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### NEARBY



CPI(M) leader Mythily Sivaraman passes away

CHENNAI  
Mythily Sivaraman, CPI(M) leader and former vice-president of the All India Democratic Women's Association, died on Sunday. She was 81, and is survived by her husband and daughter.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

Delhi reports lowest deaths in over a month

NEW DELHI  
Delhi on Sunday recorded 946 fresh COVID-19 cases and 78 deaths – this is the first time since April 13 that daily deaths in the national capital have fallen below 100.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Haryana govt. extends lockdown till June 7

GURUGRAM  
The Haryana government on Sunday extended its lockdown for the fourth straight week till June 7, but eased some restrictions. Shops in marketplaces can now open for six hours from 9 a.m. onwards.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 5

# Number of new cases across India dips further to 1.5 lakh

16,000 fewer tests conducted on Saturday

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

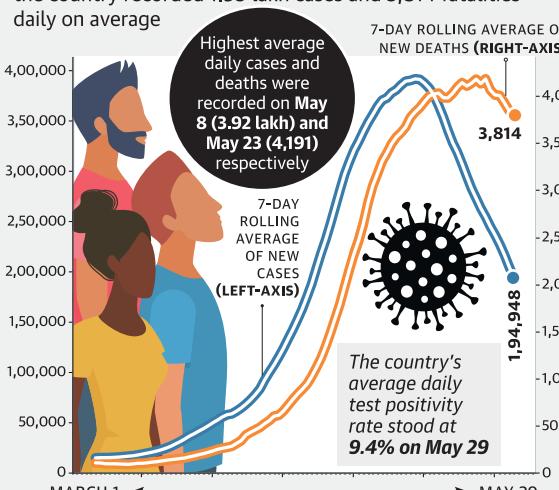
India recorded 1,50,527 new COVID-19 cases and 3,028 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Sunday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,80,44,137 cases and 3,29,026 deaths.

Tamil Nadu reported 28,864 new infections, followed by Karnataka (20,378) and Kerala (19,894). Maharashtra recorded 814 new casualties on the day, followed by Tamil Nadu (493) and Karnataka (381). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Sikkim and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins.

Around 20.64 lakh samples were tested in the country on Saturday (the results for which were made available on Sunday), which is

**Easing burden** | Daily recorded COVID-19 cases and deaths are on a declining trend in India. Until May 29, the country recorded 1.95 lakh cases and 3,814 fatalities daily on average



around 16,000 fewer tests than those conducted on Friday. It is also nearly 60,000 less than those conducted on the previous Saturday (May 22).

### Positivity rate falls

India's average daily test positivity rate (positive cases identified for every 100 tests) continues to decline.

It was 9.4% on May 29, compared to 13.4% recorded

a week earlier.

About 30.36 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Sunday, which is close to 27,000 doses fewer than what was recorded in the previous 24 hours. However, it is 14.31 lakh more doses than what was recorded during the same period a week ago.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Govt. expands credit for oxygen units

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday enlarged the scope of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to cover loans up to ₹2 crore for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants at healthcare facilities and brought in the ailing civil aviation sector under its ambit.

Industry captains appreciated the move but expressed concerns about its efficacy as the scheme's allocation has not been enhanced beyond the original ₹3 lakh crore. The ECLGS was launched last year to help businesses tide over the national lockdown's adverse effects, and about ₹2.55 lakh crore has already been utilised. Public sector banks said they were ready to implement the expanded scheme.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

# 'India has sent jet to fly back Choksi'

Antiguan PM confirms development

### SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI

The government maintained its silence on the Mehul Choksi deportation case in the Caribbean islands, even as the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda claimed he had information that India has sent a jet to Dominica to provide documentation and take custody of the fugitive businessman.

Antiguan Prime Minister Gaston Browne said India is going "all out" to ensure that Mr. Choksi, who is wanted for the ₹13,578 crore Punjab National Bank fraud case, is deported back, and indicated that Indian officials were in Dominica's capital Roseau to escort him back on a Qatar Airways private jet parked now at the Douglas-Charles airport nearby.

The private jet landed there on May 28.

"Yes, I can confirm there is a jet there. My understanding is that the Indian government has sent certain documentation to confirm that Mr. Choksi is indeed a fugitive," Mr. Browne said on Sunday.

He was speaking to Pointe FM radio channel, where he



Fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi in custody. ■ ANI

broadcasts his own show.

"My understanding is that the documentation will be used in the court case that will be heard at the court next Wednesday," he told journalists.

Mr. Stalin, who earlier visited a COVID-19 ward at a city hospital dressed in a PPE suit, pointed out that the second highest vaccinated district after Chennai was Coimbatore.

"As many as 5.85 lakh people have been vaccinated in Coimbatore. Of them, 1.51 lakh were vaccinated after the DMK returned to power on May 7," he said on a day when the hashtag, #GoBackStalin, trended on Twitter, before being overtaken by #WeStandWithStalin.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Not ignoring Coimbatore, says Stalin

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Sunday that his government was not ignoring Coimbatore with regard to COVID-19 management. The government treated all districts equally, he said, countering the charge that the western district was being overlooked for political reasons.

"The allegation is politically motivated. Those levelling the allegation should look at [COVID-19] facilities we have created after assuming office," he told journalists.

Mr. Stalin, who earlier visited a COVID-19 ward at a city hospital dressed in a PPE suit, pointed out that the second highest vaccinated district after Chennai was Coimbatore.

"As many as 5.85 lakh people have been vaccinated in Coimbatore. Of them, 1.51 lakh were vaccinated after the DMK returned to power on May 7," he said on a day when the hashtag, #GoBackStalin, trended on Twitter, before being overtaken by #WeStandWithStalin.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

# + Delhi HC to give verdict on Central Vista work today

### STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court will on Monday pronounce its verdict on a petition seeking to halt construction activities related to the Central Vista project in view of the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in

the national capital.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh reserved the verdict on May 17 after hearing both sides.

The Centre opposed the plea, saying that it was a "façade" and a "disguise" in the

form of a public interest litigation (PIL) petition to stall the project which they always wanted to stop.

### Selective plea

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, argued the public in-

terest question raised by the petitioner in the case was "very selective". He said the petitioners did not seem to care about the workmen or other construction activities going on in the city.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

2 held in U.P.  
for throwing  
COVID victim's  
body into river

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The family members of a person who died of COVID-19 were booked in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur district after they were caught in a video dumping his body into a river in broad daylight. Additional SP Balrampur Arvind Misra said two persons had been arrested in the case on charges of violation of COVID-19 protocol.

The government action comes on the heels of the Uttar Pradesh government trying to fend off criticism over bodies of suspected COVID-19 victims found floating in the Ganga in several districts.

The video from Balrampur, shot by someone driving on the bridge from where the body was dumped, was widely shared on social media. In the clip two men, including one in a PPE kit, are seen lifting the body, which is wrapped in a bag, to be thrown over the bridge into the Rapti river.

V.B. Singh, CMO, Balrampur, said an FIR had been lodged against the family of the person whose body was thrown into the river. Dr. Singh said the body was of one Premnath Mishra of Siddharthnagar, who was admitted to hospital on May 25 and died three days later on May 28.

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# THE CORRIDOR OF UNCERTAINTY

The duration of the lockdown and the uncertainty around it has made life difficult for migrant workers. It has wrecked them emotionally and financially as many stayed back hoping for a better tomorrow

CITY TEAM  
NEW DELHI/GURUGRAM/NOIDA

**T**he efforts of governments across the National Capital Region (NCR) to contain the second wave of COVID-19 have only ended up in compounding the misery of daily wagers and migrant workers, the most ravaged and vulnerable group during the pandemic.

To leave or not to leave was the question as the government kept extending the lockdown. No matter what they chose, another significant question arose inevitably. What then?

For some, making the long journey back home meant exhausting their little savings accumulated during the incremental 'unlock' phases after last year's national lockdown. Others either didn't have enough for a ticket to home or little prospects at home.

"I went back home to Allahabad [Prayagraj] for a week after the lockdown was reimposed for the third time this month but didn't feel like staying. I'm the eldest son of the family and if I didn't come back, how would the kitchen run?" asked Sunil Kumar Gupta, who operates a cigarette vend in Greater Noida.

"Weekly earnings are less than half of what they used to be but at least there's something I can send back home, no matter how little. I could have stayed on. My family didn't ask me to come back but there was nothing to stay for," he added.

**Shutting shop**  
Since the Uttar Pradesh government's lockdown orders and their extensions, daily wagers - their belongings stuffed into backpacks - have been gathering near the 'Zero Point' on the Yamuna Expressway, from where they could reach Agra, before scattering to locations spread across UP and Bihar.

"When I came back after last year's lockdown, there was less work. But there was work nonetheless. We would take a few hundred rupees less but able to afford more than one meal a day. Now everything is shut," said Pardeep Kumar, a carpenter, from U.P.'s Faizabad.

"I have just about enough money to manage a week here or go back home. I would rather go back; that way I won't have to borrow money to pay my rent," said Kumar, as he waited for a bus on the Yamuna Expressway, hoping to shelter himself from the sun on Friday afternoon.

The past three weeks have been tough on Umesh and his family. The

34-year-old runs an "open saloon" under a tree near a park in Sector 15 Part-II Gurugram.

He would earn a meager sum of ₹200-300 a day, just adequate to make both ends meet. But the three-week-long lockdown in Gurugram this month stopped his income. "It is not easy to survive without work for so long. After the lockdown was announced, I tried to return to my home in Bihar with my family. But it would cost me around ₹8,000 by bus in a sleeper class. I, therefore, decided to stay back," said Umesh.

Though the government has allowed standalone shops to open from May 24, Umesh said it might take months before a semblance of normalcy returns. Most of his regular clients too have returned to their hometowns and they might not return even weeks after the lockdown is completely lifted, feared Umesh.

For Sheikh Ariful Ali, an embroidery artist, every lockdown extension multiplied the hurdles he has to leap over. While several colleagues have returned to their villages, Ali, a resident of West Bengal, said he had continued living in the Capital with the hope of it "unlocking" soon.

"Every time the lockdown was extended, it was for a week only. So I kept hoping that things will improve and establishments will start reopening. However, it's been more than a month and it has become increasingly difficult to sustain. Most of our people have left and the remaining few are also planning to leave in a couple of days," he said.

According to the Migrant Workers Solidarity Network (MWSN), a volunteer group started last year in response to migrants' crisis, workers in NCR have



A crowd of migrant labourers at the Anand Vihar Bus Terminus; (bottom) a family waiting for a bus at Anand Vihar on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA AND R.V. MOORTHY

continued to reach out for basic help like food during the lockdown.

#### Distress calls

Shreya Ghosh, a member of MWSN, said the distress calls that started in April continued throughout May. Many, who called the helpline, wanted to know when there would be national lockdown since State governments were announcing staggered lockdowns as opposed to a countrywide one last year, she told *The Hindu*.

In a letter to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on May 24, she said the Supreme Court's order on May 13 to State governments to provide dry rations and transport to migrant workers had not reached the people in

need.

"Since the order, different State governments made announcements, but they have not reached the people on ground. The government of Delhi, in an announcement six days ago, assured that ration will be provided to migrant workers in the State, as per procedures set in place during the last year's lockdown. But no implementation has happened," she wrote.

Ms. Ghosh said the MWSN had received over 4,600 requests from workers and their families in urgent need of ration. The calls had primarily been from workers in Nangloi-Rajdhani Park-Mundka area (410), Dwarka (846), Patparganj (854), Khanpur-Sangam Vihar area (535), Vasant Kunj JJ Clusters (2,156) and Gandhi Nagar (116), she said. She added that workers had reported difficulty in procuring ration after getting e-coupons, so there was a need to increase the number of distribution centres.

"Another pressing concern is the burden of rent, which needs immediate attention. From our distress calls and survey, we have gathered that with job loss, paying rent has become a major financial burden. Urgent intervention is required to ensure that migrant workers' right to housing is protected. We appeal to you that steps must be taken for rent waiver for workers or provision of a rent allowance for the period of the lockdown to all migrant workers," she wrote

Sanjay, an autorickshaw driver, now sells tender coconut on a pavement outside a group housing society for his livelihood. Like cab drivers, the autorickshaw drivers too have been hit hard. "I have a family of six to support and could not afford to sit at home for long without an income," said 39-year-old Sanjay. He brings his teenage son along for help. "He too has nothing to do with the school being shut for over a year now," said Sanjay, pointing to his son Surya.

Like auto drivers, domestic helps have been affected. Paro, a domestic help, is yet to get back to work though the Haryana government has allowed some relaxation in the lockdown.

"The government has relaxed the lockdown, but the group housing society where I work has not allowed the house helps and car cleaners to return to work. My husband, a rickshaw puller, too is out of job. Though we have been living hand-to-mouth for the last one year the meagre savings too got exhausted. Unlike previous years, there has been no help from the social organisations and the individuals," said Paro.

#### Less support

Kuldeep Singh, founder president, Buland Awaz Welfare Society, said a large number of daily wagers had left before the lockdown this year and the companies were mostly running.

Therefore, fewer social organisations have come forward to support the poor unlike the lockdown previous year.

Small groups of workers were also seen at the Nizamuddin railway station, returning to their hometowns. On the Yamuna Expressway, migrant workers were willing to pay any amount to board private buses.

Waiting at the station, Chaman Kumar of Mathura said: "This year I thought that things will not be as bad as last time. So I had not returned in the initial days of the lockdown. However, the extensions have now lasted for over a month. How are daily wagers like me supposed to manage under these circumstances? I have no option but to return to my village now. Will take a call later about whether to return or not."

Parimal Jha from Madhubani has been postponing his trip home for the last four weeks. "I should have left two weeks ago but thought the lockdown would be lifted next week, and then the week after that. Now the ticket is almost double of what it was at the beginning of this month," he complained

"People like me have no faith left in governments - any government. They should have told us that the lockdown would be in place for the entire month. We would have faced it, made our arrangements. At least, we would not have had to die little by little every week wondering where the next meal will come from or if it will at all," Jha added.

(With inputs from Jatin Anand, Ashok Kumar, Damini Nath and Shinjini Ghosh)



## MCOCA likely to be invoked against Sushil Kumar

Wrestler is associated with gangsters and getting monetary gains from their activities, say police

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police are considering invoking the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) against Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar for his involvement with dreaded gangsters of Delhi, Haryana and Rajasthan, said a senior police officer on Sunday.

The officer said Sushil Kumar was allegedly getting monetary gains from the activities of these gangsters. He was involved with them since 2018 but that time there was not enough evidence against him.

After the arrest of Sushil Kumar, the Delhi police special cell has brought gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi, Sampat Nehra and two others from other jails on remand to find out their connections with him.



Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar being taken to court in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

"We have enough evidence that proves Sushil was in constant touch with gangster Kala Jathedi. But there relationship turned bitter after the Chhatrasal Stadium incident where Sushil along with his men thrashed Jathedi's nephew along with Sagar, who died during treatment," said the officer.

In 2016, the Delhi police

had arrested former Mundka MLA Rambir Shokeen under the MCOCA charges for his alleged involvement in an organised crime syndicate headed by his nephew and gangster Neeraj Bawana.

The Delhi police have already begun the process of invoking MCOCA against Jathedi.

It has been found that

Sushil Kumar used to take the help of Jathedi, Neeraj Bawana and other gangsters to grab properties and get contracts and the profit was shared, said the officer.

"We have also initiated the process of cancelling the arms licence of Sushil. In 2012, he had bought one pistol which is yet to be recovered."

On Wednesday, the police arrested four members of the Kala Asauda-Neeraj Bawana gang from Kanjhawala area.

They were allegedly involved

in the murder of wrestler Sagar and they were called by Sushil to reach the stadium.

On Saturday, a city court extended Sushil's police custody to four more days.

The police said during investigation, they have also come across a complaint from a person who used to supply ration at the stadium.

He was allegedly thrashed by Sushil Kumar when he demanded his dues of ₹4 lakh for the ration he supplied during the lockdown.

Satish Goyal, owner of the ration shop, claimed that he supplied the ration when Brijendra was the coach. But he was transferred before his bills could be cleared. He later contacted many people in the administration department and one day got a call that Sushil Kumar wanted to meet him.

"I begged Sushil to clear my dues otherwise I will die as I was in huge debt. I was shocked when Sushil replied 'go and die'. He thrashed me and asked me never to come again," said Mr. Goyal.

A senior police officer said they are trying to find out why no FIR was registered even after the complaint was registered.

## Services of resident doctors crucial for hospital functioning

NBE notice to extend training period not unreasonable: HC

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has said the services of resident doctors are imperative for functioning of hospitals due to the COVID-19 pandemic while noting that the decision of the authorities to extend their training beyond schedule cannot be arbitrary or unreasonable.

#### Doctors contend

The High Court's remark came while hearing a plea by several doctors who are in DNB Super Specialty courses, challenging a May 4, 2021 notification by which the National Board of Examination (NBE) has extended their training beyond the scheduled date of its

completion.

The doctors contended that the DNB course is of three years and a mandatory extension of three months is permissible, which they have already served, and claimed that the authorities are not empowered to extend the course beyond this period.

Justice Prateek Jalan, however, remarked, "Having regard to the circumstances arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for continuation of residents as mentioned in the National Medical Commission (NMC) advisory dated April 27, 2021 - which has not been challenged in the writ petition - I am unable to accede to [advocate Sidharth] Yadav's re-

quest for an interim order".

The court agreed with the submission of the NMC and the NBE that the availability of resident doctors is imperative for the functioning of hospitals.

The High Court said it was unable to accept the contention of the doctors' counsel that even in the circumstances arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the deferment of the practical examinations of the petitioners is on account of a deliberate stratagem adopted by the respondents.

The High Court has issued notices to the Centre, DNB and the NBE on the petition and listed the matter for further hearing on August 4.

## Neighbour strangles septuagenarian to death during burglary attempt

The accused was released from Tihar jail two months ago

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 72-year-old building contractor was allegedly strangled to death at his home in south-west Delhi's Sagarpur during a burglary attempt by his neighbour, who was released from Tihar jail two months ago, the police said on Sunday.

The police said they have arrested along

with his accomplice who received the stolen articles to further sell them.

The incident took place on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday. The accused have been identified as Sunny and Bhanu.

The police reached the spot where one Sunil Saigal was found in an unconscious state. He was declared dead at the hospital. The victim's

daughter Mukta Saigal alleged that a few articles were missing from their house, a senior police officer said.

The police analysed CCTV footage and arrested Sunny. Later, Bhanu was also arrested, the officer said. Two cheques books, an ATM card, a mobile phone and one golden chain and ring were recovered from their possession, the police said.

3 held for duping on pretext of redeeming credit card points Police conducted raids and apprehended two of them from Kurukshetra; another accomplice nabbed later

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Three men were arrested for allegedly duping people of several States on the pretext of redemption of credit card points, the police said on Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Vikas Jha (31), a resident of Tilak Nagar, Vicky (27), a resident of Mathura, and Avinash Kumar (36), a resident of Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh.

The police received a complaint from a man where he alleged that ₹37,000 were deducted from his credit card without sharing one time password (OTP).

#### Online gift vouchers

During enquiry, it was found that the complainant received a bulk message with a link to redeem his credit card points. He shared his card and email ID details on the website, the police said.

His email ID was also logged in from a new IP address.

The money was used to purchase online gift vouchers.

The police analysed the details and found that mobile phones worth lakh of rupees were purchased using gift cards and were sold on an application using bill and fake ID, they said.

After technically analysing over 100 mobile numbers and similar number of wallet details, the suspects were

identified. The accused were earlier involved in several criminal cases registered in Delhi, Faridabad and Gurugram, a senior officer said.

Jha and Kumar were granted bail during COVID-19, however, they didn't surrender, whereas non-bailable warrant was issued against accused Vicky by Gurgaon court, the officer said.

The police conducted raids and apprehended Jha and Vicky from Kurukshetra while they were travelling from Chandigarh to Agra. On their instance, their accomplice Kumar was also arrested, DCP (North) Anto Alphonse said.

Vicky and Kumar provided fake SIM cards of different States and bank accounts to Jha. One laptop, 15 mobile phones, 39 SIM cards, ₹85,000 etc. were recovered from their possession, the police added.

**Timings****DELHI**

MONDAY, MAY. 31
RISE 05:25 SET 19:14
RISE 00:00 SET 10:09
TUESDAY, JUN. 01
RISE 05:24 SET 19:15
RISE 00:12 SET 11:12
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 02
RISE 05:24 SET 19:16
RISE 00:49 SET 12:10

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	38	25
Safdarjung	38	25
Palam	38	26

**Delhi Pali Today**  
39°C A comfortable morning and hot day likely to prevail. Light rain and thunderstorm may occur at few places.

