplies for micro, small and medium enterprises, infrastructure projects, exporters, food processing units, as well as continuous pro-

No dramatic rise seen in cases among minors'

It is part of overall surge: Maharashtra

STAFF REPORTER
PUNE

Maharashtra's Public Health Department on Tuesday said the State has not seen a dramatic rise in the number of child COVID-19 patients. It said that the percentage of minors losing life to the disease was 0.07% till May 2021.

According to the health department data on minors from November 2020 to April 2021, the percentage of those infected in the age group of 0-5 years was 1.3%, that of 6-11 years was 2.4%, and 12 to 17 years was 4.1%, with the total being 7.8%.

According to officials from the Health Department, the percentage has remained in this range for all months. "The increase in absolute numbers is due to the increase in the total number of infections from all age groups," the official said.

Commenting on the reports of the increase in number of infections among minors in Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra, the department said in March 2021, the total number of COVID-19 patients in the district was 18,669, out of which minors were 1,631 (8.74%). In April 2021, the total number of patients were 77,344, out of which minors were 7,607 (9.83%), and in May 2021, out of a total of 80,785 patients, the minors were 9,416 (11.65%).



A swab sample being taken from a boy for COVID-19 testing.

As per the data, the percentage of minors getting infected by COVID-19 in November 2020 was 6.9% of the total infections. In December 2020 and January 2021, it was 6.3% and 6%, respectively. In February, March and April of 2021, the percentage was 7.26%, 6.78% and 8.38%, respectively.

Additional Chief Secretary (Public Health), Dr. Pradeep Vyas, said the State government has already formed a task force of paediatricians. "The State government is working at improving infrastructure at the hospital level and setting up the required machinery to combat the possible outbreak of the virus among minors," he said.

Ahmednagar District Collector Rajendra Bhosale said the district was adequately prepared to tackle a possible "third wave" of the pandemic.

CROSSWORD

13263

(set by Bruno)

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SCAN TO PLAY



14 He rigs networks to support Hawaii's skyscraper (4-4)

16 Popular old rat (8)

18 Where one may find a movie director — somewhere on the big picture (5)

20 Last bit of frizzle airbrushed from photograph of braid (4)

21 Only men can get this notice at a Mississippi tech company (5,5)

23 Wise, mostly courteous, and nice at heart (7)

24 A new team's entry often causes worry (7)

25 This' required to obtain college degrees, ultimately? (6)

26 Window's old — top requires replacement (6)

■ DOWN

1 Lover without love — ever without heart (5)

2 Ignoring sound eastern law, leader lost foresight (7)

3 Pet at Macy's running with tip of leash causing disaster (9)

5 Management sounded unenthusiastic (5)

6 Cloudy nuclear explosion (7)

7 Utensils to mostly tenderise ingredients hung around head of nail (6,3)

10 Perform extemporaneously, express displeasure and walk (5-4)

13 Fire set to a lab on freight carrier (5,4)

15 Rapid slides on islands — go sliding (9)

17 Not oddly, robust oldie vies to survive (7)

19 False argument demonstrated by Glossop & his minions (7)

21 It could bail one out? (5)

22 Change will finally come up after some time (5)

■ ACROSS

1 Church architect's advanced instrument (6)

4 Crazy sailor's taking boat on road (6)

8 Group of people of some obscure origins have base in large town... (7)

9 ... chasing King's lost drawing (7)

11 Idea from one in local office's killed regularly (10)

12 Less number of fouls, initially pitched by pitcher (4)

13 Sugar container emptied daily (5)

SUDOKU

6	4	2	3					
2								
5		1	2					
8	7	9						
2								
8	5	7						
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13262

H	Y	P	A	T	I	A
R	E	P	E	A	N	T
I	O	A	U	S	T	
P	R	E	M	I	N	
E	M	I	S	N	C	K
M	A	I	N	E	R	S
F	O	U	N	T	E	
T	A	U	E	S	I	
O	U	N	T	E	I	
G	I	B				
I	M	P				
M	H	V				
F	A	J				
M	S	A				
T	A	S				
Z	A	A				
Y	E	N				

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No. SSS995 Date/Time: www.msigfeatures.com

FAITH

Devoted disciple

Kooratashvan, a devoted disciple of Ramanujacharya, was blinded by a fanatic king. Ramanuja was anxious that his shishya regain his sight. So he asked him to pray to Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram. He could have asked Kooratashvan to worship in any Vishnu temple. Why specifically this temple? The reason was Alavanadar, who identified Ramanuja as his successor, had composed a sloka in praise of Varadaraja, wherein he praises the Lord's capacity to give sight to the sightless, the ability to walk to those who cannot walk, ability to hear to those who cannot, eloquence to one who cannot speak, and progeny to the childless. That is why Ramanuja asked Kooratashvan to seek Lord Varadaraja's blessings, said P.B. Rajahamsam in a discourse.

Alavanadar's sloka is unique, because it is the earliest sloka by any Vaishnavite Acharya. There is a sloka of Nathamuni, which has come down to us. It is a sloka that compares Namazhvar to the Sun. But this sloka does not point to any particular deity. The earliest sloka, which specifically refers to the deity of a temple, is Alavanadar's sloka in praise of Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram. While all the Azhvars have praised deities of different temples, the very first sloka in praise of an

Europe demands explanation after U.S.-Danish spying claims

Macron, Merkel seek explanations from both Washington and Copenhagen

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

France, Germany and other European countries demanded answers on Monday following reports the U.S. spied on its allies using Danish underwater cables, as questions mounted over whether Denmark knew about the operation.

In an investigative report on Sunday, Danish public broadcaster Danmarks Radio (DR) and other European media outlets said the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) had eavesdropped on Danish underwater Internet cables from 2012 to 2014 to spy on top politicians in France, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

The NSA got access to text messages, telephone calls and Internet traffic, including searches, chats and mes-



EMMANUEL MACRON
FRENCH PRESIDENT

saging services – including those of Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel, DR said.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday they expected explanations from both Washington and Copenhagen. "This is not acceptable between allies, and even less between allies and European partners," said Mr. Macron after the two leaders talked via video conference.

Bramsen's condemnation of any such spying.

Ms. Bramsen, who took over the defence portfolio in June 2019, has neither confirmed nor denied DR's report, but told AFP that "systematic eavesdropping of close allies is unacceptable".

Denmark's neighbours also demanded explanations. "It's unacceptable if countries which have close allied cooperation feel the need to spy on one another," Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg told public broadcaster NRK. She said Norway had asked Denmark "for all the information they have".

