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### NEARBY



### '14-day Covishield stock for 18 to 44 age group'

NEW DELHI  
AAP leader Atishi on Saturday said Delhi received 1.67 lakh doses of Covishield for the 18 to 44 age group. "Two days of Covaxin and 14 days of Covishield stock are available for the youth," she said.

CITY PAGE 3

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## Centre invites 14 J&K leaders to meet PM Modi next week

Gupkar alliance members will discuss strategy: Tarigami

PEERZADA ASHIQ SRINAGAR

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday invited 14 leaders of Jammu and Kashmir political parties, including the National Conference, the Peoples Democratic Party and the CPI(M), for a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 24.

This will be the first political engagement by the Prime Minister since the August 5, 2019, move by the Centre to end J&K's special constitutional position.

All the leaders have been asked to come along with a COVID-19 negative certificate, officials said.



NC president Farooq Abdullah and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

Earlier, National Conference president and chief of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration Farooq Abdullah said the amalgam would meet once a formal invitation came from Delhi.

Dr. Abdullah, the MP from Srinagar who heads the alliance of five political parties, had recently showed willingness to engage with the Centre.

Sources said that he was among the first regional leaders whom New Delhi got in touch with.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6  
J&K DELIMITATION PANEL BEGINS WORK PAGE 7

## Paras-led faction announces LJP's new national executive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The LJP faction headed by Pashupati Kumar Paras on Saturday disbanded all bodies and State units affiliated with the party and announced a new national executive. The decision comes as a counter-move to the national executive meeting called by the group headed by Chirag Pas-

wan in Delhi on Sunday.

### Chirag meets Speaker

Mr. Paswan, along with a delegation, met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Saturday, urging him to review the decision to appoint Mr. Paras as the parliamentary party leader of the LJP. He claimed that according to the LJP constitution, Mr. Paras could not

have laid claim to the post.

Mr. Paras, the four MPs and a few party office-bearers who switched loyalty to him figure in the new executive. He said in a statement that all other party wings have been disbanded. Mr. Paswan has asserted that more than 90% of the national executive members are with him.

(With inputs from PTI)

## Assam to apply population norms to govt. schemes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Assam will apply "population norms" to all government schemes soon, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

"Whether it is waiver of loans or government schemes, we are going to implement the population norms in the near future," Mr. Sarma said.

## Monitor signs of surge: Centre

Don't be complacent, ensure COVID-19 norms are followed, it directs States, UTs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday asked all the States and the Union Territories to keep a close watch on signs of a surge in COVID-19 cases, and to ensure that there is no complacency in adhering to pandemic-appropriate behaviour while relaxing restrictions.

It directed them to implement the test-track-treat-vaccinate strategy to contain the spread of COVID-19.

In a letter to the Chief Secretaries of all the States and the Union Territories, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla said vaccination was critical to breaking the chain of transmission and, therefore, the respective governments



Ready to roll: A KSRTC bus being disinfected in Bengaluru on Saturday.

should step up the pace of the vaccination drive to cover the maximum number of people in an expeditious manner.

"I would like to highlight

that the decision to impose or ease the restriction has to be taken based on the assessment of the situation at the ground level. While the opening up of activities after

## 'Act against those who assault doctors'

The Centre on Saturday asked the States and the Union Territories to register cases and invoke the stringent Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Act, 2020, if necessary, against those found involved in assault of doctors and healthcare professionals.

decline in cases is essential, the States and UTs must ensure that the process is carefully calibrated," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## HC directs NHRC to examine complaints of Bengal violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court has directed the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to constitute a committee to examine complaints of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

A Bench of five judges directed that the committee "shall examine all the cases,

and maybe by visiting the affected areas, and submit a comprehensive report to this court about the present situation".

The court asked the committee to suggest "steps to be taken to ensure confidence of the people that they can peacefully live in their houses and also carry on their occupation or busi-

ness to earn their livelihood". The order, issued on June 18, directed that "the persons prima facie responsible for crime and the officers who maintained calculated silence on the issue be pointed out".

The matter will come up for hearing on June 30.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

### Casting a spell



Monsoon magic: Onlookers watch fishermen cast their net as dark monsoon clouds hover over the Brahmaputra river in Guwahati on Saturday.

## 'No rise in black money in Swiss banks'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has asserted that "there does not appear to be any significant possibility" of an increase in Swiss bank deposits from undeclared incomes of Indians, but has requested Swiss authorities to provide "relevant facts" and "possible reasons" for changes in deposit numbers.

