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## NEARBY



Delhi gov't. cancels Class 9 and 11 exams

NEW DELHI  
Days after the Central government cancelled the CBSE Class 12 exams, the Delhi government announced on Thursday that exams for Class 9 and 11 have been cancelled and students will be assessed based on their mid-term exam performance.

CITY PAGE 2

FIR registered against group of JNU students

NEW DELHI  
The JNU administration on Thursday alleged that a group of students broke into the central library and clashed with the staffers, following which an FIR was registered. The university claimed that the students had been occupying the library for the last two days.

CITY PAGE 2

Sarma urges minorities to adopt population control

GUWAHATI  
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has advised the minority community to adopt population control measures to reduce poverty and pressure on land. He said the illegal occupation of land belonging to temples, *satras* (monasteries) and forests cannot be allowed.

NEWS PAGE 9

## Collapsed dreams



**Fatal fall:** Rescue operations at a building collapse site in Mumbai's Malad area on Thursday. Eleven persons, including eight children, died when a portion of a three-storey building fell on a structure at a slum on Wednesday night, following rain. ■ EMMANUAL YOGINI (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

## Promote second-rung leadership in Punjab: AICC

Committee submits report to Sonia ahead of election

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
A report submitted by an All India Congress Committee (AICC) panel to party president Sonia Gandhi has said that the Congress needs to actively promote second-rung leaders in Punjab, where an Assembly election is slated for early next year.

The report, submitted on Thursday, said Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is the tallest leader in the State but it was important to accommodate all sections.

**A role for Sidhu**  
The panel's suggestion that the Chief Minister should give importance to other leaders is being seen as a move to rehabilitate Navtej Singh Sidhu.

A final decision on how to accommodate Mr. Sidhu, who has been at the forefront of dissidence against Capt. Singh, has been left to Ms. Gandhi.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Bihar in fudging row as COVID toll jumps by 72% after recount

RJD hits out at Nitish Kumar govt. for massive rise in casualties in a single day

**AMARNATH TEWARY**  
PATNA  
Bihar's Opposition on Thursday accused the Nitish Kumar government of fudging data after the COVID-19 death toll in the State jumped by a whopping 72.84% after a recount by the authorities.

After the revised figures were released, the Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) accused Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of fudging data. The government, however, said its "intent was to reach out to family members of the deceased".

On June 7, the official figure for COVID-19 deaths was 5,424. But the next day, the government said the figure had gone up to 9,375 after it recounted deaths in all the 38 districts.

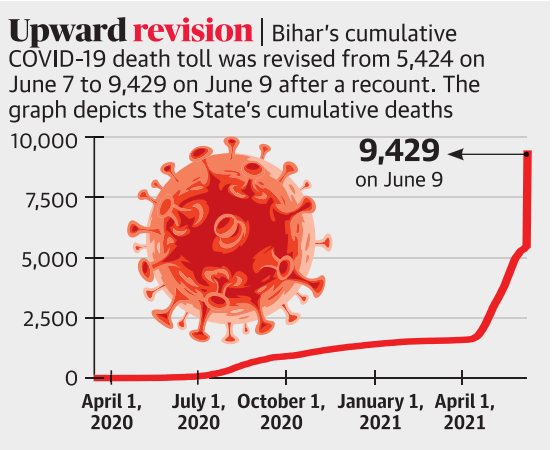
In the verification exercise that lasted 15-20 days, the government added 3,951 more deaths. Most of them happened in the second wave of COVID-19 since April 2021, said health officials.

The Health Department also revised the number of recovered patients to 7,01,234 from 6,98,397 reported on June 7. The recovery rate, which was 98.7% on June 7, too, came down to 97.65% on June 9.

Among the districts, Patna had the highest death toll



Relatives of a COVID-19 victim mourning at the Patna Medical College and Hospital. ■ PTI



with 2,303, followed by Muzaffarpur with 609 fatalities, Nalanda (463), Begusarai (454), East Champaran (425), Darbhanga (342) and Madhubani (317).

Taking potshots at the government, RJD chief Lalu Prasad tweeted in Hindi, "Nitish became fake by fudging data that brought immense worldwide disgrace but he did not feel ashamed."

Mr. Prasad's younger son and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, tweeted: "When you get caught, the death toll rose by 4,000 in a single day. Whatever the Nitish government is telling about death toll data, there has been 20% more deaths... When Nitish government is fake, data too will be fake."

Health Minister Mangal Pandey said, "We got to know from various sources that those who died [due to COVID-19] could be more in number. After consultations with the stakeholders, the government instructed the district administrations to identify institutional deaths due to COVID-19." The intent of the exercise was to reach out to the family members of the deceased, he said.

**'Intent is clean'**  
Senior BJP leader and party Rajya Sabha member Sushil Kumar Modi also said "the intent of the government was clean, so it updated the data of COVID-19 death toll".

"The updated data was not released by any investigating agency but by the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Yediyurappa will remain CM: Arun Singh

He is doing good work, says BJP leader

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to put a lid on the restiveness in the Karnataka unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), party general secretary in charge of Karnataka Arun Singh on Thursday said there was no move to shift Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa from his post, and that the party's central leadership was very happy with the work done by his government, especially with regard to COVID-19 management.

"Yediyurappa has done good work and he is Chief Minister and will remain. There is no talk or discussion of his removal or anything. He, along with other Ministers in the Karnataka government, have all done good work, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic," Mr. Singh said.

He added that Mr. Yediyurappa's statement that he was ready to quit as and when the high command would ask him to, was a "reflection" of his loyalty to the party and obedience to party discipline, but it did not mean that any such thing had been mooted.



B.S. Yediyurappa with Arun Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Adityanath's Delhi visit sets off buzz on U.P. Cabinet expansion

Rumours of Cabinet reshuffle at Centre also doing rounds

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's arrival in New Delhi for a two-day visit, including appointments lined up with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has set off a buzz over a possible Cabinet expansion in Lucknow.

Mr. Adityanath's visit to the national capital comes just a few days after the BJP's national general secretary (organisation), B.L. Santhosh, was in Lucknow on a stocktaking visit.

Speculation of a Cabinet reshuffle at the Centre was also doing the rounds with BJP president J.P. Nadda holding a one-on-one meeting on Thursday with the



CM Yogi Adityanath leaving Home Minister Amit Shah's residence in New Delhi. ■ PTI

Prime Minister.

**Second wave**  
While Mr. Adityanath's aides insisted that the visit was related to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and raising the de-

mand for a larger allocation of vaccines to the State, they admitted that "after all that happened last week, political issues were and will be discussed".

**Corrective measures**  
Mr. Santhosh's report to Mr. Nadda was on the work culture in Mr. Adityanath's Chief Minister's Office and the corrective measures needed, which included being more accommodative of the party's allies in the State, in the run-up the 2022 Assembly poll.

The performance of the BJP in the recently concluded panchayat polls in the State, where it came second to the Samajwadi Party, was also underlined as a worrying situation.

## 13 inmates in Agra jail move apex court for freedom, dignity

They started their 14 to 22 year stretches in prison as juveniles

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Thirteen persons who started their 14 to 22 year stretches in the Agra Central Jail as juveniles have moved the Supreme Court for their freedom and dignity.

The writ petition, filed through advocate Rishi Malhotra, highlighted the "very unfortunate and sorry state of affairs" in Uttar Pradesh, where many prisoners allegedly continued to languish in jail despite proving their claim of juvenility.

An accused can raise a claim of juvenility at any stage of a criminal trial or even any time after his conviction and sentence for a crime. If the claim is found true, the court should maintain the conviction, but set

aside the sentence and forward the case to the Juvenile Justice Board. A juvenile can be punished only for a maximum period of three years.

**'Clear rulings'**  
According to the petition, there were "clear and unchallenged rulings" from the Juvenile Justice Board declaring the 13 prisoners as juveniles at the time of the commission of their crimes.

"Yet, no steps have been taken to release them forthwith. The miseries are further compounded by the fact that these petitioners who are languishing in Agra Central Jail have already undergone judicial incarceration for periods ranging from 14 to 22 years," the petition said.

Mr. Malhotra said they had

spent years in "hardcore jails" among "hardcore criminals". "This completely negates the purpose and objects of the Juvenile Justice Act," the petition said.

The petition argued that a delay in raising the ground of juvenility could not be a reason to let them languish behind bars for years. "The delay in raising the claim of juvenility cannot be a ground for the rejection of such a claim. The claim of juvenility can be raised in appeal, even if not pressed before the trial court, and can be raised for the first time before the Supreme Court, though not pressed before the trial court and in the appellate court," the petition said, referring to a 2012 judgment of the apex court on the issue.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Odisha's tribals flee village fearing jab

Despite awareness drives, villagers were misled by posts on social media

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK**  
BHUBANESWAR

Tribals in Odisha's Rayagada district fled the village after locking up their houses to avoid taking the COVID-19 vaccine. The incident took place at Champakana, under Kolnara block of Rayagada, on Wednesday.

The district administration had held an awareness camp, explaining the benefits of inoculation.

"However, when our team reached the village with 100 doses for those aged above 45, it did not find anyone available. Four to five villagers present there were not ready to take the jab," said D. Sailaja, Kolnara medical officer.

Dr. Sailaja said the tribals belonging to the Kandh community were apparently misled by some WhatsApp vide-



Emptied out: The scene at Champakana in Odisha when a vaccination team arrived on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

os, which predicted death within two years of vaccination.

The population of Champakana is 500. After three hours of persuasion involving the chieftain, three persons came forward for inoculation.

"During the drive, we have faced a similar situation

Kondhs, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), for days to make them agree to vaccination. Close to 1,000 Dongria Kondhs have so far been administered the vaccine.

**Tough to convince**  
Similarly, it was difficult to convince Chuktia Bhunjia, another PVTG residing in the Sunabeda plateau of Nuapada district, on vaccination. The tribesmen said they feared they would die soon after getting the jab.

Odisha has so far managed to administer the first dose to 9,68,188 people aged between 18 and 44. Only 3,70,095 have received the second dose. While 54,34,038 people aged above 45 have been inoculated, 11,22,935 have been given the second dose.

in four to five villages. We hope the vaccine hesitancy will disappear," she said.

**Major worry**  
Hesitancy has been a major issue for district administrations across the State.

Last month, the Rayagada district administration had to sit with the Dongria

## Buddhadeb Dasgupta passes away

His films took the audience beyond realism and delved into magic realism

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH**  
KOLKATA

Buddhadeb Dasgupta, one of the most original icons of cinema, who helped put Indian cinema on the global stage, passed away in Kolkata on Thursday. The 77-year-old director had been suffering from kidney-related ailments for some time. He is survived by his wife, filmmaker Sohini Dasgupta, and two daughters.

Born in Purulia in 1944, Dasgupta graduated from the Scottish Church College in Kolkata and started his career as a lecturer in economics. However, he switched to making documentaries in the late 1960s. His first feature film was *Dooratwa* (1978). Feted with several national and international awards, his seminal works across languages include



Buddhadeb Dasgupta

*Phera* (1988), *Bagh Bahadur* (1989), *Tahader Katha* (1992), *Charachar* (1994), *Uttara* (2000), *Mondo Meyer Upakhyay* (2002), *Kalpurush* (2005) and *Tope* (2016). He will be remembered among the greats of Indian cinema that Bengal has produced, including the legendary Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen.

Dasgupta brought Indian cinema back on the international stage after the death of Satyajit Ray in 1992, winning several international accolades.

**Many awards**  
He won 12 national awards and was twice nominated for the prestigious Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival for *Phera* in 1988 and *Charachar* in 1994. In 2007, he was given the Golden Athena Award at the Athens International Film Festival. A year later, he was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Spain International Film Festival in Madrid.

The filmmaker, however, never liked comparison with legends like Ray and Sen, and preferred to be thought of alongside his great con-

temporary Govindan Aravindan (1935-1991). In his interviews, Dasgupta considered himself from the generation of filmmakers like Aravindan, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Shyam Benegal.

**Film genius**  
The subject and treatment of his films took the audience beyond realism and delved into magic realism, and at times, surrealism. Drawn from Bengali literature, his use of images, and at times non-linear narrative, added an element of fantasy, amalgamating magic realism and lyricism of poetry in films.

An acclaimed poet, too, Dasgupta emphasised that the most important aspect of a film was not its story but the "image".



## Plea in HC to postpone FMGE screening test

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Association of MD Physicians has asked the Delhi High Court to postpone the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) screening test scheduled for June 18 due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the country.

The association contended that there are a limited number of cities being notified as centres for the FMGE screening test and a large number of candidates will be forced to travel without having received even one dose of vaccine.

The petition was opposed by the National Board of Examination (NBE) and the National Medical Commission (NMC) saying that it was only a qualifying exam which can be taken even in December, if not in June and the test should not be postponed at the behest of a few candidates.

Justice Amit Bansal will continue the hearing on Friday.

## FIR registered after students break into JNU library, clash with staffers

University to take disciplinary action against students; none arrested so far

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University administration on Thursday alleged that a group of students broke into the central library and clashed with the staffers following which an FIR was registered with the police.

The university claimed that the students have been occupying the library for the last two days. The chief proctor office has been tasked with taking necessary disciplinary action against these students as per the university rules, it said.

According to the police, the incident took place on June 8 and based on a complaint from the university's Chief Security Officer, a case was registered on Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West) Ingit Prap Singh said: "Based on the complaint, a case was registered under Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant)



of the Indian Penal Code, Delhi Disaster Management Act and prevention of damage to public property Act."

### Truce meeting

No arrest has been made in the case so far, police said, adding that a meeting between the students and chief librarian was held.

The varsity said a group of students scuffled with the security staffers, broke open the side glass door of the B.R. Ambedkar Library, entered the main reading room of the building on June 8 and has occupied the space since then. It added that they did

not vacate the building even during the night.

### COVID norms flouted

"When no amount of persuasion by the librarian and the security personnel convinced these students against violating the law and COVID-19 guidelines, the JNU security office lodged a police complaint in view of the seriousness of the issue. It has been found that these students do not even use masks or follow other COVID-19 related guidelines," the university statement said.

The curfew imposed by the Delhi government is still in place and no new guidelines have yet been announced regarding resuming normal academic activities, it said.

In a statement, the university said: "This [incident] has caused health risk for library staffers and even other students residing in the hostels, since these unruly students return to hostel for lunch and dinner or other purposes."

"The students occupying the space are not permitting library staffers to sanitise the building for making it safer for students who will use the library after restoration of normalcy. All these students are instructed to vacate the library immediately," it said.

A student, requesting anonymity, said: "The library has not opened for a long time, which has left PhD students frustrated. Students have their submissions due and have not been able to access the library. The students entered the library but there was no violence."

Meanwhile, JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) termed the varsity's action as an "intimidation tactic" and demanded withdrawal of the FIR. In a statement issued, the students' body said: "The JNUSU reiterates that the university administration must reopen the library at the earliest. The administration must also withdraw the FIR and focus on issues faced by the JNU community."

## Govt. cancels Class 9, 11 exams

Students to be promoted based on mid-term exams: Sisodia

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Days after the Central government cancelled the CBSE Class 12 exams due to the pandemic, the Delhi government announced here on Thursday that exams for Class 9 and 11 have been cancelled and students will be assessed based on their performance in the mid-term exams.

Students who are unable to take the mid-term examinations will graduate to the next grade through reassessment, with projects and assignments determining reassessment grades. Results will be announced online on June 22 and the Delhi government schools' admission process for Classes 6 to 9 will begin from June 11 and registration can be done online till month end, it said.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, said that while students in Class 8 were promoted without any hassle due to the no detention policy, roadblocks in the promotion of students in Classes 9 and 12 needed to be curbed.



Results to be announced online on June 22. •FILE PHOTO

the average of marks obtained in the best two performing subjects out of five main subjects. "Students will receive their result online or via a phone call or WhatsApp," the Minister said.

### Reassessment process

According to Mr. Sisodia, all students who gave their mid-term exams in only one subject or were unable to give mid-term exams in any subject and students, who did not receive minimum qualifying marks, will be eligible for reassessment. Such students, he said, will be assessed through assignments, projects or school-based tests for promotion to the next higher class and no additional physical or online assessment will be conducted for these students.

"Admissions to Delhi government schools will begin from July 5 onwards based on the registration of students. Students who are unable to register in the given date will be eligible to register in the second admission cycle which will begin from July 23 to August 6," he also said.

## Delhi riots: court denies bail to two accused in murder case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday dismissed the bail plea of two accused in a murder case related to the 2020 north-east Delhi riots, noting that the allegations against the duo are serious in nature.

Additional Sessions Judge

Vinod Yadav junked the plea filed by Rashid and Shoaib who are accused in the murder case of waiter Dilbar Negi whose body was found charred at a local sweet shop.

While denying relief to them, the judge relied on the chargesheet, CCTV footage and video footage played in

the court by the prosecution and defence, respectively. "It is prima facie clear that the applicants were part of unlawful assembly which was responsible for putting on fire the godown in which deceased Dilbar Negi was there," the court said.

It said both the accused

were clearly visible in the CCTV footage carrying a rod in their hands in an agitated posture and instigating other members of the riotous mob. The court said that it is also apparent that the riotous mob armed carrying lethal weapons had engaged in vandalism and looting with a

main objective to cause maximum damage to the lives and properties of persons belonging to other community.

"The nature of allegations against the applicants are very serious. I do not find it to be a fit case for grant of bail to both the applicants at this stage," the judge said.

## Lifeline



Women filling drinking water from a leaked pipeline of Delhi Jal Board at Ridge Road near Dhaula Kuan on Thursday. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## Carjackers arrested from Meerut after dramatic chase

Key accused snatched service pistol and fired at police, but was caught

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Three men wanted in a carjacking case were arrested after a dramatic chase in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut, the police said on Thursday. The main accused got shot in his leg while trying to escape after snatching a service pistol during a visit to the crime scene, they said.

The accused were identified as Mohan (26), Anmol (20) and Satish (27), all residents of Sonipat in Haryana, they said. The robbed car, two stolen mobile phones and the pistol used in the offence with seven live cartridges were recovered, officers said.

According to the police, in the early hours of Wednesday, they received information regarding a carjacking incident with three persons threatening the driver at gunpoint. Driver Pushpender, a resident of Mainpuri district in U.P., said the three accused had hired his car from Kaushambi to Bawana. On the way, they stopped the

car in a forested area in Narela where they beat him and robbed his car and two mobile phones at gunpoint, a senior police officer said.

"With the help of technical surveillance, police reached Meerut and traced the car. They chased the car and overpowered all the three accused," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer North) Rajiv Ranjan Singh said.

### Part of murder plan

Mohan disclosed that the stolen mobile phone was thrown near the jungle in Shahpur Garhi where the car was robbed and they were planning to kill one Krishan of Butana village by using that car, the DCP said.

The accused were taken to the spot for the recovery of mobile phones. When they reached the spot, Mohan snatched the service pistol of constable Sanjeev and tried to escape into the jungle, police said.

When the police chased him, he opened fire at them. Police also fired a bullet that pierced his left leg. He was taken to Maharishi Hospital, police added.

## Youth stages own kidnapping to repay debt, brought back to Delhi

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old youth, who staged a kidnapping and made repeated calls to his father asking for ransom, was traced in Jalandhar, said the police on Thursday.

On June 3, Shahbad Dairy police received information regarding a kidnapping of a man for ransom of ₹3 lakh. Police reached the spot and recorded the statement of Veer Pal Singh, a resident of Prahladpur, a police officer said.

Mr. Singh stated that on June 1, his son Aman had gone

to market, but did not return home. On June 3 around, he received a call from his son who claimed that he had been kidnapped and the kidnapper was demanding ₹3 lakh as ransom.

During probe, the location of alleged mobile phone was tracked to Jalandhar following which a team was sent there. He was traced and brought back to the Capital on Sunday, police said.

"During interrogation, it came to the knowledge that Aman, who is a small time car dealer, wanted to sell a car owned by one Ravi. On June 1,

Aman went to Hisar in Haryana where his friend Ankit along with the purchaser met him. The buyer handed over ₹2 lakh to Aman and he kept the money in a bag. Ravi cheated Aman, snatched the bag and escaped," DCP (outer north) Rajiv Ranjan Singh said.

The buyer was putting pressure on Aman to return the money. Later, Aman went to Jalandhar with Ankit and started working as a labourer. He thought that he won't be able to return the money with the job and hence staged the kidnapping, police said.

## Father's untimely demise turns youth's life upside down

Kuldeep was planning to pursue higher studies in Canada, which was his father's dream, but now has to rethink

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

An 18-year-old resident of Laxmi Nagar, Kuldeep Chand, now has the weight of his family on his shoulders. Gurbax Singh, a private taxi driver, had died unexpectedly due to COVID-19, leaving behind his wife, Kuldeep and another son.

A helpless Kuldeep took to his Twitter handle and sought help. Among those who noticed was Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava, who, with the help of the force, arranged ₹10,000 for the youth, now temporarily residing in Punjab.

Recalling the night of April 27 that changed his life, he said his father Gurbax Singh complained of chest pain and breathlessness. He, his brother Gurpreet (16) and his mother Kulpreet took him to a nearby nursing home, but his oxygen levels had dropped to 40.

"We didn't know what to do. Doctor asked us to arrange for an oxygen cylinder fearing he had contracted COVID-19. I



Gurbax Singh died due to COVID-19, leaving behind his wife, Kuldeep and another son. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tried over 500 numbers but couldn't arrange one. That day, the world proved to be so selfish. One person said he'll sell the cylinder for ₹60,000," Kuldeep recalled.

### Left clueless

A gurdwara in Indirapuram arranged oxygen for a few hours. But when the family was on its way to a hospital to admit him the next morning, he passed

away. In a few seconds, Kuldeep's world turned upside down. He was all set to go to Canada for higher studies. He is now clueless about sustaining his family. Kuldeep, a second-year undergraduate from IG-NOU, took the father's body to Punjab's Rupnagar — their hometown — for cremation.

"It was my father's dream to send me to Canada so that I can settle there and eventually take

the whole family. I cracked my English proficiency test and also got admission to a college. My father took loans from friends and managed to pay the first instalment but the next is due in July," he said, adding that over ₹4 lakh have been paid and another ₹4 lakh was due.

Besides, he is crushed by the memories of his father. His father used to address everyone as 'sir' or 'madam', used to wait outside offices and it was his dream to hear someone address his father as 'sir' one day. "But everything seems so blurry now. I am only 18 and suddenly I have the full responsibility of my family, of my brother's college education, my mother's health, and my own career," he said.

### Staying back

Kuldeep said his relatives have suggested they stay back in Punjab, where they can do farming. But Kuldeep doesn't want to put to waste his and his

brother's education. So the family has resolved to return to Delhi next week.

But unable to find any glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel, he tweeted on Wednesday, "I am kuldeep from new delhi as my father was a taxi driver and he recently expired as I left with my mom and younger brother. We are going through the worst days of life, our situation is getting worst day by day please contact us [sic]."

He had tagged Delhi Police, which immediately sent an officer who was in Punjab for work. The force helped him with ₹10,000, which Kuldeep has decided to keep for emergency.