Swedish Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist said he had been in contact with Denmark's Defence Minister to ask if Danish platforms have been used to spy on Swedish politicians".

"There is no room for suspicion," said Mr. Macron, as he stressed the value of the ties between Europeans and Americans.

"That is why what we are waiting for complete clarity," from both Denmark and the U.S., he added. "We are awaiting these answers."

Ms. Merkel said she "could only agree" with Mr. Macron's comments, adding she was "reassured" by Danish Defence Minister Trine



Fatal conflict: Indian and Chinese soldiers facing off in the Galwan Valley last year. ■ AP

Qiu questioned govt's account of last year's clash

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Chinese authorities have sentenced a once popular blogger to eight months in prison "for defaming martyrs" over his comments questioning the government's account of last year's clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers in the Galwan Valley.

Qiu Ziming "received a jail term of eight months for defaming martyrs on Monday", the Communist Party-run *Global Times* reported, adding that this was "China's first such reported case since a new amendment was attached to the Criminal Law" that introduced penalties for "insulting" or "slandering" national heroes or martyrs.

The court said the sentence was "lighter" than the maximum possible three-year sentence because he had "confessed to his



Fatal conflict: Indian and Chinese soldiers facing off in the Galwan Valley last year. ■ AP

crime". Mr. Qiu was among at least half a dozen people known to have been detained for comments questioning the government over the June 15, 2020 clash in the Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives.

At least four Chinese soldiers died in the clash, with China announcing military honours for them – its only confirmation so far of causalities – eight months after the clash took place.

Mr. Qiu, 38, an investigative journalist formerly with

The Economic Observer, was arrested in Nanjing in February after posting messages to his 2.5 million followers on Weibo, the Twitter-equivalent used in China.

'Higher death toll'

He suggested that China's fatalities would have been

higher than four because as per the official account, some of the soldiers died coming to the aid of troops in difficulty, who, in his view, would have suffered losses as well.

He also questioned why

the announcement took eight months, while India had, in contrast, promptly recognised the 20 Indian soldiers who died. India's prompt announcement, he wrote, suggested that "in India's view they won and paid a lesser price".

The police in Nanjing had said he was arrested for "releasing false information and smearing the four heroes who died and one who was wounded when dealing with the Indian military's illegal trespassing".

Last week, Wang Jinyu, 19, a resident of Chongqing who is also a U.S. permanent resident and is wanted by China for similarly commenting on the Galwan clash, was freed after being detained in Dubai, the Associated Press reported.

Asked about his detention in Dubai, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Monday that "competent Chinese authorities are investigating and handling the case in accordance with law".

Sri Lanka cargo vessel fire extinguished after two weeks

Island nation facing 'worst beach pollution in history'

ELSEWHERE



U.S. to hand over Bagram base in 20 days: officials
KABUL

The U.S. military will hand over its main Bagram Air Base to Afghan forces in about 20 days, an official said. The vast base, built by the Soviets in the 1980s, is the biggest military facility used by U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, with tens of thousands of troops stationed there during the peak of U.S. involvement in the country. AFP

Malaysia scrambles jets to intercept Chinese planes
KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia scrambled jets to intercept 16 Chinese military aircraft off the country's coast in the South China Sea, a rare incident that the Foreign Minister angrily denounced on Tuesday as an "intrusion". It took place on Monday off the Malaysian part of Borneo island over the fiercely contested waters, where China and Malaysia have overlapping territorial claims. AFP

WHO gives nod to China's Sinovac jab

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

The World Health Organization on Tuesday approved the Sinovac COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use – the second Chinese vaccine to receive the WHO's green light.

The UN health agency signed off on the two-dose vaccine, which is already being deployed in several countries around the world. "WHO today validated the Sinovac-CoronaVac vaccine for emergency use," it said in a statement.

The move gives countries, funders, procuring agencies and communities "assurance that it meets international standards for safety, efficacy and manufacturing". Last month Sinopharm became the first Chinese vaccine to be approved by the WHO.

The WHO has also given emergency use listing to vaccines being made by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and the AstraZeneca jab being produced in India, South Korea and the EU, which it counts separately.

The listing paves the way for countries to quickly approve and import a vaccine for distribution, especially those states without an international-standard regulator of their own. It also opens the door for the jabs to enter the Covax scheme, which aims to provide equitable access to doses around the world, particularly in poorer countries.

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

The fire aboard a Singapore-registered cargo ship off Colombo was finally extinguished after about two weeks following a concerted international operation, the Sri Lankan Navy said on Tuesday.

"Experts from the [Dutch] salvage company SMIT boarded the vessel [MV X-Press Pearl] and said the engine rooms are flooded. Our divers are yet to obtain clearance to check if there is any leak. The Indian Coast Guard vessels are also still here, assisting us," Captain Indika De Silva told *The Hindu*.

Flames broke out aboard the vessel on May 20, and spread rapidly after an onboard explosion on May 25, leading to what Sri Lanka's environmentalists fear could be the country's worst environmental disaster.



The charred remains of the vessel. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The vessel, which left the Hazira port in Gujarat on May 15, was headed to Singapore via Colombo, carrying 25 tonnes of nitric acid, other chemicals and 28 containers of plastic raw material. Much of the cargo reportedly fell into the sea, while tonnes of plastic pellets were found deposited along Sri Lanka's coastline, prompting authorities to restrict access to the sea and impose a

fishing ban. Sri Lanka's Marine Protection Authority chairperson Dharshani Ladhandapura said: "This is probably the worst beach pollution in our history."

Many social media users shared photographs of plastic pellet heaps and dead fishes along the country's southern beaches.

Statement recorded

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan investigators questioned the crew of the cargo ship, even as the vessel smouldered for over 12 days.

The Criminal Investigation Department recorded a statement from the captain for 14 hours on Monday, Colombo-based *The Morning* newspaper reported.

The Colombo Magistrate's Court issued an order preventing the captain, chief engineer, and the deputy chief engineer of the vessel from leaving the country.

China reports human case of bird flu strain

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

China reported the world's first human infection of the H10N3 bird flu strain on Tuesday but said the risk of it spreading widely among people was low.

A 41-year-old man was admitted to hospital with fever symptoms in Zhenjiang on April 28 and was diagnosed with H10N3 a month later, the National Health Commission (NHC) said in a statement.

"The risk of large-scale spread is extremely low," the NHC said, adding that the man was in a stable condition.

It described H10N3 as low pathogenic – less likely to cause death or severe illness – in birds. Several strains of bird flu have been found among animals in China but mass outbreaks in humans are rare. The last human epidemic of bird flu in China occurred in late 2016 to 2017, with the H7N9 virus.