**Delhi Pali Tomorrow**  
38°C An easy morning and hot day would prevail. One or two spell of rain and thunderstorm likely with cloudy sky.

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**IN BRIEF****32 children orphaned during pandemic: DCPNR**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi Commission For Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) identified 32 children who were orphaned during the pandemic in the city. Ten more children have been identified who have lost their single parent to the virus, said DCPCR chairman Anurag Kundu.

**Dust storm hits parts of Delhi, rain likely: IMD**

**NEW DELHI**  
Delhi witnessed a change in weather on Sunday evening as a dust storm hit parts of the city. The IMD said the city is likely to receive rainfall late in the evening. The maximum and minimum temperatures were recorded at 38.2 °C and 25.2 °C, it said.

**Health Minister's OSD succumbs to COVID-19**

**NEW DELHI**  
An Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain succumbed to COVID-19 on Sunday, a day before his retirement, said his family. A.K. Rakshit, was battling COVID for over a month.

# Beneficiaries miffed over queues at drive-through vaccination centre

590 vaccinated at DLF City Centre site against the target of 500 on second day

**ASHOK KUMAR**

GURUGRAM  
Pooran Chandra Upadhyay, a Civil Engineer at IGI Airport, was sitting in a car with his daughter for over six hours on Sunday to get her the vaccine dose. "We are in the queue since 6 a.m. It might take another hour before our turn comes," said Mr. Upadhyay.

The queue of cars on Mehrauli-Gurugram road was around four kilometres long. All of them were in line for the vaccination drive at the DLF City Centre shopping mall for the 18-45 age group.

**'Good idea'**

"This drive-through vaccination drive with on-the-spot registration doesn't seem a good idea to me. It should be quick," added 52-year-old Upadhyay, who lives in Laxman Vihar. While Mr. Upadhyay has received both the shots, he was accompanying his daughter for her first dose.

Mr. Upadhyay was also critical of the "inherent bias" against the underprivileged



Cars lined up for drive-through vaccination on Mehrauli-Gurugram road on Sunday. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

in the concept of drive-through vaccination drive. "The rich come in cars and get vaccinated in a safe environment. What about the poor? The administration should spare a thought about them as well," he said.

The second day of the drive-through vaccination drive was no different from the first drive, which was held on Saturday with serpentine queues of vehicles and spats amongst beneficiaries.

Ravinder (42), a cab driver, claimed that a minor brawl broke out after two motorists tried to sneak into a queue and a Police Control Room vehicle had to intervene. The police made all those involved in the brawl return home.

Standing in a queue since 8 a.m., Mr. Ravinder, feared that he might miss the second opportunity to get the vaccine. "I was in the queue yesterday (on Saturday) as well for the drive at Mega Mall. The line stretched up to Galleria Market and beyond. I left after waiting for two hours. I tried booking a slot but found only in Nuh. I thought it better to wait in the queue here than to go all the way to Nuh," said Ravinder, a Gandhi Nagar resident.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Kuldeep, deployed for traffic management, said two people had parked their vehicles at the mall's entrance at 11:30 p.m. the previous night to beat the rush. ASI Yogesh, deployed at the mall's en-

trance, said beneficiaries had started queuing up around 5 a.m. He said that tokens were given to the first 500 beneficiaries so that others don't have to wait. But many towards the end of the queue did not know about the tokens.

Amit Lakhotia, founder and Chief Executive Officer, Park+, an automated parking solution start-up, said the update about the number of vaccinations administered was available on the company's app as well on an LED screen at the shopping mall to keep those in queue informed.

"It was clearly communicated that the vaccination would start at 10 a.m., but if people decide to come at 6 a.m. we cannot do much about it," said Mr. Lakhotia. His start-up has been assisting the administration in managing the drive.

The district administration claimed that 590 beneficiaries were vaccinated at DLF City Centre against the target of 500.

Besides the shopping mall, similar drive-through vaccination drives for those above 45 years were conducted at Candor Techspace in sectors 48 and 21 as well.

Delhi records less than 100 deaths after over a month

'Covaxin given to those taking 2nd dose'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI**

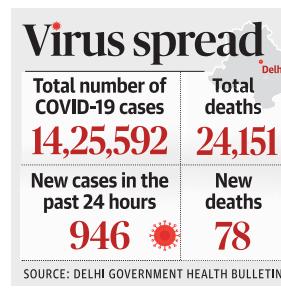
The Capital recorded 946 fresh COVID-19 cases and 78 more deaths on Sunday, according to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

The bulletin said 75,440 tests have been conducted in 24 hours with a positivity rate of 1.25%. This is the first time in nearly a month-and-a-half that daily deaths in the city have fallen below 100. The city had recorded 81 deaths on April 13.

There are 12,100 active cases in the city of which 5,817 are under home isolation. The cumulative figure in the Capital now stands at 14,25,592 cases with 24,151 deaths and 13,89,341 recoveries. Delhi on Saturday had recorded 956 fresh COVID-19 cases, the lowest in over two months, and 122 fatalities.

**Atishi on vaccines**  
Presenting the vaccination bulletin, senior AAP leader Atishi said one week had been completed since the vaccination programme had to be suspended for the 18-44 year category due to the "so-called shortage of vaccines".

"There is currently no stock of vaccine available for those between 18-44 years



and no governmental vaccination center is in operation.

As far as 45+ is concerned, right now 3.5 lakh doses are available for them in Delhi, of which 40,000 doses of Covaxin and 2.75 lakh of Covishield are available," Ms. Atishi said.

She alleged that the BJP was earning a heavy commission through private hospitals. She said the vaccines, which were supposed to be supplied to State governments, are being diverted to private hospitals. "Today, the private hospitals in Delhi are vaccinating more than the government ones because the vaccines are being made available only to them," Ms. Atishi said.

She added that the State government, which was immunising people for free is not getting any vaccines, but private hospitals and hotels are getting huge supplies. "What kind of convenience is this of the Centre?... Nearly all the countries have approved Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson, but India refuses to," Ms. Atishi alleged.

Centre giving jabs to only pvt. hospitals, alleges Atishi

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI**

AAP leader Atishi on Sunday alleged that the only way for youngsters to get vaccinated here is to pay high prices in private hospitals as the Centre was not providing vaccines to the State governments that were carrying out the drive for free.

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# North-east riots: Natasha Narwal returns to jail

**STAFF REPORTER**

**NEW DELHI**

Jawaharlal Nehru University student Natasha Narwal, who was granted bail to perform the last rites of her father who succumbed to COVID-19, returned to the jail on Sunday, said a senior jail official.

The Delhi High Court had granted bail to Ms. Narwal, a Pinjra Tod activist who was arrested last year in May in

connection with the communal riots in north-east Delhi. She was booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

In the clash that broke out on February 24, at least 53 people died and around 200 injured.

Pinjra Tod was founded in 2015 to make hostels and paying guest accommodations less restrictive for women students.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**GURUGRAM**

The Haryana government on Sunday extended lockdown for the fourth straight week till June 7 but eased the restrictions. The shops in the marketplaces can now open for six hours from 9 a.m. onwards, and shopping malls and hotels can also open with certain restrictions.

However, all colleges,

coaching institutions, industrial training institutes, libraries and training institutes (both private and government) will remain closed till June 15. The anganwadi centres and crèches under Women and Child Development Department will remain shut till June 30.

Amid a sharp decline in the number of active cases and the positivity rate in the State

over the past one month, the government extended lockdown or "Mahamari Alert-Saraksh Haryana", for another week till 5 a.m. on June 7, saying that there was the need to bring down the positivity and fatality rates even further.

The stand-alone shops were allowed to open during the daytime last week, but the timings for the shops in the marketplaces were fixed from

7 a.m. to 12 noon adhering to the odd-even formula. In further relaxations to the shops in the marketplaces, the May 30 order allowed the shops to open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

As per the new directions, the shopping malls can also open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with only one person per 25 square feet allowed inside. The cinema halls, restaura-

nts, and bars inside malls will remain closed. Similarly, room occupancy is allowed in the hotels, but restaurants and bars will remain closed.

The Haryana government had first imposed a weekend lockdown in nine districts – Gurugram, Faridabad, Rohtak, Sonipat, Karnal, Panchkula, Hisar, Sirsa and Fatehabad – from 10 p.m. April 30 to 5 a.m. on May 31.

**BJP demands probe into deaths due to lack of oxygen**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI**

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Sunday demanded a judicial probe into the deaths that happened in hospitals due to the shortage of oxygen during the second COVID wave in the Capital.

He said those who had died due to lack of oxygen supply or failure of the government should get a compensation of ₹10 lakh instead of ₹5 lakh as announced by the Delhi government. "It is high time that responsibility for these deaths be fixed...," Mr. Bidhuri said.

**Hiding deficiencies**

Dr. Gurjar said that administrative authorities are working just to hide the deficiencies in the system rather than finding solutions for the permanent shortage of machinery and human resources in government hospitals.

"Management is better at private hospitals. For instance, during COVID, in a government hospital, knowing a patient's status will be difficult for the family. But in private hospitals, doctors are more approachable. Even nurses and nursing orderlies will be easily approachable and friendlier.

"Treatment-wise,

there is not much difference," Dr. Gurjar said.

He said the government

should increase the budget on health.

"In government hospitals, the number of doctors is less, nurses are also less. Also, healthcare workers should be taken on a permanent basis so that they will get better remuneration and benefits. This will increase their dedication to work and they will work better. Currently, it is the poor who suffer as they have no other option, but government hospitals," he added.

He said the government

should increase the budget on health.

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# U.P. govt. to relax curbs from June 1 as cases drop

Establishments to open five days a week in 55 districts

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday announced relaxations to the partial lockdown in much of the State as active cases have reduced to just over 41,000.

From June 1, shops, bazaars and other establishments in the State would be allowed to open outside containment zones from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for five days a week while a lockdown would be imposed during the weekend.

#### No relaxation in 20 dists

The relaxations, however, as of now, would be introduced only in 55 out of the 75 districts. In the remaining 20 districts, which have more than 600 active cases, no relaxations would be provided till the active cases fall below



Streets wear a deserted look during COVID-induced lockdown in Varanasi on Sunday. PTI

this level, said Rajendra Kumar Tiwari, Chief Secretary, in an order.

If the active cases in a district climb above 600, the district would forfeit its relaxations and would be brought under corona curfew again, the government said.

The districts that will still have restrictions include Meerut, Lucknow, Varanasi,

# 20 dead as 350 tea estates in Assam affected by COVID-19

State government decides to facilitate offline vaccination

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The COVID-19 infections have spread fast across the tea belt in eastern Assam, affecting almost half of the State's 803 major tea estates.

The State Health and Family Welfare Department could not provide data specific to the tea estates. But associations of tea workers said about 350 estates have been affected, leaving more than 20 workers dead.

"It is difficult to give the exact figures... a majority of some 6,200 workers who tested positive are from the gardens in five-six districts," Congress-affiliated Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha leader Lakheswar Tanti said.

The districts most affected are Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Biswanath, Golaghat and

Jorhat. "The spread is worrisome. One can get an idea from the fact that a total of 1,325 people tested positive in these five districts on May 28," a Health Department official said.

**Reluctant to get tested**  
Dhiraj Goala, the president of the All Assam Tea Tribes Students' Association, attributed the spread to the reluctance of tea workers in getting tested. "There are 25 lakh people across the tea belt and 10 lakh of them are workers in large and small tea gardens. Our members have been visiting the gardens, motivating them to get tested as well as vaccinated," he told *The Hindu*.

"According to the government records, 27,000 tea garden workers have been

given the first dose of the vaccination and 2,400 the second dose. We have asked the government to speed up the process with offline, on-the-spot registration facility," Mr. Goala said.

The State government has decided to facilitate offline registration for the vaccination drive. Sooner the better, tea organisations have said.

Labour and Tea Tribes Welfare Minister Sanjay Kishan, who has been monitoring the pandemic status in the tea belt, said COVID Care Centres have been set up in over 270 tea gardens and more are being set up. "We have formed a COVID management committee in every tea garden, which updates us. We are also providing ₹2,000 for rations to each family affected."

# 13 injured in U.P. accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AGRA

Thirteen passengers were injured after a bus fell into a 15-foot-deep ditch along the Agra-Lucknow Expressway in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Sunday.

The accident occurred on the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, and its suspected that the driver lost control of the vehicle after its

axle broke, they said.

The injured passengers were admitted to the Sarojini Naidu Medical College and Hospital here, police said.

The bus, which was going from Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh to Jaipur in Rajasthan, had 70-80 passengers. It fell into a 15-feet-deep ditch along the expressway near milestone nine, they said.

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#### DEATH



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Deeply mourned by

V K Krishnan 9940192340

Vardhani Krishnan 9780911355

Sharanya, Siddharth, Vikas and family & friends

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#### LEGAL NOTICE

In the Court of Sh. Ashok Kapoor, Principal Judge Family Court, Shahbad Bhagat Singh Nagar

CNR No:PBS01-000578-2020

Notice No: 19/08/2021

Reena Ranj. Wd. Davinder Singh & daughter of Gurjald Chand, & Mohalla Aranahali, Town Rahon, Tehsil Nawanshahr, Distt. SBS Nagar

Vs.

Davinder Singh S/O Ram Lubhaya R/o H.N.O. E-12/388, Chander Nagar, Bhowar, Near J.M. Mill, Jalandhar-Bypass, Ludhiana, at present residing at V/A. ANTONIO CAGNONI 38/ PICANELLO, CATANIA, C.A.P. 95126 (Sicilia), Italy

Petition under section 13 of Hindu marriage Act, 1955, as amended upto date for dissolution of the marriage between the parties dated 23.12.2012 by way of decree of divorce.

**Notice to:** Davinder Singh S/O Ram Lubhaya R/o H.N.O. E-12/388, Chander Nagar, Bhowar, Near J.M. Mill, Jalandhar-Bypass, Ludhiana, at present residing at V/A. ANTONIO CAGNONI 38/ PICANELLO, CATANIA, C.A.P. 95126 (Sicilia), Italy

1. The above titled petition the respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that the respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 14.06.2021 at 10.00 A.M.

For detailed log on

[https://highcourtindia.gov.in/trs-district\\_notice&district=bsnagar](https://highcourtindia.gov.in/trs-district_notice&district=bsnagar)

Principal Judge Family Court

Shahbad Bhagat Singh Nagar

M.Sc., Ph.D.

Chief Scientist & Head, PST, CSIR-CLRI

Kurapatil Malakondalai

Kurapatil Prasad Babu & family

Kurapatil Hari Babu & family

Tanneru Lakshmi, Chetan & Pavan

Meduri Surendra & family

Dammala Subramanyam & family

Wish you happy, healthy and prosperous retired life

Dr. T. NARASIMHASWAMY

GREETINGS

CMYK

THE HINDU

MONDAY, MAY 31, 2021

**IN BRIEF**



**Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple elephant dies**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
An elephant, gifted by the erstwhile Travancore king Sree Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma to the famed Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple here in Kerala, died following prolonged illness. The female jumbo, named Mathilakam Darshini, was believed to be aged around 58. A favourite of the devotees and the local people, the elephant had been a constant presence at various temple rituals. PTI

**Summer vacation in A.P. extended till June 30**

VIJAYAWADA  
In adherence to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and in view of the prevailing pandemic situation in Andhra Pradesh, the summer vacation for teachers and students of Classes 1 to X for all schools under all managements has been extended till June 30. The government has already postponed the SSC Public Examination-2021. Headmasters have been directed to extend academic support to SC students from June 1.

**Stolen jewels recovered from man's stomach**

MANGALURU  
A man arrested in connection with a theft case in Karnataka was on Sunday found to have swallowed gold ornaments he had allegedly stolen from jewellery shops. The incident happened at Sullia in Dakshina Kannada district. Police sources said the accused developed severe abdominal pain on Saturday. An x-ray showed the jewels in his intestine. The ornaments, mostly rings and ear-studs weighing 35 g, were recovered through a surgical procedure, sources said. PTI

# Telangana locks down for 10 more days

Overall curbs in Kerala to stay till June 9; Karnataka to decide on extending restrictions by June 6

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The third phase of Kerala's lockdown for COVID-19 will start on Monday and be in force till June 9 midnight.

The restrictions will be uniform in all 14 districts as the stringent measures in Malappuram district are also being eased, the Chief Secretary, V.P. Joy, said in his order.

Adding to existing exemptions, additional relaxations from Monday include banks and other financial institutions being allowed to function on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays up to 5 p.m. However, June 1, 3, 5 and 8 will be holidays for banks and financial institutions under the Negotiable Instruments Act-1881. Clearing houses of member banks can function on all days.

Textiles, footwear shops and jewellery shops can function from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays with minimum staff.

Industrial establishments and production centres, including cashew, coir and



**Empty vista:** The Outer Ring Road at Nagarabhavi during the lockdown in Bengaluru on Sunday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

printing, can have up to 50% staff. Establishments and shops selling raw materials for industries can function up to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation can operate minimum services in industrial areas.

The Telangana Cabinet on

Sunday extended the ongoing lockdown by 10 days with relaxations from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m., an official statement said.

**Unfair, says Owaisi**

Before the Cabinet met, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, in a tweet, urged the Chief Minister not to extend the lockdown, as it was not a strategy to combat COVID-19. The only long-term solution was universal vaccination.

"If goal is to reduce crowding, then we may consider evening curfews (6 p.m. onwards) or mini-lockdowns for COVID clusters. But expecting -3.5 cr people to live for weeks with just a 4-hour lockdown relaxation is not fair at all," Mr. Owaisi said in a series of tweets.

The Karnataka government will decide on extending the lockdown by the weekend. "The expert committee has not yet given

the report. The government will consult experts and Ministers and decide by June 6," Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said on Sunday.

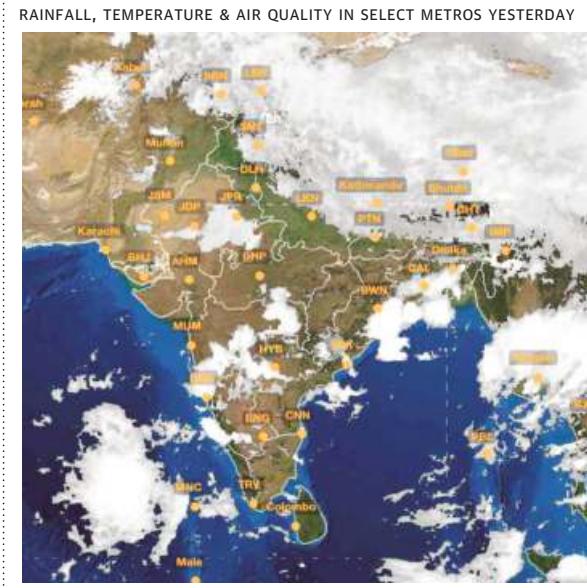
"The number of cases in some districts is still higher than what we expected," he said. To a question on the Centre's guidelines to continue with curbs till June 30, he said: "The Centre has allowed the Chief Ministers to take decisions on the nature of curbs."

Mr. Modi had convened a meeting of Chief Ministers on June 2.

Health Minister K. Sudharakar said the lockdown had shown how the positivity rate declined from about 47% to about 14 to 15%. Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said the Union Home Ministry had issued general guidelines on managing the situation till June 30.

(With inputs from Bengaluru bureau and PTI)

**WEATHER WATCH**



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

**Forecast for Monday:** Thunderstorm with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, east Rajasthan, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Goa, Telangana and Kerala and with lightning at isolated places over Chhattisgarh, Odisha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

CITY	RAIN	MAX	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	
Agartala	—	36.5	27.4	Kozhikode	26	33	24.6
Ahmedabad	—	39.7	28.7	Kurnool	—	38.6	27.8
Aizawl	4	—	23.7	Lucknow	—	35.1	23.4
Allahabad	—	34.7	23.7	Madurai	—	41	26.3
Bengaluru	—	32	19.2	Mangalore	17.2	30.4	22.6
Bhopal	3.4	40.8	25.8	Mumbai	—	33.9	28.4
Bhubaneswar	—	36.6	28.7	Mysuru	—	32.9	21.6
Chandigarh	32	36.5	18.5	New Delhi	—	39.1	25.4
Chennai	—	38.3	29.9	Patna	0.5	31.4	23.6
Coimbatore	—	35.8	23.7	Port Blair	4	29.4	25.6
Dehradun	12	33.6	19.8	Puducherry	—	39	26.2
Gangtok	—	22.1	17	Pune	37.8	34.7	22.6
Goa	—	32.4	25.6	Raipur	—	43	28.6
Guwahati	7	35	26.4	Ranchi	14	33.2	21.7
Hubballi	—	29	22	Shillong	—	26.5	17.4
Hyderabad	—	37.8	25.5	Shimla	10	29.5	14.4
Imphal	—	32	20.8	Srinagar	—	29.3	9.5
Jaipur	—	41.8	27.2	Thiruvananthapuram	3	32	24.6
Kochi	5	31	25	Tiruchi	—	40.4	27.4
Kohima	1	26.8	16.6	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	—	35.3	28.3	Visakhapatnam	0.2	38.6	25.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	17	.42	26	.59	.76	...
Bengaluru	.6	.37	91	.26	.32	...
Chennai	.82	.38	35	.45	.54	...
Delhi	6	4	33	.44	.134	...
Hyderabad	—	.68	21	.33	.50	...
Kolkata	10	.18	18	.64	.86	...
Lucknow	12	.4	72	.32	.45	...
Mumbai	—	.17	3	.70	.87	...
Visakhapatnam	16	.52	34	.74	.106	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Hisar, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 262 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Gadag, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 10

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.  
**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

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

## 11 Telangana hospitals can't treat COVID-19 cases

Complaints trigger surprise checks

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
KHAMMAM

After detecting blatant violations of rules pertaining to the admission and treatment of COVID-19 patients, health authorities in Telangana's Khammam district have cancelled the permission granted to as many as 11 private hospitals to treat COVID-19 patients.