"When we go back to Delhi, I'll have some emergency needs. I'll keep this money for then. I am very thankful to Delhi Police for it," said Kuldeep, who said if he is unable to go to Canada, he'll pursue Civil Service and work simultaneously to sustain his family.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT "NOTICE INVITING TENDER CUM AUCTION"		
The HPPWD intends to sale old unserviceable "T&P Articles/Computer Hardware" as per detail given below on as is where is basis, through Tender cum Auction. Sealed Tenders are therefore invited from the interesting Agencies having sufficient experience in purchase of such materials through auction. Auction will be held in the office of Executive Engineer, Electrical Divn. No-1, HPPWD Shimla-9 on 23-06-2021 at 11:00AM.		
<b>1st Lot</b>		
Sr. No	Description of Items	Quantity
1.	HCL Computer along with accessories	31 Nos
2.	Acer Computer along with accessories	4 Nos.
3.	HP-P1505 Printer	4 Nos.
4.	HP2600N Printer	1 No.
5.	Numeric 5KVAonline UPS along with battery of 65AH	3 Nos.
6.	Battery 65AH	28 Nos.
7.	INLOVA 1KVA	1 No.
8.	5KVA UPS/14 Battery 100AH (Architect office U.S.Club)	1 No.
9.	Battery 100 AH	14 Nos.
<b>2nd Lot</b>		
1.	HP Computer along with accessories	5 Nos
2.	DELL Computer along with accessories	9 Nos.
3.	Acer Computer along with accessories	5 Nos.
4.	Wipro Server	2 Nos.
5.	HP Laser Jet-1160 Printer	4 Nos.
6.	HP Laser Jet-1022 Printer	1 No.
7.	Numeric 3KVAonline UPS/10 battery of 70AH	1 No.
8.	Battery 70AH	10 Nos.
9.	APC off line UPS (received back from consultant PMGSY Rural Road Project-II)	2 No.
10.	Enertech 5 KVA UPS/32 Battery 28 AH	1 No.
11.	Battery 28 AH	32 Nos.
12.	Tritronics 2 KVA/8 Battery 26 AH	1 No.
13.	Battery 26 AH	8 Nos.
14.	Libert 3 KVA/16 Battery 26 AH	1 No.
15.	Battery 26 AH	16 Nos.
16.	Pulsetech 3 KVA/14 Battery 15 AH	1 No.
17.	Battery 14 AH	13 Nos.
18.	UPS 800VA Enlova offline	2 Nos.
<b>Terms and Conditions of Sale:-</b>		
1. The intending Tenderers/Bidders can inspect the material on any date on or before 22-06-2021 on any working day between 11:00AM to 4:00PM after obtaining permission from the Executive Engineer, (IT) HPPWD Nigam Vihar, Shimla-2, Custodian Officer.		
2. Articles will not be sold below the reserve price fixed for it and will be sold as a lot only.		
3. The intending Tenderers should submit their Tender in a sealed cover along with the EMD of Rs.5,000/- for each lot for which he is interested by way of DD drawn in favour of Executive Engineer, Electrical Divn. No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9 payable at Shimla. The sealed cover should be super scribed by <b>Tender for the purchase of unserviceable T&amp;P Articles/Computer Hardware Lot I &amp; II.</b>		
4. Tenders with condition will not be accepted Tenderers should quote their rate in the format as prescribed for <b>Lot-I &amp; Lot-II.</b>		
5. Only those who submit the tender before the stipulated time and along with EMD will be allowed to participate in the Auction on 23-06-2021 at 11:00AM.		
6. The sealed tender will be opened by the <b>Executive Engineer, Electrical Divn. No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9</b> or Authorized Officer.		
7. The un serviceable "T&P Articles/Computer Hardware" will be sold on <b>AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION</b> and the successful Bidder will have to meet all the expenses relating to dismantling, restoration, carrying, paying tolls/ taxes if any etc.		
8. To the best of the knowledge of the Executive Engineer, <b>Electrical Divn. No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9</b> or Authorized Officer, there are no encumbrances on the property. If there are any charges or encumbrances which is revealed later.		
9. The successful bidder will have to deposit sufficient amount to satisfy the above charges/encumbrances over and above the bid amount.		
10. The Executive Engineer, <b>Electrical Divn. No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9</b> or Authorized Officer, have the absolute right to accept or reject a bid or postpone/ cancel the sale and to prescribe procedures for the conduct of Auction.		
11. For further details Executive Engineer, Electrical, HPPWD Divn. No-I, Shimla-9 can be contacted during office hours on any working days. If the sale is postponed/ adjourned for any reason, no fresh notice will be given. However the new date of sale will be notified on the Notice Board of its present location.		
12. The successful bidder shall have to deposit the bid amount on same day with the Executive Engineer Electrical Division No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9.		
<b>Place of Auction:</b> O/O Executive Engineer, Electrical, HPPWD Divn. No-I, Shimla-9.		
<b>Address of Offices at Which the Tenders are to be submitted:</b> Executive Engineer, Electrical, HPPWD Divn. No-I, Shimla-9.		
<b>Date of sale of auction form :- 21-6-2021 from 10.30AM to 5 PM.</b>		
<b>Last date and time for receipt of Tender:</b> 10.30AM of 23-06-2021.		
<b>Date and time of Auction:</b> 11:00AM of 23-06-2021.		
Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No-I, HPPWD Shimla-171009.		



**Timings**  
**DELHI**

FRIDAY, JUN. 11	RISE 05:23	SET 19:20
	RISE 05:50	SET 20:16
SATURDAY, JUN. 12	RISE 05:23	SET 19:20
	RISE 06:39	SET 21:08
SUNDAY, JUN. 13	RISE 05:24	SET 19:20
	RISE 07:32	SET 21:57

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	40	29
Safdarjang	40	29
Palam	39	30

**Delhi Palam Today**  
39°C Day would remain uneasy hot and humid. A partly cloudy sky. Chances of thunderstorm at few places.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
38°C A hot and humid day with partly cloudy to cloudy sky. Short spell rain and thunderstorm with gusty winds may occur at few places.

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**IN BRIEF**

**Over 1,300 people fined flouting COVID-19 norms**  
NEW DELHI  
Over 1,300 people were fined in Delhi on June 9 for violation of COVID-19 guidelines, the police said on Thursday. According to data shared by the police, 1,349 challans were issued on Wednesday, of which 1,167 were for not wearing face masks. PTI

# 'One in nine health workers got infected even after two doses'

Breakthrough infections are occurrences of COVID 14 days after taking both jabs

**NIKHIL M BABU**  
NEW DELHI

A study done by faculty members of a government medical college says that nearly one in nine health-care workers contracted COVID-19 infection, even after receiving both shots of a vaccine.

The study is yet to be peer reviewed and has currently appeared in preprint on an online platform. As per the study done by faculty of Delhi government's Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC), 36 of 326 health-care workers at a Delhi hospital, who were part of the study, had breakthrough COVID-19 infections.

Breakthrough infections are occurrences of COVID-19, 14 days after taking both doses of a vaccine.

"A total of 36 breakthrough infections were reported in the HCWs (health-care workers)... Furthermore, COVID-19 infections occurred in 65 HCWs vaccinated with at least one dose of vaccine but



Health workers attend to children undergoing treatment at GTB COVID Care Centre on Thursday. \*SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

prior to receiving their second dose or <14 days post second dose," a preprint of the study published online read.

**Past history**

"Most breakthrough infection cases [94.4%] were mild and did not require supplemental oxygen therapy. Conclusion: nearly one in nine HCWs experienced a COVID-19 breakthrough infection in the present study," it further read.

The study also said that the HCWs with a past history of natural COVID-19 infec-

tion and later recovered, were 4.5 times less likely to experience a COVID-19 infection after partial vaccination. "Variant strains may be passing the immunity created by the vaccine. So, even after vaccination we have to take precautions," said Pragma Sharma, professor at Department of Community Medicine of MAMC, who is one of the authors of the study.

The preprint said that a cross-sectional analysis was conducted at a medical college and hospital complex in Delhi through telephonic in-

terviews among HCWs who had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine during January to March.

**Remain vulnerable**

"These findings suggest that in real-world settings, a significant proportion of vaccinated individuals with high risk of exposure remain vulnerable to COVID-19 infection albeit with reduced disease severity in most cases," the report said.

In this study, a history of a natural infection and recovery, was observed to be protective against a subsequent COVID-19 infection or reinfection in HCWs who had been administered at least a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

The study also warned that since infection status of the HCWs was based on self-report, mostly symptomatic breakthrough infections diagnosed with RT-PCR test were likely to be captured, while asymptomatic infections were potentially omitted.

# 'Govt. has asked States not to share info on vaccine stocks'

People have a right to know about vaccine availability: Atishi

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

AAP leader Atishi, who shares the daily vaccine bulletin of the Delhi government, on Thursday claimed that the Central government has asked States not to share details of stocks of the vaccines.

"We are surprised by the fact that, yesterday, the Central government has sent a letter to all State governments where they have mentioned that no government will be allowed to share the information about how many vaccines have been administered and what is the stock position," Ms. Atishi said.

The AAP leader said that they believe that the people of Delhi have a right to know whether there is any vaccination available. "They want to know about the availability of the vaccines and where they are being administered, whether the slots will be opened up or not," she said.

The AAP leader alleged that amid a vaccine scarcity, the Central government



A beneficiary gets a vaccine shot at a centre in Jahangirpuri in north Delhi on Thursday. \*SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

finds hiding numbers more important than inoculating its citizens.

"It is our appeal to the Central government that instead of hiding information regarding the vaccines, focus on providing the vaccines. It is the right of every citizen because it is this very vaccine that can save the people from COVID-19," she said.

**Vaccines available**

Meanwhile, updating about the vaccine stock, she said, "For the 18-44 age group, 1,74,000 doses of the vac-

cine are available out of which 1,24,000 are of Covishield and 50,000 doses of Covaxin are available. Yesterday 29,800 doses of the vaccine were added for the 18-44 category. The vaccines for 45+ we have a stock of two days of Covaxin and 26 days of Covishield. For those between 18-44 years, we have four days of stock of Covaxin and eight days of Covishield. This means those who have been administered the first dose of Covaxin, they can comfortably get their second dose administered in the next four days."



Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai at the construction site of a smog tower at Connaught Palace in the city on Thursday. \*SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

# Smog tower to be ready by Aug. 15, experts to study outcomes: Rai

'Based on the success, more such structures will be built'

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said that a smog tower being constructed near Connaught Place will be completed by August 15 and the experts will study the outcomes of this tower.

On January 13 last year, the Supreme Court had ordered the Delhi government to build a 'smog tower' at Connaught Place in the city by April 13 to control air pollution.

**Deadlines missed**

On the same day, the court had also ordered a smog tower to be installed in Anand Vihar by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) by the same time. But, both the go-

**The total cost of this tower is ₹20 crore. The height of this tower is around 25 metre. It has a capacity of air purification of 1,000 cubic metres per second**

**GOPAL RAI**  
Delhi Environment Minister

vernments missed the deadline.

On July 29, the Supreme Court threatened contempt action against the Indian Institute of Technology (Bombay) on learning that the premier institution has opted to pull out of the court-ordered project to install the smog tower. "We are making this tower on a pilot basis and

based on the success of this work such towers will be built across the Capital. The work has been delayed due to the second wave of the COVID pandemic but today, I have directed to escalate the work," said Mr. Rai.

**Joint work**

"The total cost of this tower is ₹20 crore. The height of this tower is around 25 metre. It has a capacity of air purification of 1,000 cubic metres per second. The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) of the State government is the nodal authority of making this tower. However, IIT, Mumbai, NBCC and Tata Project are also working jointly with the Delhi government to build this tower," he added.

# 'Have ramped up oxygen storage capacity'

19 more plants to be inaugurated to avoid crisis faced during second wave: CM

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said the Delhi government had installed three 57 MT oxygen storage and generation centres in Siraspur here, adding that arrangements were being made to ensure that residents did not face any oxygen-related problem during the possible third wave. He said that work in this regard was being done on a war footing.

**On war footing**

Mr. Kejriwal made the announcement while visiting a 57-MT oxygen storage and generation centre in Siraspur here, adding that arrangements were being made to ensure that residents did not face any oxygen-related problem during the possible third wave. He said that work in this regard was being done on a war footing. "The Delhi government is rapidly making arrangements in case a third wave



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal visits an oxygen storage centre at Siraspur. \*PTI

comes. In the second wave, the biggest challenge that was faced was shortage of oxygen, because of which the people of Delhi had to struggle a lot for a few days," he said.

"Therefore, preparations for that are being made that in case, a third wave emerg-

es then there should be no shortage of oxygen. Today, we are standing in front of the 57-MT oxygen storage centre in Siraspur. Two more oxygen storage centres have been set up in Babasaheb Ambedkar Hospital and DDU Hospital," he said.

The Chief Minister also

took to Twitter to state that the cryogenic tank of 57 metric tonnes of oxygen storage capacity had been installed at the site along with an oxygen-generation plant with a production capacity of 12.5 tonnes per day.

Two oxygen generation plants, with a combined capacity of 13,500 MT, were in the process of being set up. In this way, Mr. Kejriwal said, oxygen facilities were being created at various locations in Delhi. As many as 19 more plants were to be inaugurated within a day or two.

"Across Delhi, facilities for oxygen storage, oxygen generation are being created. We faced a lot of problems regarding the tankers such that when we had to get oxygen from Haryana and other States, we did not have tankers. So, we are also getting tankers. All preparations are in swing," he said.

# No adequate preparation for job drive: North Mayor

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Thursday said that while the new vaccination campaign 'Jahan Vote, Wahan Vaccination' started by the Delhi government for citizens above 45 years of age was a welcome step, preparations for it to be rolled out on a city-wide basis seemed to be wanting.

The North Delhi Mayor said there were 13,765 poll-

ing stations in Delhi and every polling station required one doctor, three nurses, a data entry operator and civil defence personnel for the camp; more than one lakh staff would be required for it, he said.

"If the Delhi government has not completed the preparations then they should also inform about how this campaign will start simultaneously in the whole of Delhi," Mr. Jai Prakash said.

# BJP wants ACB probe into new low-floor buses 'scam'

No transparency in purchase, it tells L-G

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Alleging a "largescale scam" in the purchase of new buses, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Thursday asked Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal to have the matter investigated by the Delhi Anti-Corruption Branch.

In a letter to the L-G in this effect, Mr. Gupta alleged there was "no transparency" in the purchase of 1,000 low-floor buses as there had been contrary statements by the State Transport Department and Transport Minister.

"It smacks of a largescale scam and hence, in public interest, should be investi-

gated at the highest level," he demanded.

**Rotting ration**

In a related development, former Delhi BJP president and Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta alleged the Delhi government was chanting about its doorstep delivery of ration scheme to divert the attention of the people from its accountability in relation to rotting ration in the Capital.

The Rohini MLA said that the L-G had ordered the Chief Secretary to take action regarding spoil ration after he urged him to take action in the matter in a letter on June 5.

# BJP has increased trade licences by 17 times: AAP

Bharadwaj's remarks misleading: BJP

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday alleged that during the pandemic the BJP-led municipal corporation increased trade licence rates by 17 times, which added to the financial pressure faced by small businesses.

"The BJP-ruled North Delhi Municipal Corporation has increased the rates of trade licences by 17 times. Trade licence fee has been increased from ₹500 to ₹8,625 for A-B category. The North Delhi Municipal Corporation has increased the rates of trade license for C and D category from ₹500 to ₹5,750 per square metre.

He said that the BJP-ruled East Delhi Municipal Corporation has increased the rate of trade licence for A-B category from ₹200 to ₹3,000 and for C-D category from ₹200 to ₹2,000 per square metre," AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said.

"All small and big shopkeepers have to take a trade licence from municipal bodies and pay its fee every year. EDMC and North body have made a tremendous increase in the trade licence," the AAP leader said.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that Mr. Bharadwaj has mastered the art of issuing "misleading statements".

# NGT pulls up Haryana govt. for not acting on Murthal garbage issue

Plea had sought action against illegal dumping by eateries

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has pulled up the Haryana government for not taking requisite action on a plea seeking remedial action against illegal dumping of garbage by restaurants in Murthal.

The green panel directed the Haryana Chief Secretary to take remedial measures, including action against erring officers.

**Compliance status**

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "We find that beyond saying that action will be taken by the

State of Haryana in terms of standard operating procedure issued by the CPCB [Central Pollution Control Board], there is no mention of compliance status."

**Taken it lightly**

"The authorities appear to have taken the matter lightly treating the filing of a status report to be a formality. The tribunal expected meaningful action on the ground level which has not been taken in spite of long time available after the last hearing and finalisation of the SOP by the CPCB long back," the Bench said.

The Chief Secretary was also directed to furnish a

compliance report by October 22.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Abhay Dahiya and others against illegal dumping and burning of garbage and discharge of untreated water by several establishments, including restaurants.

Earlier, the tribunal had directed authorities to expedite the setting up of solid waste treatment plant for the management of waste generated by the restaurants and had questioned why a decentralised treatment plant had not been set up by the eateries in the area.

# City reports 305 new cases

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 305 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,30,433, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

Also, 44 deaths were reported and the total number of deaths stood at 24,748. A total of 75,133 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said. Of the total cases, 14,01,473 people have recovered and there are 4,212 active cases.

The test positivity rate was 0.41% which means that less than one person out of 100 people taking COVID-19 tests are now positive for the virus.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia directed officials to tie up with e-commerce organisations to ensure vaccination for delivery persons.

**THE HINDU**  
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- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

7 DAYS OPEN



Haryana moved backwards under BJP rule: Deepender

'It only leads in crime, unemployment'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH Congress Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Hooda on Thursday said Haryana in the past seven years of BJP rule has moved backwards instead of moving ahead in all spheres...

Hidden agenda behind farmers' stir, says Anil Vij

All India Kisan Sabha terms his remarks 'outrageous'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij on Thursday said the farmers' protests seemed to have a "secret agenda" other than the opposition to the three farm laws as they had failed to point out any objections to the legislations...

Release SC scholarship funds, Punjab govt. tells PM Modi

Non-release will adversely affect their education: Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking release of the State's pending amount and revised sharing pattern under the Post Matric Scholarship for Scheduled Castes (PMS-SCs) for 2017-2020...

Anti-graft group forms political party in Nagaland

ACAUT was formed in 2013 to protest 'multiple taxations' by extremist groups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI Members of a group that had stood up to "multiple taxations" by extremist groups such as the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) factions have formed a political party...

Tiger reserve union calls off strike

Release of wages promised within a fortnight

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI The Pakke Tiger Reserve Workers' Union on Thursday withdrew their indefinite strike after the State government assured payment of four months' wages within 15 days...

Package for Yaas-affected Odisha farmers

Staff who completed more than 15 years of service of the department have not been met.

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR The Odisha government on Thursday announced a package for farmers affected by the cyclonic storm Yaas...

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Anthropology New Batch Starts on 16.07.2021 @ 06:00 AM As per the recent trends and dynamics of UPSC pattern...

PUBLIC NOTICE Notice is hereby given that Baljit Kaur @ Baljit Kaur D/o Nian Singh, R/o 14/36-A, Second Floor, Tilak Nagar, Delhi is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

सार्वजनिक सूचना सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्लॉट नं. C-2/39, Sector-31, Noida (U.P.) का आवंटन श्री कृष्ण दत्त शर्मा पुत्र स्व. श्री शिव दत्त शर्मा के पक्ष में किया गया है।

PUBLIC NOTICE MR. DUBA/CONS/434/MR/2021-114 DATED: 19/05/2021 MR. NITIN SHARMA S/O BAL KRISHNA SHARMA RESIDENT OF FLAT NO. D8 GOVERNMENT OF DELHI...

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE DEATH In Loving Memory Shri G SIVAKUMAR 09.06.2021 "A great father, the best mentor and a true friend" breathed his last on June 9, 2021...

FOR ENQUIRIES ON ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THIS SECTION, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT THE FOLLOWING NUMBER between 10a.m. and 8p.m. New Delhi : 011- 43579797

OPEN TENDERS THROUGH ONLINE (E-Tendering) are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom)/Varanasi/ N. E. Railway for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works: 1. Tender Notice No. and Description of Work: NER-BSB05NT-OT-09-2021: Name of work - Provision of E-1 for High Speed Networking of Data logger at all stations of BSB Division. Details: Approx. Value: Rs. 5702228.34, Earnest Money: Rs. 00.00, Cost of Tender Form: Rs. 00.00, Completion Period: 06 Months, Tender Closing Date & Time: 05.07.2021 up to 15.00 Hrs 1, Tender Online will be submitted up to 15 Hrs on date 05.07.2021. 2. For full details and submission of bid kindly visit the Official website of Indian railways i.e. www.rlys.gov.in

TAMIL NADU ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION CHENNAI - 600002 (A Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking) NOTICE INVITING TENDER Tender Notice No. 1/ADE/2021-2022/dated:10.06.2021 (KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT) e-TENDER NOTICE For and on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu, Item works will be received by the Executive Director, TNRIDC, Chennai, only in online for the work of "Construction of Grade Separator at km 37/6-38/4 of Vandalur - Wallajabad road" upto 20.07.2021, 14.00 Hrs (as per server system clock)...

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एम्स), भुवनेश्वर ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), BHUBANESWAR (A Statutory Body under aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India) Engineering Branch (Civil), Sijua (Patrapada), Bhubaneswar (Odisha)-751019 www.aiimshhubaneswar.nic.in File No. : AIIMS/BBSR/Engg./015 /2021-22 Dated : 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar invites e-Tender for the Work(s) for Mechanized Cleaning & Disinfection of U/G sump, overhead tanks & replacement water storage tank of Hospital Complex at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar (NIT No. : AIIMS/BBSR/Engg./015 /2021-22). The detailed Tender Document along with Last Date & Time of Submission of Tender can be viewed & downloaded from the website www.aiimshhubaneswar.nic.in, www.tenderwizard.com/AIIMSBBSR & CPP Portal www.eprocure.gov.in.

Chief Engineer, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency First Floor, Directorate of Panchayati Raj, Opp-PT Park, Sahastardnara Road, Dehradun Ref. No. 447/URRDA/M2-04/SQM/outsource/2021 Dated : 10-06-2021 Press Notice for Consultancy Services of State Quality Monitoring under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana 1. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a centrally sponsored programme of Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India aims at providing all weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitations. The Programme is being implemented by the State Government of Uttarakhand with Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency (URRDA) as the implementing Agency...

COVID-19 widows to get ₹2.5 lakh in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced a one-time financial support of ₹2.5 lakh for every woman in the State who lost their husband due to COVID-19. Marking the completion of a month of his BJP-led government on Thursday, he also announced a scheme that entails parking ₹7.81 lakh as fixed deposit in the bank in the name of each child orphaned by coronavirus. The Chief Minister said a monthly financial assistance of ₹ 3,500, to be realised from the fixed deposit, would be given to each beneficiary child till he or she attained 24 years of age. The principal amount would be credited to the bank account of ₹ 2,000 a month. "We hope the Chief Minister's Sishu Seva Scheme would help the children who have lost their parents due to the virus," Dr. Sarma said, adding that the COVID-19-induced widows would also be entitled to the benefits of the Arunodoi scheme along with the monthly widow pension scheme besides the ₹ 2.5 lakh. Arunodoi scheme The Arunodoi scheme, introduced during the Sarbananda Sonowal government, entails ₹ 830 a month for women in poor households. The amount is expected to be increased to ₹ 3,000. "For children under 10 years and adolescent girls with no guardian, the State government will take steps to house them in one of the child care institutions and provide adequate funding towards their upkeep including educational expenditure. Orphaned adolescent girls will be given accommodation in suitable and reputed institutions to ensure their sensitive care and proper protection," the Chief Minister said.