Pope updates canon law to address paedophilia by priests

This is the most comprehensive revision since 1983

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis updated the Catholic Church's criminal code on Tuesday by adding details on punishing sexual abuse crimes of minors by priests, measures long sought by activists against paedophilia.

Revision of the penal sanctions within the Code of Canon Law followed a years-long process involving input from canonist and criminal law experts and came after repeated complaints by victims of sexual abuse and others that the code's previous wording was outdated and intransparent.

The new code falls short of explicitly spelling out sexual offences against minors yet refers to offences against the sixth commandment which prohibits adultery.

The purpose of the revision, the most comprehensive since 1983, is "restoration of justice, the reform of the offender, and the repair of scandal" wrote Pope Francis in introducing the changes. Since becoming pope in 2013, the Argentine

pontiff has striven to tackle the decades-long sexual abuse scandals involving Catholic priests around the globe, although many activists against paedophilia insist much more needs to be done. He convened an unprecedented summit on clerical sex abuse in 2019 while lifting secrecy rules that hindered investigations of abusing priests, among other measures.

"The new text introduces various modifications to the law in force and sanctions some new criminal offences, which respond to the increasingly widespread need in the various communities to see justice and order re-established that the crime has shattered," he wrote.

Other technical improvements related to "the right of defence, the statute of limitations for criminal action, a more precise determination of penaltys", he added. The changes will take effect in December.

INTERVIEW | JULIUS PRANEVICIUS

Europe should speak in one voice'

Pro-China 17+1 grouping has not proved beneficial, says Lithuanian Ambassador



We don't have any issues that would makes us fear China's presence in this area

ion. We want Europe to speak in one strong voice, and in that sense the '17 plus one' format became a divisive forum. We would prefer to keep the dialogue as 27 members plus one, meaning that the entire European Union will engage as one with China on all aspects.

Tensions between China and Lithuania have been building up over a number of issues: Lithuania's new ties with Taiwan, its Parliament's resolution on Uighurs, and then Chinese sanctions on Lithuanian and EU politicians, which led to the EU putting the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment on hold.

Well, we decided to set up a trade office in Taipei, which is part of our broader reach out to Asia, and to be more active and to be more present in different parts of this continent. This is not so unusual – around 15 European countries, and I think about 60 countries all have the trade missions in Tai-

wan. This move was driven by our trade and economic needs, as well as our decision to broaden resources in Asia, and we are also establishing new embassies in South Korea and Singapore. This should not reflect on our bilateral relations with China.

On the sanctions, it was China that decided to impose entry bans and sanctions against some European politicians and academics, and that has had an impact on EU-China relations. Yes, the Lithuanian Parliament had a resolution on the situation in Xinjiang (calling for UN enquiry into treatment of Uighurs), but that is their decision, they are keen to observe what is happening in different parts of the world.

What is Lithuania's stand on the Belt and Road Initiative, which is causing concerns in other European countries more recently, like Montenegro, over the debt incurred?

In our case, the investments from China are not very large, and China ranks 40th among all the countries in the world on FDI in Lithuania.

We also have a well-functioning system of screening of all the foreign direct investment that was introduced in 2002, and a special commission that checks them. We don't have any issues that would make us fear China's presence in this area, as you said with the examples of some other countries.

India is now back in negotiations with the EU on a free trade agreement, just as the EU put a hold on its Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) with China. Have Lithuanian tensions with China come up in bilateral discussions in New Delhi?

We very much welcome the decisions of the most recent summit for European leaders and Prime Minister Modi and the decision to launch the discussion on trade agreements. In terms of our bilateral cooperation, we haven't discussed our stance on the '17 plus one' format with Indian counterparts recently, but when we do have ministerial meetings, we will discuss what is happening more broadly in the world, as we always do.

ODISHA STATE MEDICAL CORPORATION LTD.
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Assuring Quality, Saving Lives

Letter No. 5276/OSMC/I-51 /2021/D&S (Division) Dt. 01/06/2021

CORRIGENDUM

Bid Ref. No.: OSMCL/2021-22/GLOBAL/COVID-19/16, dated:14/05/2021

for supply of Covid-19 Vaccine

Sl. No.	Details as mentioned in the Tender Document	Amendments
1.	Clause 5.2.2 (Pre-Qualification of Bidders) DCGI (Drugs Controller General of India) approval is mandatory and the respective bidder as detailed at Clause No. 5.2.1 must submit the appropriate valid supporting documents	1. Manufacturer or their authorized importers of COVID-19 vaccine approved by: USFDA (The United States Food and Drug Administration) or EMA (The European Medicines Agency) or MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, UK) or PMDA (Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency, Japan) or listed by WHO (World Health Organisation) for emergency use- are eligible to bid for which the supporting documents must be submitted. 2. Purchase Orders will be placed to such qualified bidders subject to approval of DCGI (Drugs Controller General of India).
		All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain same.

CAD-372 SD/-Managing Director, Odisha State Medical Corporation

Regd. Office : Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd., Convent Square, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Odisha

Phone No.:(0674) 2380660, Website : www.osmclicod.in Email: logistics.osmclicod@nic.in

OIPR-1012/11/0018/2122

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khamija Bhavan Race Course Road

Bengaluru – 560 001 . Phone No. 080-22265383

website : www.kiadab.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-06/2037/2021-22 Date: 01.06.2021

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through G

MARKET WATCH

	01-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	51,935	0.00
US Dollar	72.90	-0.39
Gold	48,892	0.58
Brent oil	70.99	2.09

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	798.20	28.65
Asian Paints	2931.00	-46.50
Axis Bank	745.15	-5.55
Bajaj Auto	4238.95	46.15
Bajaj Finserv	11829.90	23.60
Bajaj Finance	5784.80	156.85
Bharti Airtel	532.90	-2.00
BPCL	470.85	-1.15
Britannia Ind	3446.75	-1.10
Cipla	946.45	-2.90
Coal India	147.60	-0.10
Divis Lab	4220.10	26.10
Dr Reddys Lab	5316.50	7.35
Eicher Motors	2665.80	-10.35
Grasim Ind	1444.55	-26.65
HCL Tech	950.70	5.50
HDFC	2580.75	27.90
HDFC Bank	1511.70	-4.15
HDFC Life	665.25	-0.65
Hero MotoCorp	2976.75	-30.75
Hindustan	394.70	0.45
Hind Unilever	2358.30	18.25
ICICI Bank	650.10	-12.65
IndusInd Bank	1010.05	-2.95
Infosys	1387.20	-6.55
Indian Oil Corp	109.90	0.65
ITC	215.25	-1.35
JSW Steel	694.50	-16.40
Kotak Bank	1797.00	-10.70
L&T	1474.65	6.95
M&M	806.30	-1.65
Maruti Suzuki	7091.15	4.85
Nestle India Ltd.	17758.50	62.95
NTPC	110.20	-0.30
ONGC	117.60	3.95
PowerGrid Corp	224.40	-1.25
Reliance Ind	2168.90	8.60
SBI Life	966.30	-9.35
State Bank	432.55	8.20
Shree Cement	27623.15	45.15
Sun Pharma	671.05	2.75
Tata Consumer	Products Ltd.	665.80 1.95
Tata Motors	318.10	-0.65
Tata Steel	1100.90	-24.75
TCS	3153.00	-6.15
Tech Mahindra	1030.50	8.85
Titan	1591.40	-4.85
UltraTech Cement	6601.35	-106.65
UPL	815.80	0.70
Wipro	542.80	3.75