The action follows a surprise inspection of private hospitals designated for COVID-19 treatment by the district-level task force team here on Saturday night.

During the inspections, multiple violations such as failure to display the treatment tariff details on hospital notice boards, non-compliance with COVID-19 safety norms, were detected by the team.

following the outbreak of the second wave of COVID-19.

**Exorbitant charges'**

After a string of complaints from aggrieved patients and relatives, mainly on "exorbitant charges", the task force team swung into action and conducted surprise checks in around 11 private hospitals on Saturday night.

During the inspections, multiple violations such as failure to display the treatment tariff details on hospital notice boards, non-compliance with COVID-19 safety norms, were detected by the team.

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## Storm and strife

The Centre and the West Bengal government must negotiate their relations in good faith

The conflicting versions of the BJP and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee regarding a meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday to review the situation after Cyclone Yaas cannot be glossed over as miscommunication. BJP leaders, including Union Ministers, went to great lengths to show Ms. Banerjee in a bad light over the meeting. They said she made the PM wait for 30 minutes at Kalaikunda in Paschim Medinipur district in south Bengal; and once she arrived, she handed over certain papers and left without attending the meeting. Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar accused the CM publicly of being confrontational. In an unprecedented act, the Centre unilaterally placed the West Bengal Chief Secretary under central deputation. Considering the fact that no concurrence of the official in question or the State government was sought, this can be seen only as a vindictive move. Ms. Banerjee has said that she had sought the PM's permission before going about her schedule to oversee relief operations in other parts of the State. While offering to even touch the PM's feet if that was required to secure the support of the Centre for the State's welfare, she has questioned the BJP version and pleaded that the CS be allowed to stay in the post. Ms. Banerjee said she was delayed for the meeting with the PM only because of air traffic regulations for the landing of the PM's aircraft.

That there is such acrimony between the State and the Centre at a time when both must be working hand in hand is extremely disheartening for the people of West Bengal. But there can be no equal apportioning of blame in this. By calling Mr. Dhankhar and Leader of Opposition Suvidha Adhikari to the meeting, the Centre had already betrayed its plans to belittle the CM, who has won a resounding third term recently by trouncing the BJP. In Odisha on the same day, and in Gujarat earlier, the PM reviewed the situation with the CMs, and not Opposition leaders. It is apparent that the BJP has not been able to stomach the popular verdict in Bengal. The defeat could have been an occasion for the BJP to introspect and mend its strategy for West Bengal. Far from it, the Centre unleashed the CBI against the newly elected Trinamool Congress Ministers. Mr. Adhikari, the PM's interlocutor on Friday, remains untouched by the CBI though he is an accused in the same case. Now, by dragging a senior IAS officer who has just been cleared for a three month extension after retirement on May 31, into a nasty political tussle, the Centre has crossed yet another red line. The BJP must wake up to the tradition of Centre and States constantly negotiating their relations in good faith. It must also get used to the reality of losing elections in a democracy.

## Sweating the small stuff

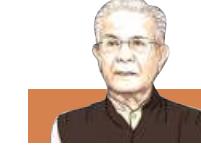
The GST Council leaves weightier issues hanging fire; sets stage for more acrimony

The GST Council, which met last Friday, could not live up to the expectations of some meaningful relief from the disastrous second wave of the pandemic. The measures unveiled were insipid, be it for the common man hoping to survive while keeping fingers crossed for a vaccination slot or a hospital bed, or businesses hurting from lockdowns, and States grappling with a cash crunch amid a scramble to purchase vaccines. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced an elaborate amnesty scheme for small firms pending GST returns, lowered the interest levied on late payments for recent months, and extended several compliance timelines. But there is little respite for businesses with turnover of over ₹5 crore, and industry is underwhelmed. No discussion occurred on bringing fuels under GST, despite the Centre's noises to that effect amid runaway petrol prices. Taxes on COVID essentials remain unchanged, despite States and industry pressing for waivers. Ms. Sitharaman said the subject dominated deliberations but 'varying viewpoints' compelled her to let a Group of Ministers pore over possibilities of rate cuts. The GoM has to report back by June 8, but the Council, constitutionally empowered to recommend special rates during a disaster, would still have to concur. Thus, no immediate relief can be expected.

Opposition States allege that NDA-ruled States' representatives in the Council vociferously opposed waiving the GST on COVID vaccines and drugs. Tax mavens have mooted ways to implement such cuts, so it is unfortunate that the Centre, usually so conscious of optics, came to the table with little to offer. GST breaks offered on free COVID-related imports from abroad for donation to State-approved entities, were extended to material imported on a payment basis as well. It is not clear why this had to wait for the Council – BJP-ruled Gujarat and Haryana have already offered GST refunds on such imports. A ₹1.58-lakh crore borrowing plan may quell States' concerns about immediate compensation dues, but larger schisms are apparent that could fray the Council's functioning further after recent acrimonious parleys. Sikkim, for instance, has demanded that it be allowed to levy its own cess to cope with falling revenues, a demand that has been backed by others, including Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh. This could virtually derail the very edifice of GST subsuming all local levies, even as States now want to be compensated beyond next year. The Centre, facing flak for its handling of the second wave, could do with a more responsive approach. Winning an intellectual or ideological battle over taxes on COVID essentials is meaningless at this precarious time, when each day's delay in providing relief hurts thousands. Small gestures with limited revenue implications would give the Centre more room to strike common ground with States on the challenges that loom over the GST regime.

# A 'reform wave' Lakshadweep could do without

Though there is room for improvement, the archipelago does not need the measures announced by its administrator



WAJAHAT HABIBULLAH

Praful Khoda Patel, a former Gujarat Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Minister who took additional charge as Administrator, Lakshadweep, in December last year, is in the news for having introduced a slew of draft legislation that will have a wide-ranging impact on the islands: the Lakshadweep Animal Preservation Regulation, 2021; the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation (PASA); the Lakshadweep Panchayat Regulation, 2021 and Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021. Addressing the media in the face of widespread criticism of these measures, Mr. Patel says he intends to develop Lakshadweep like neighbouring Maldives, "a renowned international tourist destination".

Adding to this, the Collector of Lakshadweep, S. Asker Ali (a young IAS officer from Manipur) says, "It was only in 2017 that the Centre constituted the Island Development Agency under the Home Minister for the development of the islands. Since then, we have been working on developing town and country planning norms."

### The IDA framework

Mr. Ali should be aware that a specially constituted Island Development Authority (IDA) for the island territories of India, chaired by no less than the former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, had, in Kavaratti in 1988, approved a framework for the development of India's island territories. It held the view that "an environmentally sound strategy for both island groups hinges on better exploitation of marine resources coupled with much greater care in the use of land resources". Published in 1989, the report carried six recommendations for Lakshadweep (Cecil J. Saldanha, Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep: An Environmental Impact Assessment).

At this point, I must highlight that Lakshadweep was an assignment that I consider to be the most enriching in my career – I was Administrator, Lakshadweep, 1987-90. Upon the conclusion of my term, the Union Territory had its own decentralised political entity from the adoption of panchayat raj much before the constitutional amendments of 1993, in which the Island Development Council, at the apex of the local government, was mandated to advise the Administrator on development; its own airport, and a flourishing tourist industry, with an international tourist resort in Bangaram. According to its first franchisee, Jose Dominic, this facilitated ecotourism in Kerala.

A paradise set in the Arabian Sea, the archipelago of Lakshadweep also gives India a vast and exclusive economic zone with three distinct ecosystems: land, lagoon and ocean. Fishery is a primary occupation here. The language, except in Minicoy, is Malayalam; in Minicoy, Mahl is spoken, a language akin to the 17th century Diveri of the Maldives.

The society in all islands is matriarchal. The religion is Islam of the pristine Shafi school of law. When Islam came to the islands is debated. According to Prof. Lotika Varadarajan, "The thesis... that Islam was introduced not from Malabar but from Yemen and Hadramaut may be accepted in relation to the Maldives but not Lakshadweep... On the other hand, social conventions, dress and the position accorded to Thangals within the community all point to the Mappilas of Malabar as progenitors of present-day Islam in Lakshadweep."

Vatteluttu was the earliest script used with its heavy Sanskrit component and this system of autography is in evidence in the sailing manuals of local pilots (*malmis*), on inscriptions on tombstones and those in some mosques/*pallis*. With the introduction of Islam, Arabi-Malayalam, with Malayalam in Arabic script and associated with the literature of the Mappilas that developed on the mainland, also came into use on the islands.

I was a part of the team accompanying Rajiv Gandhi while on his

first visit to Lakshadweep in 1985. Together with his visit to the Andaman and Nicobar islands, Rajiv Gandhi was concerned about the development agenda for these ecologically fragile territories – an agenda hitherto dictated by a faraway government to a design set by the Union Planning Commission, and without so much as a reference to the people most concerned, the residents of the islands.



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### A 'no' to the Maldives model

Deliberations of the IDA wanted that Lakshadweep, with its land ownership constitutionally protected, be opened to international tourism not as a means of generating wealth for investors from the mainland but to bring prosperity to the islanders. Specifically rejecting the Maldives model, the plan for Lakshadweep required that the industry had to be people-centric and enrich the fragile coral ecology. Lakshadweep today has rainwater harvesting facilities, first introduced in government buildings on every island and now accessible in every home. Solar power, which covers 10% of lighting needs, makes Lakshadweep a pioneer in India's present flagship initiative.

All islands have been connected by helicopter service since 1986, and high-speed passenger boats were purchased in the 1990s by an international tender. A study by the National Institute of Oceanography found practical applications, helping a redesign of the tripods reinforcing the beaches against sea erosion, and ensuring piped water supply especially designed to draw from the fresh water lens that, in every coral island, floats on the saline underground seawater at the core of every coral island, so as not to disturb the slim lens.

The islands boast total literacy. Minicoy had among the country's

first Navodaya Vidyalayas. Kadmat has a degree college that was designed by K.T. Ravindran, an authority on vernacular building traditions, who was to become dean and professor and head of the department of urban design at New Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture. Vernacular building traditions are the theme of all government housing projects undertaken in the islands in the 1980s, with leading architects providing the designs. Kavaratti has a desalination wind-powered plant gifted by the Danish government. And although the poverty line in terms of GDP is only slightly higher than the World Bank's poverty threshold, Lakshadweep today has no poor people; they have a high calorific consumption from plentiful foods harvested from the lagoons and islands.

The office of the Administrator, Lakshadweep was also among the first in India to be computerised with a mainframe and fax machine; every island in Lakshadweep had a computer by 1990. Endorsed with outlays by the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Finance Commissions (1984-2005), this established, in the words of the last of these Commissions "speedy and accurate generation of accounting information that might be needed for purposes of better planning, budgeting and monitoring".

Admittedly, there is much room for improvement. Today, long lines and refrigeration have aided the expansion of the fishing sector but income disparities have grown. Indiscriminate trawling endangers the coral, as experienced in the Maldives and now banned there. The Government recognises the need to develop policies for enhancing employment opportunities, environment-friendly management of fisheries, sanitation, waste disposal and widening access to drinking water, with the youth, having acquired a modern education, preferring salaried jobs over pursuing traditional occupations. None of this requires any of the measures announced by Administrator Patel.

Revenue from tourism has declined with the closure of resorts (including at Bangaram) from litigation. A clear policy must include

conservation and natural resource management arrived at after wide consultation, eminently possible within the existing infrastructure of the Union Territory, and also taking into account climatic compulsions. Maldives is hardly a suitable model. Water bungalows – an expensive concept and also hazardous to the coral – favoured by the NITI Aayog, would collapse in Lakshadweep's turbulent monsoon. It should be noted that a wooden jetty installed at the diving school in Kadmat needs to be dismantled every monsoon.

### Obtuse plans

But, ostensibly, in the pursuit of 'holistic development', using the 'claim' that there has been no development in Lakshadweep for the past 70 years, Mr. Praful Patel has proposed a cow slaughter ban in a territory where there are no cows (except in government-owned dairy farms), a preventive detention law where there is no crime, and also steps to undermine tribal land ownership, with judicial remedy denied, with also plans for road widening on the islands where the maximum road length is 11 km. More insidious is the provision to allow the mining and exploitation of mineral resources which could convert the islands into a hub for cement manufacture.

Other initiatives by Mr. Praful Patel include panchayat rules designed to restrict the population growth in a territory where, according to the National Health and Family Survey-5 (2019-20), the total fertility rate is 1.4 (which is far behind the national average of 2.2) and relaxing prohibition, extant in the Union Territory because of public demand. Worse still is the relaxation of quarantine restrictions for travel which have introduced the novel coronavirus into a pandemic-free archipelago. The developments only lead one to suspect that there is something sinister being planned. Is the game plan to altogether supplant Lakshadweep's human habitation with cement factories?

Wajahat Habibullah, a former IAS officer, was India's first Chief Information Commissioner, and thereafter Chair, National Commission for Minorities

## Evidence of how little the judiciary has learnt

The Tarun Tejpal case judgment must not be allowed to become a precedent in derailing the workplace safety of women



BRINDA KARAT

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in Goa has rightly filed an appeal in the High Court against the judgment of the Additional Sessions Judge acquitting a former editor of a news magazine, Tarun Tejpal, of charges of the rape of an employee in November 2013. He was tried under sections introduced into the law after the Nirbhaya case, including one denoting that he was in a position of power, authority and trust over the young woman concerned.

We should not let ourselves be distracted either by the argument that this is a case of "political vendetta" since Mr. Tejpal was known as a BJP critic or by the utter hypocrisy of the BJP when it comes to its double standards in dealing with cases of rape.

### The survivor's battle

The young woman survivor is no pawn of those who may have political motives. Throughout these years she has fought a very tough battle.

In the 527-page judgment (<https://bit.ly/3p5Ag6l>), in spite of all the efforts to suppress it, it is her voice we hear, a voice which speaks with honesty and courage, a voice of a young woman conflicted and torn – sexually assaulted by a man, her boss whom she considered a father figure, the father

in fact of her very close friend; confused as to what her course of action should be since so many relationships were at stake; angry, sad, and yet trying to act "normally" to fulfil her responsibilities at work – a voice which perhaps unintentionally also reveals the horrendous nature of the sexualisation of women made possible at a workplace by not just the accused boss but by women too in positions of authority and the normalisation of such a process by them.

The judgment transforms the accused into the victim and it is the young woman who becomes the accused. It says "(Prosecutrix) neither demonstrates any kind of normative behaviour on her own part – that as a prosecutrix of sexual assault might plausibly show" (p.457).

This pushes us back to 1979 when a rape survivor had to prove through physical marks on her body that she had not consented. In this 2021 judgment, in a similar approach, since the survivor did not fit into the court's preconceived ideas of a rape survivor's behaviour, she is considered a liar. It would appear that four decades of women's struggles which forced changes in law, in case law, and in approaches to victims of rape, have no relevance for this judgment.

Case law gives weightage to the statement of a victim of rape with the proviso of it being "credible and sterling". The judgment gives a new and dangerous interpretation to this. It poses the question, "who is a sterling witness?" And then accepts every highly objectionable charge of the defence to prove the witness (prosecutrix) is



not "sterling".

### Violation of laws, of privacy

To this end, in total violation of various laws, the full personal details of the survivor, her name and that of her family, her WhatsApp messages, her personal mails, her photographs and her relationships are laid out bare in the judgment in the most ferocious aggression on her right to privacy and which have no relevance to the charge of rape. In sharp contrast, there is a blanket of protection given by the court to the accused. Not a mention of his back story. Even his telling WhatsApp message referring to "fingertips", a clear reference of what he had done to the survivor, is brushed aside.

She on the other hand is subjected to a barbaric and cruel cross-examination recorded in the judgment on intimate details of her life and her friendships. Even while upholding the objections of the prosecution on some issues under Section 53A in the Indian Evidence Act, which rules out reference to past sexual history, the judgment defends this stating "some of the messages shown were not for purpose of proving immoral character or consent but to prove suppression of relevant

facts by the prosecutrix". This is nothing but a licence for the character assassin's knife.

The most telling evidence against the accused is his own "personal apology", the draft of an "official apology" and the conversations recorded by the survivor with the senior woman officer negotiating on behalf of the accused clearly showing that there was no ulterior motive behind the complaint. The judgment records the accused as stating in his apology, "Yes, you did say at one point that I was your boss and I did reply 'that makes it easier'... again 'I had no idea that I had been even remotely non-consensual' and then 'anything furtive with my daughter's best friend'", are words that match what the survivor had said in her accusation – that she asked him to stop but he continued.

### Sympathy towards accused

But in an extraordinary and unprecedented interpretation, the judgment holds that the apology and the statements made by the accused were "not sent voluntarily but that it was due... to the pressure and intimidation by prosecutrix to act swiftly and also the inducement that the matter would be closed." In this way, the boss accused of rape is converted into a victim by "manipulation and calculating nature" of the prosecutrix and his statement is taken as being "not voluntary and against his wishes". The sympathy towards the accused leaps out in paragraph after paragraph of the judgment. Sample this: "Accused was absolutely repulsed with the accusation made by the prosecutrix"; "accused asserted his claim that it

was only drunken banter"; "accused consistently claiming to be a bunch of lies", In contrast, the comment against the survivor: "she twists and manipulates the truth".

Every witness who gave evidence that the survivor shared her traumatic experience with them within hours of the incident – proving that it was no afterthought – is brushed aside on grounds that they are her friends, and therefore biased while the statements of the accused's own sister and another female colleague known to be close to him, are accepted as being true.

Even the right of a survivor to approach activists and lawyers for their help – the most natural course of action for any rape survivor – is criminalised in this judgment. Senior members of the Bar such as Indira Jaisingh are put in the dock as probable advisers for "doctoring" and also "of adding to incidents".

The judge in this case was a woman which once again underlines that it is not biology but ideology which determines one's view of social reality. This judgment will find its place in history as an example of the worst kind of victim blaming and shaming to benefit the accused, a man old enough to be her father, powerful as her boss. The sooner it is overturned the better. Otherwise if this becomes the precedent, no working woman will dare to speak out against sexual abuse and violence at the workplace.

Brinda Karat is a member of the CPI(M) Polit Bureau and a former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament

## 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.

### COVID and children

If the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic saw an uptick in child marriages and children from the lower rungs of the society being forced to work for wages, the second wave has dealt them another blow – hundreds of children being orphaned. The new coinage, 'COVID orphans',

is a grim reminder to state authorities to take concerted measures that ensure the well-being and protection of such children. They must have a conducive environment to grow and evolve as good and responsible citizens. The authorities also need to keep constant vigil over child traffickers. Given the

M. JAYARAM,  
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

New variant

The reports, of a lockdown in China's Guangzhou and

traumatised state of the orphaned children, they must also be provided with mental health support. They do need our empathy, kindness and protection.

M. JAYARAM,  
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

# Only a global effort can tame COVID-19

What we need is the mass production of vaccines in order to inoculate the global population



REJI JOSEPH &amp; THANKOM ARUN

India has been witnessing an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases, largely due to the new variants. The variant found initially in the United Kingdom (B.1.1.7) was found in parts of north India earlier this year and began to spread across the country. The World Health Organization (WHO) recently declared the variant first found in India (B.1.617) as a variant of global concern as it has already spread to more than 40 countries. This underscores the fact that no one is safe until everyone is safe. It calls for globally coordinated efforts to build herd immunity through mass vaccination and to develop new vaccines or tweak the existing ones to become effective against the new variants. Experts have been doubtful about the effectiveness of some of the COVID-19 vaccines against the new variants of the virus.