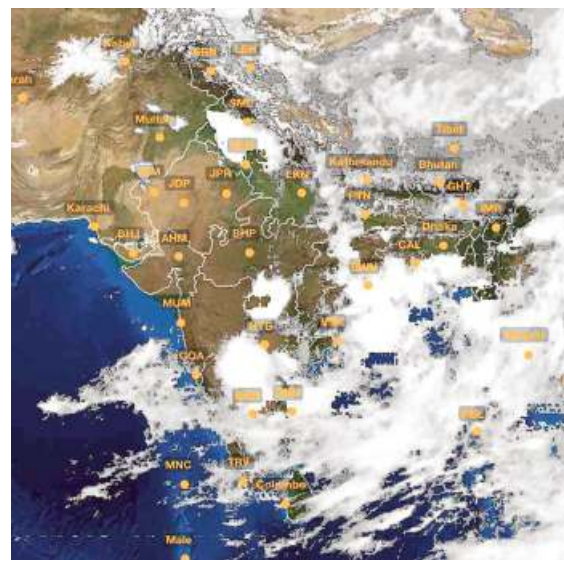
GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION NIT No.09: Tender Notice No. 09/SE(P-C,N&E)/GHMC/2021-2022, Dt. 09.06.2021, Name of the Work: "Construction of Grade separator/ Fwyover at Uppal Junction", IBM Value: Rs. 19778.41 Lakhs; Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: Start Date: 11.06.2021 @ 05.00 PM, Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 09.07.2021 @ 03.00 PM, Name & Address Officer Cell No.: S/o Superintendent Engineer (Projects-C,N&E), GHMC, 9898930408. Further details can be seen at 'e' Procurement @ www.tender.telangana.gov.in Or can be contact Office of the Superintending Engineer (P-C, N&E), GHMC in office working hours. Sd/- Superintending Engineer, (Projects-C,N&E) GHMC. DIPP R.O.No.12668-PP/CL/ADVT/11/2021-22 Dt. 10.06.2021

Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Gumla (DISTRICT PLANNING OFFICE, GUMLA), Jharkhand-835207 Email: dpogumla1@gmail.com, Website: www.gumla.nic.in EOI Reference No: - 09 Date:- 10.06.2021 Expression of Interest for Selection of Agency for Design, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Micro Lift Solar Based Irrigation System for Promotion of Integrated Agriculture on Turnkey Basis in the Gumla District. SL NO INFORMATION/SUBJECT DETAIL 1 NAME OF WORK SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF MICRO LIFT SOLAR BASED IRRIGATION SYSTEM FOR PROMOTION OF INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE ON TURNKEY BASIS IN THE GUMLA DISTRICT OF JHARKHAND. 11.06.2021 2 DATE OF PUBLICATION OF EOI 3 EOI COST RS 5,000 (IN FORM OF DD) IN FAVOR OF 'DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, GUMLA' PAYABLE AT GUMLA (EXEMPTED FOR MSME) NON REFUNDABLE 4 EARNEST MONEY TO BE DEPOSITED (EMD) RS 2,00,000 (RS TWO LACS ONLY IN FORM OF DD) IN FAVOR OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, GUMLA PAYABLE AT GUMLA (FOR MSME THIS IS EXEMPTED) IN CASE OF UNSUCCESSFUL BIDDER, THE AMOUNT WILL BE REFUNDABLE WITHIN A WEEK OF WORKING DAYS THE SUCCESSFUL BIDDER WILL RECEIVE THE EMD AMOUNT AFTER THE WORK COMPLETION 5 LAST DATE & TIME FOR EOI SUBMISSION Date : 02.07.2021 Time : 02.00 P.M 6 DATE AND TIME OF OPENING OF EOI Date : 05.07.2021 Time : 12.00 P.M 7 EOI OPENING PLACE OFFICE OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, COLLECTORIATE BUILDING, GUMLA Date : 06.07.2021 Time : 12.00 P.M 8 DATE AND TIME OF POWER POINT PRESENTATION OFFICE OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, OFFICER, VIKAS BHAWAN, GUMLA, JHARKHAND-835207 Date : 06.07.2021 Time : 12.00 P.M 9 INVITING EOI SUBMISSION PLACE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT PLANNING OFFICER, VIKAS BHAWAN, GUMLA, JHARKHAND-835207 10 HELPLINE NO DPO GUMLA 7761807242 11 EOI VALIDITY 90 DAYS Note:- details are available at Website: www.gumla.nic.in. D.C. Gumla. PR 247754 Gumla(21-22)#D



**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



**Forecast for Friday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few isolated places over Assam, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, coastal Andhra Pradesh, coastal Karnataka and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Punjab, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand and Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	34.4	25.3		Kozhikode	0.4	32.6	24.8
Ahmedabad	39.2	28.5		Kurnool		34.5	26.1
Aizawl		22.4		Lucknow	8	27.4	27.0
Allahabad	35.1	28.0		Madurai		39.0	26.0
Bengaluru	29.0	20.4		Mangaluru	45.8	27.4	22.0
Bhopal		25.6		Mumbai	231	29.7	23.4
Bhubaneswar	32.2	25.5		Mysuru		33.0	21.2
Chandigarh	35.4	29.4		New Delhi		39.8	29.0
Chennai	0.5	36.6	29.5	Patna		34.6	25.2
Coimbatore	34.7	23.6		Port Blair	30	29.0	22.1
Dehradun	45	29.6	22.5	Puducherry		38.7	26.4
Gangtok	4	22.0	16.7	Pune	3.6	29.1	21.5
Goa	64	31.5	22.8	Raipur	1.4	28.6	21.6
Guwahati	35.6	26.2		Ranchi	24	31.2	22.1
Hubballi	27.0	22.0		Shillong	0.6	25.6	18.1
Hyderabad	32.6	23.9		Shimla	11	28.5	19.5
Imphal	30.1	21.8		Srinagar		34.7	19.2
Jaipur	41.8	30.4		Thiruvananthapuram	0.1	32.5	24.7
Kochi	10	31.4	25.2	Tiruchi		37.7	27.5
Kohima	5	28.0	18.0	Vijayawada		36.2	29.1
Kolkata	33.8	27.8		Vizakhapatnam	20	35.0	25.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	3	45	137	46	66	4
Bengaluru	3	47	37	14	46	4
Chennai	43	19	174	29	41	4
Delhi	9	25	35	263	291	4
Hyderabad	2	70	13	20	26	4
Kolkata	10	27	20	70	76	4
Lucknow	6	36	74	67	85	4
Mumbai	47	18	17	21	32	4
Pune	5	1	75	85	58	4
Vizakhapatnam	16	57	40	71	94	4

**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>2</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.  
**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

# Maharashtra govt. clears action plan to protect heritage trees

State to amend Act to preserve trees more than 50 years old in urban areas

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Thursday passed an action plan to protect and preserve trees older than 50 years in urban areas by terming them heritage trees.

The plan includes the concept of heritage tree and plan of action for conservation; method to define age of the tree; compensatory plantation; rules to be followed before hacking trees; formation of the Maharashtra Tree Authority; structure of the local tree authority and their duties; tree census; fixing land of tree plantation; transplantation of trees; and tree cess and fine to be charged.

The State will also bring about amendments in the Maharashtra (Urban Area) Protection and Preservation of Trees Act. As per the plan, trees older than 50 will be termed heritage trees. The Environment and Climate Change Department will issue guidelines in consultation with the State Forest Department based on the existing methods.

Compensatory plantation will include planting the number of trees equivalent to the age of trees to be cut. The saplings need to be six to eight feet in height while planting and they will undergo geo-tagging with seven years of caring period. The option of monetary compensation has also been given, instead of compensatory plantation.

A State-level Tree Authority will be formed to protect and preserve heritage trees. The authority will hear applications seeking permission to cut 200 or more trees that are five or more years old. The local tree authorities will come under this bo-



**Green mission:** A State-level Tree Authority will be formed to hear applications seeking permission to cut 200 or more trees that are five or more years old. ■ FILE PHOTO

## Interest-free crop loans up to ₹3 lakh

2% additional concession for farmers who repay on time

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Thursday cleared a proposal to provide crop loans up to ₹3 lakh at zero interest rate. Under the Dr. P. V. Narasimha Murthy Interest Concession Scheme, farmers who repay their interest of loans up to ₹3 lakh get interest subsidy.

The decision was taken at the State Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. Finance Minister Ajit Pawar, while presenting the State

budget for 2021-22, had announced that crop loans up to ₹3 lakh will be charged at zero per cent interest. The State government was earlier extending interest concession of 3% to non-defaulters with crop loans up to ₹1 lakh and 1% concession in interest rate if crop loans between ₹1 lakh and ₹3 lakh was repaid on time. The scheme was aimed at encouraging non-defaulters.

Under the new scheme, those who repay crop loans on time will get 2%

additional interest concession for a short-term crop loan between ₹1 lakh and ₹3 lakh. The State government will extend a total concession of 3%.

The Central government too encourages timely repayment of crop loans with 3% interest concession on short-term crop loans up to ₹3 lakh.

Combining both the schemes, farmers will get 6% as total interest concession, ensuring short-term crop loans up to ₹3 lakh at zero interest rate.

dy. Tree experts will be part of the local tree authorities. These bodies will ensure that the tree census is conducted after every five years. They will also be in charge of

counting heritage trees, ensuring their preservation, keeping tabs on tree plantation, pruning and caring of trees, and ensuring that 33% of government land is used

for tree plantation.

The State authority will issue directions for the use of tree cess. The fine amount cannot be more than ₹1 lakh per tree in case of violations.

## Opportunity to win govt. projects up to ₹15 lakh at Maharashtra Startup Week

Young, innovative entrepreneurs can submit their entries till June 15

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government is set to hold the fourth edition of Maharashtra Startup Week from August 9 to 13 to encourage young and innovative entrepreneurs.

The Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSIS) is the nodal agency under the State government's Department of Skill Development, Employment, and Entrepreneurship, which is responsible for conducting the programme. Applications are open till June 15 and from the total entries, 100 startups will be shortlisted by next month. The final 24 winners will be awarded government pilot projects up to ₹15 lakh. The winners will also receive assistance from the State for 12 months.

"The Maharashtra Startup Week is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for startups with out-of-the-box innovations to engage directly with the government and also open doors to scale their solutions. The entrepreneurial talent of the country will surely benefit from such a unique programme," said Nawab Malik, Skill Development, Employment and Entrepreneurship Minister.

MSIS aims at the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation framed under the Maharashtra State Innovative Startup Policy 2018 to promote an innovation-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem in the State. The MSIS has envisaged Maharashtra Startup Week as a platform to bring innovation in government by giving



**It is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for startups to engage directly with the government**

NAWAB MALIK  
Maharashtra Minister

opportunities for startups to showcase and provide their innovative services/products.

"After successfully organising three editions, we invite startups to participate in the fourth edition of the Maharashtra Startup Week. Startups from sectors such as education, healthcare, agriculture, environment, skill improvement, clean energy, water and waste management, smart infrastructure and mobility, governance and miscellaneous can submit their applications," said Deependra Singh Kushwah, CEO of MSIS. He said the top 100 startups would be selected to pitch their innovative solutions to a select panel of judges comprising representatives from the government, industry, academia and investors.

Over the past three editions, 72 startups won pilot projects and an opportunity to provide their solutions to different government bodies such as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, the Directorate of Health Services and the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited. Visit [www.msins.in/startup-week](http://www.msins.in/startup-week) to participate.

## 'Name Navi Mumbai airport after PWP leader'

Project-affected people, local residents organise human chains to press for demand

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

Thousands of local residents and project-affected people formed human chains on Thursday to express their disappointment over a proposal to name the upcoming Navi Mumbai international airport after Shiv Sena founder late Bal Thackeray.

Around one lakh villagers held placards demanding that the airport be named after the late Peasants and Workers' Party (PWP) leader and parliamentarian Dinkar Balu Patil, who was popularly known as D.B. Patil.

The human chains were spread across 130 km covering Uran, Ulwe, CBD Belapur, Panvel, Digha, Shilpha-

ta, Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Kalwa, Mira-Bhayander, Thane, Chunabhatti and Mankhurd.

"From 2012, when the airport project was announced, we had put up a board in the area saying 'DB Patil International Airport'. All parties had agreed on the name then. Even the Shiv Sena was in support of it. Now, since they are in power, they have decided to name it after Balasaheb Thackeray. We respect Mr. Thackeray, but we want DB Patil's name on it as it was due to his efforts that project-affected people are drawing the benefits from government schemes," Rajesh Patil, who coordinated the human chain in Navi Mumbai, said.

The All-Party Action Committee (APAC) that organised the human chain said that the State government should understand the emotions of the villagers and accept their demand. On April 17, the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO), which is the nodal government agency for the airport that is coming up near Panvel, approved a proposal to name the airport after Bal Thackeray. The proposal was then sent to the State government for final approval.

"Three days ago, the Chief Minister held a meeting in which he said that the airport will be named after Bal Thackeray and that we can suggest some other project

to be named after D.B. Patil. It was the late PWP leader who had fought for the farmers and project-affected people and ensured that they receive 12.5% of the developed land from CIDCO. Apart from Navi Mumbai, Patil had also struggled for the cause of farmers in Thane and Palghar districts. If not this project, which other project would be apt to bear DB Patil's name?" said project-affected person who participated in the human chain.

**Protest on June 24**

APAC now plans to hold another major protest against CIDCO's decision on June 24, the death anniversary of D.B. Patil.

## Rain in the offing



**Overcast skies:** Dark clouds hover over Marine Drive at Churchgate, in Mumbai, on Thursday. ■ PTI

# CHIME telescope yields unprecedented results

Scientific collaboration detects more than 500 mysterious fast radio bursts in its first year of operation

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Scientists with the Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment (CHIME) Collaboration, who include researchers at the Pune-based Tata Institute for Fundamental Research (TIFR) and the National Centre for Radio

Astrophysics (NCRA), have assembled the largest collection of fast radio bursts (FRBs) in the telescope's first FRB catalogue.

While catching sight of an FRB is considered a rare thing in the field of radio astronomy, prior to the CHIME project, radio astronomers had only caught sight of around 140 bursts in their scopes since the first FRB was spotted in 2007.

FRBs are oddly bright flashes of light, registering in the radio band of the electromagnetic spectrum,

which blaze for a few milliseconds before vanishing without a trace. These brief and mysterious beacons have been spotted in various and distant parts of the universe, as well as in our own galaxy. Their origins are unknown and their appearance is highly unpredictable.

But the advent of the CHIME project – a large stationary radio telescope in British Columbia, Canada – has been a game changer and has nearly quadrupled the number of fast radio bursts discovered to date. With more observations, astronomers hope soon to pin down the extreme origins of these curiously bright signals.

The telescope has detected a whopping 535 new fast radio bursts in its first year of operation itself, between 2018 and 2019.

"Before CHIME came along, different telescopes



**Game changer:** The CHIME project, a radio telescope in British Columbia, Canada, has nearly quadrupled the number of fast radio bursts discovered to date. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

had observed a handful of FRBs each, but with their own selection criteria and software. But now, with the help of CHIME, we can observe a large swathe of the sky round the clock and were able to detect FRBs at an unprecedented rate. We could gather the first large sample of FRBs with a single instrument and a single, well-understood selection

criteria which is allowing us to get a far better understanding of the properties of the FRBs as a population," said CHIME/FRB member Shriharsh Tendulkar, also a faculty member at the TIFR-NCRA.

The new catalogue significantly expands the current library of known FRBs, and is already yielding clues as to their properties.

For instance, the newly discovered bursts appear to fall in two distinct classes: those that repeat, and those that don't. Scientists have identified 18 FRB sources that burst repeatedly, while the rest appear to be one-offs.

When the scientists mapped their locations, they found the bursts were evenly distributed in space, seeming to arise from any and all parts of the sky. From the FRBs that CHIME was able to detect, the scientists calculated that bright fast radio bursts occur at a rate of about 800 per day across the entire sky – the most precise estimate of FRBs overall rate to date.

The first FRB catalogue is to be presented later this week at the American Astronomical Society Meeting. Mr. Tendulkar said that observations showed that the repeaters looked different, with each burst

lasting slightly longer and emitting more focused radio frequencies than bursts from single, non-repeating FRBs.

"We find that repeaters emit bursts of longer duration with the radiation being detected in a narrower range of frequencies compared to the one-off FRBs. These differences strongly suggest that emission from repeaters and non-repeaters is generated either by different physical mechanisms or in different astrophysical environments," said Pragya Chawla, a Ph.D. candidate at McGill University and a member of the CHIME team.

CHIME comprises four massive cylindrical radio antennas, roughly the size and shape of snowboarding half-pipes, located at the Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory, operated by the National Research Council of Canada

in British Columbia. The telescope receives radio signals each day from half of the sky as the Earth rotates.

While most radio astronomy is done by swivelling a large dish to focus light from different parts of the sky, CHIME stares, motionless, at the sky, and focuses incoming signals using a correlator – a powerful digital signal processor that can work through huge amounts of data, at a rate of about seven terabytes per second, equivalent to a few per cent of the world's Internet traffic.

"Digital signal processing is what makes CHIME able to reconstruct and 'look' in thousands of directions simultaneously. That is what helps us detect FRBs a thousand times more often than a traditional telescope," says Kiyoshi Masui, Assistant Professor of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (MIT), who will lead the group's conference presentation at the American Astronomical Society Meeting.

For each of the 535 FRBs that CHIME detected, Professor Masui and his colleagues measured its dispersion and found that most bursts likely originated from far-off sources within distant galaxies.

The fact that the bursts were bright enough to be detected by CHIME suggests that they must have been produced by extremely energetic sources, he said. As the telescope detects more FRBs, scientists hope to pin down exactly what kind of exotic phenomena could generate such ultra bright, ultra fast signals.

According to Professor Masui, the scientists plan to use the bursts, and their dispersion estimates, to map the distribution of gas throughout the universe.





## Seeds and fruits

A mechanism for CMs to cooperate on issues of Centre-State relations is welcome

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's call for cooperation among non-NDA counterparts in other States to support farmers agitating against three controversial laws made in June 2020 seems part of a larger political project. It is meant to go beyond aiding the farmers, who fear that these laws could make them more vulnerable to market fluctuations. But the focus on farm laws, which the Government says would make farming more competitive and remunerative, is an important start. While the Government reiterated this week that MSP for various crops would continue, the fact remains that regardless of the merits of these laws, they were made without adequate consultations with parties, States and the stakeholders. After a meeting with farmer leaders from Uttar Pradesh, Ms. Banerjee said she accepted their request to speak to other Chief Ministers who are not in the NDA. While reiterating her demand to repeal the three laws, she has proposed a virtual conference of CMs with the farmers and a joint letter to the Centre on the issue. Many CMs are likely to agree with her, despite political rivalries among them. At least two other CMs who were elected along with her in the recent Assembly elections share her position on the farm laws — Kerala's Pinarayi Vijayan and Tamil Nadu's M.K. Stalin. In Kerala, the previous Assembly had in December 2020 passed a unanimous resolution seeking the repeal of these laws.

That said, all non-NDA CMs may not be willing to be part of a joint platform because of their individual calculations and expediency, and the fear of retribution by the Centre. Delhi's Arvind Kejriwal, for instance, had sought the support of other CMs against unilateral actions by the Centre that curtailed the powers of his government. Ms. Banerjee had vociferously supported him, but Mr. Kejriwal was not reciprocative when she raised concerns of overreach by the Centre. The recent joint efforts by some CMs to persuade the Centre to withdraw its previous vaccination policy did not get wholehearted support from others. The CMs of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, Naveen Patnaik and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, have sought to keep the Centre in good humour. Nevertheless, the joint efforts by CMs did lead to a change in the vaccination policy. Joint strategy on farm laws could be more difficult as their impact is uneven across States. But a broader point raised by Ms. Banerjee, about the Centre's tendency to ignore the States while formulating policy, is salient. She has also called for a continuing mechanism for CMs to cooperate on issues of Centre-State relations. Turning this into a combative platform could do more harm than good, but it is a suggestion worth pursuing. Cooperative federalism, a concept that Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocates, can be pursued more meaningfully through continuous and harmonious communication with CMs. A conversation on farm laws could be a good beginning.

## Terror in the Sahel

Global powers should not stay away from the growing threat posed by Islamists in Africa

The massacre of at least 160 people in a border village in Burkina Faso over the weekend is a grim reminder of the threat the Sahel region faces from Islamist terrorism. Nobody has claimed responsibility, but Burkina authorities have named the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), which has carried out hundreds of terror strikes in recent years. The security situation in Burkina Faso, which saw its first major Islamist terrorist attack in 2015, has deteriorated steadily, especially along the borders with Niger and Mali. This has been the case with much of the Sahel region, a 5,900-km-long semi-arid territory. It has seen terrorist groups expanding their networks and stepping up attacks on civilians and soldiers. The Burkina Faso attack occurred after 137 people were killed by jihadists in Niger, in March. In Nigeria, Islamists control swathes of territories and have carried out abductions and attacks, including gunning down 27 people in a village on Sunday. Mali has been fighting terror groups since 2013.

Four main terror outfits operate in the region — the ISGS, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin, the local al-Qaeda branch in Mali, and Boko Haram. Of these, the ISGS and Jama'at Nasr are reportedly in alliance to expand their influence in the Burkina-Mali-Niger border region, where they shoot down anyone who does not declare their loyalty to the jihadists. Boko Haram and the ISWAP are fighting each other but control territories in northeastern Nigeria. France has deployed troops in the region for counter-insurgency operations and is helped by the U.S., which has a drone base in Niger. The regime change policies of the U.S. and France are partly to be blamed for the problems the Sahel countries are facing today. When a NATO invasion removed Muammar Gaddafi from power in Libya in 2011, the region lost a stable bulwark against militias and jihadists. Libya, having fallen into anarchy and civil war, became a jihadist breeding ground. When trouble spread to Mali, France made a military intervention in 2013. But it did not defeat the insurgency, which spread beyond Mali's borders. Now, jihadists find safe havens in the lawless deserts of the Sahel. When the IS-militant infrastructure was destroyed in Iraq and Syria, their foot soldiers fled to Africa, regrouping themselves in the region. The recent attacks should serve as a warning to all stakeholders. Major global powers, which worked together with regional players to defeat the IS in West Asia, should not stay away from the growing threat from Africa. They should, along with the UN, help the Sahel countries build capacity and institutions, offer stable governance and adopt sustainable counter-insurgency strategies.

# The dream of a borderless world

More than the biological virus, civilisation is experiencing a pandemic of barriers and barricades across the world



SHELLEY WALIA

The more I see images of racist violence, of the dispossessed sea of humanity travelling hundreds of miles by foot to reach their homes, of migrants being turned back by xenophobic immigration policies at the Mexican border, of vulnerable hungry people moving from Somalia to Jordan, or Bangladesh to India, or of a white policeman suffocating an African-American with his knee pressed into his neck, the more I am compelled to think that the world needs to rise above the frenzy of labels of race, gender, caste, religion and political bias, and begin, instead, to address as one people the issues that are far more crucial to humanity. More than the biological coronavirus, civilisation is indeed experiencing an excruciating world-wide pandemic of barriers and barricades, a disease that since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has jumped from a little more than a dozen border walls to over 60.

### The real image

But a different image comes to mind when you visualise a borderless earth from far away in space. The arsenal of concertina wires and checkpoints are not visible. You do not see the barriers of language, culture or distance from here. And you do not see the blockade of Gaza where two million Palestinians "caged in a zoo" that could easily be a toxic slum with negligible access to medicines, food, electricity or drinking water. The landmass or the seas

and oceans stretch across the globe interspersed with rivers and mountains. The mind begins to wander across the mountains, an eternal tranquil stretch across the face of the earth.

Absorbed in the landscape, I begin to imagine a world undivided by race, gender, religion or nationalities, a global consciousness unabashedly pro-diversity that is like the white cloud moving freely or the blue sky stretching far into the horizon, a peaceful land that gives you a deep sense of belonging. The cloud is not fenced in like many threatened by death behind a razor-sharp fence that is reproduced globally, in every continent, in every nation, in every state. However, at the back of my mind, I can feel the hidden bazooka-like cameras revealing sorrowfully the apprehensive face of a mother crossing the border from Mexico to Arizona to reunite with a lost child. Cold-blooded xenophobic immigrant laws, threats and detentions clash with the deep sense of peace that I experience from the placid landscape before my eyes, resonating a flash of some utopian borderless world that might someday become a reality.

### Rights for all

But as a river bursts out of a dam that its gushing waters find irksome, fences too are broken by rebels incarcerated for no crime but the love of freedom or a happier tomorrow. How long can you keep a human being locked up when the crime is struggling for the human rights of all? The insatiable desire to breakout becomes the carnival of the oppressed, an iconic symbol of that ray of hope that sustains the power of imagination and reclaims the space for freedom and the dream of reality where the past meets the future in the present.

The wandering cloud or the ef-



fortless river is a souvenir of rebels dancing on the edge of chaos, between the broken and the built, each telling her untold story that profoundly surpasses in its intensity the single overriding story that is always ideologically frozen in its linearity and intransigence. Their action is the action of life, powerful as the winds converging into a whirlwind, distinct, and yet a reflection of the many alliances uniting to target the rich and the powerful in their palaces and in the government buildings gradually beginning to feel insecure.

### Tyranny of the majority

The fence is a testimony of death and terror of race and ultra-nationalism, something Mexicans or Palestinians or we in India can very well realise, cut off as we are from the rest of the world lest we infect it with an unsurpassable wave of death and human suffering. We stand fractured by not only borders but political and economic and social and ethnic differences. Surveillance, lockdowns and military vigilance at the borders are a lame excuse of self defence camouflaging the tyranny of the majority aiming at the expulsion of the "other".

Between the rich and the poor, between the business class and the tourist class travelling in the same plane, reaching the same destination or crashing together,

between an upmarket gated community and the suburbia of poverty and hunger, between the mosque and the temple, there is the jarring sense of imbalance, screaming out in a burlesque of the inordinate magnificence of bigotry and self-indulgence.

### An onslaught

Sorrowfully, racism now seems to be embedded in the very idea of the fence. The world overflows with stern vigilantism, the cold and heartless bureaucracy, the secret agents and the terrorising state apparatus. The onslaught is on the people, jobless and homeless, with no choices in their own land. They leave their homes seeking a better way of life as well as serve the host country supplying it the labour that it so desperately needs to uphold its economy. Migration occurs owing to the unbearable suffering in war-torn homelands lacking social security, or the construction of mega-dams that drive out the native farmers from their land, the only means of their subsistence. As the author Naomi Klein says, they "are increasingly treated like cargo, with no rights at all". Rich nations who believe in free trade do not realise that the migrants who have come to their shores in the face of death are not their "clients but sellers" of their labour, their blood, sweat and tears. How long will they remain silent?