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.70	73.02
Euro	88.84	89.23
British Pound	103.06	103.55
Japanese Yen (100)	66.32	66.61
Chinese Yuan	11.39	11.44
Swiss Franc	80.80	81.20
Singapore Dollar	54.96	55.21
Canadian Dollar	60.37	60.66
Malaysian Ringgit	17.61	17.70

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



ALL to operate only for 5-10 days in June

CHENNAI Ashok Leyland Ltd. said its plants will be operational in the month of June only for five to 10 days due to the pandemic-induced lockdown. The company had earlier announced the closure of its plants during May. "The plants are still not fully operational due to the lockdown in the States where our plants are located," the commercial vehicles manufacturer said.

Yamaha cuts prices of two FZ-25 bikes

CHENNAI Yamaha Motor India has announced a revision in the ex-showroom prices of two bikes in the FZ-25 series. "Our team has managed to bring down the input costs for the FZ-25 series and would like to pass on the benefit to customers," Yamaha Motor India said in a statement. The revised prices are ₹1,34,800 (ex-showroom, Delhi) for FZ-25 and ₹1,39,300 for FZS-25.

ITC posts consolidated Q4 net profit of ₹3,817 cr.

Revenue from operations at ₹15,404 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI ITC Ltd. on Tuesday reported a consolidated net profit of ₹3,816.84 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2021. The cigarette-FMCG-to-hotel major had posted a net profit of ₹3,926.46 crore during the January-March quarter of the previous fiscal, ITC said in a filing.

Revenue from operations was at ₹15,404.37 crore during the quarter under review. This was ₹2,560.64 crore in the corresponding period of 2019-20.

Meanwhile, ITC said the results for the latest quarter were not comparable with the earlier period as it also included the revenue of Sunrise Foods, which it had

Moody's cuts GDP forecast

Agency sees economy expanding by 9.3% in FY22 versus earlier estimate of 13.7%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service cut its 2021-22 India GDP growth forecast to 9.3%, from 13.7% earlier, while noting that longer-term risks to the economy would increase if the second COVID-19 wave lasted beyond June and the vaccination roll-out remained a challenge.

"At this stage, we expect an outright decline in economic activity to be limited to the April-June quarter, followed by a rebound in the second half of the year," the ratings agency said on the impact of the second wave.

Following the 7.3% contraction in GDP last year, the second wave would push a recovery to the country's pre-pandemic level out even further, Moody's said, with a

**Growth shackles:** Moody's expects decline in economic activity to be limited to April-June. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

'catch up' unlikely till the end of 2021. In 2022-23, the agency now expects growth of 7.9% compared with its earlier expectation of 6.2%.

"The government's ability to limit the spread of the virus and materially increase the rate of vaccinations will have a direct impact on...

both health and economic outcomes," Moody's noted.

Moody's warned of more scarring if the second wave "caused a permanent loss of jobs and business closures", resulting in a fundamentally weaker growth dynamic.

"We do not expect a sustained recovery in private in-

vestment until domestic economic conditions strengthen and the health of the financial sector improves."

While Moody's did not expect the government to enhance spending much from its Budget plans, revenue shortfalls and diversion of more funds to countering the pandemic would push the general government fiscal deficit to 11.8% of GDP this year instead of 10.8% projected earlier. The combined impact of slower growth and a wider deficit would drive the general government debt burden to 90% of GDP in FY22.

Citing structural constraints and the limited effectiveness of reforms, Moody's said it expects India's real growth rate to average about 6% over the medium term.

Manufacturing PMI slides in May, job losses quicken

'Index at 50.8, nears stagnation'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector recorded the weakest performance in 10 months in May, with job losses accelerating as order books shrank, according to the IHS Markit Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) which slid from 55.5 in April to 50.8 in May. A reading of 50 indicates no change.

"The Indian manufacturing sector is showing increasing signs of strain as the COVID-19 crisis intensifies," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics associate director at IHS Markit, adding that all indices were down from April, including key gauges of current sales, production and input buying.

"Amid a lack of new work, goods producers reduced headcounts again, with the rate of job shedding quickening," she said.

The overall level of positive sentiment dipped to a 10-month low.

This subdued optimism, Ms De Lima warned, could hamper business investment and cause further job losses, going forward.

However, housing finance companies (HFCs), with a lower share of field collections, had been less

impacted than the NBFCs,

ICRA said.

With 25-30% of collection through field operations, loan overdues are set to increase as regular collections and recoveries from overdues were impacted by the more extensive and stringent lockdowns implemented by various states during May 2021," the rating agency said.

However, housing finance companies (HFCs), with a lower share of field collections, had been less

NBFCs, HFCs feeling heat of second wave: ICRA

'Loan overdues are set to increase'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Collections of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) have been adversely impacted due to widespread and more stringent lockdowns in May 2021, rating agency ICRA said.

"Amid a lack of new work, goods producers reduced headcounts again, with the rate of job shedding quickening," she said.

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impacted than the NBFCs, ICRA said.

Stating that NBFCs and HFCs felt the stress of the second wave COVID-19 lockdowns and movement restrictions, ICRA said the budding recovery in loan collections witnessed in the third and fourth quarters of FY21 had been stemmed.

'Sugar output climbs to 305.7 lakh tonnes'

Jan.-May exports at 45 lakh tonnes

SPECIAL

CORRESPONDENT

COIMBATORE

Sugar production between October 1, 2020, and May 31 rose to 305.68 lakh tonnes – 35.63 lakh tonnes higher than that of the corresponding period in the 2019-20 sugar season.