#### Vaccine nationalism

An immediate outcome of the second wave in India is that many people are no longer hesitant to take the vaccine. However, vaccine shortages have been reported in many parts of the country. Several people have criticised the government's Vaccine Maitri policy. The government has already imposed temporary restrictions on the export of COVID-19 vaccines from India. Although there is a need for these temporary restrictions to meet domestic demand, any definite move towards vaccine nationalism will be detrimental to global efforts to contain the virus. The pandemic needs to be checked globally in a coordinated manner. If this is not done, the virus will keep mutating and no country will remain isolated.

From May 1, all those aged 18 and above became eligible in India to receive the COVID-19 vaccines. This means that 595 million people who require 1,190 million doses were added to the 344 million people in the 45 and above age group requiring 688 million doses. Inoculating this huge population calls for massive production capacities. Only a little over 12% of the population has re-



NAGAR GOPAL

ceived one dose and 3.2% has received both the doses in India so far.

The current production capacity of Covishield and Covaxin is just over 70 million doses per month. The government has allocated ₹45 billion as an advance commitment to Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech for enhancing their production capacity. By June-July, in the best-case scenario, the combined production capacity of the two companies is expected to rise to 158 million doses per month. The 50 million imported Sputnik doses will add to this. This vaccine will be available only in major private hospitals for now. It is reported that the Sputnik vaccine will be produced in India from July with an annual capacity of 156 million doses, which, according to the Russian Ambassador to India, will be gradually increased to 850 million doses. Even if all the three vaccines are exclusively used for domestic supply, the anticipated production in the near future will not be sufficient to meet the enormous vaccine demand.

#### Pharmacy of the world

Being the pharmacy of the world, India needs to rise to the occasion and cater to the demand for vaccines in the country as well as facilitate inoculation of the global population, especially in poorer countries. In the first week of May, the Indian Council of Medical Research said it was willing to share the know-how to produce Covaxin with any company interested in production. Allowing multiple producers will lead to more competition and a reduction in prices. The government can easily task the public sector vaccine manufacturers with the production of Covaxin by providing support to them. In its attempt to enhance the produc-

#### International co-operation

Scaling up production of existing

vaccines and producing new vaccines is not easy. Unavailability of raw materials, complexities in the transfer of technology, and intellectual property barriers all hinder production. Serum Institute and Bharat Biotech have faced constraints in continuing production due to the lack of raw materials.

Intellectual property rights act as a major barrier in scaling up production. About 1,800 patents cover the single-use plastic reactors which are used in the production of some of the COVID-19 vaccines. Similarly, other equipment and materials used in the production of vaccines are patent-protected and therefore supplied by only a few players. India and South Africa had led an initiative at the World Trade Organization (WTO) for the waiver of intellectual property rights over products required for treating COVID-19. Recently, after coming under pressure, the U.S. extended support to this proposal covering only vaccines. However, Germany said it is opposed to it. Therefore, it is unclear how this IP waiver proposal will help enhance the global production of vaccines. Besides, the U.S. support, which is limited to vaccines, may also limit the benefits deriving from the intellectual property waiver, if the proposal comes through the WTO.

An article published in *Nature* points out the benefits of mRNA vaccine technology compared to conventional vaccine technologies. The key advantage of this technology is easy scalability in production. At present, the WHO has approved two mRNA COVID-19 vaccines produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, and those vaccines have proven to be more effective than other vaccines. Global cooperation is needed to create an environment where those companies interested in producing the mRNA vaccines get open licence from the innovators.

Global cooperation is also required for the sequencing of the viral genome to track and control the multiple variants. Only if we tame the virus together and quickly will the world benefit both in terms of health and economy.

*Reji Joseph is an Associate Professor at Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi; Thankom Arun is a Professor of Global Development and Accountability at the University of Essex, U.K. Views are personal*

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## The binding law

The newspaper cannot follow the norms set by social media in reporting child sexual abuse



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

I have been critical of whataboutery for both ethical and practical reasons. Ethically, it creates a false hierarchy among the issues confronting us and arranges them in neat political silos. Practically, it diverts our attention from the pressing issue. When I get complaints from the readers of this newspaper, I tend to use accepted journalistic yardsticks to evaluate them and hardly indulge in the comparison of differing standards between news organisations.

#### Best practices in journalism

I draw from documented best practices for journalism. While many scholars believe that the history of modern journalism begins with the anti-colonial struggle in the United States in the mid-18th century, the finer nuances emerged in the first half of the 20th century. We can distil these principles into five actionable points to understand what constitute the best practices in journalism. They are: 1) differentiate facts from conjecture and opinion, 2) maintain a standard of accuracy, 3) do not easily resort to anonymous sources, 4) do not promote hate and bigotry, and 5) defer to the rule of law, including those dealing with privacy.

Early this week, Chennai was rocked by allegations of sexual misconduct by a teacher in a reputed school. Social media platforms carried all sorts of information. Most of them were violative of the guidelines spelt out in two important laws: the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (the POCSO Act) and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (the JJ Act). Some readers expected this newspaper to follow the norms set by social media.

A report on May 25, "Teacher accused of sexual misconduct suspended", was seen by this section of readers as incomplete reporting as it did not name the school in which the said offence took place. S. Kathiresan, a reader from Saligramam in Chennai, wrote: "The Hindu has published the name of the accused teacher but not the name of the school. Why are you protecting the school?" I received a number of letters and direct messages on my Twitter account about the failure of the newspaper in naming the

school.

The report that the newspaper published was in compliance with the POCSO Act, which clearly states that any form of reporting that may result in identifying the survivor would violate the privacy of the individual. People who express themselves on social media platforms are not necessarily familiar with the laws that govern the reporting of sexual violence against children. It is true that with the proliferation of social media platforms, many rules are broken. At times, even the survivors have been named. But this is a clear violation of the prescribed law.

#### Pointing out lacunae in the law

At the same time, the newspaper has pointed out the lacunae in the POCSO Act. While reporting within the legal framework is a primary requisite, it is also important to flag the loopholes in the governing law. The newspaper carried a comment article by lawyer Manuraj Shumugusundaram titled "Expanding the scope of POCSO" (May 25). He argued that necessary changes should be made in the law to account for the reporting of historical child sexual abuse.

The newspaper has been looking at this law closely. For instance, when a single bench of the Madras High Court allowed a petition seeking to quash a case of kidnap in March, a lecturer, Shraddha Chaudhary, wrote a comment article titled "The limits of POCSO" (March 16, 2021). She dealt with the more sensitive area of adolescent sexuality. In her earlier article, "Putting victims on trial" (July 16, 2020), she documented the deeply entrenched patriarchal biases in our justice system.

Like society, journalism too does not condone child sexual violence. But the reporting on this particularly distressing story has to navigate a binding legal regime. For instance, when complaints started emerging against various schools in the city, the newspaper stuck to the legally sanctioned method of reporting. Its report on May 30, "Schools mull child protection measures", also refrained from naming the other schools which are in the investigative dragnet.

Not naming the schools that failed to protect the students from predatory behaviour does not mean that the newspaper is not worried about accountability and the necessary follow-up action. It has been reporting the police investigation and the observations of the School Education Minister extensively.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## Holding leaders to account

Any regime which demonises critical voices against it does great disservice to the idea of politics

MANOJ KUMAR JHA

From the first COVID-19 wave to the second, certain things have remained predictably consistent in India. First, the governments at the Centre and in different States have displayed their incapacities. Second, the party in power has constantly asked everyone to 'refrain from playing politics' while we are in the midst of a pandemic. While this sounds good in the first instance, repeated requests to 'refrain from playing politics' nudges us to examine the reasons behind such posturing.

#### Meaning of politics

And that takes us to the question, what is politics all about? Unlike the popular myth, politics is not only about what happens in Assemblies and Parliament. It should also not to be perceived as a dirty word signifying the lust for power or the route to meeting personal ambitions. An important element of politics is government formation, but more significant in a democratic set up is to keep creating avenues for civic engagement. It is through such avenues that informed citizens are able to fulfil their duty as well as right to question the very government they elected. Successful government formation or peaceful transition of power from one political outfit to another is not the end of politics. Vigilant citizens should be able speak directly on a platform or through an association or the existing Opposition about their concerns. During an unprecedented crisis such as the one we are facing now, sharing fears, trauma and anxieties through a medium also occupies a space in the approved hamper of politics and political activities. Any government which begins denigrating or demonising such critical voices against it is actually doing a great disservice to the very idea of politics. It forgets that it is the electors who occupy the central rostrum in a democracy and not the elected.

History has taught us that whenever regimes have felt that they are no longer in control of the mess they created, their first approach is to shift the goalposts. Thus, 'please don't play politics' is the only weapon in

their hands. In the last eight weeks, an overwhelming number of people have needed hospital beds, oxygen support or basic life-saving drugs, but only thousands have been lucky to have them. Thousands of families have lost their loved ones due to the unavailability of a live-saving instrument or drug. They have suffered the agony of being unable to attend burials or cremations of their near and dear ones. Hundreds of bodies have been found floating in different river streams in north India.

#### Dismissing concerns

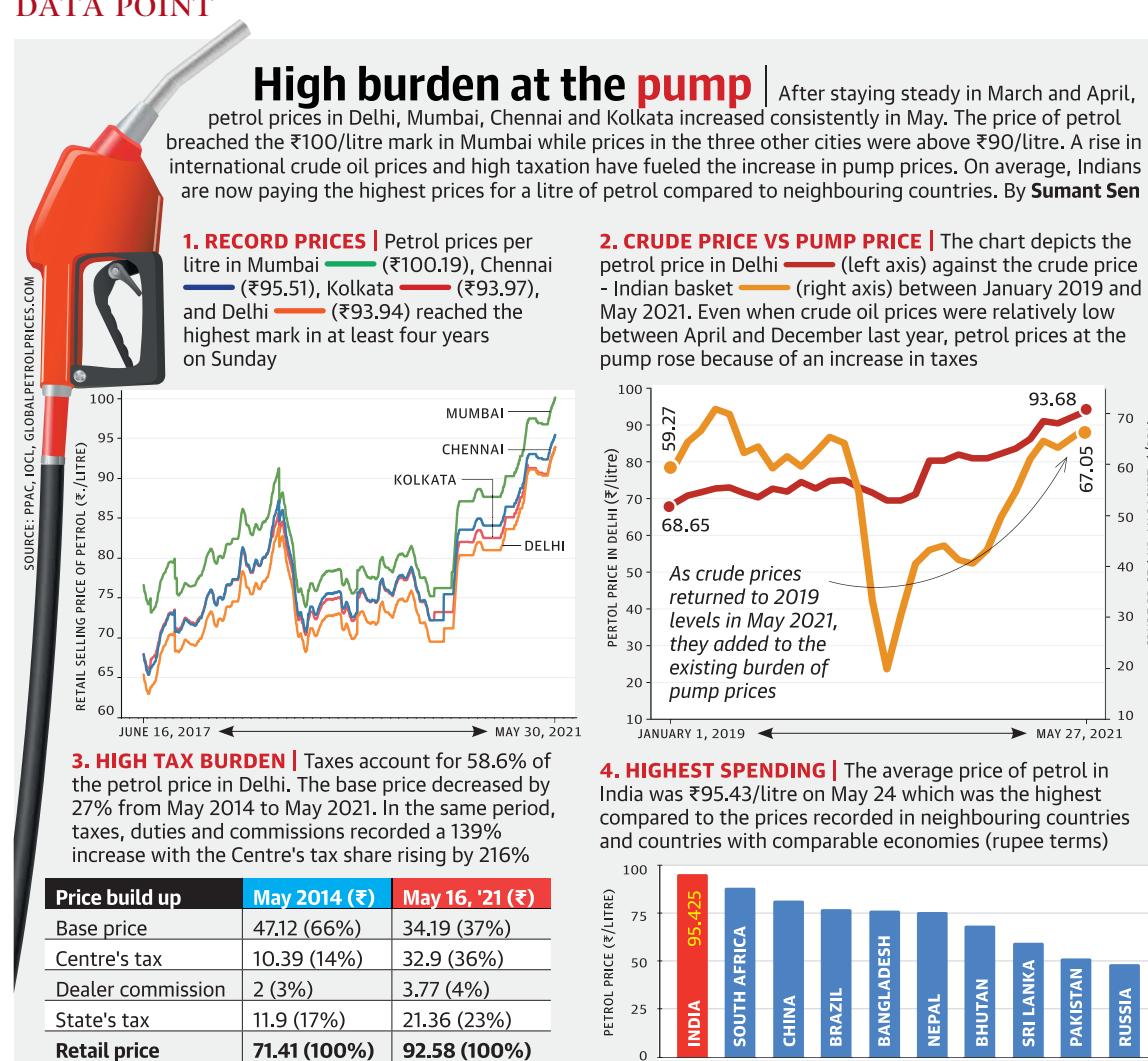
Members of the Opposition, civil society groups and hundreds of doctors and healthcare professionals flagged concerns about the huge lacuna in health infrastructure much before the second wave began. Their concerns were ridiculed and dismissed. A government which was not able to deal with its own inferiority complex was quick to parade ministers and spokespersons to label all those voices as 'political'. The regime must remember that pain and grief are two enduring emotions. The mismanagement of the pandemic has resulted in lakhs of grieving families in India. Though important, routine press conferences informing people that the recovery rate is high or that the positivity rate is going down are no soothings balm to the families who have lost their loved ones not just to the virus but to the lack of facilities which could have saved them. When grieving families are interviewed, they don't blame the virus for their irreparable loss but the apathy and callousness of the government.

The French sociologist Alain Touraine once said that the political class is becoming increasingly alien to the people. This is true of the government of the day. Our constitutional arrangement is such that the government is accountable to the people. The government's disdain for people raising critical issues about the mismanagement of the crisis makes it clear that the leader of the regime does not think of "We the people..." but instead thinks, "I am the people".

Manoj Kumar Jha is Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)



#### DATA POINT



The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 31, 1971

Telangana talks continue in Delhi

The Union Planning Minister, Mr. C. Subramaniam, and the Telangana Praja Samithi leader, Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, discussed for an hour this morning [New Delhi, May 30] the proposals for a settlement of the Telangana problem. Dr. Reddy met the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, yesterday and it was decided then that he should meet Mr. Subramaniam today. Neither Dr. Reddy nor Mr. Subramaniam would, at the end of the talks, indicate either the contents of the proposals or the progress they have made. Dr. Reddy will resume his dialogue with Mr. Subramaniam tomorrow. Any further meeting with the Prime Minister would depend on the outcome of that dialogue.

Our correspondent writes from Hyderabad: Mr. D. Sanjivayya, Ruling Congress President, arrived in Hyderabad to-day from New Delhi on a four-day visit to Andhra Pradesh. When pressmen referred to the talks being held at New Delhi by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and Mr. C. Subramaniam with Dr. Chenna Reddy, Mr. Sanjivayya said, "Let us hope some solution to the Telangana problem will emerge from these talks."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 31, 1921

Mrs. Besant and the Press Act

The Puritans according to Macaulay condemned bull-baiting not because it gave pain to the bull but because it gave pleasure to the spectator. Mrs. Besant apparently shares this mental characteristic for her main reason for urging the repeal of the Press Act is not that papers are unjustly harassed but that it proves ineffective against offenders like Mr. Gandhi. The following passage from her memorandum, quoted by the Simla correspondent of the *Times of India*, will enable our readers to form a clearer conception of the nature of Mrs. Besant's fight for freedom of speech and writing. "Repeal of the Press Act is expedient just now, partly as a reasonable concession to Indian sentiment and partly because the law is now inoperative against big offenders, while it is still used against little known publicists who inflame but a small circle. The discrimination shown in the second case has become a public scandal. Mr. Gandhi in *Young India* is allowed every week to excite hatred and contempt against Government in language compared with which criticisms of Government which have ruined many papers are harmless; he is even allowed to approach perilously near to high treason by saying that he would 'in a sense' assist an Afghan invasion of India."

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Number of new cases dips further to 1.5 lakh

There has been a significant uptick in daily vaccinations in the country.

On May 29, India administered an average of 23.39 lakh doses daily, which is higher than the 13.19 lakh average daily doses adminis-

tered until a week before (May 22). Until May 30, about 17.7% of India's adult population, 38% of the 45+ population and 42.9% of those aged above 60 had been vaccinated with at least one dose.

## Govt. expands credit for oxygen units

However, just about ₹45,000 crore remains to cope with the demand from newly included beneficiaries as well as existing ones who have been offered some marginal respite. Attributing the latest changes in the scheme to 'disruptions caused by the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic to businesses across various sectors', the Finance Ministry extended the scheme's validity till September 30 from June 30 and permitted lenders to disburse credit till December 31, 2021.

FICCI president Uday Shankar hoped banks would begin lending quickly to the critical healthcare sector to help ramp up the health infrastructure to prepare for any future waves of the pandemic but added that a higher allocation would have helped more.

"ECLGS 4.0 (includes) 100% guaranteed cover to loans upto ₹2 crore to hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen

generation plants, interest rate capped at 7.5%," the Ministry said in a statement.

### Loans for treatment

State Bank of India chairman Dinesh Khara and Indian Banks' Association chief Rajkiran Rai, in a joint briefing, said banks are ready to implement the new ECLGS features and announced three new products to help fight COVID-19.

These include unsecured personal loans to individuals from ₹25,000 to ₹5 lakh to meet medical treatment costs for COVID-19, and business loans to healthcare facilities upto ₹100 crore.

With the inclusion of the capital-intensive aviation sector, the government has also dropped the ₹500 crore loan outstanding limit for availing emergency credit.

The maximum additional assistance to each borrower has, however, been limited to 40% of the outstanding amount, or ₹200 crore, whichever is lower.

## India has sent jet to fly back Mehul Choksi'

PM Browne said Mr. Choksi had not been taken forcibly from Antigua, nor had he "escaped", but that he had travelled to Dominica "to have dinner and a good time" with his girlfriend, whom he did not name.

"That would have been a monumental error because whereas in Antigua he is a citizen, we could not have deported him," Mr. Browne said, comparing Mr. Choksi's case to another case

where U.S. marshals were allowed to apprehend a fugitive who was not a citizen from Antigua.

Official sources in New Delhi said the government is in touch with both Antigua and Dominica authorities and will continue to track Mr. Choksi "no matter whether he is in Antigua, Dominica or another place".

(With inputs from Devesh K. Pandey)

## Govt. not ignoring Coimbatore, says Stalin

He recalled his statement that the DMK government would work in such a way that people who voted for the party would be happy and those who did not vote would regret it, appreciating its work.

To drive home his point, he said this was his second visit to the district. He had held a video-conference with the Collector, deputed Minister for Medical and Family Welfare Ma. Subramanian and designated a senior officer as the nodal officer to oversee the implementation of the COVID-19

control measures.

If need be, he would make another visit, he said.

Mr. Stalin said the State had fared better than Kerala and Karnataka, which had reported the highest daily case count of 43,000 and 50,000 as the pandemic peaked. On the other hand, Tamil Nadu had reported the highest of 36,000 cases, the Chief Minister said.

The case count had come down in the last two days in the district as the administration was taking all steps to control the spread of the infection.

## Delhi HC to give verdict on Central Vista today

Meanwhile, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority on Saturday allowed construction activities within their worksites outside the containment zones during the curfew period, which was extended in the city for another week.

Before the High Court, the petitions by Anya Malhotra, who works as a translator, and Sohail Hashmi, a historian and documentary film maker, argued that the

Central Vista project was not an essential activity and hence, it could be put on hold for now during the pandemic. Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for the petitioners, argued that his clients were only delivering a message of health and safety for the people of Delhi and if the government could not see it, then it was a "sorry reflection" of their concerns for the lives of the citizens.

Leaders, led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, condoled her death.

"She visited Keezhvenmani village after the [Dalit] massacre and wrote a series of articles. It was published as *Hunted by Fire* and stands today as a research document," Mr. Stalin said.

She also struggled for protecting the rights of tribal community (in Vachathi) in Dharmapuri district, he recalled. "If there was injustice to women anywhere, the angry voice against it would be that of Mythily Sivaraman."

Her action would be taken.

Ever since bodies were seen floating in the Ganga, the police have set up pickets and patrolling by boats to prevent such disposals.

## Two held for throwing body into river in U.P.

"The body was handed over to his family as per the COVID-19 protocol," the CMO said. Dr. Singh said *prima facie* it came to light that the family had thrown the body into the river, and approached

the police for investigation.