If you listen carefully, you can hear the whispering of the voices from below, the voices the rich and the powerful refrain from hearing. How long will they ignore the farmers, the artisans, the builders? How long will they turn a deaf ear to the demands of those who want to break out of the confines of chauvinism or racial fanaticism? How long will their voices go unheard from across the fences, voices fortified with the words

of resistance not for rewards but for the vision of peace and freedom, of human rights and dignity that await people of all races, of all colours of all ethnicities, of all genders?

These voices cannot submit to the powerful and the rich. They cannot because they are on the other side of the fence opposing the rich nations which meet annually in sickeningly opulent venues, discussing and adjudicating on the poor and the deprived on whose land they now exercise their will and their right. Armed policemen keep the hungry and the deprived out, and if ever they dare to cross over, the unfortunate wither away in detention centres behind the impenetrable walls of the hawk-eyed state. The fence keeps them at bay from vast stretches of land preventing thousands from cultivating on the land that rightly belongs to them. Surely, clean air, drinking water, health care, land and shelter and food are their birthright.

### The power of peace

The only option left is to peacefully send across the fences their messages and songs of resistance that reverberate across the world with the ideas of revolution and hope, of emancipation and freedom from the tyranny of the handful who rule the world. The rebel voices, sooner or later, will remember their poets and the songs of their past that will penetrate the fences, tear them down in globally interconnected social movements when the extremes of wealth and poverty will no longer be endured. The language of diversity and dignity would soon engulf the unilateral predatory game plans of the rich and the mighty.

Shelley Wallia is Professor Emeritus at Panjab University, Chandigarh and is the author of 'Humanities at the Crossroads'

# The rope of federalism and an unwanted tug-of-war

The controversy in West Bengal, over political and administrative issues, is an aberration in the federal polity



NIRANJAN PATNAIK

The Centre-West Bengal controversy on the conduct of Bengal's former Chief Secretary, Alapan Bandyopadhyay in the final days of his tenure, in May, has thrown up several political and administrative issues that deserve our attention for the future health of our federal polity.

In the overall context, there are two elements which need to be kept in mind while discussing this subject. First, India is a 'union of states' and in this union, the State governments are not subordinate agencies of the central government. There are, no doubt, matters enunciated in our Constitution, where the Centre's decisions have primacy over those of the State governments, but this does not extend to holding of meetings, even if these are called by the Prime Minister. A State's functionalities — both political and administrative — are requested or advised to attend such meetings and this necessitates courtesy and consideration on the part of both sides. It is possible that due to the no-holds-barred electoral campaigns in the recently held Assembly elections, which included West Bengal, these considerations were gi-

ven a go-by; the result is an unseemly controversy which is best avoided for healthy Centre-State relations.

### Relief and the third tier

Second, the meeting that became a flashpoint was the one called by the Prime Minister on May 28 to review cyclone relief work — in connection with cyclone Yaas — in West Bengal. The allegation is that Mr. Bandyopadhyay reached the meeting late and then left abruptly along with West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, to visit the cyclone-affected areas in her State. In real life, most relief and rehabilitation work in the event of a natural calamity or management of a disaster is of a local nature and is carried out by the district, sub-divisional and village level officials working under the State governments. Over time, the States have conceded space to the Centre for disaster management for getting financial, technical and logistical support. Even then, the comprehensive framework under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (<https://bit.ly/3ivd1Ad>) operates mainly at the State, district and local levels.

The conduct of Mr. Bandyopadhyay, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, must be seen in this overall context along with the central government's reactions which together raise issues regarding the norms of civil service conduct, political and administrative arrogance and revenge-



ful behaviour. New Delhi has sent showcause notices and a charge sheet for Mr. Bandyopadhyay's failure in fully and properly participating in the meeting called by the Prime Minister in West Bengal for cyclone relief review. He has since replied to the Centre.

### The services and fine balance

The All-India Services, that includes the IAS, were conceived by the makers of our Constitution to provide uniformity and high standards of public service in both the Centre and the States, and to provide a measure of administrative unity in our diverse and plural society. The architecture has been exquisitely designed. To ensure quality and as a measure of convenience, IAS officers are recruited by the Union Public Service Commission and formally appointed by the President of India. But they are ultimately borne in State cadres which makes them subject to the control of the respective State governments as well, especially when they are in the employ-

ment of their States. To that extent their position is somewhat different from that of the central services who go through similar recruitment procedures but are under the Centre's total control.

The IAS officers work for the central government on "deputation" from their respective State cadres and during their central deputation, their loyalty is of course to the central government. IAS officers will face acute trust-deficit, if while working for a State government, they show preferential allegiance or loyalty to central government functionaries by reason of the fact that they were initially appointed by the President of India.

### High-handed approach

As a measure of the vindictive assertion of its rights and power, Mr. Bandyopadhyay was initially called to the Centre on "deputation" and asked to report in New Delhi on the day he was to superannuate. It is a different matter that he chose to retire on that day instead of availing himself of the three-month extension given to him earlier. Several commentators have pointed out that the "concurrency" of the relevant State government is required before an officer of its cadre is deputed to the Centre. Also, there must be prior consultation between the Centre and the State for the latter's viewpoint to be overruled. The Central government did not exactly cover itself with glory by violating these

requirements.

Further, action has been initiated against Mr. Bandyopadhyay under Section 51(b) of the Disaster Management Act for failing to comply with the Centre's direction to attend the review meeting taken by the Prime Minister.

This is an absurd interpretation of the provision that is meant to deal with cases of defiance of the lawful orders or action of the competent authorities (handling disaster management) under the Act. Besides, Mr. Bandyopadhyay was with the Chief Minister, his administrative boss. It is obvious that in the performance of his official duties, an All-India service officer, or any officer for that matter, will have to act under the direction of his official superior. Obviously, Mr. Bandyopadhyay listened to his boss; this is what it should be when IAS officers work for a State government or any other government; otherwise, there will be chaos and indiscipline in administration.

It is very unfortunate that for some inexplicable reasons, a mountain has been made of a molehill, as the cliché goes. In these circumstances one misses the sagacity, wisdom and sophistication of some of our tall political leaders who steered the destiny of our nation in the past.

Niranjan Patnaik, a former Minister of the Odisha Government, is presently the President of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Needed, 'tact'

I am a former civil servant, having retired from service in the early 1980s. Let me join the commentary on *'l'affaire Bandyopadhyay'*. There is something called 'tact' on which comments are also recorded in the annual confidential report, or ACR, of government servants. Awkward situations arise, sometimes all of a sudden, which would need 'tactical handling' by those holding positions of responsibility. I believe the Chief Secretary (CS) could have risen to the occasion and prevented the embarrassing fallout, by handling the situation with greater tact. Having said that, it is difficult to believe that Mr. Alapan Bandyopadhyay would have reached the level of CS

without 'tact' being in his armoury. So, what could have happened? Either he was over-exhausted or going through some inexplicable stress or caught in an 'anxiety syndrome' as to how to avoid, at the end of his career, being caught in a crossfire — though eventually finding himself in the thick of it. The CS is nobody's shadow nor is she or he a push-over. The service rules governing her or him are protective and not vindictive. She or he represents the entire permanent Executive of the State as its head. I believe Mr. Bandyopadhyay missed an opportunity to come out with a better score card. And for young civil servants, my word of

advice. Ponder over this and come to your own conclusions.

V.I. RAJAGOPAL,  
Jaipur, Rajasthan

### Exit Congress

The leadership of the Indian National Congress is not serious enough in keeping its flock together (Page 1, "Former Minister Jitin Prasada leaves Congress, joins BJP", June 10). After its electoral debacle in West Bengal and its handling of the second wave of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the Bharatiya Janata Party is definitely on the back foot. Any political party would have used this golden opportunity, worked smartly and turned the tide in its favour. But the Congress party just

seems to continually stamp out the spark of an opportunity. If Rahul Gandhi really aspires to be in a serious figure in politics, he must learn to observe and practise some serious politics. The absence of a strong leadership in the Congress party is apparent. If the same situation continues, by the time the next general election comes, all mainstream leaders would have left the Congress

T. ANAND RAJ,  
Chennai

■ Mr. Prasada's crossover is another sad pointer to the pathetic state of affairs in the Congress. It is bound to affect the fortunes of the party in the crucial State of Uttar Pradesh as the entry of

Mr. Prasada is a shot in the arm for the BJP having faced setbacks in the U.P. local body elections along with facing the discontent of a section of party leaders against the style of functioning of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. For the Congress, a beleaguered party that is yet to recover from the magnitude of electoral defeats in elections of every kind, the exodus of young and committed leaders is another indicator of deep crisis within the organisation. The pathetic slide of the one-time majestic

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: The picture caption accompanying the report titled "Pakke Tiger Reserve's contingency workers go on strike" (some editions, June 10, 2021) erroneously said the Tiger Reserve is in Assam. It should have been Arunachal Pradesh as given in the story.

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Congress can be attributed to its total disconnect with the grassroots and its obstinate obsession to invoke dynastic politics to revive its electoral fortunes. Mr. Prasada's departure should make the party nourish its grass roots, purge itself of power-brokers and sycophants, conduct organisational elections in a free and fair manner, and, above all, to usher in generational change in order to prevent a total disintegration.

B. SURESH KUMAR,  
Coimbatore



# Should retired officials be barred from disclosing information?

PARLEY

The restrictions in place must be based on operational calculations

Last week, the Government of India prohibited retired officials of security and intelligence organisations from publishing anything about their work or organisation without prior clearance from the head of the organisation. Serving civil servants are barred from expressing their personal opinion on policy matters and criticising the government. But once they retire, many of them take part in public debates and enrich our conversations. In a conversation moderated by Varghese K. George, G.K. Pillai and Syed Akbaruddin discuss whether there should be any restrictions on the freedom of expression of a specific category of retired government officials. And if yes, what the limits of such restrictions should be. Edited excerpts:

**Mr. Pillai, do you think the restrictions imposed on retired officials of intelligence and security organisations are justifiable?**

**G.K. Pillai:** We have the Official Secrets Act [of 1923]. Officers of intelligence and security organisations and other departments are privy to a lot of sensitive information. So, all of us in the service take into account the fact that the government needs some control over that information leaking into the public.

The issue is whether it is all information on which there is not yet much clarity or whether it is sensitive information. Who decides what is sensitive and what is not? The government would like to have some control so that existing intelligence security operations are not affected by such leakage of information. But there is this fine balance which has to be struck and we have so far been managing that. Many retired officers who are in these sensitive organisations actually informally get their draft vetted by the current head of the security services, so that there is no information which is of operational nature and could get compromised. The government has now put it down in a formal manner and we have to see how it goes.

**So, you are in favour of some kind of restrictions. The recent announcement makes this**

**restriction lifelong, and the word 'sensitive' is left open to subjective interpretations...**

**GKP:** I would put a time limit – say, five years from the time you retire. It is the operational information which is actually more sensitive. In five years, it won't be of concern in most cases.

**Unlike in the U.S., for instance, books by former intelligence officials are infrequent in India. Given that, how do you see the move, Ambassador?**

**Syed Akbaruddin:** The tradition of understanding history through eyewitness accounts is not new. That tradition, unfortunately, in the past, as far as India is concerned, has been weakened. We gain and the public is better informed of activities, including those taken for the benefit of our own country's interests, when information is shared from different perspectives. And that should be the broad theme.

Increasingly, a large number of people at different levels have returned to the tradition. The former Leader of the Opposition, L.K. Advani, has written an excellent book about his own experiences, for instance. There is always tension between the government's desire to keep information secret on national security grounds and the public's right to information held by public authorities. But there is a near-universal consensus among decision-makers, not only in India but elsewhere too, that some measure of secrecy is necessary to protect authorised national security activities such as intelligence gathering, military operations, sometimes confidentiality of deliberations and sometimes personal privacy.

**So, in a democracy, the public has a right to know. Questions related to national security are considered holy. We have ongoing debates on how best we can ensure democratic accountability of security agencies. Is our problem one of too much of information being in the public domain or too little transparency in the functioning of our national**



THE HINDU ARCHIVES

security apparatus?

**GKP:** One way in which information is actually given to the public is through the declassification of files. In the U.S., at the end of 30 years, after a rigorous examination, they declassify most files and make them available in the public domain. In India, we don't declassify information enough. For example, the Henderson Brooks report on the 1962 conflict with China. It's been more than 60 years and I really don't think there's anything in that report which we should be worried about now. Copies of it are on the Internet. So, why are we keeping it a secret? Similarly, as Home Secretary, I had suggested that we declassify the Justice Mukherjee report on Subhas Chandra Bose and send it to the National Archives.

**In democracies like the U.S., there is a challenge that the public will have no way of verifying independently what security agencies put out as information. There is a strong case for increasing transparency, but the direction that democracies in general are taking is the opposite – they want to be in control of more and more information.**

**SA:** Reconciling these divergent interests of national security and the right of the public to know is an ongoing challenge. A stable security policy is always hard to achieve since the boundaries of official secrecy cannot be clearly articulated. And national security issues keep evolving, sometimes dramatically. So, you will always have an unsatisfactory situation regarding this.

That said, I will go back to where Mr. Pillai mentioned declassifica-

**In India, we are sometimes less than forthcoming about declassification. We also over-classify things which perhaps need not have been classified at all.**

SYED AKBARUDDIN

tion. Now, declassification is an important tool in raising public awareness after a specified period. In our case, there are two issues. One is that we are sometimes less than forthcoming about declassification. We also over-classify things which perhaps need not have been classified at all. For example, five years ago or maybe less than that, we contested many elections in the UN and one was a very tough election. At that time, we sent some messages, cables, etc. All of that was classified then. But today, everybody knows what happened, the success was ours. Do we still need to keep that classified?

Coming to the issue of democracies. Now, we need to understand that we don't want an explosion of deep throats. If you block all avenues of information, or gradually reduce them, you will have to resort to deep throat-kind of activities, which is not good for any society. So, the U.S. itself moved long beyond deep throat. But I think after 9/11, there have been concerns about national security. That's why a lot of issues relating to national security are being tightened up. So, the phenomenon of non-disclosure of information can be traced back to almost two decades ago. Once you are in that space, it is difficult to roll back because that's the nature of the beast – that once there is a status quo, you find it difficult to pull back. So, until those are addressed, I would say that this individually will not be addressed so easily.

**I think both of you broadly agree that the restrictions that you are favouring must be based on operational calculations. Both of you seem to be okay with the sharing of more information...**

**GKP:** Yeah, I think so. During the 1971 War, every time Pakistan said India was interfering in Bangladesh, we denied it. Once the war was over, a number of books were written on the topic by top Army Commanders, Border Security Force [personnel] and others on how they operated inside Bangladesh. I don't think the Official Secrets Act has been invoked against anybody who has written about that.

**So, we can afford to be much more liberal in terms of declassifying information?**

**GKP:** Declassification is an area where everybody plays safe. I think at least 50% of the top-secret files in the Government of India can be declassified straightaway. Thousands of files were declassified when I was in the Home Ministry, but we still have thousands more which can be declassified. This is not a priority for the department. And that is why I'm also in favour of a time limit.

**Do you think compared to other democracies, India is stricter when it comes to sharing official secrets?**

**SA:** If you look at the tradition of these transparency efforts, the first such effort actually goes back to Europe, and by centuries, when parliaments wanted access to the executive authority. However, it was only towards the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century that this proliferation of what we call the right to information in the Indian context took place globally. There are, I think, 95 to 200 countries today which have these disclosure arrangements in place. They still haven't covered the entire expanse, because there are, of course, caveats to this. But if you see it in the historical context, the availability of information is certainly much more now than it was, say, 25-30 years ago. Whether it is adequate, my answer would be no. Whether it should be expanded – yes. Whether it should be absolute – again, my answer would be no, because no

rights to freedom of expression can be absolute; they will always be restricted in certain contexts. It will be best for all of us if these are clarified from time to time, because these circumstances keep evolving and clarification and enunciation of this is a part of the growth of transparency, whether in India or elsewhere.

**Both of you are custodians of quite a few official and national secrets which you have accumulated through your careers. I assume that both of you will write books soon. How much will you be willing to reveal and what will be your consideration when it comes to how much to tell? How will you balance public interest and the existing regulations and your own intellectual honesty?**

**SA:** Your assumption is not wrong; I am working on something. As a citizen of a free and democratic country, which is based on the free flow of information and the right of the public to be aware about situations, I would start from the premise that as much as is feasible can be revealed without, of course, revealing national secrets or difficult situations. In policy debates, you may have differences of opinion. Those differences can be reflected without indicating where individuals are involved. I would come from the proposition that greater transparency, greater public awareness, and the tradition of eyewitnesses providing factual perspectives of their own should be my pathway.

**P.V. Narasimha Rao once told an interviewer that a lot of secrets will perish with him. How much of the secrets that you know can be shared, Mr. Pillai? More than 50%?**

**GKP:** I think about 80% can be shared. Some 20% can't be shared partly because the people involved are living contemporaries. And especially if they are in the political sphere, you don't want either their opponents or them to take advantage of what you have written. So, those are some of the reservations we have. Insofar as general administration, governance issues, policy, etc. are concerned, I don't think there is much of a problem in trying to put some of those things down. Many IAS officers have done it.



**G.K. Pillai** is former Home Secretary of India



**Syed Akbaruddin** was India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and is now Dean, Kautilya School of Public Policy



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

## Making peace with nature

A decade of protecting and reviving the ecosystem will help India in various ways

ATUL BAGAI & SHOKO NODA

There has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems. The COVID-19 pandemic is a direct result of the degradation of natural areas, species loss, and exploitation. Zoonotic pathogens are more frequently jumping from wildlife to humans, creating public health emergencies. Healthier ecosystems and a healthier respect for the wild spaces of our world will give us a healthier planet and healthier people.

It is time to change how we cultivate our land, use our soils, exploit coastal and marine ecosystems, and manage our forests. The damage has been done over decades and the destruction cannot be reversed overnight. But we need to start somewhere. That's why this World Environment Day, the UN Environment Programme and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization launched the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean.

India must participate actively in this decade of restoration. Ten years of sustained action to protect and revive the country's ecosystems will help India to end poverty by enhancing livelihoods, combat climate change by reviving natural carbon stores, and halt the collapse of biodiversity by rebuilding homes for wildlife. Ecosystem restoration benefits people and nature.

### Path towards restoration

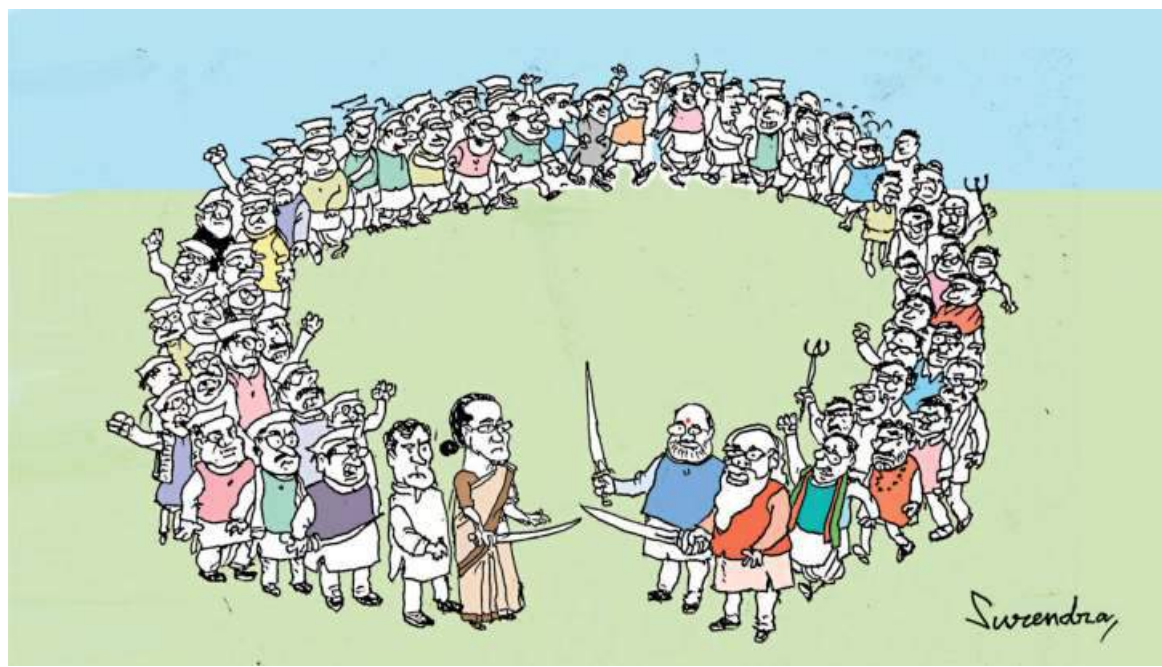
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already set India on this path. In 2019, he announced that India would raise its ambition for restoration, promising an increase in restored degraded land from 21 to 26 million hectares by 2030. There are several steps we can take to build on this commitment. First, there must be a concerted effort to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Climate change is dangerous to humans, but also to the fragile ecosystems that sustain all life on earth. Globally, we must reduce net carbon dioxide emissions by 45% by 2030 compared to 2010. And we must reach net-zero emissions by 2050 to

have a hope of achieving the 1.5°C Paris Agreement target. India needs to work towards this by transforming energy systems, land use, agriculture, forest protection, urban development, infrastructure, and lifestyles. Crucially, this has to be aligned with conserving and restoring biodiversity and minimising air and water pollution and waste. Given the interconnectedness of nature, all problems have to be dealt with simultaneously. We already have the goals, targets, commitments, and mechanisms under international environmental conventions that can direct this ambition. Let us use them.

Second, we need to transform our economic, financial and production systems towards sustainability. Including natural capital in decision-making, eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies, and investing in low-carbon and nature-friendly technologies are key elements of this. By making investments in sustainable development financially attractive, we can shift the financial flows and investment patterns towards sustainability. We already have the knowledge base, the scientific expertise, and the policymaking know-how through national and international scientific bodies that can guide this process. Let us use it.

Finally, the power to revive our environment lies with us as individuals. For a better future, India must work towards creating food systems that work with nature, reduce waste, and are adaptive to change and resilient to shocks. Empowering small-scale farmers and women farmers, changing patterns of consumption and challenging social norms and business practices are key. This can be achieved through capacity building and education. We already have the power to effect change through cooperation and collaboration, and through changing how we consume, travel and use energy. Let us not shirk this responsibility. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres has stated, making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century.

Atul Bagai is Head, UN Environment Programme India and Shoko Noda is UNDP Resident Representative, India



NOTEBOOK

## Learning to take questions

Schools reach out to the media for publicity but are averse to scrutiny of any kind

MEERA SRINIVASAN

As a reporter covering school education for *The Hindu's* Chennai city bureau, my work entailed speaking to teachers and school heads – of both public and private institutions – regularly. Some of them have given me crucial tips-offs about policy changes, and shared valuable insights on trends that only they, as practitioners, would understand.

Many of these schools, especially those privately run, consider themselves 'top brands' in education. They believe every event held on their premises – be it the annual day, sports day, science project, literary club inauguration, or some Rotaract club activity – is worthy of publicity. In their view, some coverage, any coverage, is justified for their effort and "innovativeness". "Even a few lines would be an encouragement for our children," the

charismatic school principals would say.

All the same, these schools proved thin-skinned when their institutions were in the news for the wrong reasons. Some of the reactions following the recent, troubling allegations of sexual harassment in city schools reminded me of that aversion to any scrutiny or criticism. Responses from the school managements and many alumni reflected a staunch belief that their school could not err. Past pupils' loyalty to their alma mater seemed to trump reason.

It took me back to two important stories from a decade ago, whose coverage invoked similar reactions at the time. One was a swimming pool accident in 2012 at a famous city school, in which a nine-year-old boy tragically drowned. A subsequent police case meant the issue, while taking its legal course, received wide cov-

erage, and rightly put the spotlight on children's safety in schools – a concern that is never redundant.

Another story I covered was in 2011, two years after the historic Right to Education Act was passed. One of its clauses mandated that private schools reserve 25% of their seats to children from weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighbourhood, and provide them free and compulsory elementary education, for which the government would bear the cost.

Some schools reacted in telling ways – from terming the rules "very damaging to the class and the entire school", to asking parents to protest against the Act through letters that said: "Your child's quality of education will suffer seriously as the teachers will have a very difficult time managing and educating a few children who are not qualified for the particular

class or who are very difficult to manage."

The institutions barely hid their class bias. Their pride and brand consciousness outweighed everything else, including any sensitivity to the Act's thrust on fairness or social justice. A few school heads even casually threw in the "I'll speak to your editor" line when we sought a reaction. Clearly, they did not appreciate the media asking them questions.