Compared with 18 sugar mills that were crushing sugarcane on May 31 last year, only seven, located in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, were into the process on May 31 this year, the Indian Sugar Mills' Association said in a press release on Tuesday.

The association added that export contracts



were entered for almost 58 lakh tonnes of sugar, as against the 60 lakh tonnes of maximum admissible export quantity (MAEQ) fixed by the government.

It is estimated that about 45 lakh tonnes of sugar had been exported between January and May this year.

SBI pares FY22 GDP forecast to 7.9%, from 10.4% earlier

VIKAS DHOOT

NEW DELHI

State Bank of India has slashed its GDP growth projection for this fiscal to 7.9%, from 10.4%, and said India's economic recovery will now be 'W-shaped' instead of the 'V-shaped' recovery anticipated earlier.

While the bank's researchers said there could be an upward bias to its projections, linked to the 'fervent hope of one crore vaccinations per day beginning mid-July as per government projections', they expect a 'disproportionately larger impact' on the economy from the second COVID-19 wave, especially since rural India is not as resilient as its urban counterpart.

"Pick-up in pent-up demand is unlikely to make a large difference in FY22 GDP estimates, and hence it could only be a modest pick-up," the group's chief economic adviser Soumya Kant Ghosh said in a report.

"For [FY22], GDP outlook will be impacted by... international commodity prices which have risen sharply during the year... impact of higher commodity prices will be visible in domestic prices thus impacting consumption."

"The rural economy has been affected during the second wave. Diesel consumption, two-wheeler and tractor sales, fertilizer sales, MGNREGA employment generated all declined in April 2021," Mr. Ghosh pointed out. Warning that the third wave could be as severe as the second wave, going by international experience, the report's author said vaccination should be the key priority for India.

Auto sales decline from April levels

'Pent-up demand may drive recovery'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Automakers posted muted wholesales of vehicles last month amid multiple State-wise lockdowns and disruption to production due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Maruti Suzuki India, the country's largest carmaker, said it sold 32,903 passenger vehicles (PVs) in the country, compared with 1.35 lakh in April 202

QUICK SINGLES



Shafali keeps top spot in WT20 rankings

DUBAI
Shafali Verma, with 776 points, maintained pole position among T20 batters while Kathryn Bryce became the first woman from Scotland to make it into the top-10 in the ICC rankings published on Tuesday. PTI



Jamieson named NZ's Cricketer-of-the-Year

LONDON
New Zealand all-rounder Kyle Jamieson on Monday was awarded the 2021 edition of the Players' Cap. The all-rounder was presented the 'Cricketer-of-the-Year' award by wicketkeeper-batsman B.J. Watling, who will retire after the UK tour. ANI

CSA awards for Nortje and Shabnim

JOHANNESBURG
Pacer Anrich Nortje and Shabnim Ismail were named South Africa men's and women's 'Cricketer-of-the-Year' at CSA's virtual awards ceremony on Monday. ANI

Broad named vice-captain

ANI
LONDON
England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), on Tuesday, confirmed that pacer Stuart Broad would be the side's vice-captain for the two-match Test series against New Zealand, beginning on Wednesday.

"Our vice-captain for #ENGvNZ, @StuartBroad8," official handle of England Cricket tweeted.

Last week, England men's cricket team coach Chris Silverwood had called up Kent's wicket-keeper-batsman Sam Billings and Nottinghamshire's top-order batsman Haseeb Hameed for the upcoming Test series against New Zealand.

The probable teams:

England: Joe Root (Capt.), Rory Burns, Dom Sibley, Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope, Dan Lawrence, James Bracey (wk), Ollie Robinson, Mark Wood, Stuart Broad, and James Anderson.

New Zealand: Kane Williamson (Capt.), Tom Latham, Devon Conway, Ross Taylor, Henry Nicholls, BJ Watling (wk), Colin de Grandhomme, Kyle Jamieson, Tim Southee, Neil Wagner, and Matt Henry.

FIRST MATCH
June 15

vs Sweden, Seville, 12.30 a.m.

THE SPAIN FILE

Sergio Ramos was left out of Spain's squad following a season plagued by injuries, a decision that means no Real Madrid player was called up by the national team for a major tournament for the first time

GOALKEEPERS: Unai Simon, David De Gea, Robert Sanchez

DEFENDERS: Jordi Alba, Jose Gaya, Pau Torres, Aymeric Laporte, Eric Garcia, Diego Llorente, Cesar Azpilicueta

MIDFIELDERS: Sergio Busquets, Rodri Hernandez, Pedri Gonzalez, Fabian Ruiz, Thiago Alcantara, Koke, Marcos Llorente

FOWARDS: Dani Olmo, Mikel Oyarzabal, Alvaro Morata, Gerard Moreno, Ferran Torres, Adama Traore, Pablo Sarabia

C It was tough. It was a complicated decision but it had to be made to benefit the entire group

LUIS ENRIQUE on dropping Sergio Ramos

ONE TO WATCH

Gerard Moreno | The forward may have only made his debut in 2019, but he has taken his excellent club form with Villarreal onto the international stage, netting five times in ten appearances for La Roja, and is already an important focal point for Luis Enrique's side

COMPILED BY S.V. SRIRAM | SOURCE: UEFA/AGENCIES

'Continuity in Test cricket will be great'

Sometimes it's nice to go in without a baggage, you just play and enjoy the atmosphere, says Mithali

CRICKET

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

With India women set to play two Tests in three months, that too away from home, after a seven-year drought, the focus will definitely be on the traditional format as Mithali Raj's side embarks on a full tour of England. Captain Mithali stressed that playing Test cricket will be a big step forward for the younger lot, which has been focusing on limited-over cricket.

"It's good to have Tests, whether it's home or away. If there's continuity, it's great because it helps players as well. Sometimes it's nice to go in without baggage, you just go in, play and enjoy the atmosphere," Mithali said during a media interaction ahead of a tour that will comprise a Test, three ODIs and three T20Is in England. The women's and men's squads will leave together during the wee hours of Wednesday.

Lot of exposure

"It's good to have the girls who are playing for the first time and the girls who have played in the past and can share their experiences how it was back in 2014. But having back-to-back Test match-



Forget the past: Mithali has urged everyone to move on from the unsavoury episode involving Ramesh Powar and herself in the coach's earlier stint. ■ FILE PHOTO

es can give a lot of exposure to the current lot."

Recently appointed head coach Ramesh Powar, albeit ironically, referred to the conventional format as "new" for the youngsters but hoped that the forthcoming Tests in England and Australia (in September) will reinvigorate interest in women's Tests.