## India will prevail over COVID-19

Country has given befitting reply to those who conspire against it, says Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

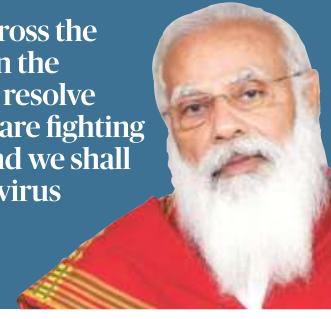
In his 'Mann ki Baat' address, which coincided with the seventh anniversary of his government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there had been many successes, along with trials, especially the COVID-19 pandemic that had hit lives hard across the country and dealt a blow to the economy. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that India would prevail over the virus.

"India now moves ahead not under the pressure of other countries but with its own convictions," he asserted, adding that it made everyone proud.

"When we witness that now India gives a befitting reply to those who conspire against us, our confidence soars. When India does not compromise on the issues of national security, when the strength of our armed forces increases, we feel that, yes, we are on the right path," Mr.

**Indians across the country, on the strength of their resolve and confidence, are fighting the pandemic and we shall prevail over the virus together**

NARENDRA MODI,  
PRIME MINISTER



Modi said.

Many old disputes had also been resolved with complete peace and harmony, and a new confidence, underpinned by peace and development, had arisen from the northeast to Kashmir, he said.

### Water, oxygen supply

Noting that in seven decades after Independence, only 3.5 crore rural homes had water connections, he added that now 4.5 crore houses had been given clean water connections in the last 21 months alone. Of these, 15

months were during the COVID-19 period, Mr. Modi said.

His address also spoke of the massive second wave of the pandemic that has hit India, and the effort and resolve it took to take the country's oxygen production and supply from 900 metric tonnes to 9,000 metric tonnes in a matter of days.

"No one had had the experience of dealing with this once in a century pandemic, but Indians across the country, on the strength of their resolve and confidence, are fighting the pandemic and we shall prevail over the vi-

rus together," he said.

Mr. Modi spoke to corona warriors, including oxygen express driver Shirsha Ghajani and Air Force pilot group captain Patnaik who had been transporting oxygen and tankers across the country and from offshore to India.

### Digital transactions

In these seven years, India had worked to show the world a new direction in digital transactions, and it was also setting records in launching satellites and constructing roads, Mr. Modi said.

India had overcome many difficult tests as well, and each time it emerged stronger, he said. "In the form of the pandemic, we are being continuously put to test. This is a crisis that has plagued the whole world. So many people have lost their loved ones. Even big countries were not spared from its devastation," he said.

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## 'Opposition quarantined itself during pandemic'

Party workers providing relief: Nadda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

organised relief works under the campaign 'Sewa Hi Sangathan Hai'.

As part of the campaign, Mr. Nadda said, BJP MLAs and MPs were participating in relief works in at least two villages. "In this pandemic, BJP workers, without being bothered about their well-being, are standing with the people. But the Opposition has gone into lockdown and quarantined itself. It is visible only in virtual press conferences or on Twitter," Mr. Nadda said. "Some are *sadak* [doers], while some are *badhak* [obstructors]... But we don't have to get bothered by them and must continue in our endeavour to serve," he said.

Taking on the Opposition over their statements about the vaccination drive against COVID-19, the BJP chief said they were the ones who questioned the vaccines to create doubts in the minds of people.

## Cong. releases seven-point 'chargesheet' against Modi

BJP govt. reversed economic gains made by the UPA'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday released a seven-point "chargesheet" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, which has now completed seven years in power.

The party accused the ruling BJP of reversing all economic gains made by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, insensitive treatment of the farmers, inept handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and failing to protect the country against threats from China.

### Weakest govt.'

Randeep Surjewala, Congress general secretary and in charge of the communication department, in a virtual press conference said the Modi government was the weakest government India had had in 73 years.

When the UPA government demitted office in 2014, the GDP was 8.1%, Mr. Surjewala said. Even before the pandemic hit in 2019-20, the GDP had fallen to 4.2%.

"In the first quarter of the 2020-21, the GDP was down to minus 24.1% and in the second quarter, it is now minus 7.5%. It is estimated that

in 2020-21 the GDP will be close to minus 8%," he said.

The government came to power on the promise of providing two crore employment. "In seven years, they should have provided 14 crore jobs. Forget about 14 crore jobs, the unemployment rate is on a 45-year high," he added.

### Already volatile'

Sky-high inflation was exacerbating the already volatile situation. "Petrol is selling at ₹100 per litre, while mustard oil at ₹200 per litre. The LPG cylinders are at ₹809 per cylinder. The rate of pulses is also skyrocketing," he added.

The Congress leader also slammed the government for its insensitive attitude towards the farmers. He said the BJP government wanted big corporations to replace

the small farmers.

Mr. Surjewala also accused the government of going back on its promise of the Swaminathan Commission report.

### 'Govt. is against poor'

"This government is not against poverty, they are against the poor," he said while pointing at the World Bank report, which claimed that during the UPA years, 27 crore persons overcame extreme poverty, while the PEW Research Centre in 2020 said the middle class had shrunk in India, with nearly 3.20 crore people being pushed off the grid.

Mr. Surjewala reiterated the Congress's earlier allegation that the government had been under-reporting COVID-19 deaths. "Will the Modi government explain why there is a paucity of vaccines? And if there were no vaccines for us then, why were 6.63 crore vaccines sent to the other countries?" he asked.

Despite the "chest-thumping" by the Modi government, China continued to "occupy the Indian territory with impunity in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh", Mr. Surjewala said.

**गोदी जी, हमारे बच्चों की वैक्सीन**

Demanding their due: Congress workers protesting against the Centre's vaccine policy in Mumbai on Sunday. •PTI

## Vaccine policy a major scam, charges Chavan

Ex-CM launches attack on Modi govt.

STAFF REPORTER  
PUNE

On the BJP's completion of seven years in power at the Centre, former Maharashtra Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday.

Mr. Chavan claimed that the vaccine policy was a "major scam" and demanded a probe into it, while alleging complete mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Centre's part.

"The Centre is expected to provide free vaccines to the citizens of the country. Instead, it is shifting this responsibility to State governments. Why are different prices being quoted for the Centre, States and private hospitals? Moreover, the

Centre ought to have placed an order of 200 crore vaccines much earlier," the Congress leader said.

He said the "splitting" of vaccine orders only ended up benefiting private manufacturers. "Last year, the MD of Bharat Biotech had claimed that Covaxin would be cheaper than the cost of a water bottle. So, going by that, a vaccine should not cost more than ₹150-₹180. Yet, vaccines are being sold at rates as high as ₹1,000 to private establishments, while being sold at a reasonable rate to the Centre," Mr. Chavan said.

The Congress held protests in various parts of the State against the Modi government to mark the BJP's seventh year of power at the Centre as a "black day".

A lot more needed to be done, he said, adding that there were problems of inflation, unemployment and unrest due to the pandemic. "When you get a majority, it means people have handed you the power with faith and trust. The needs and demands of the people are very few. They need livelihoods - *roti, kapda, makaan* [food, clothing and shelter] - are important, along with health and education facilities," Mr. Raut said.

He said the Central government should "introspect" if this had been achieved in the last seven years.

## 'There is no need for me to apologise to Goans'

T.N. Minister hits out at Goa Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister P.T.R. Palanivel Thiagarajan on Sunday said there was no need for him to apologise to Goans as demanded by Goa Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho, adding that he had only backed the State's rights at the recent 43rd GST Council meeting.

Mr. Godinho had claimed that at the virtual meeting, Mr. Thiagarajan had asked him to "shut up" after he cast his "vote". He alleged that Mr. Thiagarajan's case was that "since he comes from a big State, he should have a bigger vote".

Denying the allegations, the Tamil Nadu Finance Minister said he was clear in his position that the "one State-one vote" mode of the GST Council was fundamentally unfair and he believed in a federal governance model. "Every statement I made during the entire meeting was entirely consistent with these two principles," he said.

Mr. Thiagarajan alleged that the Goa Minister was vociferously and repeatedly against lowering the GST on

COVID-19-related drugs and vaccines from 5% to 0% on humanitarian grounds.

"In any event, I have no need to apologise to the people of Goa, for I have done you no harm. I have strongly advocated for your State government's rights. I do not require or expect any thanks for that, as my position was dictated by my principles of strengthening the States' rights and federalism with enhanced devolution," he said in a 'Statement to the People of Goa'.

He said there was no agenda item in the GST Council regarding Goa's intention to levy any cess. "So, I simply could not have voted at all on a agenda item that did not exist, let alone vote against it!"



Mythily Sivaraman

Mr. Stalin said, terming her death a huge loss to Tamil Nadu and the CPI(M).

"It was she who, through her writings, drew people's attention to the massacre of 44 Dalits in Keezhvenmani in east Thanjavur. She was also instrumental in creating awareness against imperialism and the war in Vietnam," said K.

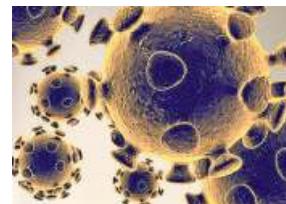
# Govt. cited 'Indian double mutant strain' in SC affidavit

It had objected to affixing nationality to the variant later

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Centre used the term "Indian double mutant strain" in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court just days before it officially objected to affixing nationality to the virus variant.

A May 9 affidavit referred to "Indian double mutant strain" while detailing the steps taken by the Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology to develop Covaxin. The affidavit was filed in the court three days prior to a Ministry of Health statement on May 12, taking exception to media reports which referred to the B.1.617



The WHO had said it does not identify variants with countries.

variant as an "Indian variant". It said the World Health Organization (WHO) had not associated B.1.617 with the term "Indian variant". Instead, it considered the virus a variant of "global concern".

The WHO had also clarified that it "does not identify viruses or variants with names of countries they are first reported from". "We refer to them by their scientific names and request all to do the same for consisten-

cy," it said. But the affidavit runs contrary to the WHO even in this aspect. In fact, the affidavit calls variants "UK variant, Brazil variant, South African variant" and caps the list with the "Indian double mutant strain".

The Ministry of Health was one among the many Ministries consulted before the affidavit was filed. The introductory paragraph in the affidavit filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs said the document was filed in compliance with the instructions received from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce, Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Ministry of Railways.

# SC to resume COVID-19 hearings

It may discuss Centre's May 9 affidavit today

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A Special Bench of the Supreme Court is scheduled to resume its marathon hearings on COVID-19 management from Monday, following a nearly month-long hiatus after the lead judge, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, caught the virus amidst a devastating second wave.

The hearings were interrupted after the Bench, also comprising Justices L.Nageswara Rao and S.Ravindra Bhat, constituted a National Task Force to scientifically study and recommend a fool-proof mechanism for allocation of oxygen to States.

The top court had constituted the 12-member team to streamline the "effective and transparent" allocation of liquid medical oxygen on a



**Back in action:** The top court had constituted a National Task Force to streamline the allocation of oxygen. ■ FILE PHOTO

"scientific, rational and equitable basis" to States and Union Territories. The court had expressed its dissatisfaction at the Centre's earlier "oxygen-for-bed" formula. This "rough-and-ready" arrangement, the court said, was based on calculating the allotment of oxygen based on the number of ICU/non-ICU beds.

The court had also repeatedly expressed its acute dissatisfaction at the haphazard and lacklustre distribution of oxygen even as the coun-

try experienced its worst death toll. Justice Chandrachud had made it clear to the Centre that the Supreme Court would not remain a "mute spectator" to a national calamity.

On Monday, the Bench may discuss a May 9 affidavit filed by the Centre saying that bringing COVID-19 vaccines under a statutory regime would be "counter-productive" at this stage. In fact, this position in court contradicts India's position globally. India, along with

South Africa, had initiated a proposal for the temporary waiver of certain provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to facilitate fair, affordable and universal access to COVID-19 vaccines and medicines, especially for developing countries. The affidavit also has the Centre arguing that judiciary should keep its hands off the management of the COVID-19 crisis and its "waves/surges".

"Though it [Centre] is duty-bound to fully assist this Honourable Court ... the policy, strategy and steps taken by the Executive, based on expert medical and scientific advice, have to be appreciated in the context of the medical crisis," the affidavit said. It said decisions were taken after "detailed deliberations at the highest Executive level". Hence, no "interference" is called for in judicial proceedings.

## Plea calls for NSA against hoarding

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court to invoke the National Security Act (NSA) against hoarding, profiteering, adulteration and black-marketing of COVID-19 essentials, including drugs and equipment.

The plea said, "Thousands of EWS and BPL citizens died on the streets, in vehicles, in hospital compounds and their homes due to hoarding of hospital beds, adulterated COVID medicines, black marketing of medical equipment like oxygen cylinders and huge profiteering in the sale of life-saving injections like Remdesivir, Tocilizumab, etc."

The petition blamed State inaction. "In Delhi, Remdesivir injection was sold for ₹70,000 though its price is ₹899," it said.

## IN BRIEF



### Govt. tells news channels to display new helplines

NEW DELHI

The Centre has asked private TV news channels to display four new helpline numbers for COVID-19 awareness. The new helpline numbers are of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (1075), child helpline of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (1098), senior citizens helpline of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (14567), and National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences helpline for psychological support (08046110007). PTI

### In U.P., some prisoners feel safer inside jail

LUCKNOW

As many as 21 inmates in nine prisons of Uttar Pradesh wrote to the authorities saying they don't want parole as staying incarcerated is "safer and healthier" for them during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The inmates say health check-up is done regularly in the jails ... They say that once they go out, they will have to struggle to earn a living," said Anand Kumar, Director General of Jail Administration.

# Aggressive vaccination is key to fighting COVID-19'

Doctors say pandemics often persist for years

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

An aggressive, liberalised vaccination program is key to prevent another surge of COVID-19, say health experts, warning that pandemics often persist for years presenting surges.

It is important to accept that COVID-19 is here to stay and the focus should be on long-term management of the virus, say doctors.

The warning comes as India has managed to vaccinate just over 21.20 crore of its population (including those that have got the first dose and those with two shots) as of Sunday morning. The Health Ministry on Sunday announced that to hasten the vaccination drive, nearly 12 crore vaccine doses will be made available for June. Giving the break-up, the Health Ministry said that for June, 6.09 crore doses will be supplied for vaccination of priority group of Health Care Workers (HCWs), Front-Line Workers (FLWs) and persons aged above 45 years as free supply from the Centre. In addition,



**Vaccine drive:** A health worker administering a dose of COVID-19 vaccine to a beneficiary at a drive-through camp in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ PTI

more than 5.86 crore doses will be available for direct procurement.

### Appropriate behaviour

Meanwhile, doctors said that liberalised vaccination, making masks mandatory, following strict norms of social distancing are vital to prevent another surge.

Sanjeev Bagai, Chairman of Nephron Clinic added that it was also important to protect the vulnerable and the immune-compromised pop-

ulations, and make health insurance mandatory.

Puneet Nigam, senior vice-president, medical services at Metropolis Healthcare Ltd., said creating the right infrastructure, making available equipment, consumables and drugs is key in the preparation for another surge.

"Teleconsultation to the needy can reduce the load on hospitals and only moderately or severely sick should be hospitalised."

Cautioning that a third

wave is likely, Monalisa Sahu, consultant, Infectious Diseases, Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad, said the virus is highly mutagenic in nature.

"Elders in the family should follow strict COVID-appropriate behaviour and get vaccinated at the earliest. As no vaccine in India is approved for children, encouraging all to stay away from crowds, testing-isolating-treating, building hospital infrastructure and providing robust surveillance is the way forward."

observing COVID-appropriate behaviour, even months after we get over the second wave. Achieving a good level of herd immunity by adequately vaccinating a majority of the population can serve as a game-changer," said Dr. Sahu.

On the possible vulnerability of children during the third wave, Lokesh Mahajan, HOD, Pediatrics, QRG Hospital in Faridabad, said, "In the first wave, less than 1% of the children were infected but in the second wave, the infection rate among children increased up to 10%. Hence, we have to work on keeping our children safe by following COVID appropriate behaviour and boosting their immunity. Train your children to follow good hygiene practices and don't send them outside if they have a fever or any other illness."

"People have to accept and understand COVID-19 is here to stay in our lives," added Vikas Maurya, Director, Pulmonology at Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh. He said that vaccinating people, encouraging all to stay away from crowds, testing-isolating-treating, building hospital infrastructure and providing robust surveillance is the way forward."

"Elders in the family should follow strict COVID-appropriate behaviour and get vaccinated at the earliest. As no vaccine in India is approved for children, encouraging all to stay away from crowds, testing-isolating-treating, building hospital infrastructure and providing robust surveillance is the way forward."

It added that apart from government and private vaccination centres, workplaces, home COVID-19 vaccination centre for elderly and differently-abled persons to be organised at group housing societies, there were no other avenues to carry out vaccination un-

# Centre bars hotel vaccination 'packages'

It writes to States, UTs against tie-ups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has written to the States and Union Territories to initiate legal or administrative action against institutions offering packages for COVID-19 vaccination in collaboration with hotels.

Private hospitals could not offer packages for vaccination in collaboration with hotels, the Health Ministry said on Saturday, adding that this was in violation of prescribed guidelines.

In its letter, the Central government said that it had come to the notice of the Health Ministry that some private hospitals were giving package for vaccination in collaboration with some hotels, which was against the guidelines issued for the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

It added that apart from government and private vaccination centres, workplaces, home COVID-19 vaccination centre for elderly and differently-abled persons to be organised at group housing societies, there were no other avenues to carry out vaccination un-

### SII promises over 9 crore doses in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Serum Institute of India (SII) has informed the government that it will be able to manufacture and supply nine to 10 crore doses of Covishield in June as compared to its production capacity of 6.5 crore doses in May, official sources said on Sunday.

der the national COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. So, vaccination carried out in star hotels was contrary to the guidelines and must be stopped immediately, it said. "Necessary legal and administrative actions should be initiated against such institutions. Therefore, you are also requested to monitor and ensure that National COVID-19 vaccination drive is carried out as per the prescribed guidelines," the letter said.

# COVID-19 cases surge in rural Odisha

Many villages have been declared containment zones

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

In the past three days, Kailash Chandra Behera, Block Development Officer (BDO) of Ersama in Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha, has noticed distress calls about COVID-19 rising in at least four places in his administrative area.

In Gadaharipur gram panchayat of Ersama, where three villages have already been declared containment zones, 14 out of 20 rapid antigen tests conducted on Saturday turned out to be positive. "Over a 100 villagers with COVID-19 symptoms were already under medication in Gadaharipur, Asia and Garia villages without COVID-19 tests and doctors prescriptions. We conducted 20 antigen tests and 70% of them were infected. Results of RT-PCR tests on 40 others would be known in a day or two," said Mr. Behera. The BDO said people in the nearby Goda village and the other two habitations had similar symptoms. Based on the cry for help of the Sarpanch of Gadaharipur, the Jagatsinghpur district administration has declared three villages as containment zones till June 4.

Away from Jagatsinghpur, Barasingha village under the Hindol block in Dhenkanal has a crisis that is deepening. From this single village, 96 inhabitants have tested



**Safety measures:** Community screening going on at a village in Nuapada district in Odisha. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

second wave of the pandemic in Odisha, more than 4 lakh positive cases have been added to the tally. In total, as many as 7,47,143 people have so far tested positive in the State.

Before cyclone Yaas struck the State, the Health and Family Welfare Department sources said the prevalence of COVID-19 was almost 57% in rural areas. Apart from the coastal region, in some of the less urbanised districts, such as Boudh, Mayurbhanj and Rayagada, the high TPR is a matter of concern. While the rate in Boudh was 25.09%, Mayurbhanj and Rayagada reported TPRs of 19.26% and 14.60% respectively.

The situation may worsen further. About 7.10 lakh people were evacuated when Yaas hit the coast on May 25 and 26. Though the government tried to separate COVID-19 patients from the others during the evacuation, the fear of cyclone unsettled the plan. The Ersama BDO said, "We had initially set a target to evacuate 1,000 people from low-lying areas to safer places. With much persuasion, villagers shifted.

However, weekend shutdowns would continue. The government has also decided to increase the time given to people to buy essential items in three districts – Gajapati, Nuapada and Sundargarh – due to a drop in the TPR.

In Bhangan village of Debrish block in the Kendrapara district, 36 persons were infected, forcing the administration to declare it a containment zone. There has been some improvement in the overall test positivity rate (TPR) of Odisha. Once hovering around 24%, the TPR dropped below 15%, but the situation in rural areas remained a matter of concern.

Since March 15, which is considered as the cut-off date for the beginning of the

## Bihar to give monthly dole to orphans

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

The Bihar government on Sunday said it would provide ₹1,500 each month to children who lost their parents to COVID-19. The children will get the financial assistance till the age of 18 and will be housed in State child care centres.