As far as our reporting requirement goes, we need to establish the facts, give the context, with the perspective of those affected, as well as the reaction of the said schools to the concerns raised. But invariably, these private schools suggested that they were beyond public scrutiny. If critical thinking and a spirit of inquiry is at the heart of education, it is ironic that schools are so averse to questions, let alone the slightest introspection.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 11, 1971

## Crisis in Japan over Constitution

Tokyo, June 10: A political crisis is developing in Japan over Article 9 of the Constitution, under which the nation renounces war forever. While the Japanese Government slowly and cautiously reviews the country's Constitution – in contrast to the current constitutional convention fever in the Philippines – a strong rightist bloc, headed by the former Prime Minister, Mr. Nobusuke Kishi, is seeking to legalise a five-year plan to expand Japan's "self-defence" forces by doing away with Article 9 completely. Japan's forces now total 1,80,000 men. Despite the large support which Mr. Kishi has in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (L.D.P.), the government is reluctant to provoke parliamentary opposition and Japan's largely pacifist public opinion into a repetition of the anti-war frenzy which overwhelmed the country in 1950 when the Japan-U.S. mutual security treaty was signed. A Constitutional Review Council, under Mr. Osamu Inaba, is quietly working out a consensus between the Kishi partisans – numbering 264 out of the 540 L.D.P. – and the anti-revisionists within the party who are reluctant to rock the ship of state at this particular time.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 11, 1921

## Failure of European Civilisation

From an Editorial

It may seem somewhat paradoxical to the ordinary mind to speak of European civilisation as a failure at the present day. To all obvious appearances and material purposes it is the European races that now hold sway over the major part of the world. And judging from the pride and enthusiasm with which European institutions, ideals and habits of life are being adopted as the high water mark of refinement and progress by non-European peoples all the world over, one would rather be expected to pronounce a verdict of unqualified success upon the civilisation which is embodied in them. But such an estimate can never be sound so long as we do not mistake aggressive power and splendour for real greatness and success. A civilisation is to be judged not merely by its vigour and extension in a particular period of human history. The phenomenon of its growth and volume, however stupendous and surprising, may be the result of circumstances peculiar to that epoch of history and may change with the change of these favourable conditions.



FROM PAGE ONE

## Bihar in fudging row as toll jumps by 72% after recount

In May last, a division bench of the Patna High Court slammed the government and expressed concern over inconsistencies in the death toll in Buxar district presented by two top government officials in two separate affidavits. It asked the government to verify all facts before putting them on record. "All facts must be verified from all sources and

then only be placed before us, else it will amount to filing of false or incomplete affidavit," the court of Chief Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice S. Kumar told the government.

Bihar, till June 9, registered 7,353 active cases with a total of 7,15,179 positive cases. The death toll, so far, has been reported to be 9,429.

## Promote second-rung leadership in Punjab: AICC

Sources said the report of three-member panel, comprising Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, AICC general secretary (Punjab) Harish Rawat and Congress leader J.P. Aggarwal, also suggested a complete revamp of the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) along with the various committees, including the election-related committees.

Among the 20-odd recommendations, one was related to the setting up of a panel of Ministers and party leaders to regularly monitor the response/action on the requests made by party MLAs about various developmental work in their constituencies. This is in the backdrop of several MLAs complaining about lack of access to the Chief Minister.

The AICC panel is also learnt to have suggested welfare schemes for targeted groups like farmers and Scheduled Castes. The panel had met party leaders from Punjab, including Mr Sidhu, and the Punjab Chief Minister in Delhi last week.

While Mr. Sidhu claimed to have told "the loud truth"



Sonia Gandhi

about Punjab to the high command, the Chief Minister had countered him with a strong defence of his government and shared details of the work done to fulfil poll promises.

Speaking on organisational changes, the Chief Minister had argued that a Jat Sikh cannot be heading the PCC since the State government was already being headed by one. To ensure that the Hindu community doesn't move away from the party, Capt. Amarinder had batted for a PCC chief from the community.

On the issue of Mr. Sidhu being a contender for the Deputy Chief Minister, the Chief Minister is learnt to have argued there should be more than one, and at least one should be from the Dalit community.

## Yediyurappa will remain CM: Arun Singh

Dissident activity against Mr. Yediyurappa had shot up in the last month or so, with State Minister C.P. Yogeshwar visiting Delhi with his issues with regard to the Chief Minister. He got a lukewarm response and made public statements expressing his dissatisfaction with the CM. In Bengaluru, Mr. Yediyurappa's loyalists decided to start a signature campaign by MLAs who supported the CM, which was then halted at his behest. In all this, Mr. Yediyurappa's son, State unit vice president B.Y. Vijayendra visited Delhi and met with party chief J.P. Nadda. A pet

grouse of dissidents against Mr. Yediyurappa has been the prominence being given to Mr. Vijayendra.

Mr. Singh, however, kept his remarks to dissident MLAs, urging them not to voice their opinions on the internal affairs of the party on a public forum, and to discuss it within appropriate quarters in the party. "I will be visiting Bengaluru soon and will meet with MLAs and party leaders. I will speak to them on all these issues," he said.

As of now, it seems the storm clouds brewing over Mr. Yediyurappa have dissipated.

## Refused entry, MP moves against Lakshadweep Administrator

Binoj Viswam has filed a privilege motion against Pratul Patel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

CPI MP Binoj Viswam has filed a breach of privilege motion against the Lakshadweep Administrator Pratul K. Patel for denying him permission to visit the islands, preventing him from meeting his cadre and people of the island amidst growing resentment about the policies of the new administrator.

In his letter to the Rajya Sabha secretary general, Mr. Viswam said he had informed the Lakshadweep administration regarding his proposed visit on May 26, assuring them that he would abide by the COVID proto-



LDF members holding a protest outside the Lakshadweep Administration office in Kochi. ■ H. VIBHU

col. Mr. Viswam said it took five days for the administration to revert. Following which the Additional District Magistrate of Kavaratti replied that due to the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Viswam should postpone his visit.

"It is pertinent to note that since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the islands of Lakshadweep had

been able to keep the virus out in 2020. However, post the appointment of the current administration certain quarantining guidelines were relaxed as a result of which the UT has seen over 4,000 cases, with over 20 deaths already," Mr. Viswam said in his letter.

He said it is "undemocratic" and "abuse of power" on part of the administration to

use the pandemic as an excuse to prevent elected representatives from visiting the island. Earlier a delegation of the CPI (M) were also denied permission for a visit.

"The Right of a parliamentarian to move freely and meet with the people is integral to the privilege of their position itself," Mr. Viswam said.

Since Mr. Patel's appointment, Mr. Viswam said, the administration has passed a number of directions that encroach on personal liberty, disrupting economic activity and snatching away the livelihood of the people.

"It is unacceptable for a governing authority to have such blatant disregard for the people under its jurisdiction and continue to perpetuate decisions that cause great harm to them," he added.

## Karnataka eases curbs in districts with fewer cases

Kerala test positivity steady at over 13%; A.P. records 8.29%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Karnataka on Thursday extended lockdown restrictions in 11 districts with high positivity rates, but modified curbs in other districts, including Bengaluru Urban, from June 14 to 21.

The COVID-19 night curfew would be in place from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. in all districts. The weekend curfew will also come into effect from 7 p.m. on Friday to 5 a.m. on Monday in all districts.

Current restrictions will continue till 6 a.m. on June 21 in 11 districts - Chikmagalur, Shivamogga, Davanagere, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Bengaluru Rural, Mandya, Belagavi, and Kodagu - Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa announced after a high-level meeting with Ministers and officials.

Based on the Technical Advisory Committee's suggestions, lockdown restrictions were relaxed in 20 districts. Shops delivering essentials such as food, medicine, milk, fruits and vegetables could open from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. All street vendors will be allowed from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Kerala on Thursday reported 14,424 new cases of COVID-19 from 1,07,250 tests. The test positivity rate



Vaccinated residents under observation at a government school in Hyderabad on Thursday. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

(TPR) was steady at around 14-15% with no significant reduction in two weeks. On Thursday, the TPR was 13.45%. Active cases declined to 1,35,298. Cumulative fatalities were 10,631, with the State adding 194 deaths from the past few days.

The cumulative case burden was 26,88,590.

Among districts, Thiruvananthapuram reported the highest new cases with 2,030, Kollam 1,605, Malappuram 1,597, Ernakulam 1,596, Thrissur 1,359, Palakkad 1,312, Kozhikode 1,008, Alappuzha 848, Kannur 750, Idukki 673, Kottayam 580, Kasaragod 443, Pathanamthitta 429 and Wayanad 194.

A.P. added 11,763 cases and the cumulative tally was 17,87,883. The number of active cases dropped to below one lakh for the first time in 44 days.

The daily TPR of 97,863 samples was 8.29%.

Chittoor again reported the highest toll of 11 deaths

in the past day. East Godavari had the highest daily tally of 1,416 infections.

Active cases in Telangana rose to 23,561, with 1,798 new additions from 1,30,430 tests on Thursday. There were also 14 more deaths.

Khammam and Nalgonda districts, apart from Hyderabad and its surroundings showed a high number of cases. There was a decline in the numbers in other places across Telangana.

Tamil Nadu's active case load dropped below two lakh after nearly a month on Thursday. As many as 1,88,664 people are presently under treatment. Across the State, 16,813 people tested positive for COVID-19 and 358 succumbed to the infection. With this, the State's tally surpassed 23 lakh - 23,08,838 people have tested positive for COVID-19 so far. The toll rose to 28,528.

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayawada, Hyderabad and Chennai bureaus)

## When CM's son can enter temple, why ban others, asks HC

'Submit probe report on Vijayendra'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

After noticing that B.Y. Vijayendra, son of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, has announced to enter Sri Nanjundeswara temple in Nanjangud recently, the Karnataka High Court on Thursday asked the State government why then even ordinary citizens are not allowed to enter temples like him despite a ban imposed in view of COVID-19 lockdown.

The court noted that Mr. Vijayendra, in his response to the May 27 notice issued by the Mysuru district Deputy Commissioner, had admitted to entering the temple around 8.30 a.m. on May 18.

As details of the preliminary inquiry made by the Deputy Commissioner were not submitted before the court, a Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice Suraj Govindaraj directed the government to submit the report of the Deputy Commissioner along with all documents.

As Advocate-General Prabhuling K. Navdgi pointed out to the court that a photograph of Mr. Vijayendra performing religious rituals inside a temple submitted before the court on behalf of a petitioner was

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHI

The Lakshadweep administration on Thursday assured a Division Bench of the Kerala High Court that necessary steps would be taken to ensure that there was no shortfall in the supply of food kits and other necessary provisions to islanders during the lockdown period.

The undertaking was given by counsel for the Lakshadweep Collector when a public interest litigation petition alleging starvation on the islands came up for hearing before a Bench comprising Justices Anil K. Narendran and Ziyad Rahman A.A.

The court also directed the Collector to file a statement regarding the measures already taken and proposed additional measures, if any, to ensure adequate

and sufficient supply of rice and other provisions to the islanders either free of cost or on a payment basis.

Central schemes

S. Manu, counsel for the Lakshadweep Administrator, submitted that there had been no starvation in the islands as sufficient quantities of food were being distributed to islanders under Central schemes.

He submitted that ration articles were being distributed to the islanders through 39 ration shops. Every 1.5 km on the islands had a ration shop. In fact, free rice of 5 kg per person was being distributed under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana through the public distribution system.

He said there was sufficient stock of food on all the islands to last up to October.

IN BRIEF



'My priority is to restructure the party'

KOZHIKODE

The newly appointed Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president K. Sudhakaran on Thursday said, "My priority is to restructure the party on a semi-cadre line. The KPCC and District Congress Committees will be overhauled. Jumbo panels will be done away with. Only the best will be retained on the committees.

Project to ensure connectivity for students

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A time-bound project will be drawn up to ensure Internet connectivity across the State to facilitate online education for all students, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said. A committee, with the Information Technology Principal Secretary as convener, will prepare an action plan within four days, he said.

'A.P. stands fifth in conducting COVID tests'

VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday informed the Andhra Pradesh High Court that it stood 5th in the country in the COVID-19 tests conducted per million population, with the number surpassing two crore. In a memo submitted to the court, in response to a PIL filed by the AP Civil Liberties Association, the government also claimed to have conducted the highest number of RT-PCR tests.

## Probe begins into illegal tree felling on assigned land in Kerala

STAFF REPORTER  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Forest Department has instituted a State-wide probe into the allegations of illegal felling of trees on assigned land in Kerala.

The move comes against the backdrop of the department unearthing instances of unauthorised logging in Wayanad.

Forest Minister A.K. Saseendran had announced the government's decision to order a probe into the controversy in the Assembly two days ago.



A. K. Saseendran

Special investigation teams led by Divisional Forest Officers (DFO) in charge

of flying squad divisions (FSD) have been constituted to examine cases of felling of reserved trees in land assigned under the Kerala Land Assignment Rules, 1964.

Formed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Vigilance and Forest Intelligence) Ganga Singh, they will verify documents, including declarations, passes and no-objection certificates (NOCs) issued for felling and transporting trees from such 'patta' land from May 11 last onwards.

STAFF REPORTER  
PALAKKAD

The Palakkad district police on Wednesday lifted the lid on a love story in which a man secretly lived with his partner, belonging to another community, in a tiny room at his family house at Ayiloor, near Nemmara, without letting anyone know about it for 11 years.

Rahman, 34, son of Mohammed Khani, feared a backlash when he ran away with a woman living a few blocks away from his house on February 2, 2010. He co-

vertly brought her to his house at Ayiloor and hid her in his room without giving any hint to his family.

They lived in a small room with few amenities for 11 years. He would lock the room whenever he went out, and never let any of his family members enter it. By removing the grill, he converted his room's window into a secret exit that they used for her to get out at night to relieve herself.

Mr. Rahman would bring food and other essentials -

all in tight secrecy. He even set up a mechanism which would give electric shocks if the room's door handle was touched, to deter his family from entering. He was able to keep his father, mother and sister, who lived with him in the small house, unaware of his actions for 11 years.

The police questioned many people as part of an investigation following the woman's disappearance in 2010. Mr. Rahman, too, was among those ques-

tioned. As he continued to live in the same village, none suspected him for the woman's disappearance.

Man missing case

In March this year, Mr. Rahman left his house and the family filed a man missing case.

The secret relationship came to light when the police found Mr. Rahman at Nemmara town on Wednesday.

He reportedly told the police that he had shifted to a rented house in the neigh-

bouring Vithanassery village three months ago with his partner.

Although the police refused to believe the story, they were convinced when they visited Mr. Rahman's house at Ayiloor. The police examined the room in which the couple lived for 11 years in secret.

The police produced the couple in a court, which permitted them to live together. The partners returned to their rented home at Vithanassery, glad to be free to live a normal life in the open.

## Webinar to explore management education

STAFF REPORTER  
CHENNAI

A webinar on 'How digital technology is changing the curriculum of management education' will be held on June 13 at 11 a.m. as part of the SRM Virtual Conclave for Career Guidance 2021 webinar series.

Organised by the SRM Institute of Science and Tech-



nology (SRMIST), in association with The Hindu Group, the webinar series spotlights science, engineering, technology, law, humanities,

medical health sciences, management studies and agriculture courses and their relevance to the 2020s workplace.

Dr. V.M. Ponniah, Dean, College of Management, SRMIST; Rupesh Bisht, CEO, Masters Union; and Jasjeet Kaur, Executive Director, Imarticus Learning, will speak at the webinar.

The session will be moderated by Yashasvini Rajeshwar, Founder and CEO, AuxoHub. The webinar will conclude with a Q&A session with the speakers. To register for the free session, visit bit.ly/SRMTHE15 or scan the QR Code.



## Actor's appeal nets over ₹1 crore for Karnataka zoos

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MYSURU

Donations and adoption of animals have been continuing across nine zoos in Karnataka after actor Darshan Thoogudeepa's recent appeal to his fans and the public to support the crisis-hit zoos whose mainte-

nance largely depends on gate collections. After the actor's video appeal on June 5 went viral, the zoos have received ₹1,00,47,900 until June 10.

Most people made donations or adopted animals using 'Zoos of Karnataka' app launched by the Zoo Authority of Karnataka.



APPEAL

9 years old Yogisairam needs your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. He suffers from Relapsed Acute Myeloid Leukemia and requires Rs. 20,00,000/- towards Haploidentical Bone Marrow Transplantation at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Donations sent by Ch / D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through CH / D.D. / NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No: 60182010063310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT. Please give us your E-mail ID. All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No. 13, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28253224 / 733978027. E-mail ID: womenswelfare syndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfare syndicate.org WWS



## 'Student visa appointments from June 14'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. will open July-August student visa appointments in all consular offices in India from June 14, the Embassy said on Thursday. The announcement marks the beginning of academic exchanges in the backdrop of the pandemic.

The Embassy has also begun to hold online exchanges with students on the "current operating status and visa processing at the consular sections". U.S. universities are opening up following widespread vaccination drives conducted by the Biden-Harris administration. A large number of Indian students in U.S. campuses were forced to return home and resort to online academic experiences after COVID-19 broke out last year.

The announcement was in contrast with the Chinese decision to prevent the arrival of foreign students. The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said India was in touch with the Chinese side "to seek an early resumption of travel by Indian citizens to China, especially for those who work or study there". According to a new rule of the Indian government, students and professionals going abroad would have to get their CoWIN vaccination certificates linked to their passport.

## 'ESI cover for contractual workers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Casual and contractual employees of municipal corporations will be covered under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Act, 1948, Union Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar said on Thursday.

## Adopt population control: Sarma urges minorities

'Govt. will educate women on issue'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has advised the minority community to adopt decent population control measures to reduce poverty and pressure on land.

Reacting to criticisms of his government's drive to free State-owned land from encroachment, the Chief Minister said the illegal occupation of land belonging to temples, *satras* (monasteries) and forests cannot be allowed.

Most of those evicted were Bengali-speaking Muslims.

"Members of the community have assured us that they do not want encroachment on these lands," Dr. Sarma told presspersons on

# MEA hints at talks with Taliban

'In touch with various stakeholders'

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

India is in contact with "various stakeholders" in Afghanistan, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in response to specific questions about whether the government has opened direct talks with the Taliban.

While the MEA did not confirm the talks, which would represent a major shift for Indian policy, it did not deny recent reports that indicated that Indian security officials have exchanged messages with several "nationalist" Taliban factions, including Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a member of the Rehbari Shura, or the leadership council, which includes the Pakistan-based Taliban accused of terrorism.

"We are in touch with various stakeholders in pursuance of our long-term



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Qatar National Security Adviser Mohamed Bin Ahmed Al Mesned. • PTI

commitment towards development and reconstruction of Afghanistan," said MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi while speaking to presspersons on Thursday, where he referred to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's participation at the inaugural ceremony of the Intra-Afghan talks with Taliban leaders in Doha last year.

Significantly, Mr. Jaishankar held a meeting with Qatar National Security Adviser Mohamed Bin Ahmed Al Mesned on Thursday during a transit stop in Doha bet-

ween his visits to Kuwait and Kenya, where he said he had discussed "developments in the region and beyond". The MEA declined to respond to a question on whether the recent developments in the Afghanistan talks came up during the conversation.

The talks appear to have run into trouble both in Doha, where the Taliban's official headquarters are based, and in Istanbul, where a U.S.-backed process for talks with the Taliban have been delayed for more than two months.

So far, India has refused to open a direct dialogue with the Taliban leadership.

However, according to experts, India has reconsidered its position in the aftermath of the U.S. announcement that it would pull out all its troops by September this year.

"The clarity over the U.S. decision to pull out, which could be as early as next month, has added to the sense of urgency for Delhi to make these direct contacts," said Avinash Paliwal, an associate professor of international relations at SOAS in the U.K. and an author, who had confirmed the Indian outreach in a column earlier this week.

An official, who asked not to be named, said India's engagement with groups in Afghanistan was driven by a desire to "limit damage" to its security interests as a result of the U.S.'s decision to leave and the Taliban gaining military strength in several key provinces.

## EC has vast powers to act against criminalisation of politics: experts

Ex-CEC cautions against it entering political process

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI

Legal and political experts on Thursday said the Election Commission could do more to stop the criminalisation of politics, during a discussion on the implementation of the Supreme Court's February 2020 directions to political parties on publicising criminal antecedents of candidates.

Retired Supreme Court judge Madan B. Lokur said during the webinar organised by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) that with the assumption that political parties would not cooperate, the EC and the judiciary would have to play their parts. He said the EC had "vast powers", including under Article 324 of the Con-



Madan B. Lokur

stitution.

"All kinds of things are possible if the EC applies its mind to it. It has the power to say that persons accused of crimes cannot stand for elections," Justice Lokur said. He said it was his guess that the EC had not brought it to the Supreme Court's notice that parties had not complied with the order. He added that the role of the judiciary was also important as cases remain pending for years.

Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, an All India Trinamool Congress MP, said he carried the "stigma" of having a pending case since 2010. He said the EC should issue show-cause notices to parties if it finds the reasons they give for selecting a candidate with criminal antecedents "not in consonance with the intent or purport" of the SC's order.

Former Chief Election Commission O.P. Rawat, however, said he did not agree with the suggestion that the EC should use its plenary power. Citing the SC, he said the EC had "no locus standi to enter the political process per se". He said the investigation and trial of cases should be expedited and there should be an effort to disseminate information to voters.

## Chinese man held at West Bengal border

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

A Chinese national was on Thursday apprehended by the Border Security Force (BSF) at Malda in West Bengal. The South Bengal Frontier of the BSF, in a press statement, said Han Junwe, 36, was arrested when he was illegally trying to cross into India from the Indo-Bangladesh international boundary.

"From interrogation and recovered passport, it was learnt that he reached Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 02 June 2021 on a business visa and stayed there with a Chinese friend. On June 08, 2021, he came to Sona Masjid, District-Chapainawabganj [Bangladesh] and stayed in a hotel there before sneaking into India on June 10," the statement said.

# Probe sought into Choksi's abduction to Dominica

U.K. organisation lodges a complaint with Scotland Yard

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A United Kingdom-based legal help organisation has lodged a complaint with the Scotland Yard's War Crimes unit, seeking an investigation into the role of some British soldiers in the alleged abduction of Mehul Choksi from Antigua to Dominica.

The organisation, Justice Abroad, is headed by lawyer Michael Polak. At an online press conference on Thursday, he said: "The rule of law is a very important principle across the Commonwealth. People need to know that when they are in Commonwealth countries like Antigua and Dominica, they won't be kidnapped and taken away from places from where they have outstanding legal matters."

With regard to Christian Michel, who is in judicial custody in Tihar Jail in connection with the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal case, Mr. Polak said it was a worrying case and that a United Nations panel had already



Legal recourse: Mehul Choksi being helped into a wheelchair by the police in Dominica last week. • AP

made pronouncements about it.

Choksi's lawyers have alleged that he was abducted and physically tortured in Antigua on May 23 after being lured by one Barbara Jabarika, a Hungarian national and U.K. resident, to her house. She has denied her involvement.

It has been alleged that Choksi was overpowered at Ms. Jabarika's house by about half-a-dozen men, taken to a small boat and then shifted to a larger one to be transported to Dominica, where the authorities knew about his identity. However,

he was not given access to legal counsel for three days.

Choksi's bail application and a *habeas corpus* petition filed by his lawyers are pending in the Dominica High Court. In Antigua, he had the right to approach the Queens Privy Council in case he did not get any reprieve from lower courts.

Meanwhile, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said: "Regarding Mehul Choksi, no particular update. He continues to remain in custody of Dominican authorities where certain legal proceedings are under way."

## Is the Congress' 'Team Rahul' strategy a failure?

Prasada's exit now raises question

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Has the Congress' experiment of creating a generation of young leaders that came to be identified as "Team Rahul" completely failed? With Jitin Prasada following Jyotiraditya Scindia in joining the BJP, such questions are being asked in the Congress, especially among veterans.

In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, while taking on the incumbent BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, the Congress fielded many youngsters to coincide with Mr. Gandhi's debut as a Lok



Rahul Gandhi

have left after his own assessment of the Congress faring poorly in the Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh next year. Mr. Prasada has not won an election since 2009 - he lost the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls as well as the 2017 U.P. Assembly election - and his recent outing as the All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of West Bengal had resulted in a disaster as the party drew a blank.

His much publicised exit adds to the sense of drift that exists in the Congress.