"It's a great start. As a coach I want more Tests all over the world. It's a good start and let's take it step by step. Don't push the girls into a zone where you are demanding too much. It's a new format which hasn't been played consistently over the past few years. You might get surprises." Powar's reappointment

last month had raised eyebrows considering he and Mithali had had a public fallout during his short stint as coach in 2018. While Mithali urged everyone to "move on" from the episode and "look forward", Powar stressed they are not going back to the episode.

"I would like to stop the speculation that is happen-

The schedule

TEST

June 16-19: Bristol, 3.30 p.m.

ODIS

June 27: Bristol, 3 p.m.

June 30: Taunton, 6.30 p.m. (Day-Night)

July 3: Worcester, 3 p.m.

T20IS

July 9: Northampton, 11 p.m. (Day-Night)

July 11: Brighton, 7 p.m.

July 14: Chelmsford, 11 p.m. (Day-Night)

All times IST

C This is a great opportunity for me, Mithali and for the whole group to take women's cricket to another level

RAMESH POWAR
Head coach

ing. We interacted well. Otherwise I wouldn't have come back into women's cricket. Everyone grows up in three years," he said. "This is a great opportunity for me, Mithali and for the whole group to take women's cricket to another level when BCCI is supporting us. I don't think we're going to go back to these small things."

T20 World Cup: ICC accepts BCCI request to extend deadline

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) Board has acceded to the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI's) request to extend the deadline for finalising the venue for the T20 World Cup to be played later this year.

The ICC Board, during its meeting on Tuesday, has asked the BCCI to resolve all the pending issues and confirm its plan for hosting the T20 World Cup by June 28.

"The ICC Board has requested that the (event) management focuses its planning for the T20 World Cup 2021 being staged in the UAE with the possibility of including another venue in the Middle East," an ICC statement issued after the meeting said.

Decision later

"A final decision on the host country will be taken later this month. The Board also confirmed that the BCCI will remain the hosts of the event regardless of where the event is played."

The Hindu understands that with a 16-team event to be staged, the three venues in UAE – Dubai, Abu Dhabi

C The BCCI has time till June 28 to host the World Cup in India. If not, we will host it in the UAE. In case the event is shifted to the UAE, we are adding another venue. They are thinking about whether there should be three or four venues

SOURAV GANGULY
BCCI president

and Sharjah – may not suffice. As a result, the ICC is considering hosting a few games in Oman, which has created excellent infrastructure for cricket.

The T20 World Cup is tentatively scheduled to start around Oct. 18 and end on Nov. 14.

Meanwhile, the ICC Board has expanded the ODI and T20 World Cup events. The ICC Board confirmed that the T20 World Cups in 2024, 2026 and 2028 will have 20 teams each (55 matches), the ODI World Cups 2027 and 2031 will see 14 teams vying for honours (54 games).

While the men's Champions Trophy will return in 2025, a six-team women's T20 Champions Trophy will be introduced in addition to the 10-team T20 World Cup.

Players' families allowed on England trip

No BCCI office-bearers for WTC final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

who can also have their families around. These are times when mental well-being of players is paramount.

"The BCCI understands that we need our players and support staff to be in a good head space," the source said.

However, Ganguly and Shah, who were originally supposed to be in England for the WTC final will not be going.

"As far as I know, the ECB didn't grant permission to them (Ganguly and Shah). Normally, administrators go before the Test match but as per quarantine rules, since they are not playing members, they would have had to undergo hard quarantine of 10 days."

Both teams have served a 14-day quarantine period (home plus hotel) in India and undergone six RT-PCR tests which allow them to board the charter flight to London on Wednesday.

It is expected that they will have three days of hard quarantine (room) and then be able to use the gym as well as begin skills training.

Nadal advances, Barty fights through hip problem

The Spaniard begins his bid for a record-setting 21st Grand Slam title with a straight sets win over Popovin

ROLAND GARROS

AGENCIES
PARIS

Rafael Nadal began his bid for a record-setting 21st Grand Slam title with a straight sets win on Tuesday as the fallout from Naomi Osaka's revelations over depression and anxiety sent shockwaves through Roland Garros.

Nadal, the 13-time champion in Paris, defeated 63rd-ranked Alexei Popovin of Australia 6-3, 6-2, 7-6(3) to take his record at the tournament to 101 wins against just two losses.

"I was lucky to win that third set, I don't know how (I did). The beginning of the match had been very tough too," said Nadal, who had been 2-5 down in the third set, saving two set points.

"In these warm and fast conditions it's always very difficult. He's young and the speed of his ball is very strong."

Up next is fellow 34-year-old Richard Gasquet.

The pair first played one another when they were children. As professionals, Nadal leads 16-0.

Winning return

World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty marked her return to Paris for the first time since her 2019 title triumph by beating American left-hander Bernadette Pera 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 but admitted she was fighting a hip

The highlights



Since 2010, Kvitova has not made the third round at Roland Garros just twice

Only the second time in the last 11 Majors that Cecchinato, who

famously beat Djokovic in the 2018 French Open and reached the semifinals, has won a first-round match

170 Struff and Rublev both won 170 points each in their five-set thriller

301 Nadal has won 301 of the 328 full sets he has played at the French Open

Pretty happy with the way I played. He is a fast-running player, serving bombs and every time he goes for a shot with full power. I won the first set, I don't know how. But happy

NADAL, AFTER HIS FIRST-ROUND VICTORY

WEDNESDAY'S PICKS

MEN: 2-Medvedev vs Paul

5-Tsitsipas vs Martinez

6-Zverev vs Safiullin

DOUBLES: Divij & Delbonis vs De Minaur & Reid

WOMEN: 3-Sabalenka vs Sanovich

7-Serena vs Buzarnescu

15-Azarenka vs Tauson

DOUBLES: Ankita & Davis vs Hradecka & Siegemund

IMPORTANT RESULTS

First round: Men: 3-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt Alexei Popovin (Aus) 6-3, 6-2, 7-6(3); Jan-Lennard Struff (Ger) bt 7-Andrey Rublev (Rus) 6-3, 7-6(6)-4, 6-3, 6-4; Andreas Seppi (Ita) bt 20-Felix Auger-Aliassime (Can) 6-3, 7-6(8), 6-4, 6-4; Ricardas Berankis (Ltu) bt 29-Ugo Humbert (Fra) 6-4, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4; Marco Cecchinato (Ita) bt Yasutaka Uchiyama (Jpn) 3-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4; 14-Gael Monfils (Fra) bt Albert Ramos Vinolas (Esp) 1-6, 7-6(6), 6-4, 6-4.