Orphaned girls will get admission in Kasturba Gandhi Balika residential schools on priority basis.

### SOUTHERN RAILWAY (Construction Organization)

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PROJECT (RAILWAYS) CHENNAI

Tirumallai Station Building, Mylapore,

Chennai-600 004

TENDER NOTICE NO. MTMY-BBQ-01-2021

dt 25.05.2021.

For and on behalf of President of India, the Dy. Chief Engineer, Metropolitan Transport Project Railways, Tirumallai Station Building, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004, invites e-tender for the following work as per Notice inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in)

The tenderer's/Contractor's intending to apply for the tender need to get enrolled in the portal [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) and only online tenders will be accepted.

Name of Work: Basin Bridge Yard-

Integrated coach Maintenance facilities

including EOG LHB coaches (P.B.

No.1001 of 2019-2020) - Proposed

construction of LT switch room for 11 KV

750V compact substation at Basin Bridge

Coaching Yard

Approximate Tender value: ₹ 96,23,362/-

Earnest Money Deposit : Nil

Period of Completion in Month(s): 06 Months

e-Tender Closing / Opening date & time : 17.06.2021 @ 15.00 Hours

For further details contact office of the

Dy. Chief Engineer, Tirumallai Station

Building, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004, or

refer/ download tender document which is

available on Internet site [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in)

## 'Accused denied anticipatory bail can be given protection'

High Courts can grant relief in exceptional circumstances: SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court judgment said an accused denied anticipatory bail can, in exceptional circumstances, still be given protection from immediate arrest if his sudden incarceration by the State will plunge his personal affairs and family into crisis.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, said the black-and-white of the written text of law did not provide for all the grey spots in human life. Chief Justice Ramana, in the judgment pronounced on Friday, underscored the "reality that no law or rule can possibly account for the complexities of life, and the infinite range of circumstances that may arise in the future".

An accused, besides being an accused, may also be the primary caregiver or sole breadwinner of the family. His arrest may leave his

loved ones in a state of starvation and neglect.

In such "exceptional" cases, Chief Justice Ramana observed that courts had the power to allow an accused, while dismissing his anticipatory bail plea, to retain his personal liberty for "some time" – the shortest duration reasonably required – in order to make arrangements for his family before surrendering in the trial court," he wrote.

He urged judges to pay equal attention to the humane side of criminal law while hearing pleas for anticipatory bail. The grant or rejection of bail in such cases had a direct bearing on the fundamental right to life and liberty of an individual.

The concept of anticipatory bail germinated from Article 21 of the Constitution. At times, courts may need to look beyond the strict confines of the written text to se-

cure complete justice. The High Courts and the Supreme Court had the powers to do so. "Even when not inclined to grant anticipatory bail to an accused, there may be circumstances where the High Court is of the opinion that it is necessary to protect the person apprehending arrest for some time, due to exceptional circumstances, until they surrender before the trial court," he wrote.

However, he said courts should not use this discretion to grant "judicial largesse" to accused persons.

"Therefore, such an order [to grant protection from arrest despite denying anticipatory bail] must necessarily be narrowly tailored to protect the interests of the applicant [accused] while taking into consideration the concerns of the investigating authority. Such an order must be a reasoned one."

"The monsoon winds haven't picked up. We expect that in the aftermath of

It is likely to hit State by June 3; private forecaster Skymet, however, says the monsoon has arrived

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

The arrival of the southwest monsoon over Kerala has been delayed to June 3, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday. The agency had last month forecast that the onset would be on May 31.

"As per the latest meteorological indications, the south-westerly winds could strengthen further gradually from Olst June, resulting in likely enhancement in rainfall activity over Kerala. Hence the monsoon onset over Kerala is likely to take place by 03rd June 2021," the IMD said in a statement.

However, the IMD had, until Saturday evening, maintained that the monsoon would keep its May 31 schedule. All monsoon onset forecasts have a built-in error window of four days, and so, June 3 still falls in this window.

"The cyclone [Yaas] there would be a pickup in wind speeds but that hasn't happened. We expect the wind flows to strengthen in the next few days," M. Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, told *The Hindu*.

### Rain trail

A look at the date of monsoon onset over Kerala in the past five years

Year	Actual onset date	Forecast date
2016	June 8	June 7
2017	May 30	May 30
2018	May 29	May 29
2019	June 8	June 6
2020	June 1	June 5

Source: IMD



Sharp showers: A man riding through rain in Kochi on Saturday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

fined by the IMD – had been met, said meteorologist Mahesh Palawat.

The criteria are rain-bearing westerlies being at a minimum depth and speed; at least 60% of the available 14 stations in Kerala and coastal Karnataka, namely Minicoy, Amini, Thiruvananthapuram, Punalur, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Kochi, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Thalassery, Kannur, Kudlur and Mangalore reporting rainfall

of 2.5 mm or more for two consecutive days after May 10; a certain degree of clouding, indicated by a parameter called 'outgoing long-wave radiation' (OLR), being below 200 W/square metre.

Mr. Palawat said IMD's own data indicated that except for the OLR, the other criteria were met. "This is certainly a weak onset and the OLR was actually below 200 two days ago but has now increased to 250. There

To herald the onset, initial rains first occur over south Andaman Sea and the monsoon winds then advance across the Bay of Bengal.

Since 2005, the monsoon has arrived within the error margin of the IMD's weather models, except in 2015.

### IN BRIEF



Father Stan Swamy tests positive for COVID-19

MUMBAI

Father Stan Swamy, 84, an accused in the Bhima Koregaon case, tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday. He was shifted to a private hospital from Talaja Central Jail on May 29 after being directed by the Bombay High Court. As per a call made by Fr. Swamy to his close associate, his blood pressure was dropping and he continued to feel weak. His advocate told the court on May 29 that Fr. Swamy had agreed to move to a private hospital and would bear his own expenses.

Aligarh spurious liquor death toll mounts to 25

ALIGARH

The death toll in the Aligarh spurious liquor tragedy climbed to 25 on Sunday, officials here said. BJP MP from Aligarh, Satish Gautam, however, said according to information gathered by him, the toll had crossed 35. Meanwhile, the Loda police station in-charge has been suspended. PTI

Tribunal orders liquidation of Devas Multimedia

NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal has ordered the liquidation process of Devas Multimedia by allowing a petition filed by Antrix Corporation, a commercial arm of the ISRO. The tribunal directed the liquidator to take "expeditious steps to liquidate" the company to prevent it from perpetuating its fraudulent activities. PTI

## Locate absconding IPS officer, Allahabad High Court tells U.P.

Manilal Patidar is wanted in an abetment to suicide case

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Noting that an IPS officer missing for months was a "serious issue", the Allahabad High Court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to investigate if suspended Superintendent of Police of Mahoba, Manilal Patidar, who is absconding since being accused of abetment to suicide of a businessman, was dead or alive and asked what efforts were made to apprehend him.

The family of Mahoba businessman Indrakant Tripathi - who died last September after being found shot in his car days after he had accused the 2014-batch IPS officer of threatening to eliminate him - had lodged

an FIR against Mr. Patidar, then district police chief, for murder and conspiracy. However, following a probe by a Special Investigation Team, the charges were downgraded to abetment to suicide. Mr. Patidar, meanwhile, continued to evade arrest and his pleas for anticipatory bail were rejected by the court.

**Trace whereabouts?**  
In an order dated May 27, the High Court directed the agency investigating the cases against Mr. Patidar to file an affidavit explaining what efforts were made to arrest him after tracing his whereabouts when his anticipatory bail applications were rejected by the court.

The court has further asked the investigating agency if it has put on surveillance the mobile numbers used by Mr. Patidar and found his last location.

## 'No cracks in glaciers in Uttarakhand'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Following reports that cracks had developed in glaciers at the origin of Rishiganga in Chamoli, a team of scientists carried out an aerial survey and found nothing wrong, Uttarakhand Director-General of Police Ashok Kumar said.

Mr. Kumar said the scientists conducted the heli survey on Saturday. "They did not find anything untoward," he said.

Following the Chamoli disaster in February – in which 204 persons were reported missing and more than 80 deaths have been confirmed so far – an avalanche close to the Indo-China border near Joshimath had claimed 11 lives in April.

## Follow your passion: chef Damu

Webinar highlights widespread options in hospitality sector

MADHUVANTI S. KRISHNAN  
CHENNAI

As part of the Virtual Conclave for Career Guidance 2021, SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), in association with *The Hindu*, hosted a webinar on Hotel Management: Impact of the Pandemic on the Industry and Way Forward for Students, moderated by Pankaj Srivastava.

Mr. Kumar said the participants, celebrity chef Damu recalled how he quit a B.Sc. Chemistry course to pursue his passion. "I was from a Tamil-medium school, and my peers were English speakers, so it was intimidating. But I was aware that English skills were a must and, eventually, picked up the language. Once you cross such barriers, the sky is the

limit." He stressed the importance of joining an institute with excellent infrastructure and advised students to "zero-in on whichever department you think will suit you and specialise in it".

D. Antony Ashok Kumar, director, Institute of Hotel Management, SRMIST, pointed out that one of the first industries to bounce back after the pandemic was hospitality. "Students have varied opportunities," he explained, pointing out options in tourism hotels, government jobs, cloud kitchens, and more.

Chef K. Thirugnanasambantham, principal, Welcongroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, Manipal, said while traditional jobs in the industry were aplenty, the pandemic had accelerated new opportunities.

"Now, students can learn production, housekeeping, F&B, Management, and more. There are also several micro-specialisations: a wellness pastry chef or baker, chocolatier, hospitality coding, to name a few. Culinary arts and entrepreneurship are also popular. The scope for vegetarian chefs is high, as people are increasingly opting for low-cal and wellness meals," he said.

The session can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3i0tpP>

## Commando training, more firepower for Kaziranga guards

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

The Assam government has approved a proposal to increase the firepower of the guards of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve and provide commando training to them.

The government has also sought the notification of all animal corridors, accelerated construction of elevated road corridors through the park, and exploration of heli-

copter services to and from the one-horned rhino habitat.

These decisions were taken at a meeting on flood preparedness, animal safety and anti-poaching headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on May 27.

According to the minutes of the meeting accessed by *The Hindu*, the number of Ghatak (Indian-made Kalashnikov series) rifles would be increased for the

1,300 sq. km. Tiger Reserve's guards and members of the Assam Forest Protection Force (AFFP).

All AFFP personnel and frontline staff using modern weapons would be trained at the Assam Police Commando Training Centre near Guwahati on a regular basis, the minutes signed by Dr. Sarma said.

"There shall be zero tolerance to poaching," the Chief Minister's note said.

## Assam detention centre frees last 'foreigner'

Manindra Das of Cachar district was declared a foreigner in May 2019

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The last "foreigner" has walked out of one of the six detention centres in Assam, leaving about 170 more to be released from the other five.

Manindra Das was tagged a 'D-voter' in 2015 and later declared a "foreigner" in a one-sided decision by a Foreigners' Tribunal in 2019. He was lodged in the detention centre within Silchar Central Jail in southern Assam's Barak Valley.

A D-voter, or doubtful voter, is a category of voters in Assam disenfranchised by the government allegedly for lacking proper citizenship credentials. The barely literate 67-year-old and members of his family had no clue what the successive notices sent by the tribunal meant.

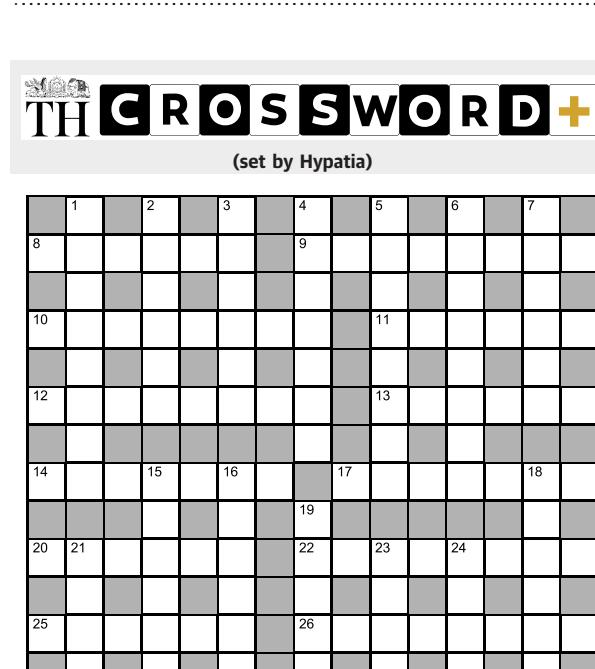
"I have seen many governments come and go, voting every time since I became eligible to. Suddenly, I became a foreigner, got detained and reduced to a living corpse. I don't blame anyone for my fate, but I hope the government lets me live a normal life, whatever is left of it," he said after his release on Saturday.

But the ordeal of the man from Siddhipur village in Cachar district is far from over.

"He will have to do the rounds of the local police station and the tribunal periodically. But he got a respite because of the COVID-19 situation, which made the Supreme Court reduce the

minimum detention period from three to two years and from two sureties of ₹1 lakh each to one of ₹5,000," said Barak Valley-based activist Kamal Chakraborty, who helped get bail for 45 Indian citizens marked foreigners.

Satyendra Baishya, the in-charge of Silchar Central Jail said the detention centre inside the jail was now free of any D-voter. "The Foreigners' Tribunals have not sent any declared foreigner for almost two years," he said.



### ACROSS

- 8 Withdraw from outcast returning outside Ashram's entrance (6)
- 9 Part of Myanmar, in a terrain that's steep (8)
- 10 Commercial property assumptions (8)
- 11 Can frequently sell for five cents in the US (6)
- 12 Sex changes in peak spring (8)
- 13 With drug in hand, youth leader is spirited (6)

CM YK

### SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13260

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# Israeli opposition closing in on deal to unseat Netanyahu

Far-right Bennett is expected to join hands with Lapid to oust the longest-serving PM

REUTERS

JERUSALEM

Israeli far-right politician Naftali Bennett will deliver a statement on Sunday, in which he is widely expected to throw his crucial support behind a "government of change" to unseat Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Opposition chief Ya'ir Lapid, who has until Wednesday to put together a coalition after the fourth inconclusive election in two years, was closing in on an alliance of right-wing, centrist and leftist parties, Israeli media reported.

Mr. Lapid's chances of success rest with Mr. Bennett, a 49-year-old former defence chief whose Yamina party's six seats in the 120-member Parliament are enough to give him the status of kingmaker.

Under the prospective power-sharing deal, Mr. Bennett will replace Mr. Netanyahu, 71, as Prime Minister and later give way to Mr. Lapid in a rotation agreement.

The new coalition's di-



Naftali Bennett, left, and Benjamin Netanyahu. • AFP

verse members would have little in common apart from a plan to end the 12-year-run of Mr. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader.

Mr. Bennett is widely expected to announce that he will team up with Mr. Lapid, whose centrist Yesh Atid party was placed second to Mr. Netanyahu's Likud in a March 23 election.

Meeting Yamina's legislators on Sunday, Mr. Bennett received their support for his coalition moves, a Yamina statement said.

Israel's YNet website said Mr. Bennett told the lawmak-

ers that he was "marching towards a government of change".

An anti-Netanyahu coalition would be fragile and require outside backing by Arab members of Parliament, who oppose much of Mr. Bennett's agenda, which includes more settlement building in the occupied West Bank and its partial annexation.

It would be expected to focus on the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, while setting aside issues on which members disagree, such as the

role of religion in society and Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

## Counter-offer

Trying to scupper an opposition deal, Mr. Netanyahu made a three-way counteroffer on Sunday to stand aside in favour of another right-wing politician, Gideon Saar.

Under that blueprint, Mr. Saar would serve as Prime Minister for 15 months, Mr. Netanyahu would return for two years, and Mr. Bennett would then take over for the rest of the government's term.

"We are at a fateful moment for Israel's security, character and future, when you put aside any personal considerations and take far-reaching and even unprecedented steps," Mr. Netanyahu said in a video statement about the proposal.

However, Mr. Saar swiftly rejected the offer, writing on Twitter: "Our position and commitment are unchanged – to end Netanyahu's rule."

# Sri Lanka to sue Singapore vessel owners over pollution

Criminal probe launched into blaze aboard the ship

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NEGOMBO

Sri Lankan authorities on Sunday said they will sue the owners of a Singapore-registered cargo carrier, which has burned for 11 straight days off the island's west coast and caused some of its worst-ever marine pollution.

Police said a criminal investigation was also launched into the blaze aboard the MV X-Press Pearl, which was carrying 25 tonnes of nitric acid and plastic raw materials. The fire, still burning, has destroyed much of the cargo, some of which also fell into



Marine disaster: Smoke billowing from the Singapore-registered ship MV X-Press Pearl. • AFP/SRI LANKA AIR FORCE

the Indian Ocean.

Tonnes of microplastic granules have inundated the beaches, forcing a fishing ban and sparking fears of ecological devastation.

Authorities are planning legal action against the owners of the vessel, its crew, as well as insurers.

# Brazilians stage more protests against Bolsonaro

Anger over his handling of pandemic

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

RIO DE JANEIRO

Tens of thousands of people in Brazil staged another day of protest against President Jair Bolsonaro, in particular for his chaotic handling of the pandemic, which has claimed more than 461,000 lives here.

In downtown Rio de Janeiro, some 10,000 people wearing masks marched through the streets, with some chanting "Bolsonaro genocide" or "Go away Bolsovirus."

Similar rallies were held in other major cities, the latest in a wave of anger against Mr. Bolsonaro that began months ago. After the U.S., Brazil has the world's

second highest coronavirus death toll.

At the outset of the pandemic, the far right Mr. Bolsonaro dismissed COVID-19 as "a little flu". As the death toll has risen steadily, he has gone on to infuriate people in other ways, opposing stay-at-home measures and masks, touting ineffective medications, refusing offers of vaccines, and failing to anticipate oxygen shortages that left patients to suffocate.

One of the themes of the rally on Saturday was how many lives might have been saved if the Bolsonaro government had started Brazil's vaccination drive earlier.

# Israel, Egypt officials meet in bid to solidify Gaza ceasefire

Permanent truce with Hamas to be discussed: Minister

REUTERS

JERUSALEM

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hosted Egypt's intelligence chief and sent Israel's Foreign Minister to Cairo on Sunday, amid efforts to build on a ceasefire reached between Israel and Hamas a week ago that ended the worst violence in years.

Egypt helped broker the truce that has held since May 21, a diplomatic success that thrust it into the spotlight, and is working with the United States and other regional partners to expand it into a more permanent ceasefire.

Mr. Netanyahu said his

meeting with Abbas Kamel in Jerusalem dealt with regional security issues and ways to prevent Hamas, the Islamist militant group that rules Gaza, from siphoning off civilian aid to strengthen its capabilities.

Palestinian officials put reconstruction costs at tens of millions of dollars from Israeli strikes in Gaza, where medical officials said 248 people were killed during 11 days of fighting. Israel is also repairing damage caused by Palestinian rockets and missiles, which killed 13 people in Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi's trip to Cai-

## ELSEWHERE



Canada extends shelf life of AstraZeneca jab

MONTREAL

Canadian health authorities announced on Saturday they were pushing back the expiration date on nearly 50,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine by one month. Health Canada said the approval to extend the shelf life of two lots of vaccine from May 31 to July 1 was supported by "scientific evidence". AFP



Cherished moment: Boris Johnson and Carrie posing in the garden at 10 Downing Street. • GETTY IMAGES

# Johnson weds fiancee in 'secret' ceremony

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, 56, and his fiancee Carrie Symonds, 33, married over the weekend, his office confirmed on Sunday, in what media reports have described as a "secret ceremony".

He is only the second British Prime Minister to marry while in power, and the first in nearly two centuries.

The pair got engaged in December 2019, and have a one-year-old son, Wilfred.

He had four children with his previous wife, lawyer Marina Wheeler, before they split in 2018.

"The couple will cele-

# Colombian Army tightens grip on Cali

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BOGOTA

The Colombian Army on Saturday tightened its control over Cali, the country's third largest city, after the latest anti-government protests left at least 13 people dead.

The city's streets were largely deserted after clashes late on Friday pitted police against armed civilians. The country is in the second month of protests against the government of President Ivan Duque.

In Cali, a city of 2.2 million, the smoking remains of barricades and rubble heaps testified to the chaotic night. There, as across the country, poverty and the pandemic have sparked widespread anger and resentment.

The month of protests has left at least 59 people dead, officials say, including the 13 who died in Cali.

corruption and his failure to quell a bloody jihadist insurgency.

After the takeover, the military agreed to appoint civilians as interim President and Prime Minister under pressure from Ecowas, which has served as a mediator.