The party is firefighting in Punjab, as the rivalry between Mr. Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu has peaked ahead of the Assembly election next year. Factionalism has resurfaced in Rajasthan, with Mr. Pilot and his supporters expressing dissatisfaction, while the leadership is yet to work out a workable compromise with the group of 23 dissenters (G23). Finally, the question of leadership still remains open. "The problem is at the top. The arrangement of power-sharing between the Congress president and Mr. Gandhi with no responsibility won't work any more," said a G23 member.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

Sabha member from Amethi. Apart from Mr. Prasada and Mr. Scindia, Sachin Pilot, Sandeep Dikshit, Milind Deora, Madhu Yaski Goud, Deepender Hooda, Manish Tewari and R.P.N. Singh were all given tickets. While Mr. Tewari and Mr. Singh lost the elections, they were part of the Congress' young Turks even before they became Lok Sabha members in 2009.

The idea was to replicate Indira Gandhi's 1980 Lok Sabha election strategy to build a team around Sanjay Gandhi that threw up leaders like Kamal Nath and Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh. But 16 years later, several young Turks, now in their late 40s and 50s, are either "disillusioned" or have chosen to cross over to the ruling party.

Mr. Prasada is said to

## Programme helps women hone business skills

WEDP has enabled women in Rajasthan take up start-up projects and make profit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

A series of women's entrepreneurship development programmes (WEDP) launched by a Jaipur-based research institution has helped a number of women in Rajasthan overcome barriers to business creation and self-employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidance has enabled them to take up start-up projects with profitable outcomes.

Most of the WEDPs were designed in a manner to train potential women entrepreneurs and were run in a hybrid mode to provide blended learning opportunities. Women were exposed to business theories and practices



Madhu Raturi at 'Sevaartha' home healthcare unit in Jaipur. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

in several sectors, touching upon aspects such as developing business models, financial and operational planning, market research and funding sources.

The Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) at Indian

Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) here has conducted the programmes. CIE chairperson Sheenu Jain said here on Thursday that several nascent start-ups in the State had commenced the work on a small scale and the women running them had honed up their entrepreneurial skills.

Medical professional Madhu Raturi, 67, who attended a WEDP, has started a home healthcare model, *Sevaartha*, along with her son for providing nursing care to patients needing home service. The venture has benefited those isolated at home in the pandemic. Dr. Raturi's institution is currently developing it as a model that could

provide employment to educated girls from rural areas.

Neha Khandelwal, who makes handcrafted paper products, has given a formal shape to her start-up with the title 'Innovative Papers' while looking for new opportunities in social media marketing. She said learning from the programme had helped her get more traction for her business.

"As a feminine phenomenon, the WEDPs have given wings to women's ideas and speeded up their start-up journey. The potential entrepreneurs have received an impetus to curate the models which will fill the gaps existing in various sectors during the pandemic," Dr. Jain said.

## Playschools seek loan moratorium

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Many playschools, creches and daycare centres have collectively moved the Supreme Court for help, saying the online mode of functioning does not work for them and they are in financial distress.

The Indian Council of Early Childhood Educators and Institutions, represented by advocate Rohit Pandey, has asked the court to intervene on its behalf with the government to provide financial succour through fresh loan moratorium and a temporary pause in the declaration of non-performing assets by banks.

**MATSYAFED**  
RE - E - TENDER NOTICE

Medi/Mktg/M1/5531/2021-22 03/06/2021  
Matsyafed invites online bids in two bid system (Technical & Financial) for the supply of Nylon Multifilament Webbing, PVC Fishing Float, Plastic Fishing Float, HDPE Woven sacks, Plastic Crates, Insulated Boxes & Nylon Monofilament Twine to the net factories and OBM Division.

Last date of submission of e-bid at 16/06/2021. The Date of opening of e-bid is on 21/06/2020. For details visit: <http://tenders.kerala.gov.in>. Further clarifications / Corrigendum in this regard will only be put up on [www.matsyafed.in](http://www.matsyafed.in)

Sd/- Managing Director

KERALA STATE CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION FOR FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT LIMITED (MATSYAFED) KAMALESWARAM, MANACAUD P.O. THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695009. Phone: 0471-2458606, 2457756, 2457172 Website: [www.matsyafed.in](http://www.matsyafed.in) Email: [matsyafed@matsyafed.in](mailto:matsyafed@matsyafed.in)

File No. T-15/11/Jan/19/1925763/CON  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF CULTURE**  
Archaeological Survey of India, Bangalore Circle, Bengaluru

**E- TENDER NOTICE**

The Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Bangalore Circle, Bengaluru, Karnataka on behalf of President of India, invites following online E-Tender through CPP Portal.

Sl. No.	Name of The work and Tender ID	Quantity	Bid Submission End Date	Tender Amount in Rs.
1.	MW (Cons) to Palace in Fort and Large Masonary Elephant Madikeri, Coorg Tender ID: 2021_ASI_631747_1	As per tender schedule	24.06.2021	23750000.00
2.	MW (Cons) to Palace in Fort and Large Masonary Elephant Madikeri, Coorg Tender ID: 2021_ASI_632495_1	As per tender schedule	25.06.2021	5707500.00
3.	MW (Cons) to Palace in Fort and Large Masonary Elephant Madikeri, Coorg Tender ID: 2021_ASI_633090_1	As per tender schedule	29.06.2021	21266150.00

The Tender documents with detailed terms and conditions may be downloaded from the website (<https://www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>). Manual bid shall not be accepted. In case of any corrigendum /addendum issued on the above advertisement, it will be published on the website mentioned above.

Sd/-  
Superintending Archaeologist /lc





**IN BRIEF**

**Sunita Narain appointed to climate action group**

**NEW DELHI**  
Noted environmentalist Sunita Narain has been appointed to an international advisory group for climate action by Per Olsson Fridh, Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation.

**Rath Yatra in Odisha to be held only in Puri**

**BHUBANESWAR**  
Apprehending that large congregations could trigger spread of infection further, the Odisha government on Thursday said the Rath Yatra (car festival) will be organised only in Puri without devotees. The Rath Yatra is scheduled to be held on July 12.

**Leopard mauls woman to death in Uttarakhand**

**KOTDWAR**  
A 55-year-old woman was mauled to death by a leopard in Uttarakhand's Pauri district on Thursday, officials said. The incident took place in the Chaubattakhal area when the victim, Godambari Devi, was working in a field near her village Dabra, SDM Sandeep Kumar said. PTI

**Bengal issues high tide warning for coastal areas**

**KOLKATA**  
The West Bengal government issued an alert in the coastal areas and evacuated a few thousand people from islands exposed to the Bay of Bengal over fears of fresh inundation due to a high tide on Friday. The embankments breached during cyclone Yaas are yet to be repaired and the weather office has predicted a low-pressure formation likely over northwestern Bay of Bengal, resulting in enhanced rainfall.

# 'Focus on second dose for HCWs, FLWs'

Health Secretary flags low COVID-19 vaccination among priority groups

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

States have been advised to focus on the second dose of COVID-19 vaccination coverage among healthcare and frontline workers.

A release issued by the Union Health Ministry said Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan chaired a high-level meeting on Thursday and informed States and Union Territories of the modifications in Co-WIN platform, aimed at making it more effective as a back-end management tool for the countrywide vaccination drive.

"Mr. Bhushan highlighted the low vaccination coverage among Healthcare Workers (HCW) and Frontline Workers (FLW), especially for the second dose for both the priority groups, terming it a cause of serious concern," said the release.

The Ministry said that while the national average for the first dose administration among HCWs was 82%, the national average for second dose among HCWs was only 56%. Punjab, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Assam had a coverage below the national average in this aspect.

For FLWs, the national average of first dose coverage was 85% but that of second dose coverage for FLWs was only 47%, and 19 States and UTs had reported second dose coverage of FLWs less than the national average. Among them were Bihar, Haryana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, Telangana, Karnataka, and Punjab.

"The Secretary highlighted less than adequate private

sector participation in the COVID vaccination drive. As per the revised guidelines, 25% of the vaccine stock can be procured by the private hospitals. Limited presence of private hospitals and their unequal spread were highlighted for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, etc," said the release.

The Ministry also alerted the States to the new features in the Co-WIN portal. Revised features allow rectifications in personal information (Name, YOB, Gender and Photo ID number of the card used) by citizens requesting changes only in any of the two fields out of the four mentioned. These changes are allowed only once.

**E-VIN data**

Meanwhile, the Centre advised the States and UTs to obtain the Health Ministry's permission before sharing E-VIN data related to vaccine stocks and the temperature at which they are stored. This, it said, was to prevent any misuse of data by various agencies for commercial purposes. E-VIN is used by the Ministry for inventory management of vaccines and tracking storage temperature data of vaccines under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).

The Ministry on Thursday said crucial information on vaccine usage trends for multiple vaccines used in the UIP, and temperature-related data, could be used to manipulate the market as well as associated research with respect to various vaccines and cold-chain equipment.



**Hard times:** Children from a slum waiting to receive food being distributed by social organisations during the lockdown in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

# Doctors welcome Ministry's treatment protocol for children

But they urge caution to prevent misinterpretation

**BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI**

Doctors, while welcoming the Union Health Ministry's latest treatment guidelines for COVID-19-management in children, underlined the need to "create awareness to prevent misinterpretation, which could prove counterproductive".

The Directorate-General of Health Services (DGHS), in its guidelines for the management of COVID-19 among children, has said that Remdesivir is not recommended in this population and that it is an emergency-use-authorisation drug. "There is lack of sufficient safety and efficacy data with respect to Remdesivir in children be-

low 18 years of age," the guidelines said. They also call for rational use of HRCT imaging.

"...We welcome DGHS coming out with the all-important guidelines ... However, awareness should be created so that the guideline is not misinterpreted, which would be counterproductive," said Gauri Agarwal, senior gynaecologist at Yashoda Hospitals in Hyderabad.

"DGHS has said children below the age of 5 should not wear a mask. It does not mean that they are not at risk. Moreover, since they'll not be wearing a mask, it means that additional care and precautions need to be taken by their guardians,"

Dr. Agarwal said.

Rahul Nagpal, director, Pediatrics and Neonatology at Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj, welcomed the DGHS guidelines and said they standardised treatment protocol for children. Since the first wave, doctors have been using the protocol by the Indian Academy of Pediatrics, which discouraged unnecessary use of steroids, anti-viral drugs and CT scan in children, he said.

Doctors also said while the guidelines will be useful if there is a rise in the number of children getting infected, hospitals will have to ensure that there is enough standardised infrastructure to cater to this population.

# Assam Cong. MP slams evictions amid pandemic

State govt. has violated rights: Khaleque

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI**

A Congress MP has slammed the "two-faced" drive by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government to make Assam encroachment-free. He also asked the Gauhati High Court to take note of the eviction drive that violates human rights amid the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Abdul Khaleque, who represents western Assam's Bapeta constituency in the Lok Sabha, said the State government's move to evict thousands of settlers from more than 77,000 bighas of State-owned land was "two-faced".

This was in reference to 2.28 lakh periodic *pattas* (land deeds) and allotment certificates distributed among landless people belonging to the indigenous communities on more than 2.09 lakh bighas of government land during the tenure of previous Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

Local authorities and police have over a week freed more than 400 bighas of government land of encroachers in Hojai, Karimganj and Darrang districts. More than 200 houses, mostly belonging to migrant Muslims, were uprooted.

**Question of timing**

"At a dire time of COVID-19 crisis, the government's eviction in Sonitpur and Hojai is a violation of Articles 21 and 39 of the Indian Constitution. Encroachers should be evicted but not at a time of crisis," Mr. Khaleque said, adding that the government should have served notices to the settlers and provided them with dwellings elsewhere.



Cong. MP Abdul Khaleque

In an appeal to the Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court on June 7, the MP cited the court's May 10 pandemic-related order that said: "It is also made clear that any decree for eviction/dispossession or demolition which was passed by any court, tribunal or authority during this period, shall remain in abeyance subject to any specific orders which may be passed in a given case."

**AAMSU criticism**

The All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU) has also criticised the eviction drive.

"The State government has violated the High Court's order that clearly states there would be no eviction drive during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Assam government should stop harassing the minority people under communal agenda," the AAMSU said.

The Assam Cabinet under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had on June 8 formed a committee for properly utilising the 77,000 bighas of land freed from encroachers. The committee is headed by BJP legislator Padma Hazarika.

# 11 killed, seven injured in building collapse in Mumbai

Four-storey structure fell on adjacent building

**STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI**

As many as 11 people, including eight children, were killed and seven others injured after a portion of a four-storey residential structure collapsed on an adjacent two-storey structure in western Mumbai late on Wednesday.

The incident was reported from the Malvani slum at Malad following incessant rains throughout the day. The State government has announced an ex-gratia of ₹5 lakh to the kin of the deceased.

According to civic officials, the building had serious structural faults and was further damaged during



**Big tragedy:** Distressed residents after a building collapsed in Mumbai's Malad area on Thursday. • AP

cyclone Tauktae, after which some more changes were made to it. The collapse has affected the adjacent residential structures as well, leading to the civic body evacuating them.

Mumbai mayor Kishori Pednekar said, "When the building is declared under C category, the occupants must be moved out immediately. Culprits must take

the responsibility." Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, along with Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal and Environment minister Aaditya Thackeray, visited the injured at the Shatabdi hospital in Kandivali.

The police registered a case under Section 304 (2) of the IPC against the owner of the building.

# HC no to stay on film based on Sushant's life

'Posthumous privacy not permissible'

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI**

The Delhi High Court on Thursday refused to stay the release of a film based on Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's life, noting that the information of events around the actor's death was already in the public domain and "posthumous privacy right is not permissible".

The High Court's direction came on a plea moved by the late actor's father, Krishna Kishore Singh, seeking to restrain anyone from using his son's name or likeness in movies. He had sought to restrain the release of a movie titled *Nyay: The Justice*, a self-proclaimed "tribute to Sushant Singh Rajput (SSR)", slated for release on June 11.

"We must note that the right to privacy has also

been invoked not just of the deceased but also in respect of the right of the family of SSR. The submissions on this aspect are unspecific and vague. No definite instance has been presented by the plaintiff (Mr. Singh) to show how this right is infringed and therefore, the plea is devoid of merit," Justice Sanjeev Narula remarked.

**Award of damages**

The High Court said that the actor's father can be compensated by award of damages if he is later able to prove in trial that "celebrity/publicity rights were inheritable". The court directed the makers of the film to "render complete and true accounts of the revenue earned from the films by way of sale/licensing of all rights relating to the films".

# Govt. agencies can analyse WhatsApp chats, NCB tells HC

Conversations in drug case sent for forensic analysis

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH**

WhatsApp chats, which are end-to-end encrypted, can be analysed by government organisations, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) recently told the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Responding to a bail petition filed in the High Court by an 18-year-old under Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in a Narcotic Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS) case, the NCB stated that since the entire WhatsApp chat of the accused was end-to-end encrypted, it could not be opened by the agency, which was constrained to send it to forensic specialists for its "opening and analy-



Chats on WhatsApp are end-to-end encrypted.

The petitioner's advocate submitted that recordings of the alleged WhatsApp conversations between the petitioner and the contraband supplier, a Nigerian national, had not been revealed or made available to show the petitioner's involvement.

The NCB counsel stated that the WhatsApp conversation was sent for analysis on April 4 this year, as it was not considered necessary earlier in view of the petitioner's confessional statement. The counsel added that the NCB was subsequently constrained to send the conversations for forensic analysis to submit its report at an appropriate stage during trial.

Justice Sudip Aluwalia, who was hearing the matter on May 7, stated that the Court finds no justification to release the petitioner on bail at this stage. The petition is, therefore, dismissed.

**THE CROSSWORD + 13271** Fed up at home, locked down? Lock your answers down pat online! @ <https://qrqo.page.link/jjptn>

(set by Neyartha)

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

**ACROSS**

- Article behind the damaged iPhone box on a fear of foreigners (10)
- Warm to loosen up (4)
- Tubes combining well with cheese? (8)
- A selection of mesli derivatives for the freshwater turtle (6)
- Turkey imprisons a revolutionary individual to make a point (5)
- Stagger to the competition with a pollen collector (9)
- Impractical to leave California without a justifying reason (7)
- Kind of strength shown by Israel under pressure all around (7)
- Policeman tricks the French into welcoming a flying mammal from the east (9)
- Liberal student getting rid of the second letter in the freight vessel (5)
- Trouble resulting from ash-trays yet to be emptied out (6)
- Boat on a lake with a bird needing an injection of blood (8)
- Young woman hiding in the glasswork section (4)
- A relaxing beginning to a formal atmosphere in a ship sailing the Arctic seas (10)

**DOWN**

- German-born Greek character turns up for an exchange of views (6)
- Painful struggle reported at the geological feature (5)
- Leaderless gang putting a robe with cut sides on top of a geometrical feature (7)
- Mediocre auditor's impressionable (8)
- Stop work on the geological feature (6)
- Corrected her label for the flowering plant (8)
- Successful register entry? (2,1,4)
- Ticket-less passenger's vacation interrupted by Washington drowning in a cry of anguish (8)
- Half-cousin going around the muddy lakes to get material for a fur coat (8)
- Friend in France surrounded by upset workers shows inner strength (7)
- Awkward ascent by an unusually calm rebel retreating after making the Spanish quit (7)
- Uncommon to find leading socio-political analysts requiring sensitivity education (6)
- Deeply impressed Vatican chief makes way for the bishop to get to the geological feature (6)
- Row, after internal turmoil, to the geological feature (5)

**SUDOKU**

5	7		8					
		3						7
		9	2					6 4
8	1		3					
			9		1			
				4		6		3
2 9					6 8			
7						4		
				1			2 5	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to puzzle 13270**

DAMPEN	OBSTACLE		
JULDUO	ALL		
POSTERIOR	TUTSI		
STEVSY	CECX		
TESSERA	TIMPANI		
INPH	HLR		
CRESS	PREAMBLE		
K	HOHA	CO	
SWASTIKA	YAHOO		
BAN	FEA		
AUGMENT	CALOMEL		
LEAM	HOLE		
SCRAPE	DELWEISS		
A	ENT	EN	C
MODERATE	GREECE		

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

5	6	1	3	7	4	8	2	9
7	3	2	9	1	8	6	4	5
4	9	8	2	5	6	1	3	7
8	2	3	1	6	7	5	9	4
6	7	5	4	2	9	3	1	8
1	4	9	8	3	5	7	6	2
9	5	7	6	4	1	2	8	3
3	8	6	5	9	2	4	7	1
2	1	4	7	8	3	9	5	6

**FAITH**

## Salvation via surrender

No one knows the end which we call salvation, and hence the path is also most hazy. But from the Charama Sloka in the Bhagavad Gita, it is clear that salvation means release from all sins. It is a herculean task to be released from all sins and not within human effort at all, pointed out Asuri Sri Madhavachariar in a discourse. The compassionate Lord gives a direct promise to humanity that by seeking refuge at His feet we can attain this end. To the question of the worship of other celestial beings such as Rudra, Brahma, Indra, Agni, etc, who are propitiated through yagas, yagnas, etc, for fulfilment of laukika ends, He makes it clear that because He is the antaratma in all beings and pervades the entire universe, they are able to grant boons etc. Their power ends here, and when it comes to granting Moksha, it is His sole prerogative.

In the Charama Sloka His Supremacy is explicit. "Take refuge in Me alone," He proclaims. "I shall release you from all sins." Though the statement "You can give up all other dharmas," has given rise to many interpretations, the discerning jivatma cannot miss the ultimate message emerging from it. The essence of the karma yoga He has taught, which is engaging in selfless nitya and naimittika karma with no eye on fruits and with the focus that this attitude will please Him, is to be inferred in the statement that one can give up all dharmas. All the confusion in our minds about what is to be done and avoided, about commitment to truth, ordained duties, and other such acts binding on one's thought and word, can be cleared in toto if only we repose faith in His protective powers. Once this faith is firmly established, the jivatma continues to lead life in such a way that will meet the Lord's approval.



# U.S. to donate 500 mn doses to world

The Pfizer jabs would be distributed to 92 low-and middle-income countries and the African Union

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN  
SUHASINI HAIDAR  
WASHINGTON DC/NEW DELHI

The U.S. will purchase half a billion doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and donate them to 92 low and middle-income countries and the African Union. The vaccines will be shipped from August onwards, with 200 million doses distributed this year and 300 million by the middle of next year, according to a 'fact sheet' released by the White House.



First talks: Joe Biden, with wife Jill, and Boris Johnson, with Carrie, right, at Carbis Bay in Britain. ■ REUTERS

Rich countries have come under increasing pressure to not sit on orders of excess vaccines as many in middle and lower income countries remain unvaccinated. The news of Joe Biden's plan broke on Wednesday, as the President was en route to the U.K. to attend the G7 meetings. Mr. Biden is expected to formally announce the plan on Thursday evening from Cornwall, following his meeting with U.K. Prime

Minister Boris Johnson. The U.S. will work on delivering the vaccines via COVAX, an international coalition that is involved with global vaccine access. Mr. Biden is expected to emphasise, in his remarks, that his plan will give lower income countries access to mRNA vaccines, which have been mostly used in rich countries to date, partly owing to more

stringent cold chain requirements, which are harder for poorer countries to ensure. Pfizer will sell the doses to the U.S. government at a "not-for-profit" price, the *Washington Post* reported. The doses will be produced at Pfizer's plants in Michigan, Kansas, Missouri and Massachusetts, with a combined workforce of at least 7,500 people, according to

the White House. The current administration has been keen to tie its foreign policy to domestic goals and the local economic impact of the massive vaccine order is something Mr. Biden is expected to stress in his remarks, as per the White House's outline of the speech.

**India will benefit**  
Separately, the U.S. has already begun shipping 80 million doses of mostly AstraZeneca vaccines to other countries. Three quarters of these are being allocated through COVAX and a quarter is being shared bilaterally. India is also going to be in receipt of some of these vaccines but numbers are not likely to be more than a few million. When asked at Wednesday's press briefing, State Department Spokesperson Ned Price did not confirm the total number of doses India would receive. In response to a question

on how many vaccines India would receive, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the government was awaiting details of the U.S. plans.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was in Washington at the end of May to discuss, among other things, vaccine procurement for India, including manufacturing within India. However, regulatory issues remain even as supply chain issues are easing up, partly due to the U.S. releasing AstraZeneca, Novavax and Sanofi vaccines from the purview of its Defence Production Act, which had resulted in export controls for raw materials that go into manufacturing these inoculations.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla met with U.S. Charge D'Affaires Daniel Smith in New Delhi on Wednesday to discuss, among other things, cooperation on COVID-19 and vaccine supplies.

# Myanmar military charges Suu Kyi with corruption

She is accused of accepting bribes and misusing authority

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
YANGON

The Myanmar junta has charged deposed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi with corruption over claims she accepted illegal payments of gold and more than half a million dollars in cash, state media reported Thursday.



New pressures: A file photo of a protester holding up a poster of Aung San Suu Kyi during a demonstration in Yangon. ■ AFP

The country has been in turmoil since the generals ousted Ms. Suu Kyi on February 1, with more than 850 civilians killed in a brutal crackdown by security forces on near-daily protests against the coup.

The 75-year-old Nobel laureate, who has been in custody since the putsch, is facing a raft of wide-ranging criminal charges, including sedition and breaching a colonial-era secrecy law.

The latest charges relate to allegations by the former Yangon region Chief Minister that Ms. Suu Kyi illegally accepted \$6,00,000 in cash from him along with around 11 kg of gold.

The Anti-Corruption Commission found evidence that Ms. Suu Kyi had committed "corruption using her rank", according to the Global New Light of Myanmar, a state-run newspaper.

"So she was charged under Anti-Corruption Law section 55."

She is also accused of abusing her authority when renting two areas of land for her charitable foundation.

After weeks of legal wrangling, two of Ms. Suu Kyi's trials are due to start in earnest next week, hearing evidence from witnesses.

In Naypyidaw, the remote capital purpose-built by the previous military regime, her trial on charges of violat-

# 12 killed as military plane crashes near Mandalay

REUTERS  
NAYPIDAW

A military plane crashed on Thursday near Myanmar's second-biggest city of Mandalay, killing 12 people, the city's fire service said in a post on social media.

The plane was flying from the capital Naypyidaw to the town of Pyin Oo Lwin and was coming in to land when it crashed about 300 m from a steel plant, the military-owned Myawaddy television station reported.

The plane was carrying six military personnel and also monks who were due to attend a ceremony at a Buddhist monastery, other media reports said.

There were no reports of casualties on the ground.

The pilot and one passenger survived and were taken to a military hospital, according to a resident and posting by a community group. It was not clear what had caused the crash.