Second round: Rohan Bopanna (Ind) & Franko Skugor (Cro) bt Nikoloz Basilashvili (Geo) & Andre Begemann (Ger) 6-4, 6-2.

Women: 1-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt Bernarda Pera (USA) 6-4, 3-6, 6-2; 25-Ons Jabeur (Tun) bt Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) 7-5, 6-2; 13-Jennifer Brady (USA) bt Anastasija Sevastova (Lat) 6-3, 6-3; 5-Elena Svitolina (Ukr) bt Oceane Babel (Fra) 6-2, 7-5, 17-Maria Sakkari (Gre) bt Katarina Zavatska (Ukr) 6-4, 6-2; 32-Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) bt Venus Williams (USA) 6-3, 6-1.

Monday's results: Men: Lorenzo Musetti (Ita) bt 13-David Goffin (Bel) 6-0, 7-5, 7-6(3).

Women: 28-Jessica Pegula (USA) bt Zhu Lin (Chn) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4; Marta Kostyuk (Ukr) bt 12-Garbine Muguruza (Esp) 6-1, 6-4.

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Fallen seeds

TV PICKS

Roland-Garros: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m.; SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
England vs New Zealand: 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Rummennigge to step down; Kahn to take over

BERLIN After 30 years in the top echelons of Bayern Munich management, Karl-Heinz Rummennigge will step down as chairman at the end of the month and will be replaced by former Germany captain Oliver Kahn, according to reports on Tuesday. AFP

Garcia returns to Barca from Manchester City

BARCELONA Manchester City's Spain centre-back Eric Garcia will join Barcelona on a five-year deal next month, the Catalan club said on Tuesday. Garcia will leave City when his deal ends on July 1. Garcia came through the academy at Camp Nou before joining City. AFP

Sasikumar Mukund advances

LITTLE ROCK (ARIZONA) Sasikumar Mukund knocked out seventh seed Roberto Cid Subervi of Dominican Republic 6-3, 6-4 in the first round of the \$52,080 Challenger tennis here on Monday.

India can beat Qatar'

ISL has groomed Indians to take on strong teams: I.M. Vijayan

WC QUALIFIERS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

As he looks forward to watching India's World Cup qualifier against Qatar, to be played at Doha on Thursday, I.M. Vijayan cannot help but think of a match he wouldn't quite like to remember.

That match, a World Cup qualifier in 1996, was also against Qatar. India lost it by a tennis score - 6-0.

"We played poorly, but that was the time when we didn't have as much exposure - domestic or overseas - as today's players," Vijayan told *The Hindu* on Tuesday. "Those days we could rarely meet quality opposition. Things have changed quite a lot for the better in Indian football."

Last meeting

So much so, he feels India can even turn the tables on Qatar this time around. "I think this Indian team can beat Qatar," he said. "The goalless draw when they last played Qatar, in 2019, should give them a lot of confidence."

It was a performance India can be proud of: against the Asian champion ranked No. 62 in the world at the time. Qatar is now ranked 58th while India is 105th.

Vijayan, one of the all-time greats of Indian football, doesn't feel such a huge



Memory to cherish: I.M. Vijayan with one of his favourite players, Xavi, in Doha last year. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

gap will easily translate into victory for the host. "Because of the ISL, India's footballers are well-equipped to take on strong teams," he said. "When you are playing alongside and against top quality international footballers, you improve physically and mentally."

Against Qatar, he feels Sunil Chhetri - back in action after recovering from COVID-19 - will hold the key to India's fortunes. "He is my favourite Indian player," says Vijayan.

"Defender Sandesh Jhingan, midfielder Ashique Kurumiyan and goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu also have crucial roles to play."

When he thinks of Qatar, he also thinks of Xavi, the Spanish legend who is now manager of Doha's Al Sadd club. The former Barcelona midfielder, who helped Spain win the 2010 World Cup, had recently put out a video on Twitter wishing Vijayan on his birthday.

"I was surprised and happy when I saw the video," said Vijayan. "I had met Xavi on a few occasions; I was introduced to him by Shafeer Korea, who has designed the Qatar jersey and who hails from my native place of Thrissur. I always enjoyed watching the great Spain and Barcelona teams he was part of."

Manu shoots 587

SPORTS BUREAU OSJEK (CROATIA)

Manu Bhaker shot 587 in the women's 25-metre sports pistol to reinforce her strong grip on the event in the European shooting championship here on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old Manu shot 296 in the rapid fire section, after having scored 291 in the precision stage.

Asian Games gold medallist Rahi Sarnobat also improved her score in the rapid fire section to reach

584 among a small bunch of MQS shooters. She had 293 on the second day.

Sylvia Steiner of Austria topped with 590 in the regular event.

Earlier, in the mixed rifle 3-position event, Anjum Moudgil (438) and Aishwary Prapat Singh Tomar (437) placed 19th in the preliminary stage. The duo was 15 points short of the leaders, Norway.

Tejaswini Sawant and Sanjeev Rajput shot identical 431 and placed 33rd among 36 teams.

Marin pulls out of Tokyo Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Defending champion Carolina Marin, on Tuesday, pulled out of the Tokyo Olympics after suffering an Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) tear in her left knee that will require a surgery to heal.

The 27-year-old from Spain felt discomfort in her knee during training on Saturday and tests revealed that it was an ACL injury.



Marin will undergo surgery this week. ■ AP

Left-arm quick, right-arm quicker – it's up to the coaches



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

Is cricket dead? Not that it has become unpopular or that there is diminishing interest for it on television, but in a deeper, more creative sense. Has everything to be known about the game – the crafts, techniques, tactics, strategies – already been revealed, and can one say with conviction that there are no more worlds to conquer?

Somehow that doesn't sound right. No field of human endeavour can say there is nothing more to be done. At the turn of the 20th century, it was be-

lieved that physics was dead. As if on cue, quantum theory and relativity upset long-held ideas, and the field was blown wide open. It is a useful lesson.

The gifts from Pakistan

For long it was assumed that in cricket there were just a few gaps to be filled. The googly had been invented at the turn of the 20th century, and for decades its mirror image was sought – the leg-break bowled with an off-break action. Then Saqlain Mushtaq developed the *doosra*. The other major development also came from the gifted Pakistani bowlers – reverse swing. From Sarfraz Nawaz to Imran Khan to Waqar Younis and Wasim Akram it was an unbroken line.

The rest of the cricketing world followed after initial skepticism. When it was discovered that the *doosra* usually indicated a bent (or straightening) arm, and therefore might be an illegal

delivery, the authorities put a figure on what constituted a legal one. Bowlers were allowed to straighten their arm by 15° to remain within the law. The change allowed us to appreciate the skills of bowlers such as Mushtaq Miralitharan and Harbhajan Singh and the possibilities in the *doosra*.