With the junta going back on its previous commitment to civilian political leaders, doubts have been raised about its other pledges, including holding elections in early 2022.

## Broken promises

But on Monday, soldiers detained transitional President Bah Ndaw and Prime Minister Moctar Ouane, releasing them on Thursday while say-

ing that they had resigned.

The twin arrests triggered a diplomatic uproar and marked Mali's second apparent coup within a year.

Mali's constitutional court completed Col. Goita's rise to full power on Friday by naming him transitional president.

With the junta going back on its previous commitment to civilian political leaders, doubts have been raised about its other pledges, including holding elections in early 2022.

# West African leaders meet to discuss Mali

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

ACRA

West African leaders were due to meet in Ghana on Sunday to discuss a response to Mali's second coup in nine months, which has sparked warnings of fresh sanctions and deep concerns over stability in the volatile Sahel region.

Mali's new President Colonel Assimi Goita arrived in Accra on Saturday for preliminary talks ahead of the extraordinary summit of regional bloc Ecowas, which

was due to start at 1400 GMT.

Presidents Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria, Alassane Ouattara of Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso's Marc Christian Kabore were among those attending the summit, which came as another deadly jihadist attack underscored Mali's chronic instability.

Col. Goita led the young Army officers who overthrew Mali's elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita last August over perceived

corruption and his failure to quell a bloody jihadist insurgency.

After the takeover, the military agreed to appoint civilians as interim President and Prime Minister under pressure from Ecowas, which has served as a mediator.

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# China's space station plans gather pace with cargo docking

It also plans to send two manned missions this year

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China took another step towards completing the construction of its first space station by the end of next year following the launch and docking of a cargo spacecraft early on Sunday.

The Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft, described by China's state media as "the delivery guy for China's space station", was launched late on Saturday on a Long March-7 rocket from the island of Hainan, and docked eight hours later with the space station's first core module called Tianhe, or "heavenly harmony".

The launch was a third landmark for China's space programme in recent weeks.

China landed a spacecraft in Mars on May 15 carrying its first Mars rover, Zhurong.

The Tianhe module, which the cargo spacecraft docked with on Sunday, was slated for mid-June.

The six missions to follow this year, including for the space station's second and third modules, Wentian and Mengtian, will close to complete the construction of China's first space station, including "famous stir-fried Chinese dishes like shredded pork with garlic sauce and Kung Pao chicken."



Steady progress: A Long March 7 rocket, carrying Tianzhou-2 cargo craft, lifts off from the Wenchang launch centre. • AFP

and will be followed by the launch of another cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-3, and two manned missions, Shenzhou-12 and Shenzhou-13, this year, each carrying three astronauts who will spend several months in orbit. The Shenzhou-12 launch is slated for June.

The spacecraft is carrying cargo and propellant that will replenish the supplies of the Tianhe module, the agency said.

The CMSA said Tian-

zhou-2, with a maximum takeoff weight of 13.5 tons and 6.9 ton-payload capacity, is the largest cargo spacecraft in service.

The space agency said the launch was a third landmark for China's space programme in recent weeks.

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# Two killed in shooting at U.S. concert

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MIAMI

Two people were killed and at least 20 injured on Sunday when three shooters fired indiscriminately into a crowd outside a concert in Miami, Florida, local police said.

Gunfire erupted during the early hours outside a billiards hall in a row of businesses near Miami Gardens, northwest of the coastal city's downtown.

People crowded the venue, which was "hosting a scheduled event and several patrons were standing outside," Miami-Dade Police Department said in a statement.

When an SUV approached the scene, it added, "three subjects exited the vehicle and began shooting indiscriminately into the crowd."

The trio then got back in the car and fled the scene.

Two people died and at least 20 people were hospitalised, with at least one in critical condition.

Police were seeking help from the community to identify and arrest the shooters.

# AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION E-SHORT TENDER NOTICE REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR DRAINAGE PROJECT WORKS OF AMC UNDER GUJARAT RESILIENT CITY PROGRAMME (GRCP) UNDER WORLD BANK FUNDING PROGRAMME

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Re-invites Request for Proposal for following works:

- (A) Request for Proposal from technically sound and experienced Consulting engineering firms for preparing Detailed Design, DPR, Tender, Estimate & Execution Drawings for Drainage Project works for Augmentation and Up gradation of Existing Sewage Treatment Plants, Construction of New Sewage Treatment Plants, Tertiary Treatment Plants, Drainage and Storm water works, works with Micro tunneling, Lake & Canal development, Conservation of Lakes, Rehabilitation of Existing Old Drainage lines for the below listed AMC area.

(1) RFP for West Zone, North West Zone, South West Zone, (Western Side)

(2) RFP for Central Zone, North Zone, South Zone, East Zone, (Eastern Side)

(B) Request for Proposal from Experience Environment and Social Consulting Firm/Agencies for Preparation of Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for Ahmedabad City.

Pre Bid Meeting : 03/06/2021 On Digital Platform

Online Submission up to : 10/06/2021 Up to 18:00 hours

## COVER NOTE

Third party cover, a golden shock absorber

K. NITYA KALYANI

Meeting with a road accident is traumatic. On the first day of my new job, I was heading to an insurance company office for a meeting. Right in front of the building I was knocked off my bike. All I remember is scrambling to escape a bus hurtling behind me. Many are not that lucky. In a moment they would stare at damage, injuries, death...

The owner of the vehicle responsible for these bears the liability. No vehicle driver would hurt somebody intentionally, least of all themselves. Yet, 17 people are said to be dying every hour in India due to traffic related accidents. India forms only 1% of the global vehicle population, but 6% of motor accidents. Law enforcement is lax, and so is our compliance. Even those who comply are put at risk by those who don't.

Compulsory motor third-party liability insurance was introduced in British India and a majority of Indian States from July 1, 1946. This socially-oriented legislation continues today and protects both the insured owner of the vehicle as well as the third party who sustained the loss.

Claims under this policy have to be made by the third party or his legal heirs (the claimant/s) and this can be under one or more of three categories of loss namely property damage, personal injury or death.

The claimant has to obtain a first information report (FIR) from the police station which has jurisdiction over the accident location and collect a charge sheet. For this, the registration number of the offending vehicle and the insurance policy details, if possible, and an identity proof of the claimant are needed.

## Claims tribunal

A petition has to be filed with a special court for motor accident claims called the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal (MACT). For the petition, other documents may be required depending on the type of claim.

For property damage claims, a survey report and documents to establish the cost of damages are needed. For personal injury claims, original treatment bills and medical records, disability certificate, if applicable, proof of age and income of the injured person/s will be necessary.

For death claims, the documents required are identity proof of the deceased and of the claimants, documents establishing the latter's legal heirship, and documents establishing the educational qualifications, income and the age of the deceased. The MACT registers a case and summons the parties concerned, including the insurance company of the vehicle that caused the accident.

Before we get to the other details of procedures, here is an outline of the compensation matrix under the TP cover. For third-party (TP) property damage, the compensation determined by the MACT will be paid by the insurance company up to ₹7.5 lakh. Any compensation beyond is the responsibility of the insured. For injury and death claims, the liability of the policy is unlimited, and that means the insurance company will pay the entire award given by MACT. The awards can be very large and are a factor of the age and earning capacity of the deceased accident victim.

This unlimited liability clause protects the victim and his family from any inability or unwillingness to compensate on the part of the vehicle owner. For the insured vehicle owner, the TP policy represents a huge burden off his shoulders and this is not a trivial thing. Moreover, the entire legal work and costs are borne by the insurance company. The TP policy is worth its weight in gold.

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

# Weigh your investment options

Both recurring deposits and systematic investment plans help ensure regular allocation and financial discipline

SAHIL ARORA

Recurring deposits (RDs) and Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs) are both popular investment options among retail investors to meet financial goals. While one can open RDs with banks, SIP is a mode of investing in mutual funds. Both of them have a major similarity in the sense that these allow investors to invest a predetermined amount at regular intervals, thereby ensuring regular investment and financial discipline.

However, before committing to either channel of investment, it is important for the investor to understand the returns possible as well as the risk of capital erosion.

## Capital protection

RDs opened with the scheduled banks are covered under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation, an RBI subsidiary. This insurance programme covers every scheduled bank depositor's cumulative deposits, including RD, savings, current and FD accounts, of up to ₹5 lakh in the event of bank failure.

Note that insurance covers both interest and principal components. This makes RD one of the safest investment options. For those having deposits in multiple scheduled banks, the ₹5 lakh cover would apply separately to deposits with each bank.

One can use SIPs to invest in equity funds, debt funds, hybrid funds and gold mutual funds. Hence, the scope of capital protection in an SIP would depend on the mutual fund category and sub-category you invest in. Debt funds usually offer higher capital protection than equity funds. Among debt mutual funds, the risk of capital erosion would be lowest and almost negligible in liquid and overnight funds.

## Returns expectation

Interest rate applicable at the time of opening an RD stays fixed until its maturity, irrespective of the changes in the RD card rate during the FD tenure. For instance, if one opens the RD of two-year tenure at 6% p.a., the interest rate will stay the same till the end of two years.

This offers a high level of income certainty in RDs, even higher than what many small savings schemes offer. Remember that the interest rates of most small savings schemes are reviewed by the Finance Ministry in every financial quarter.

Returns from SIPs depend on the performance of the selected fund. However, regular and automated investing through SIPs allows rupee cost averaging during market downturns and corrections.

As a predetermined amount is automatically deducted irrespective of

the market level or NAV, SIP investors of equity-oriented mutual funds automatically end up getting more units at lower net asset values (NAVs) during bearish markets.

## Question of liquidity

Most banks charge a premature withdrawal penalty of up to 1% for premature closure of RD. In case of SIPs, liquidity would depend on the liquidity features of the mutual fund invested in. Those investing in equity-linked savings schemes (ELSS) funds through SIPs can only withdraw the units bought at least three years ago. While other mutual fund categories do not restrict redemption, most funds levy

exit loads of up to 2-3% on redemption before a preset time. However, no exit load is levied in case of short-term debt funds such as the ultra-short duration, liquid, overnight and most low and short-duration debt funds.

Hence, short-term debt funds beat RDs in terms of cost incurred on unplanned redemptions. Similarly, equity mutual funds also outscore RDs in terms of unplanned redemption cost flexibility as most equity mutual funds do not charge exit load after one year of investment.

## Tax implications

The interest income generated by your RD returns is clubbed with your

annual income and taxed as per your income tax slab. In case of SIPs, taxation would depend on the type of mutual fund and the holding period.

## Gains – short-term vs long-term

In case of equity-oriented funds, gains booked from redeeming investments within one year attract short-term capital gains (STCG) Tax of 15%. Gains booked from redeeming units in equity-oriented funds after one year of investment are considered Long Term Capital Gains (LTCG) and attract 10% tax on gains exceeding ₹1 lakh in a financial year. Moreover, SIPs in ELSS funds also qualify for tax deduction of up to ₹1.5 lakh per financial year under Section 80C.

In case of debt mutual funds, capital gains booked on redeeming debt fund after three years of investment are considered as LTCG and are taxed at 20% along with indexation benefits. Returns booked on debt funds redemption within three years are considered as STCG and are taxed as per the investors income tax slab.

(The writer is Director, Paisabazaar.com)



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

## ASK US

## Can tax rebate be availed on EMI for under-construction building?

**Q. I have taken housing loan of ₹29.60 lakh from SBI in FY21 for purchase of a flat. Construction of the flat is on. My EMI has already started. I am a government employee. Can I get any income tax rebate for the EMIs of housing loan I am paying?**

JATINDER BHAT

## N. Sree Kanth answers

**A.** With respect to principal component in EMI, the amount of principal repaid in the assessment year cannot be claimed as deduction under Section 80C as only amounts repaid towards the capital borrowed for the purpose of purchase or construction of a residential property, whose income is chargeable under 'Income from house property', can be claimed as deduction. In your case, the building is still under construction and the apartment has not been handed over, whereby residential income accruing from the property cannot be charged under 'Income from House Property'.

With respect to interest component in EMI, the interest paid on housing loan until the date of completion cannot be claimed as deduction in the year of payment of such interest. The interest paid until such completion is to be divided into 5 equal parts and each part can be claimed as deduction in the



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

form of pre-construction interest from the year of completion of construction. It is to be noted that the maximum deduction under this provision cannot exceed ₹2 lakh per year (including the interest paid for that assessment year).

**Q. As per recent Budget proposals, pensioners aged 75 and above need not file I-T returns if the bank is deducting I-T on pension, and income on interest. I am 79, drawing pension from the Defence Pension Disbursement Officer, who deducts I-T due on my pension before crediting the same to the designated bank. He sends me Form 16 which I attach while filing returns, where I include income on account of interest from bank. How does the concession of not filing I-T returns apply in my**

**case? Second, kindly explain the pre-filling of details of capital gains, dividend income, and interest from banks and post offices in I-T returns as mentioned in the Budget proposals.**

K. NATARAJAN

**A.** A new Section 194P has been inserted via Budget 2021, whereby senior citizens aged above 75 years, receiving income only in the form of pension and interest from any account maintained in the same specified bank in which the pension is being received, can submit to the specified bank a declaration which contains applicable chapter VIA deductions, relevant rebate and statement that the assessee does not earn any other income except the pension and the interest income of the same bank. On receipt of the same, the bank will deduct the requisite TDS on the said income, thereby relieving the assessee of the obligation to file the return.

The ITR's utilities will be pre-filled based on your PAN with income in the nature of capital gains, dividend income, interest from banks and post office based on the TDS returns filed by the respective deductor and other sources such as depositaries/R&T agents/banks/financial institutions/companies paying dividends among others.

However, the same is to cross-verified prior to filing of ITR.

**Q. At the age of 79, I am unable to manage my rented out house, and decided to transfer it to my son by settlement. But he does not want the rent to be credited to his account. Please let me know if there is a procedure to credit the rent in either my name or my wife's name and show it in our I-T returns.**

V. SRIRAMAN

**A.** Income from house property is accrued and taxed in the hands of the owner of the property. Once the settlement is done in your son's favour, the rent received will be taxable in his hands only.

**Q. My father, aged 56, had booked a flat in 2011, but as the builder did not hand over the flat, my father has now received principal and interest accrued as per the decree passed by the court. Please help clarify whether he is liable to pay any tax on the amount received and where the money received should be utilised?**

Aakanksha Arora

**A.** The amount received as return of principal is treated as return of advance monies paid; hence there is no tax implication. Whereas, the amount received in the form of interest is to be treated as

'Income from Other Sources' and included in the total income accordingly. There are no restrictions on the utilisation of money received.

(N. Sree Kanth is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

**Q. There are multiple IRDAI regulations for consumers' benefit. Many insurance companies have modified their plans to accommodate these rules and/or raised premiums for the renewal of existing policies. Can you please summarise which health insurance policies/companies are cheap and best in the current landscape?**

Naveen Chandar

**K. Nitya Kalyani replies**  
**A.** Recent IRDAI regulations have been focussed on increasing coverage and removing some of the exclusions found in most health policies. It goes without saying that this will result in an increase in premium rates.

Almost hand in hand, IRDAI has designed a standard hospitalisation policy called Arogya Sanjeevani. Every company selling health insurance has to offer this standard policy mandatorily.

This is a model policy in the sense that you can take it as the reference point to learn about coverage and pricing.

In this scenario, I suggest you

opt for this policy if the coverage, the sum assured, and the terms and benefits suit you.

Your next step in that case would be to see what your target insurer charges for the policy. Here you are likely to encounter a significant range of prices.

If the Arogya Sanjeevani terms are not suited to you, do some online shopping for the policy that has the benefits you seek. Now, if you compare the pricing, you will start getting a feel of the pricing matrix.

There is no one-size-fits-all in health insurance, or for that matter, in any kind of insurance. Neither is there much transparency or clarity on the reasoning behind benefits and pricing. Hence, you have to go through this process to get an understanding of what is on offer and what you would like to pick.

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

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to [moneywise@thehindu.co.in](mailto:moneywise@thehindu.co.in). Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

## LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Are you looking to acquire an immovable asset?"

## Bank fixed deposit rates

Bank Name	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure	Interest Rates (%)
<b>SMALL FINANCE BANKS</b>					
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	7.25	6.75	7.00	7.25	
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.75	6.75	6.75	
Equitas Small Finance Bank	6.80	6.50	6.65	6.40	
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.50	6.75	6.75	
Jana Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25	6.50	6.50	
Fincare Small Finance Bank	6.50	5.60	6.25	6.00	
AU Small Finance Bank	6.50	5.25	6.50	6.25	
ESAF Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.25	
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.40	6.00	6.00	6.00	
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS</b>					
DCB Bank	6.50	5.80	6.50	6.50	
RBL Bank	6.60	6.25	6.40	6.60	
State Bank of Mauritius	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	
IndusInd Bank	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	
Nainital Bank	6.35	5.25	5.35	5.35	
IDFC First Bank	6.00	5.50	5.75	6.00	
Karur Vysya Bank	6.00	5.50	5.65	5.75	
Bandhan Bank	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50	
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50	
CSB Bank	5.75	5.00	5.25	5.25	
Axis Bank	5.75	5.10	5.40	5.75	
Karnataka Bank	5.70	5.30	5.55	5.55	
South Indian Bank	5.65	5.40	5.50	5.65	
<b>PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS</b>					
Dhanlaxmi Bank	5.60	5.25</			

# Chelsea paints Europe royal blue

Guardiola's tinkering costs Manchester City as Tuchel wins tactical battle

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chelsea won the Champions League for the second time on Saturday, beating Manchester City 1-0 thanks to Kai Havertz's first-half goal as Pep Guardiola's overthinking proved costly again in the all-English final.

Havertz ran onto Mason Mount's perfectly weighted through-ball and skipped by City goalkeeper Ederson Moraes before slotting the ball into an empty net in the 42nd minute.

Chelsea added to the first European Cup it won in 2012 and became the 13th multiple winner of world soccer's biggest club competition. Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel got his hands on the trophy a year after losing in the 2020 final with Paris Saint Germain.

### Incomplete

City's long, often-painful and lavishly funded journey to the summit of European soccer remains incomplete and Guardiola might regret tinkering with his settled team that had swept City to its first Champions League final and to the verge of another trophy treble.

Starting without a striker was expected — Guardiola has preferred that in the Champions League knockout matches — but going without a specialist holding midfielder in Fernandinho or Rodri was a major surprise and seemed to destabilise City.

It meant Ilkay Gundogan, City's top scorer this season and a revelation in his attacking-midfield role, dropped in



**What a night!** Chelsea will cherish the Champions League triumph for years to come. ■ GETTY IMAGES

as the anchorman in midfield and struggled to protect City's defence.

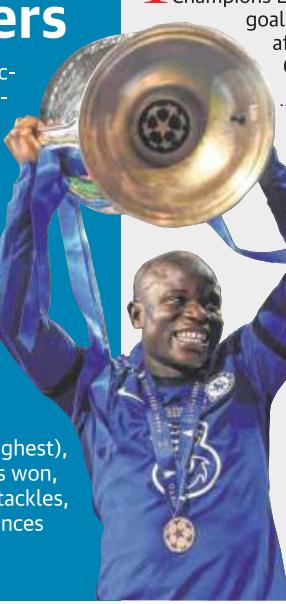
Indeed, for Chelsea's goal, Mount had time and space to thread a superb pass from inside his own half through the centre of City's defence — which was opened up by Timo Werner's decoy run — for Havertz to run onto. Ederson came flying out of his area and got the slightest of touches to the ball with his hand, but Havertz regained his balance and applied the easy finish.

City never had the control Guardiola so craves and, in that respect, Tuchel — another tactically astute manager — was the winner in his coaching duel with a rival he describes as "the benchmark."

**The result:** Manchester City 0 lost to Chelsea 1 (Havertz 42).

## By the numbers

With three consecutive man-of-the-match performances from the semifinal first leg, N'Golo Kante has been immense in Chelsea's run to the title. His numbers in the final were astounding: 11 duels won (the most), 10 ball recoveries (the highest), four aerial battles won, three successful tackles, two timely clearances and two crucial interceptions



**1** Kai Havertz is the first player to score his first Champions League goal in a final after Ilkay Gundogan in 2013

**2** Thiago Silva is the fifth player to figure in consecutive seasons with different teams, after Marcel Desailly, Paulo Sousa, Samuel Eto'o and Álvaro Morata

**3** This is the first time the European Cup/Champions League has been won in three consecutive years by three different managers of the same nationality (Jürgen Klopp, Hansi Flick and Thomas Tuchel) since 1980-82 (Clough, Paisley, Barton)

**6** Chelsea has lifted the trophy in six of its seven major European finals in its history

**8** Pep Guardiola has lost more matches against Chelsea in all competitions than any other club in his managerial career

**9** Edouard Mendy's nine clean sheets this season were the most ever by a goalkeeper on his maiden campaign



## The Tuchel file

Thomas Tuchel took over at Chelsea just four months ago when the team was ninth in the Premier League. Since then, he has steered Chelsea into the top four, reached the FA Cup final and has now won the Champions League title

■ Tuchel is only the second manager to record three consecutive wins in all competitions against Guardiola, registering nine wins and suffering no defeats. The team also conceded just two goals

Games Managed	30	Goals Scored	38
Victories	19	Goals Conceded	16
Defeats	5	Goal Difference	+22
Draws	6	Clean Sheets	19

REUTERS

Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel said he was hungry for more after delivering the Champions League just four months after taking charge with a 1-0 victory over Manchester City on Saturday.