# Biden, Johnson seek to sign 'new Atlantic Charter'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
CARBIS BAY

President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson met for the first time on Thursday, looking to highlight their nations' famed "special relationship" but doing so against a backdrop of differences both political and personal.

At their first meeting in the seaside resort of Carbis Bay, the two leaders inspected documents on Thursday related to the Atlantic Char-

ter, a declaration signed by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in August 1941, setting out common goals for the world after Second World War. Those goals included freer trade, disarmament and the right to self-determination of all people. It is often cited as a cornerstone of the trans-Atlantic "special relationship."

Mr. Johnson noted that the charter laid the foundation for the United Nations

and NATO. "Yeah, I know," Mr. Biden said.

**Finding common ground**  
At their meeting, the two leaders plan to sign what they're calling a new Atlantic Charter, pledging to "defend the principles, values, and institutions of democracy and open societies."

Mr. Biden hopes to use his first overseas trip as President to reassure European allies that the U.S. had shed the transactional tendencies

of Donald Trump's term and is a reliable partner again. But tensions could simmer beneath the surface of Mr. Biden's meeting with Mr. Johnson.

The President staunchly opposed the Brexit movement, the British exodus from the European Union that Mr. Johnson championed, and has expressed great concern with the future of Northern Ireland. And Mr. Biden once called the British leader a "physical

and emotional clone" of Mr. Trump.

The British government has worked hard to overcome that impression, stressing Mr. Johnson's common ground with Mr. Biden on issues such as climate change and his support for global institutions. But Mr. Johnson, the host for the G-7 summit that will follow his sit-down with Mr. Biden, has been frustrated by the lack of a new trade deal with the U.S.

# Colombo looks into likely oil slick from ship

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka announced an investigation on Thursday into a possible oil slick reported off its west coast where a container ship is submerged after burning for 13 days.

Coast Conservation Minister Nalaka Godaheva said local experts were asked to examine an oil patch of about 0.35 sq km, where MV X-Press Pearl ran aground. "I visited the area by boat yesterday and what we noticed was a thin film of oil which looked like diesel," Mr. Godaheva told reporters in Colombo.

# 3 Palestinians killed in West Bank

Clashes erupt during Israeli raid overnight; Abbas calls it 'dangerous escalation'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
RAMALLAH

Israeli troops shot and killed three Palestinians, including two security officers, in a shootout that erupted in the occupied West Bank town of Jenin during what appeared to be an Israeli arrest raid overnight, Palestinian officials said on Thursday.

Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) coordinate security operations in the territory against Hamas and other militant groups seen as a threat to both of them. The coordination has contributed to mounting anger among Palestinians.

A spokesman for Palesti-



Women watching the funeral of a Palestinian killed in West Bank. ■ REUTERS

nian President Mahmoud Abbas condemned what he called a "dangerous Israeli escalation," saying the three were killed by Israeli special forces who disguise themselves as Arabs during arrest

raids. The spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeneh, called on the international community and the United States to intervene to halt such attacks.

Israeli media reported that special forces went into Jenin to arrest two operatives from the Islamic Jihad militant group when they came under fire. One of the Palestinian suspects was killed, in addition to the two security officers, the media reports said.

**'Undercover' forces**  
There were no reports of any Israeli casualties. The PA said the two officers who were killed were members of

its military intelligence force.

Online video appears to show Palestinian officers taking cover behind a vehicle as gunshots are heard in the background. One shouts that they are exchanging fire with Israeli "undercover" forces.

Under interim peace agreements signed in the 1990s, the PA has limited autonomy in scattered enclaves that together make up around 40% of the occupied West Bank. Hamas drove its forces out of Gaza in 2007 when the Islamic militant group seized power. Israel has overarching security authority in the West Bank.

## ELSEWHERE



### Man says he hit Macron over France's decline

Damien Tarel, a 28-year-old man on trial for slapping French President Emmanuel Macron, testified on Thursday that the attack was impulsive and unplanned, and prompted by his anger at France's "decline." He faces possible jail time. ■ AFP

### Pakistani cleric threatens to kill Malala, arrested

Pakistani Muslim cleric, Mufti Sardar Ali Haqqani, has been arrested under the anti-terrorism act for threatening to kill Malala Yousafzai in a suicide attack and instigating people against the Nobel Laureate, police said. ■ PTI

# Delta variant is taking hold of Europe: WHO

People are urged to travel wisely

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
GENEVA

The World Health Organization's Europe director warned that the highly transmissible delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 is "poised to take hold in the region," as many countries prepare to ease restrictions and allow more social gatherings and travel across borders.

During a press briefing on Thursday, WHO's Dr. Hans Kluge said the delta variant has shown signs of being able to evade some vaccines and warned that many vulnerable populations, particularly those over age 60, remain unprotected.

"We have been here before," warned Kluge, WHO's European regional director.

"Over the course of last summer, cases gradually rose in younger age groups and then moved into older age groups, contributing to a devastating resurgence," he said.

Dr. Kluge said that spike in COVID-19 ultimately led to more lockdowns and deaths in the fall and winter of 2020. "Let's not make that mistake again."

Dr. Kluge did not say people shouldn't travel, but urged any travellers to do so wisely. He also called for vaccination and other public health measures to be stepped up across the continent, saying even immunisation coverage "is far from sufficient to protect the region."

# Castillo holds razor-thin lead

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LIMA

Leftist Pedro Castillo held a razor-thin lead on Wednesday in Peru's polarising presidential election as his right-wing rival Keiko Fujimori made renewed allegations of voter fraud she claimed involved half a million ballots.

ed from Sunday's presidential poll, rural school teacher and union leader Mr. Castillo retained a small lead of 50.2% over Ms. Fujimori's 49.7%.

On Wednesday, Ms. Fujimori asked the National Electoral Tribunal (JNE) to annul the results of 802 polling stations, the equivalent of 2,00,000 votes.

She also asked for another 3,00,000 ballots to be reviewed, so "half a million votes are in play," she said at a press conference.

Ms. Fujimori, the daughter of jailed former President Alberto Fujimori, led in early counting but as Mr. Castillo slowly gained ground, she alleged "irregularities" and "signs of fraud."

**भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान मोहाली**  
(शिक्षा विभाग, भारत सरकार द्वारा स्थापित)  
शेक्टर 81, सोनिया हिल्स, प.जी. मोहाली,  
एच.ए.ए. एच. नगर मोहाली, चंदा-140306  
IISER Mohali  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH MOHALI  
(Estd. By Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)  
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**VACANCY**  
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali, an Institution of National Importance, invites applications from suitable Indian nationals for appointment to the post of Deputy Registrar (Finance & Accounts). Last date for submission of application forms is 10.07.2021 upto 5.00 p.m. For details regarding educational qualifications, experience, general conditions, etc., please visit the Institute's website www.iisermohali.ac.in. REGISTRAR

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23538713 to 23538721 Ext : 545, e-mail : gnanakumar@nmdc.co.in; bmkumar@nmdc.co.in; jpsingh@nmdc.co.in. CIN : L13100TG1958G0101674

Tender No. HQMM/2022-20/57X376/384 Dt. 10-06-2021  
**OPEN TENDER NOTICE (E-Procurement Mode Only)**  
E-tenders are invited for following items from reputed manufacturers directly or through their dealers/accredited agents through MSTC portal website https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprocurement/nmdc/buyer\_login.jsp.

Description of Equipment	Qty. (NO)	Display of Tender Documents Period	Last date & Time for submission of Final offer
Supply, Erection & Commissioning including Comprehensive AMC of 5 years after expiry of Guarantee period of One year for IP based CCTV surveillance system for BIOM Bachel Complex, Chattisgarh State. (Prebid Meeting on 24/6/2021 at 11:00 AM through Microsoft Teams. mail)	01	Draft Tender : 10.06.2021 to 24-06-2021 FINAL Tender (Tentative) 05/07/2021 to 20/07/2021 upto 2.30 p.m	20-07-2021 by 2.30 PM (IST)

Prospective bidders may visit our websites: www.nmdc.co.in; CPP Portal https://eprocure.gov.in; https://mstcecommerce.com and may download the tender documents. Any corrigendum to the above tender notice will be uploaded on our website and MSTC e-portal only.  
CGM (Materials)

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S. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fees (Rs.) (non-refundable)	Date of Release of Tender in e-procurement solution	Last date/time of submission of tender through e-procurement solution	Tender ID
1.	Replacement of 1000 mm dia PSC transmission water line by 1000 mm dia MS water line with internal cement mortar lining from Najafgarh (UGR to Tuda Manli, Najafgarh (Re-invited))	1,67,39,239/-	Exempted	1500/-	09.06.2021	01.07.2021 upto 03:00 PM	2021_DJB_204193_1

Note: Any further amendment/corrigendum made in this NIT will be uploaded and can only be seen on website http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in  
PRO.DJB  
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) (Naresh Kumar Dargan)  
Advt. No. J.S.V. 103 (2021-22) EE (Proj) W-IX

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No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-07/2277/2021-22 Date: 10.06.2021

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
(Through GOK e - Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting Item rate Tenders under two cover system as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from procurement from Class-I Contractors (Civil) registered in KPWD who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following works: (1) Formation of balance roads, in road no-02, 05 & 06 and construction of RCC side drains and lead drain connecting road no.05 & road no.02 of Devakathikoppa Industrial Area, Shivamogga District. (2) Formation of proposed Sub-Layout in Women Entrepreneur's Park and biggest plots in Harohalli 3rd Phase Industrial Area, Ramanagar District.  
The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 12.07.2021 upto 04:00 pm  
Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in. Sd/-  
DIPR/DDU/R.O:519/2021-22 Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

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Wear Mask | 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene



## MARKET WATCH

	10-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52300	0.69
US Dollar	73.06	-0.12
Gold	48127	-0.61
Brent oil	72.39	-0.12

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	846.75	-5.85
Asian Paints	2950.60	7.05
Axis Bank	744.25	7.50
Bajaj Auto	4179.90	-44.60
Bajaj Finserv	11993.10	434.25
Bajaj Finance	6086.40	411.90
Bharti Airtel	545.15	5.15
BPL	483.55	-1.50
Britannia Ind	3576.30	1.60
Cipla	974.20	15.55
Coal India	156.50	0.10
Divis Lab	4372.55	105.10
Dr Reddys Lab	5292.05	69.25
Eicher Motors	2705.05	-24.00
Grasim Ind	1492.50	0.45
HCL Tech	968.55	-2.75
HDFC	2561.90	17.15
HDFC Bank	1481.05	0.75
HDFC Life	689.25	4.35
Hero MotoCorp	3009.00	-14.50
Hindalco	385.40	2.25
Hind Unilever	2378.80	22.80
ICICI Bank	640.40	4.30
IndusInd Bank	1024.35	20.80
Infosys	1424.30	9.00
Indian Oil Corp	115.45	1.00
ITC	209.30	-3.20
JSW Steel	705.80	7.95
Kotak Bank	1799.55	16.65
L&T	1519.70	0.40
M&M	806.95	2.50
Maruti Suzuki	7199.90	-39.10
Nestle India Ltd.	17556.10	-1.05
NTPC	118.50	0.40
ONGC	123.95	-0.10
PowerGrid Corp	241.65	-0.45
Reliance Ind	2183.00	8.00
SBI Life	997.55	-1.05
State Bank	432.25	10.80
Shree Cement	28225.80	-181.55
Sun Pharma	676.05	3.20
Tata Consumer	707.70	4.85
Products Ltd.	344.75	1.40
Tata Motors	1114.45	13.45
Tata Steel	3216.80	16.55
TCS	1064.90	12.65
Tech Mahindra	1738.65	7.90
Titan	6709.65	-15.10
UltraTech Cement	838.70	-6.85
UPL	554.25	10.05
Wipro		

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 10

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.85	73.17
Euro	88.60	88.99
British Pound	102.67	103.13
Japanese Yen (100)	66.52	66.82
Chinese Yuan	11.40	11.45
Swiss Franc	81.24	81.64
Singapore Dollar	54.96	55.21
Canadian Dollar	60.17	60.43
Malaysian Ringgit	17.67	17.76

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



**Skoda rolls out new Octavia at ₹25.99 lakh**

MUMBAI  
Skoda Auto India has unveiled the all new Octavia at an ex-showroom price of ₹25.99 lakh nationwide. The Octavia marked the beginning of Skoda Auto's model introduction in India two decades ago. "Octavia in its fourth generation pushes the yardstick further," the company said.

**Yes Bank gets nod to raise up to ₹10,000 cr.**

NEW DELHI  
Yes Bank on Thursday received board approval for raising up to ₹10,000 crore by issuing debt securities. The board of directors in its meeting held on June 10, 2021, considered and approved seeking shareholders' approval for borrowing funds in Indian/foreign currency up to ₹10,000 crore by issuing debt securities, Yes Bank said in a filing. PTI

**Open market purchase of G-secs on June 17**

MUMBAI  
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it will conduct the third tranche of open market purchase of government securities of ₹40,000 crore under the G-sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP 1.0) on June 17, 2021, as announced earlier this month. Of this, state development loans (SDLs) up to ₹10,000 crore would be purchased, RBI said.

**Tata Digital to acquire majority stake in 1MG**

MUMBAI  
Tata Digital Ltd., a 100% subsidiary of Tata Sons, has entered into an agreement to acquire majority stake in 1MG Technologies Pvt. Ltd., a digital health company, for an unspecified amount. The investment is in line with Tata Group's vision of creating a digital ecosystem which addresses the consumer needs across categories in a unified manner, the company said.

# Auto retail sales more than halved in May from April: FADA

Dealers' body says PVs slid 59%, CVs by 66%; urges support from banks, OEMs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Automobile retail sales in the country declined by 55% in May as compared with April as lockdowns across various States amid the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hit vehicle registrations, automobile dealers' body FADA said on Thursday.

All segments were hit as showrooms across various States were forced to down shutters amid the restrictions. Total registrations across categories in May dropped to 5,35,855 units from 11,85,374 units in April. According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations, which collect vehicle registration data



**Dire straits:** Centre should direct banks to allow a moratorium of 90 days to all dealer categories, says FADA. ■BIJOY GHOSH

from 1,294 out of the 1,497 regional transport offices, passenger vehicle sales slumped 59%. Two-wheeler sales also declined 53% to 4,10,757 units last month. Similarly, commercial vehicle sales dropped by

66% to 17,534 units last month, from 51,436 in April. Three-wheeler sales saw a decline of 76% to 5,215 units, while tractor sales witnessed a dip of 57% to 16,616 units. "The second wave of COVID has left the entire coun-

try devastated as there may not be a single household which did not get affected," FADA President Vinkesh Gulati noted. "Apart from urban markets, this time, even rural areas were badly hit."

He added auto retailers were in dire need of support. "While a handful of OEMs... have announced financial help to their channel partners, others are yet to do so. Hence, FADA humbly requests all those OEMs which have still not announced any financial assistance to kindly do it urgently," he said. He also appealed that instead of restructuring, banks should allow a moratorium of 90 days to all categories of dealers sans a turnover limit.

# Centre to auction 'major' fields of ONGC, OIL

Aim is to boost output, says Pradhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Centre will auction unmonetised, large oil and gas fields of state-owned ONGC and OIL to boost hydrocarbon production, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Thursday.

Speaking at the start of the third round of auction of small discovered fields, he said companies cannot indefinitely sit on resources they may have discovered.

These resources belonged to the nation and would be monetised by auctioning them out to interested entities, he said. As many as 32 oil and gas blocks with 75 discoveries have been offered in the Discovered Small Field (DSF) round-III.

Under DSF, liberal terms including pricing and mar-



Dharmendra Pradhan

keting freedom are offered, making them viable. "There will be no DSF next time. Next time, it will be a 'major' round (auction of large fields)," Mr. Pradhan said.

He said the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, has the "full mandate" to identify unmonetised major fields that could be offered for bidding.

# GST Council to mull tax cut on June 12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will meet on June 12 to decide on GST rate cut for COVID essentials, according to officials.

In the previous meeting of the council on May 28, a Group of Ministers (GoM) was set up to recommend tax relief on COVID essentials including PPE kits, masks and vaccines, to the GST Council. The GoM submitted its report on June 7.

Officials said the GST Council would discuss the report as well as consider tax rate cuts for black fungus medicine.

Currently, 5% GST is levied on domestically made vaccines and 12% on COVID-19 drugs and oxygen concentrators.

# GST: FinMin revamps Groups of Ministers

Pawar is convener of IT-related GoM

VIKAS DHOOT  
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has modified the composition of ministerial groups studying pending Goods and Services Tax (GST) issues.

Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar has been appointed convener of the Group of Ministers (GoM) monitoring IT-related challenges, replacing former Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi.

Mr. Modi's successor in the Bihar government Tarikhore Prasad has also been included in the GoM, while former Haryana Minister Captain Abhimanyu has been replaced by the State's Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala. Mr. Pawar replaced former Maharashtra

FM Sudhir Mungantiwar, while Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma has been replaced by the new FM Ajanta Neog.

The ministry notified the changes in the GoMs on Wednesday along with changes to two other groups set up in January 2019. Gujarat Deputy CM Nitin Patel has been made convener of the GoM to analyse revenue under the GST regime, replacing Mr. Modi.

Mr. Patel stays convener of the real estate sector-focussed GoM, which now includes Mr. Pawar and Kerala FM K.N. Balagopal.

Mr. Balagopal is the new convener of the GoM overseeing implementation of e-way bills for moving gold and precious stones.

# 'IT, pharma, e-com buck job losses, witness hiring surge'

Some IT roles command 50% wage premium: Balakrishnan

LALATENDU MISHRA  
MUMBAI

Information technology (IT), pharma and e-commerce have bucked the trend of job losses, emerging as top hirers between February and April, said a top HR official.

The hiring surge comes in the backdrop of an estimated 8.6 million salaried jobs, especially in tourism and hospitality, being lost in the same period, as data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy showed.

In the three months, the IT industry saw a surge of more than 100% in demand growth for skilled technical job roles, said Sudhakar Balakrishnan, group CEO,



FirstMeridian, a human resources (HR) firm. "In IT, some specialised roles are commanding a wage premium of 30-50%," Mr. Balakrishnan said.

Since demand for medicines has risen, the pharma sector is also hiring, he said. In healthcare, the govern-

ment's decision to employ medical and nursing students who are yet to pass the qualifying examinations, to bridge the demand-supply gap, has enhanced employment, he said. "In healthcare, over three lakh jobs have been created."

Home delivery of food and grocery as well as closure of markets has led to increased pressure on e-commerce firms that have been hiring in thousands. The warehousing sector is also hiring to support e-commerce.

"Almost 75,000 temporary jobs are available, led by sectors such as e-commerce, retail, IT/ITeS and financial services," he added.

# 'Real estate hit worse by second wave than first'

Sales have plunged since April: Credai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

About 90% of real estate developers feel that the second wave of the COVID-19 has been more 'devastating' on their business than the first one, as new sales and collections have fallen drastically since April this year, as per a survey by realtors' body Credai.

Most developers (95%) fear project delays because of localised lockdowns across States. The association, which has about 13,000 members in various States, released a survey of its 4,813 members from 217 cities, conducted across the country between May 24 and June 3 to assess the impact of the second wave of



COVID-19 on the real estate sector. Labour shortage, financial constraints, approval delays, increased construction costs, and weakening customer demand are key challenges highlighted by developers.

About 95% of builders said customers had postponed purchase decisions due to the second wave.

# 'Patent-waiver plan has made huge progress'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The proposal of India and South Africa on providing temporary patent waiver at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to deal with the pandemic has achieved 'tremendous' progress as the member-countries have agreed to start text-based negotiations, a top government official said.

The TRIPS Council of the WTO has agreed to start the negotiations on a proposal submitted by India and South Africa seeking patent waivers.

Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan said it meant that the members have in-principle accepted the objective behind the waiver proposal.

"India and South Africa's proposal has achieved tremendous mileage."

# Paytm, Infosys offer to help on vaccine booking

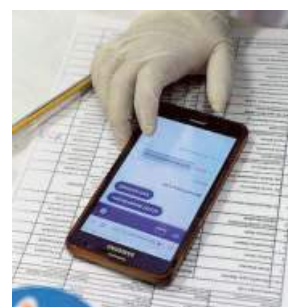
More platforms will help, says Sharma

REUTERS  
BENGALURU

Paytm, Infosys and MakeMyTrip are among companies seeking approval in India to provide online COVID-19 vaccine bookings, the head of the government's tech platform said, as the country tries to make it easier for its huge population to book shots.

The Centre relaxed rules last month to potentially allow third-party apps to offer vaccine bookings and has taken back control of procurement from States following delays and shortages.

About 15 state agencies and private firms, which include healthcare providers Apollo and Max, have asked to be allowed to offer vaccine bookings, R.S. Sharma, head of the government's panel managing the CoWIN



vaccination registration platform, told Reuters.

Digital payments app Paytm has more than 100 million monthly active users and MakeMyTrip has 12 million. Their popularity is seen providing more options to Indians looking to book their COVID-19 shots.

"It will work in favour of the country, the union of all the entities is better than just one individual platform," Mr. Sharma said.

# Air traffic to recover fully only by Q4 of FY23: Crisil

'COVID wave to spur slump this fiscal'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Air traffic is expected to slump in fiscal year 2022 and fully recover only by the fourth quarter of fiscal 2023, because of the debilitating consequences of the second COVID-19 wave in India, Crisil said in a report.

But, the credit quality of airport operators will continue to be supported by strong business models and healthy liquidity covers amid low debt servicing needs this fiscal, it added.

With localised lockdowns, night curfews and other restrictions on movement of people, passenger traffic at airports has nose-dived, with average daily domestic passenger traffic halving in May 2021 from February 2021, or to a mere



10% of pre-pandemic levels seen in May 2019, the ratings agency said in the report.

"Second wave will push back revival of business travel and pick-up of international traffic, which account for over half of overall traffic," said Manish Gupta, senior director, Crisil Ratings. "Given this backdrop, we now expect traffic volumes this fiscal to be 60% of fiscal 2020 levels," he added.

# Food-unit bills to carry FSSAI licence details

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Food safety regulator FSSAI has mandated food business operators to mention FSSAI licence or registration number on cash receipts or purchase invoice with effect from October 1.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a latest order in this regard.

Since complaints remain unresolved due to lack of specific information, this move will help consumers who can lodge an online complaint against a particular food business using the FSSAI number, it said.

"Licensing and registration authorities are directed ensure its implementation mandatorily with effect from October 2, 2021," the FSSAI said.

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# Pavlyuchenkova one step away

Beats a wildly erratic Zidansek to reach her first Grand Slam final

## ROLAND-GARROS

**REUTERS PARIS**  
Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova held a steady course to beat a wildly erratic Tamara Zidansek and reach the final at Roland-Garros, showing all her experience to win 7-5, 6-3 on Thursday.

Slovenian World No. 85 Zidansek made a flying start with her aggressive style earning her an early break but Pavlyuchenkova soaked up her opponent's best shots and proved way too solid in the end.

Zidansek, like Pavlyuchenkova a Grand Slam semifinal debutant, cracked down 27 winners but struggled to contain errors at key moments of the match and handed over the first set with a double fault.

The 29-year-old Pavlyuchenkova forged 4-1 ahead in the second set and then snuffed out an attempted Zidansek comeback, clinching victory when her opponent blazed a backhand wide.

On Wednesday, a fired-up Novak Djokovic repelled a stirring fightback by Italian Matteo Berrettini to claim a 6-3, 6-2, 6-7(5), 7-5 victory to set up a mouth-watering semifinal showdown with defending champion Rafa Nadal.



**Battle of the debutantes:** Zidansek's made a flying start, but Pavlyuchenkova soaked up her best shots and proved way too solid in the end. • GETTY IMAGES

The 34-year-old bellowed a series of frightening roars after completing a victory that at one stage looked like a formality but became increasingly fraught as Berrettini threw the kitchen sink at the Serb.

"This match had it all: falls, crowd, break," he told reporters. "It was a lot of intensity. I just felt under tension the entire time and missed some chances to end it in three.

"It was just super, super stressful to constantly be under pressure... the reaction in the end was just me liberating that tension that was

building up for the entire match."