Both these innovations took place in the last century, and for many coaches there are no more gaps to be filled in the evolution of the game. There was the odd club bowler who could bowl off either arm, but he was seen as a freak rather than the harbinger of a revolution.

In international cricket it happened on one memorable occasion, though. Garry Sobers was batting on 364 when the occasional off-spinner bowling to him – Hanif Mohammad – switched to left-arm spin. Sobers didn't mind (he was later quoted as saying, "He could bowl with both hands if he wished").

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The rest of the cricketing world followed after initial skepticism. When it was discovered that the *doosra* usually indicated a bent (or straightening) arm, and therefore might be an illegal

and bat both right- and left-handed as well as field and throw off either. That's six players in one! Often we don't know there is a gap to be filled till someone actually fills it.

Batting has seen fewer fundamental changes. The switch hit or the Dil-scoop over the wicketkeeper's head are recent, but batting is about refining what already exists rather than inventing something fresh.

Sunil Gavaskar once famously batted left-handed for Mumbai in a Ranji Trophy match, but that had little to do with technique or tactic and more with (opponents Karnataka believe to this day, four decades later) tantrum.

Stick-to-one theory

Old school coaches discourage players from doing too many things. If you can bowl both spin and pace, then focus on one or the other, they say. If you can bowl off either arm, stick to one.

Some schoolboys can bat either left- or right-handed, but they are told this will not do. As a boy, Michael Hussey was a right-handed batsman till he saw Allan Border bat, and switched to batting left-handed. He does everything else right-handed.

Right-handers Sachin Tendulkar and Kane Williamson write left-handed and hold their rackets in their left hand. Coaches speak about the dominant hand and how to use it, but do not encourage those who are comfortable doing it either way.

The next major innovation in batting is in the hands (left and right) of the coaches who will have to jettison a favourite theory: that it is better to be a good right-hander or a left-hander than an unsure left-and-right-hander.

About one percent of the world's population is ambidextrous. Surely there are some cricketers among that 70 million?

Sanjeet the Lion shows his class

Sanjeet's 91kg title win has boosted his confidence

BOXING

Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

Popular as 'Sher' among his peers for wearing a lion's tattoo on his back, 24-year-old Sanjeet loves his newly-achieved status as an Asian champion following his lion-hearted showing in Dubai.

Sanjeet's 91kg title win, India's lone gold medal in the men's section of the Asian championships, has boosted his confidence.

"This is my best performance. I beat two Olympic qualified boxers (Sanjar Tursunov of Uzbekistan 5-0 in the semifinals and Olympics silver medallist Vassiliy Levit of Kazakhstan 4-1 in the final). The win over Levit was sweeter as I had lost to him in the President's Cup in Kazakhstan in 2018," Sanjeet told *The Hindu* on his return from Dubai on Tuesday.

"I have gathered a lot of confidence and feel I could have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics."

The Asian crown was Sanjeet's first achievement after a major shoulder injury, which he picked up during the World Military Games in October 2019. It forced him to go under the knife and rendered him unfit for the Asian Olympic qualifier in March last year.

"I am thankful to JSW and Army for their support during my recovery and rehab, which took about five to six months."

Sanjeet worked hard for the World Olympic qualifier



Sweet victory: Sanjeet's win at the Asian championships was his first achievement after a major shoulder injury in October 2019. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

C The win over Vassiliy Levit was sweeter as I had lost to him in the President's Cup in Kazakhstan in 2018

in Paris this year but was heart-broken when he learnt about its cancellation due to the pandemic. His cousin and early coach Sanjeev Kumar says Sanjeet was in tears.

The well-built boxer feels his punches have gathered more power in recent years but his endurance needs some attention. "I have to work on my endurance. I want to do well in the World Championships in October," said Sanjeet.

Vidal hospitalised after positive COVID test

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE SANTIAGO

Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal, who plays for Inter Milan, has been hospitalised after testing positive for coronavirus, his national team said on Monday.

This means the 34-year-old will miss Thursday's World Cup qualifier against Argentina.

No other player in the squad had tested positive for the virus.

Vidal was initially hospitalised with severe tonsillitis, but tested positive for coronavirus on Monday, the team statement said.

FC Goa extends Gama's contract

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

Indian Super League side FC Goa has inked a new three-year contract with Saviour Gama to keep the left-back at the club until 2024.

Gama's consistent performances on the left of the backline helped FC Goa secure its fourth consecutive playoff appearance whilst propelling the club to a 15-game unbeaten run to end the last season.

Aguero hoping for Messi partnership

Wish could yet be scuppered if the Barca legend doesn't renew

FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BARCELONA

Sergio Aguero said on Monday that he was hoping to have the "pleasure" of playing alongside Lionel Messi after signing a two-year deal with Barcelona.

However, he is still not sure that Messi will be his teammate next season as the club captain is yet to sign an extension to his current contract which expires next month.

"Let's hope we play together ... what happens with Leo is down to decisions that he will make with the club," Aguero told reporters at the Camp Nou after he was unveiled on the famous pitch.

"Obviously it will be a pleasure if we play together. If he continues here, which I think he will, we will try to do our best for the club as he always has done."

Declining performances

Barca will hope Aguero's arrival in Catalonia helps to

convince his friend and fellow Argentine Messi to stay, as the club faces up to declining performances on the pitch and a worrying financial situation.

Ronald Koeman's side finished third in LaLiga this past season and has debts of €1.2 billion.

It was knocked out of the Champions League at the last-16 stage by Paris Saint-Germain, and could yet face sanctions from UEFA for refusing to back out of the short-lived European Super

League project.

Talks going well

Last week club president Joan Laporta said that talks for Messi's new contract were "going well", and on Monday insisted that Aguero's signing was part of a broader Barca rebuild.

"The signing of Aguero is for Aguero. We want to build a competitive team and obviously we also want Leo to stay, we have already told him this," Laporta said.

Aguero leaves City as its

all-time record goalscorer with 260 goals, and with the most goals scored for a single club in Premier League history – 184 goals in 275 appearances.

"Leaving aside last season, I had nine very good years at City," said Aguero.

"A knee issue kept me out for a few months, I recovered, I got COVID ... but in the last four months I've felt very good physically."

Long in the offing

His move to Barcelona had been long in the offing, with Guardiola saying a week ago that he was close to a deal with the Catalan giant.

He will participate in this year's Copa America, which on Monday was moved from Colombia and his home country Argentina to Brazil.

"If they have made