Yet with the celebrations in full flow, Tuchel was already plotting more silverware for a young team that has

emerged as the most likely challengers to City's domestic dominance.

"The level is set and once the celebrations are over and we've all digested this experience, it's the moment to grow, to use it to become better," Tuchel told reporters.

"It's absolutely crucial that we do that. It's a big challenge to stay hungry and

go for the next one. I feel hungry, part of a really ambitious club and a strong group that supports my beliefs in football perfectly."

Guardiola defended his selection for the final. "I did the best selection I could. Against Lyon, like I did PSG (semifinals) and like I did against Dortmund (quarter-finals). I picked the best to win the game," he said.

## SHORT TAKES



### Injured De Bruyne doubtful for Euro

PORTO  
Kevin De Bruyne is a major doubt for Belgium's Euro 2020 campaign after suffering two facial fractures in Manchester City's Champions League final defeat against Chelsea on Saturday. De Bruyne was helped off the field in tears after colliding with Antonio Rudiger on the hour mark in Porto. The midfielder's left eye immediately appeared swollen. "Just got back from the hospital," De Bruyne posted on his Twitter account. AFP

### Sterling and Walker face racist abuse after Manchester City's defeat

PORTO  
Manchester City forward Raheem Sterling and defender Kyle Walker have been racially abused on Instagram following the team's 1-0 defeat by Chelsea in Saturday's Champions League final, Sky Sports reported. The report said the pair was sent monkey emojis on their Instagram pages after the game. Sterling was also targeted following City's semifinal win over Paris St Germain, shortly after English soccer's social media boycott campaign came to an end earlier this month. REUTERS

# Thiem sent tumbling out by Andujar

Kerber makes yet another first-round exit; Osaka lets her racquet do the talking

## ROLAND-GARROS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIJS

Fourth seed Dominic Thiem blew a two-set lead to be dumped out of Roland Garros in the first round by Spanish veteran Pablo Andujar on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Andujar staged a remarkable comeback to defeat the two-time Roland Garros runner-up 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 after almost four and a half hours on Court Philippe Chatrier.

It is the first time in his 17-year career that Andujar has come from two sets behind to win.

### 'Hard to believe'

"It's a very special moment because I'm 35 and I don't know how long I'm going to play," said Andujar. "I had to believe to be able to get this result."

"It was very difficult, in the third set he wasn't quite as strong."

It is Thiem's first opening-round exit at Roland Garros and the first time he has failed to reach at least the quarterfinals of the tournament since 2015.

The Austrian lost both the 2018 and 2019 finals to 13-time champion Rafael Nadal, but did win his maiden Grand Slam title last year at the US Open.

Andujar, the World No. 68, had not beaten a top-10 player since 2015 until a win over Roger Federer in Geneva last week.

"Probably that win helped today," he said. "I didn't think I was in my best shape, but the belief was the key to the win today."

### Bitter blow

It will be an especially bitter blow for Thiem, though, after the 27-year-old had been placed in the opposite half of the draw to Nadal, World No. 1 Novak Djokovic and Federer.

Meanwhile, 16th seed Grigor Dimitrov retired in the fourth set against Marcos Giron.

Dimitrov had won the first two sets 6-2, 6-4 and was up 5-1 in the third, holding three match points on the Giron

## The highlights

**1** First-ever loss for Thiem in the opening round at French Open. In 2014 and 2015 he made the second round and from 2016 to 2020 he made one quarterfinal, two semifinal and two final appearances

**2** Only the second time Thiem has lost after being two sets up in a Grand Slam. Previous: Del Potro at 2017 US Open

**2** Andujar's second straight victory over a top-10 player, after having beaten Federer in Geneva earlier in May. Prior to that, he had won only four of his 27 matches against top-10 players and none since 2015

**MONDAY'S PICKS**

**MEN**  
2-Medvedev vs Bublik  
8-Federer vs Istomin  
15-Ruud vs Paire

**WOMEN**  
4-Kerin vs Ostapenko  
7-Serena vs Begu  
8-Swiatek vs Juvan



**I am 35 and I don't know how long I am going to play. I had to believe and believe until the end [against Thiem]. This result is a special gift for me**

ANDUJAR after his victory over Thiem

I was not able to play my best tennis or like how I practised in the last few days. I have to accept that. Looking forward to the next challenge

KERBER after her first-round loss

### Roland Garros to shine under lights

#### SPORTS BUREAU

The first-ever official night session match at Roland Garros will see 23-time Major champion Serena Williams take on Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu on Monday.

Court Philippe-Chatrier, where the match will be held, added a roof last year, and the French Open has now joined the Australian and US Opens in having night sessions.

Over the next 10 days, the organisers have scheduled 10 matches under lights but only the last match will see fans. Paris has a COVID-19 related curfew in place until June 8 which restricts movement after 9 p.m. local time (12.30 a.m. IST), the time the night session begins.

**Fallen seeds**

- Men: 4-Thiem, 16-Dimitrov, 25-Evans
- Women: 26-Kerber

**IMPORTANT RESULTS**

**First round: Men:** 11-Roberto Bautista Agut (Esp) bt Mario Vilella Martínez (Esp) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; 27-Fabio Fognini (Ita) bt Gregoire Barrère (Fra) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; 12-Pablo Carreno Busta (Esp) bt Norbert Gombos (Svk) 6-3, 6-4, 6-3; Miomir Kećmanović (Srb) bt 25-Dan Evans (GBr) 1-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; 23-Karen Khachanov (Rus) bt Jiri Vesely (Cze) 6-1, 6-2, 6-3; Pablo Andújar (Esp) bt 4-Dominic Thiem (Aut) 4-6, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; Marcos Giron (USA) bt 16-Grigor Dimitrov (Bul) 2-6, 4-6, 7-5, 3-0, ret.

**Women:** Anhelina Kalinina (Ukr) bt 26-Angelique Kerber (Ger) 6-2, 6-4; 21-Elena Rybakina bt Elsa Jacquemet (Fra) 6-4, 6-1;

# Osaka fined, threatened with default over media boycott at French Open

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS

Japanese superstar Naomi Osaka was on Sunday threatened with disqualification from the French Open if she persists with her controversial media boycott, officials said.

"We have advised Naomi Osaka that should she continue to ignore her media obligations, she would be exposing herself to possible further code of conduct infringement consequences," said a statement from the four Grand Slam tournaments after handing the

World No. 2 a \$15,000 fine. "As might be expected, repeat violations attract tougher sanctions, including default from the tournament."

Osaka, a four-time Grand Slam title winner and sport's highest-earning female athlete, was fined for refusing to hold a press conference after her opening 6-4, 7-6(4) victory over World No. 63 Patricia Maria Tig of Romania.

The 23-year-old had said on the eve of the tournament that she would refuse to carry out any media obligations, claiming news conferences are detrimental to



Osaka. ■ AP

her mental health. She believes traditional post-match inquests are akin to "kicking

people when they're down". However, the four Grand Slam events — Wimbledon, the French, Australian and US Opens — issued a joint statement, saying they had written to Osaka "to check on her well-being and offer support".

"She was also reminded of her obligations, the consequences of not meeting them and that rules should equally apply to all players. Osaka today chose not to honour her contractual media obligations. The Roland Garros referee has therefore issued her a \$15,000 fine."

## LONG SHOTS

A look at a few teams that are likely to create an upset or two but unlikely to go all the way at Euro 2020



### CZECH REPUBLIC

**GOALKEEPERS:** Jiri Pavlenka, Tomas Vaclik, Ales Mandous

**DEFENDERS:** Ondrej Celustka, Jan Boril, Pavel Kaderabek, Tomas Kalas, Alex Matejic, Vladimír Coufal, David Zima, Jakub Brabec

**MIDFIELDERS:** Jakub Jankto, Antonin Barak, Tomas Soucek, Tomas Holek, Lukas Masopust, Alex Kral, Vladimir Darida, Petr Sevcik, Jakub Pesek

**FORWARDS:** Michael Krmencik, Tomas Pekhart, Patrik Schick, Matej Vydra, Adam Hlozek



### DENMARK

**GOALKEEPERS:** Kasper Schmeichel, Frederik Ronnow, Jonas Lossl

**DEFENDERS:** Simon Kjaer, Andreas Christensen, Jannik Vestergaard, Joakim Maehle, Jens Stryger Larsen, Joachim Andersen, Daniel Wass, Mathias Zanka, Nicolai Boilesen

**MIDFIELDERS/FORWARDS:** Christian Eriksen, Thomas Delaney, Pierre Emile Hojbjerg, Christian Norgaard, Mathias Jensen, Anders Christiansen, Martin Braithwaite, Yussuf Poulsen, Jonas Wind, Kasper Dolberg, Andreas Cornelius, Andreas Skov Olsen, Mikkel Damsgaard, Robert Skov

**COACH:** Kasper Hjulmand

**FORM GUIDE:** W | L | W | W | W

**FIRST MATCH:** June 12 vs Finland, Copenhagen, 9.30 p



Fabio Quartararo wins

Italian MotoGP

MUGELLO

Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo dominated the Italian MotoGP on Sunday at the Mugello circuit shaken by the death hours earlier of Moto3 rider Jason Dupasquier. Reigning World champion Joan Mir of KTM was second, with Portugal's Miguel Oliveira on a Suzuki completing the sombre podium.

## Anjum shoots 1173

in rifle 3-position

OSIJEK (CROATIA)

Former world record holder Anjum Moudgil shot 1173, which would have just made the cut for the final, in the women's rifle 3-position event in the MQS section of the European shooting championship on Sunday. Former World Champion in prone, Tejaswini Sawant, shot 1172. Germany's Jolyn Beer topped qualification with 1185 in a field of 66 regular shooters.

## Diya, Swastika confirm doubles medal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Young Indian paddlers Diya Chitale and Swastika Ghosh put up solid performances at the 2021 WTT Youth Star Contender in Tunisia as they confirmed a medal in the U-19 girls' doubles besides advancing to the knockout stage of the singles category.

Diya and Swastika, who received a bye in the opening round, registered a convincing 11-5, 6-1, 11-9, 11-8 win against local favourites Fadwa Garci and Marwan Zoghli in the last-eight match and secured at least a bronze medal with an entry into the semifinals.

Diya and Swastika also progressed into the U-19 singles last-16 stage after topping their respective groups with an all-win record.

Diya was dominant during her identical 3-0 victories against Belarusian Darya Vasilenko (11-7, 11-7, 11-7), Linda Zaderova (11-4, 10-12, 11-1, 11-8) and Algeria's Narmene Hind Siddeki (11-3, 11-4, 11-7) in Group VI.

Swastika defeated Greece's Malamatenia Papadimitriou and Portuguese Ines Matos 3-0 (11-6, 11-6, 11-9) and 3-2 (8-11, 11-6, 11-5, 8-11, 11-7) respectively in the Group I matches.

Earlier in the boys' event, Preyesh Raj Suresh bowed out in the U-15 singles quarterfinals while Payas Jain and Deepit Patil exited in the pre-quarters and group stage of U-19 category, respectively.

## Pooja Rani punches her way to glory

Mary Kom, Lalbuatsaihi and Anupama end up with silver medals

## ASIAN BOXING

SPORTS BUREAU

DUBAI

Pooja Rani Bohra collected her second continental title to bring cheers to the Indian camp after Mary Kom and Lalbuatsaihi lost their respective summit clashes at the Asian boxing championships here on Sunday.

The Olympic-bound Pooja, who had a walkover in the semifinal, practically fought her first bout in the 75kg final and won convincingly with a 5-0 margin over Mavluda Movlonova of Uzbekistan.

The Indian, the 81kg champion in 2019, showcased her solid blows to score points and bobbed and weaved nicely to stay safe and take the crown.

Six-time World champion Mary lost 3-2 to Nazym Kyzai bay in a tightly-fought 51kg fi-

## Chopra gets visa to compete in Europe

A worry for the champion javelin thrower could be a 10-day quarantine on arrival

## ATHLETICS

STAN RAYAN

KOCHI

With Germany's Johannes Vetter unleashing some of the biggest throws in history in the last few weeks, Asian Games champion Neeraj Chopra had been a very anxious man.

Javelin thrower Chopra, the man just behind Vetter in the World list this year with his National record of 88.07m in March, has not competed in quality international meets for nearly three years. Rising coronavirus cases in the country meant plans for his international travel had to be frequently changed or cancelled.

However there is hope now that Chopra, who trains in Patiala, could be competing with some of the world's best soon to fine-tune himself for this July's Tokyo Olympics.

## Multi-ministry effort

The 23-year-old, the best bet to win the country's first-ever Olympic medal in athlet-



Window of opportunity: One of India's brightest prospects, Neeraj Chopra, has got a chance to hone his incredible throwing skills ahead of the Tokyo Games. ■ FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

ics, has got his visa approved to fly to France through the efforts of the Sports Authority of India, Sports Ministry, Ministry of External Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office. That should see him competing in European

meets soon. "He may be leaving for France on Tuesday or Wednesday," National chief coach Radhakrishnan Nair told *The Hindu* from Patiala on Sunday. Biomechanical expert Dr. Klaus Bartonietz

and physio Ishaa Marwah will be travelling with Chopra.

However, Chopra will have to undergo a 10-day quarantine on arrival in France and that will be a worry. It is not clear whether

the Commonwealth Games champion would be allowed to train during quarantine.

Chopra is happy that he is going abroad after a long break.

## Have to deliver

"I really needed to take part in competitions before the Olympics. I had approached TOPS (Target Olympic Podium scheme) to help me get the visa and I feel lucky that so much effort has been taken to make this happen," he said. "The government has done its bit, now it is my turn to give my best at the Olympics."

"Chopra had earlier applied for a Swedish visa which did not come through because of the travel restrictions but when the possibility of travelling to France came up, we decided to approach the French authorities through the MEA," said Kiren Rijiju, the Union Sports Minister.

"With their help and intervention of the PMO, the French visa has come through."

increasing oxygen requirement.

"On the request of the family, Mr. Milkha Singh was discharged from the hospital today in a stable condition. He is on oxygen and nutritional support," Fortis Hospital, Mohali, said in its update.

"Mrs. Milkha Singh had to be shifted to the ICU last night due to increasing oxygen requirements. She continues to be stable."

## Milkha Singh discharged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

Milkha Singh was on Sunday discharged from a private hospital where he was being treated for COVID-19, even as he continued to be on oxygen support.

While the 91-year-old Milkha was discharged on the request of his family, his 82-year-old wife Nirmal Kaur had to be shifted to the ICU on Saturday night due to

## Fouaad Mirza seals Tokyo berth

His Olympic qualification was filled with hurdles

## EQUESTRIAN

ASHWIN ACHAL

BENGALURU

Equestrian Fouaad Mirza sealed his spot in the Tokyo Olympics with a fine show at an event in Poland over the weekend.

Mirza achieved the necessary Minimum Eligibility Requirement (MER) on both his horses, Seigneur Medicott and Dajara, in the CCI4\*-L eventing competition in Baborowko (Poland).



was laid low by an injury two years ago – recovered in time to come good in Baborowko.

Mirza had earlier earned an Olympic quota berth for India. His exploits at Baborowko helped secure his individual Tokyo berth.

Mirza will become the third Indian Olympic equestrian, after Indrajit Lamba (1996) and Imtiaz Anees (2000).

## Malvika loses in quarters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GRAZ (AUSTRIA)

"I didn't expect to win the title, worth a spot in the World Cup beginning in Sochi Russia on July 10."

It was important for Iniyam to win against overnight third-placed Raja Rithvik in the day's first round.

S.L. Narayanan did Iniyam a favour by holding Gukesh to a draw.

Leading by a point with two rounds remaining, Iniyam defeated Sarvana Krishna to ensure that he could not be overtaken by Gukesh who stayed close by beating Soumya Swaminathan (2).

Iniyam. ■ FILE PHOTO

the result did not harm Iniyam even after D. Gukesh won his final round to match the winning tally.

In the final round, he could not focus enough and lost to Deep Sengupta. But

Since Iniyam had scored over Gukesh in their 14th round encounter on Satur-

day, he was awarded the title, worth a spot in the World Cup beginning in Sochi Russia on July 10.

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Iniyam. ■ FILE PHOTO

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## Bopanna seeks clarity on Olympics entry

Would rather go spend time with family if I can't make it'

## TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI

There will be 31 teams entering the men's doubles draw for the Tokyo Olympics tennis event, apart from one reserved for Japan as host.

Can Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, ranked 40 and 73 at the moment, get into the Games?

The cut off ranking will be on June 14, after Roland Garros.

Dupasquier, in his second season in Moto3, fell and was struck by at least one bike, before sliding along the track, during qualifying.

Doctors rushed to the scene and after attending to him for 40 minutes on the circuit had him airlifted to hospital.

The multi-bike accident at Mugello on Saturday.

Dupasquier, in his second season in Moto3, fell and was struck by at least one bike, before sliding along the track, during qualifying.

"Nobody knows about the entry status. There are people already saying that Divij & I can't get an entry. If they are able to tell me how, I would rather go home and

spend time with my family.

"I missed my daughter's second birthday recently. My physio Gaurang Shukla has not been able to join me for five weeks, as it is hard to get a visa. Every country has different rules and regulations," said Bopanna from Paris.

The top 10 players, both

in singles and doubles, have the option to nominate a partner and get entry to the doubles draw of the Games.

"The thing is nobody knows who all are willing to go to Tokyo for the Olympics.

"Asia has not hosted any tennis tournament since

2019, except Singapore. Many don't want to go. Also, even if one is ranked No. 11 or 12, one can't get in without a good ranked partner.

"A country like France, may send four singles players rather than two doubles teams. There are many factors involved," said the 41-year-old Bopanna, who had missed the mixed doubles medal with Sania Mirza very narrowly in the last Games in Rio in 2016.

Bopanna and Divij will linger till June 16. ■ FILE PHOTO

Painful wait: The suspense of Olympic entry for Bopanna and Divij will linger till June 16. ■ FILE PHOTO

spend time with my family.

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in singles and doubles, have the option to nominate a partner and get entry to the doubles draw of the Games.

"The thing is nobody

knows who all are willing to go to Tokyo for the Olympics.

National federations will have time till June 22 to submit their nominations for men's and women's doubles.

"I am very happy with my performance as it has come in a very strong field. I played some very good games," said Vaishali.

In the semifinals, Vaishali defeated Bibisara Assauyeva 2-0.

## Vaishali wins qualifier-2



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHENNAI

India's R. Vaishali won the women's Speed chess online championship qualifier-2, beating Polina Shulavova of Russia in the final on Sunday.

The 20-year-old from Chennai, a woman Grandmaster, became the second Indian after D. Harika to qualify for the main event of the 2021 women's Speed chess championship.

"I am very happy with my performance as it has come in a very strong field. I played some very good games," said Vaishali.

In the semifinals, Vaishali defeated Bibisara Assauyeva 2-0.

## Bucks sweep past Heat

REUTERS

MIAMI

Gianinis Antetokounmpo posted just the third triple-double (20 points, 15 assists and 12 rebounds) in Milwaukee Bucks playoff history, helping his team complete a four-game sweep of their Eastern Conference first-round series with a 120-103 win over Miami Heat on Saturday.

**The results:** EC: Bucks 120 bt Heat 95. Bucks win series 4-0; 76ers 132 bt Wizards 103. 76ers lead 3-0.

**WC:** Trail Blazers 115 bt Nuggets 95. Nuggets win series 2-2; Jazz 121 bt Grizzlies 111. Jazz lead 2-1.

## Age is on my side, says Nikhat

My job is to give 100% every time I enter the ring'



Nikhat Zareen. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

cause of the pandemic is proof of my ability to come good," said Nikhat, who had beaten two-time world champion Nazym Kyzaibay of Kazakhstan to enter the semifinals.

Forced to train at home back in the city here, since the SAI centres across India have been closed, Nikhat is gunning for glory in the Commonwealth Games next year.