Pavlyuchenkova is the first woman to play more than 50 Majors before reaching her first Grand Slam final

Pavlyuchenkova is the seventh Russian woman to reach a Major final after Myskina, Dementieva, Sharapova, Kuznetsova, Safina and Zvonareva

Before Pavlyuchenkova, Sharapova was the last Russian woman in a Grand Slam final (2015 Aus Open, lost to Serena)

**Evenly poised**  
In the second semifinal, Sakkari and Krejckovic were 5-5 in the third set after splitting the first two

## THE RESULTS

**Women (semifinals):** 31-Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) bt Tamara Zidansek (Slo) 7-5, 6-3. **Mixed doubles (final):** Desirae Krawczyk (USA) & Joe Salisbury (GBR) bt Elena Vesnina (Rus) & Aslan Karatsev (Rus) 2-6, 6-4, [10-5].

**On Wednesday:** **Men (quarterfinals):** 1-Novak Djokovic (Srb) bt 9-Matteo Berrettini (Ita) 6-3, 6-2, 6-7(5), 7-5.



## BATTLE ROYALE

Nadal and Djokovic will meet for a men's record-extending 58th time on Friday.

It's not like any other match. It's the biggest challenge on clay. Each time we face each other, there is extra tension and the vibes are different. I would pick Rafa as the biggest rival I have ever had. Let's have a great battle

**Last meeting:** ATP Rome Masters 2021, Final, Nadal won 7-5, 1-6, 6-3  
**At French Open:** 2020, Final, Nadal won 6-0, 6-2, 7-5

Djokovic leads the head-to-head 29-28, but Nadal leads 19-7 on clay and has won the last five matches on the surface

At Majors, Nadal is ahead 10-6, including 7-1 at the French Open. Djokovic's lone victory came in the 2015 quarterfinal, which he won in straight sets

The two have met in French Open semifinals thrice before and Djokovic has lost all of them. Nadal

won in straight sets way back in 2007 and 2008 before being stretched to five sets in 2013 [6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 6-7(3), 9-7]

In fact, Nadal is 13-0 in French Open semifinals, while Djokovic is 5-5  
Friday's other semifinal between Tsitsipas (22) and Zverev (24) is the youngest Roland-Garros last-four clash since a 22-year-old Nadal met a 21-year-old Djokovic in 2008

We know each other well and in these matches anything can happen. But it is the semifinal, not the final. So that's a big difference. The winner still has a lot of work left to do [in the final]. The goal is to play at my highest level

**SEMIFINAL LINE-UP:**  
**5-Tsitsipas vs 6-Zverev (6.20 p.m. IST)**  
**1-Djokovic vs 3-Nadal (Not before 9 p.m.)**

# COVID curfew forces angry fans to leave

**ASSOCIATED PRESS PARIS**

Novak Djokovic's quarterfinal against Matteo Berrettini was delayed for about 22 minutes while thousands of spectators were cleared out of the stadium because of an 11 p.m. coronavirus curfew.

Restrictions were eased to allow 5,000 inside Court Philippe-Chatrier on Wednesday rather than the 1,000 for

the previous matches, and it was quite an atmosphere until the rule was imposed.

"The conditions were strange with the fans here and then the atmosphere was a bit different (afterward)," Djokovic said later. "You have to find a different motivation because the energy from the fans is special."

Some disappointed fans jeered and even sang "We've

paid, we'll stay" as they refused to leave at 10:45 p.m. as curfew approached.

Shortly before 10:55 pm, both players packed their bags and walked off while fans shouted in frustration. The top-ranked Djokovic was up 2-1 in sets and leading 3-2 in the fourth when play was halted.

Berrettini waved to the crowd as they chanted his

name shortly before the players departed. The big-hitting Italian said he felt for them. He also felt some sting was taken out of his game.

"I think it's a shame, it's something that I didn't like. But it's bigger than us, it's not what you can do something about," the ninth-seeded Berrettini said of the curfew.

# Will France do the rare double of World Cup and Euro?

Portugal and Germany are also in the group of death along with the World champion

## EURO 2020

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON**

Euro 2020 finally kicks off on Friday as Portugal prepares to defend its title and world champion France seeks a rare double a year after the tournament was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic.

France's fearsome forward line makes it favourite to win a third European crown at the pan-continental event, while top-ranked Belgium and a youthful England side will be major threats.

For the first time, the tournament is taking place in 11 cities across Europe - instead of one or two countries - despite the lingering shadow cast by the COVID-19 crisis.

Favourite France is not in

action until Tuesday in the headline act of the first round of group matches when it takes on Germany in Munich.

All eyes will be on 33-year-old forward Karim Benzema, who was recalled after an international exile of five-and-a-half years following a prolific season for Real Madrid.

Portugal and Hungary complete Group F, dubbed the tournament's group of death.

**Better squad**  
Cristiano Ronaldo is now 36 but is still going strong and is supported by a better squad than five years ago, which also boasts the outstanding talents of Joao Felix, Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva and Ruben Dias.

England has the carrot of knowing both semifinals and the final will be played at Wembley, while Italy and the Netherlands are eager to impress after failing to qualify for recent tournaments.

But despite the ongoing COVID-19 threat, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has been bullish, insisting Euro 2020 will be safe.

**Packed to capacity**  
The clearest illustration of that is set to come from Budapest, where it is hoped the new Puskas Arena will be packed to capacity.

Each of the host cities will welcome back fans, with capacities of between 25 percent and 100 percent apart from Munich, which aims to host a minimum of 14,500 fans - around 22% of capacity.



**Ready to host:** London's Wembley stadium is all set to welcome guests for the European Championships. • AFP

# Italy takes on Turkey in the opening game

Azzurri looking to go all the way

**ASSOCIATED PRESS ROME**

The biggest crowd to gather in Italy for a year and a half will witness an Azzurri squad aiming for the title play a Turkey team aiming to spring a surprise on Friday at Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

After embarrassingly failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, Italy won all 10 of its qualifying matches for Euro 2020 and enters on a 27-match unbeaten run.

Turkey, meanwhile, took four points off France in qualifying, including a 2-0 win over the World Cup champion,

and lost only one of its matches to finish second in its group.

Italy has won its past eight matches without conceding a goal and has 20 clean sheets in 32 matches since Roberto Mancini took over as coach.

The Italian government decided that the Stadio Olimpico can be filled to 25% capacity for the four games it will host.

## TODAY'S MATCH

**GROUP A:**  
**Turkey vs Italy,**  
12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

# Neeraj opens season with gold

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI**

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra opened his international season with a very promising 83.18m effort that brought him the gold in the City of Lisbon athletics meet at the Lisbon University Stadium in Portugal on Thursday.

The conditions were windy and Neeraj, the Asian Games champion who set a National record with an 88.07m throw in the Indian Grand Prix in Patiala in March, had a foul-ridden series messing up three of his six rounds. His best came in the last round. He opened with an 80.71 and his other legal throw was 78.50 in the fourth.

# Brisbane tipped to host 2032 Olympics

**ASSOCIATED PRESS GENEVA**

Brisbane could be officially named host of the 2032 Olympics when the IOC meets in Tokyo next month.

IOC president Thomas Bach said after an executive board meeting on Thursday that Brisbane can be awarded hosting rights at a July 21 meeting ahead of the Games.

# Indians undergo first group training session



**Intense:** The fielding session, under coach R. Sridhar, mostly focused on catching in the slip cordon. • BCCI/TWITTER

## WTC FINAL

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SOUTHAMPTON**

India carried out its first group practice session at a ground adjacent to Ageas Bowl here on Thursday, five days after being allowed staggered training in the run-up to the World Test Championship final against New Zealand, commencing on June 18.

It was the first time the players mixed with their teammates on the ground after being allowed to run in the gymnasium and the main playing field at different time slots on completion of the third day of their hard quarantine in the UK.

**In full swing**  
"We have had our first group training session and the intensity was high. Fire.

#TeamIndia's preparations are on in full swing for the #WTC21 Final," the BCCI wrote in a twitter post along with a short video of the training session.

The players had a full net session, where the likes of skipper Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara and Rishabh Pant batted for a considerable amount of time and faced throw-downs as well.

The bowlers too had an intense session with all the main players - Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Ravichandran Ashwin - participating in the practice session.

The nets were followed by a fielding session under fielding coach R. Sridhar, which mostly focused on catching in the slip cordon.

# Dhawan to lead in Lanka

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI**

Shikhar Dhawan will lead India in the white-ball series against Sri Lanka in July. The senior selection committee, which picked the squad on Thursday, has named Bhuvneshwar Kumar as vice-captain.

All matches will be played in Colombo.

**The squad:** Shikhar Dhawan (Capt.), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (vice-capt.), Prithvi Shaw, Devdutt Padikkal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Suryakumar Yadav, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Nitish Rana, Ishan Kishan (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, K Gowtham, Krunal Pandya, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy,



Dhawan. • FILE PHOTO

Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini, and Chetan Sakariya. **Net Bowlers:** Ishan Porel, Sandeep Warrier, Arshdeep Singh, Sai Kishore, Simarjeet Singh. **The schedule:** ODIs: July 13, 16 and 18. **T20Is:** July 21, 23 and 25.

# Nortje runs through West Indies top-order

## SA IN WI

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE GROS-ISLET (ST. LUCIA)**

South Africa fast bowler Anrich Nortje took three wickets for eight runs as West Indies tumbled to 48 for four at lunch on the first day of the first match of the two-

## SCOREBOARD

**West Indies - 1st innings:** Kraigg Brathwaite b Nortje 15, Shai Hope b Nortje 15, Nkrumah Bonner c de Kock b Rabada 10, Roston Chase (batting) 7, Kyle Mayers c van der Dussen b Nortje 1, Jermaine Blackwood (batting) 0; Total (for four wkts. in 27 overs, at

lunch): 48. **Fall of wickets:** 1-24, 2-31, 3-45, 4-46. **South Africa bowling:** Rabada 10-2-24-1, Ngidi 7-2-10-0, Nortje 6-3-8-3, Maharaj 4-3-6-0. **Toss:** West Indies.

# Burns and Lawrence shine

## NZ IN ENG

**ANI BIRMINGHAM**

Rory Burns and Dan Lawrence were the standout performers for the hosts as England ended day one at 258 for seven in the second Test against New Zealand here on Thursday. Lawrence (67) and Mark Wood (16) were at the crease.

Opting to bat first, England got off to a steady start as openers Dominic Sibley and Burns saw off the new ball, playing out 29 overs

and scoring 67. Matt Henry broke the partnership, dismissing Sibley for 35. Zak Crawley went for a duck and captain Joe Root for four as England slid to 85 for three.

Burns, however, continued the battle and made 81 before getting out to Trent Boult. Lawrence's fighting innings further boosted England's total.

## SCOREBOARD

**England - 1st innings:** Rory Burns c Latham b Boult 81, Dom Sibley c Blundell b Henry 35, Zak Crawley c Mitchell b Wagner 0, Joe Root c Blundell b Henry 4, Ollie Pope c Blundell b Ajaz 19, Dan Lawrence (batting) 67, James Bracey c Mitchell b Boult 0, Olly Stone lbw b Ajaz 20, Mark Wood (bat-

ting) 16; Extras (b-5, lb-8, w-1, nb-2): 16; Total (for seven wkts. in 90 overs): 258. **Fall of wickets:** 1-72, 2-73, 3-85, 4-127, 5-169, 6-175, 7-222. **New Zealand bowling:** Boult 23-4-60-2, Henry 22-5-66-2, Wagner 20-6-62-1, Mitchell 11-2-23-0, Ajaz 14-4-34-2. **Toss:** England.

# Anand to face Aamir, Chahal

**P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE**

Viswanathan Anand, Aamir Khan and Yuzvendra Chahal have something in common: love of chess.

Aamir and Chahal are just two of the celebrities who will play Anand on chess.com. Actor Riteish Deshmukh, singers Arijit Singh and Ananya Birla, film producer Sajid Nadiadwala and businessman Nikhil Kamath and Manu Kumar Jain will also take on Anand in the series of matches to be streamed live on YouTube, from 5 p.m. on Sunday.

They are coming together for a noble cause: to raise funds for COVID-19 relief. "I am looking forward to the event, which I expect will be a lot of fun," Anand told *The Hindu*. "I also hope we will



Anand, Aamir and Chahal... ready to match wits. • FILE PHOTOS

be able to raise good money."

He is delighted with the response from the celebrities. "I played Aamir in an exhibition match, six years ago and I found him a good player who is not going to drop anything in a hurry," he said. "Chahal would be a stronger opponent as he used to be a tournament player."

The wrist-spinner is one

of the three FIDE-rated players in the event. Ananya and Nikhil are the others.

"The proceeds from this event will go mainly to Akshaya Patra Foundation," said Rakesh Kulkarni, director of chess.com (India).

"We are also supporting the AICF's COVID-19 fund. We were all pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic response we received from the celebrities."



TV PICKS

**England vs New Zealand:** 2nd Test: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**Roland-Garros:** Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.  
**Euro 2020:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



**Neymar to lead Brazil at Copa America**

SAO PAULO  
Brazil coach Tite named superstar Neymar captain of his squad for the Copa America. Paris Saint-Germain striker Neymar, who missed Brazil's 2019 Copa America win due to injury, will lead a squad where Thiago Silva will replace Rodrigo Caio. AFP



**Jazz's Gobert wins NBA Defensive Player award**

NEW YORK  
Utah Jazz's Rudy Gobert was named NBA Defensive Player-of-the-Year on Wednesday, the third time the big Frenchman has won the award. Gobert (2017-18, 2018-19) is the fourth player to win the award at least three times, joining Dikembe Mutombo and Ben Wallace (both four times) and Dwight Howard (thrice). AFP

**Bhavesht stuns Prithu**

NEW DELHI  
Bhavesht Mahajan stunned top seeded Grandmaster Prithu Gupta in the third round of the National (under-18) online rapid chess championship on Thursday. Bhavesht is among the 21 leaders with three points after as many rounds. Top seed Mrudul Dehankar led 11 leaders at three points in the girls' section.

# Boxing star Dingko Singh passes away

COVID survivor succumbs to cancer after long battle

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

Asian Games gold medallist Dingko Singh, who inspired a generation of Indian boxers with his feat in Bangkok in 1998, passed away at Imphal on Thursday after a prolonged battle with cancer. His death was confirmed by a close family friend.

Dingko was 42 and is survived by his wife, son and daughter. He had been battling cancer since 2017 and recovered from a bout of COVID-19 last year.

According to boxers close to Dingko, the iconic pugilist's health started deteriorating about three months back. The end came early on Thursday.

**Rise from the depths**

Dingko rose to prominence by winning the 1997 Kings Cup in Bangkok. He could not make it to the 1998 Asian



Dingko Singh.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Games squad after his second-round exit in the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games and took to alcohol out of frustration.

Dingko was included in the squad at the last minute and gave his best to bring India its first boxing gold medal in 16 years.

In an earlier interview,

Dingko said his semifinal bout against local favourite and World No. 2 Wong Prages Sontaya was the toughest fight of his career. The Thai supporters threw beer cans at him after the bout.

Dingko beat World No. 3 Timur Tulyakov of Uzbekistan in the bantamweight final to corner glory.

On his return to Imphal, he was accorded a hero's welcome. The Manipur Government even named a road after him.

He was conferred the Arjuna Award in 1998 and Padma Shri in 2013.

"Dingko was a great fighter with great determination. Like Vijender's Olympics bronze medal, Dingko's Asian Games gold popularised boxing, especially in the northeast," said G.S. Sandhu, who was the head coach in 1998.

Middleweight boxer Jiten

der Kumar, who was Dingko's teammate at the 1998 Asian Games and 2000 Olympics, walked down memory lane.

"Dingko gave his best in the final and was completely exhausted. The crowd was hostile, but he never reacted."

Vijender Singh, who led an initiative to raise funds for Dinko's cancer treatment, was emotional and said, "It is shocking."

**Tough coach**

Dingko also left his legacy as a coach. He coached the Navy to team championship victory in the 2009 inter-Services meet and groomed some top boxers, including Olympian Anthresh Lakra and Commonwealth Games champion Suranjay Singh.

"He was a hard taskmaster, but was friendly after the training. His mantra was 'no



**Dingko Singh's highs**

- Bagged the bantamweight gold at the 1998 Asian Games
- Reached the pre-quarterfinals at the 2000 Sydney Olympics
- Conferred Arjuna Award in 1998 and Padma Shri in 2013

TRIBUTES

**You were a true hero of our nation. You leave but your legacy will live among us**  
MARY KOM

**As a youngster, I watched his Asian Games fights on a black-and-white television set in our village. He really inspired a lot of boxers**  
VIJENDER SINGH

**He was a fine boxer and a good human being**  
JITENDER KUMAR, DINGKO'S TEAMMATE AT THE 1998 ASIAN GAMES AND 2000 OLYMPICS

**Dingko was a great fighter with great determination. Dingko's Asian Games gold popularised boxing**  
G.S. SANDHU, HEAD COACH IN 1998

pain, no gain," said Suranjay. After retiring from the Navy, Dingko joined the Sports Authority of India

(SAI) at Imphal. The 2019 National boxing championships at Baddi, Himachal Pradesh, where he served as Mani-

pur's head coach, was one of Dingko's last assignments before the recurrence of cancer last year.

## Suns scorch Nuggets

NBA PLAYOFFS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LOS ANGELES

Chris Paul scored 17 points and handed out 15 assists on Wednesday to propel Phoenix Suns to a crushing 123-98 victory over Denver and a 2-0 lead in their NBA playoff series.

Veteran point guard Paul was the keystone of the Suns' dominant victory, pulling down five rebounds and finishing the night without a turnover.

Every starter scored in double figures and the Suns did not give the Nuggets a chance to celebrate the NBA Most Valuable Player award that Nikola Jokic received on Tuesday.

Devin Booker scored 18 points for the Suns. Deandre Ayton added 15



Suns' Chris Paul goes for a shot. • AP

points and 10 rebounds and also kept Jokic in check for most of the night. Jokic finished with 24 points, 13 rebounds and six assists, sitting out the fourth quarter with the Suns in full control.

**The result: WC semifinals:** Denver Nuggets 98 lost to Phoenix Suns 123 (Suns lead series 2-0).

## AICF makes course correction

Takes a zero-tolerance stand against corruption, indiscipline

CHESS

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

Apart from some much-needed constitution amendments, the All India Chess Federation (AICF) has decided to take a zero-tolerance stand against corruption and indiscipline.

All 21 amendments, including a few to set right some startling anomalies, were passed unanimously in the Annual General Meeting here on Thursday as part of the process to fall in line with the Sports Code of the Sports Ministry.

These include shifting of headquarters from Chennai to New Delhi, formation of the Ethics Commission, an

Appellate Authority and giving the competent courts in New Delhi "the exclusive jurisdiction to hear and decide any and all cases against the AICF."

The AGM also decided to disaffiliate an already-suspended Bengal Chess Association and gave affiliation to Sara Bangla Daba Sangsthan.

**Show-cause notice**

The AICF joint-secretary Atanu Lahiri has been issued a show-cause notice for anti-AICF activities. Further, an FIR will be filed against Lahiri's colleague from Bengal, Antarip Roy for maligning AICF on social media platforms.

Y. Suman, erstwhile office-bearer of the Andhra Pra-

desh, faces an FIR for having not paid the prize-money of ₹20 lakh following a tournament in the State.

"These decisions are part of AICF's 'zero-tolerance' approach to corruption. We will recover the last rupee from the defaulters in different parts of the country," declared AICF President Sanjay Kapoor after the meeting.

The meeting also decided to send Grandmaster K. Humpy's application for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna this year. The applications of GMs Vidit Gujarthi, B. Adhiban, S. P. Sethuraman and M. R. Lalith Babu will be forwarded for Arjuna Awards. For Dhyana Chand Award, GM Abhijit Kunte will be AICF's choice.

## Ramkumar & Hoang knock out top seeds

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU  
NOTTINGHAM

Ramkumar Ramanathan and Antoine Hoang of France knocked out top seeds Luke Bambridge and Jonny O'Mara of Great Britain 7-6(3), 3-6, [10-7] in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the €132,280 Challenger tennis tournament on grass here.

In the \$25,000 ITF women's event in Madrid, Karman Kaur Thandi saved five match points in the 12th game of the decider, before she lost 4-6, 6-2, 7-6(3) to third seed Robin Anderson of the USA in the pre-quarterfinals.  
**The results: €618,735 ATP,**

**Stuttgart: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Ariel Behar (Uru) & Gonzalo Escobar (Ecu) bt Niko-Loz Basilashvili (Geo) & Divij Sharan 6-4, 6-2.  
**€132,280 Challenger, Nottingham:**

**Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Antoine Hoang (Fra) & Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Luke Bambridge & Jonny O'Mara (GBR) 7-6(3), 3-6, [10-7].

**€88,520 Challenger, Lyon: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Francisco Cerundolo (Arg) & Sumit Nagal bt Evan King & Hunter Reese (USA) 4-6, 7-5, [17-15].

**\$25,000 ITF women, Madrid: Pre-quarterfinals:** Robin Anderson (USA) bt Karman Kaur Thandi 4-6, 6-2, 7-6(3).

**\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Pre-quarterfinals:** Eliakim Coulibaly (CIV) bt Siddhant Banthia 6-4, 6-3.

## Refugee athletes Luna, Mahdi to shoot in Tokyo Olympics

They were trained by Campriani along with Bindra

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Refugee athletes Luna Solomon and Mahdi have been selected to shoot in the Tokyo Olympics.

Both were chosen and trained by triple-Olympic gold medallist Niccolo Campriani since 2018, in collaboration with Abhinav Bindra.

Luna will represent the Refugee Olympic Team while Mahdi will represent Afghanistan.

"In sport, I have finally found peace. At the range, there is just me, my rifle and the target. In Tokyo, this will be no different, and I am ready to make my mark," Luna said in a statement.

"I have dreamt of the Games every day since being selected for this project and it feels incredible for this



Luna Solomon. • REUTERS

dream to have now become reality," said Mahdi.

**Hard work**

"It has been an honour to coach Luna and Mahdi, and I am so proud of what they have achieved. They have both worked relentlessly for

this opportunity and I can say with all my heart that they deserve it," said Campriani.

"I have seen the power of sports to change lives first hand. I know it changed mine. I was really taken in by the story and more importantly by Campriani's passion for the concept," said Bindra.

The shooters had trained in Bengaluru at Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance Centre last year. During their week-long stint in India, the biomechanical assessment was done and they were given customised training plans.

"I am sure the journey of Luna and Mahdi will inspire former and current Olympians to take on such initiatives and uplift lives through the power of sports," added Bindra.

## Rower Drysdale retires



Mahe Drysdale. • FILE PHOTO

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
WELLINGTON

Two-time Olympics gold medal-winning rower Mahe Drysdale of New Zealand announced his retirement on Thursday, admitting "time has beaten me" after failing to make the team for the Tokyo Games.

Drysdale, 42, has competed at four Olympics, beginning in Athens in 2004, collecting three medals including back-to-back golds in the single sculls in London and Rio.

## The cost of a pandemic-delayed Games

REUTERS  
TOKYO

Despite growing local opposition amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Tokyo Olympic Games that were postponed last year will get under way in less than two months - barring "Armageddon", as one International Olympic Committee member said.

Here are some areas where costs have grown, and where income that had been expected will not materialise.

**The costs:** Organisers said last December that the entire cost of holding the Games would come to about \$15.4 billion, including \$2.8 billion in costs for the unprecedented postponement from 2020. Since then, the projected bill for postponement has risen to \$3 billion.

**Sponsors:** More than 60 Japanese companies together



**Financial fall-out:** The economic implications for the IOC and all involved are enormous. • REUTERS

paid a record of more than \$3 billion to sponsor the Games. Sponsors paid another \$200 million to extend contracts after the Olympics were postponed.

**Insurance:** Although the cancellation scenario is looking less likely by the day, global insurers would face a hefty bill should that happen, with estimates running to a loss of \$2-3 billion.

**Economy hit:** The Olympics were originally expected to be a huge tourist draw, but banning foreign spectators put paid to hopes of an early recovery in inbound tourism, frozen since last year.

In 2019, Japan hosted 31.9 million foreign visitors, who spent nearly 4.81 trillion yen (\$44 bn). Numbers plunged 87% in 2020.

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### IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) in association with The Hindu Group brings a 15-part webinar series to provide expert career guidance to Class 10, 11 and 12 students.

**Join the webinar on**  
**12<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (Saturday) at 11:00 AM**  
to hear from the experts followed by a Q&A session.

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PSG Superspecialty Hospitals  
Coimbatore

**Dr S Rajasekaran**  
Chairman  
Department of Orthopaedics and Spine Surgery, Ganga Hospital  
Coimbatore

**Dr Ravikumar Arunachalam**  
Pro-Vice Chancellor, Medical & Health Sciences  
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**Ramya Kannan**  
Chief of Bureau - Tamil Nadu  
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