The Ministry, reacting to reports of Indians stashing away more funds in Swiss banks through 2020, claimed customer deposits had actually fallen from the end of 2019. However, it cited several factors that could "potentially explain the increase in deposits", such as Indian firms holding more funds in Switzerland due to increased business transactions.

DETAILS ON PAGE 8

## Nation bids farewell to Flying Sikh

UTHRA GANESAN NEW DELHI

At five in the evening on Saturday, Indian track and field bid a final adieu to its first post-Independence superstar.

Padma Shri Milkha Singh succumbed to COVID-19 - af-

ter battling it for a month and five days after losing his wife Nirmal Kaur - in Chandigarh on Friday. Befitting his stature, he was accorded a State funeral with the Punjab government announcing a day of mourning in his honour.

His family, led by golfer

Jeev Milkha Singh, made sure Milkha and Nirmal weren't separated in death, cremating the 'Flying Sikh' at the same place and with a photo of his wife in his hands during the final journey.

DETAILS ON PAGE 14

## Rajasthan women vow to nurture 'green family'

Volunteers in 33 panchayats of Taranagar block plant 5,100 saplings as part of Harit Marubhumi drive

MOHAMMED IQBAL JAIPUR

Taking a pledge to treat the plants as "green members" of their families, 100 women each in 33 village panchayats of Taranagar block in Rajasthan's Churu district planted a total of 5,100 saplings earlier this week to mark the "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought". The initiative was part of a unique Harit Marubhumi (green desert land) drive.

The campaign highlighted the crucial interconnection between humanity and nature, making the tree an inseparable part of the "family consciousness", which in turn brings every issue related to plant, tree, leaves and the climate to the ecosystem for generating environmen-



Women planting saplings in Taranagar block on 'World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought'.

tal sensitivity and empowerment. All the panchayats in Taranagar block joined the drive and identified the land where the plantation drive could be taken up. Block Development Officer Sant Kumar Meena said the inaugural

programme at Gajuwas panchayat witnessed the plantation of 251 saplings of desert species such as khejri, rohida, neem, ber and sheesham. The women were also gifted with fruit-bearing saplings of lemon, guava, mulberry, jamun and pomegranate for

planting them at home. At the plantation sites, which included government schools and panchayat land, the saplings were sown at a distance of 15 feet each to help them grow with enough space and sunlight. The sarpanches of the panchayats and the women residing in the nearby areas owned up the responsibility of keeping the plants safe until they grow into trees, shrubs and perennial herbs.

UN award Shyam Sunder Jyani, the recipient of this year's Land for Life Award of the UN, guided the volunteers in preparing the soil, selecting the saplings and planting them with care. The UN Convention to Combat Desertifica-

tion conferred the award on Mr. Jyani, an associate professor at Government Dungar College, Bikaner, in recognition of his contribution to promote "familial forestry", relating the tree with the family. The award has put the spotlight on land restoration and conservation through exemplary efforts for improving the relationship of communities with nature.

More than 10 lakh families have joined the familial forestry campaign in 15,000 villages of western Rajasthan and over 25 lakh trees have been planted over the last 17 years. Mr. Jyani's concept of institutional forest has executed sustainable forest management in educational institutions by involving students and local communities.

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PHOTOS BY SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA,  
SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



# IN LINE FOR THE METRO

With Delhi Metro still operating at 50% seating capacity and officials strictly implementing COVID-19 protocols and social distancing measures, long queues inside stations and at entry gates are becoming the norm



**On the move:** Commuters at various metro stations across the national capital after the lockdown was lifted. Delhi Metro personnel either penalise or sensitise passengers violating COVID-19 norms.

**IN BRIEF**

**Water supply to be affected in parts of city**

**NEW DELHI**  
The water supply of several parts of north and south Delhi, including Civil Lines, Karol Bagh, Sangam Vihar and Moolchand, will be affected on Sunday due to high amounts of ammonia in water from the Yamuna, the Delhi Jal Board said on Saturday. "Due to increase in ammonia pollution and high algae in Yamuna river, water production has been curtailed from water treatment plants at Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla and water supply shall be affected on June 20," the DJB said.

## Speeding, drunk constable rams cab, kills driver at Barapullah flyover

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

A 35-year-old cab driver was killed when his car was hit by a speeding vehicle allegedly driven by a drunk Delhi police constable at Barapullah flyover on Friday night. The accused constable has been arrested.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) R.P. Meena said that the victim has been identified as Prem Pal, a resident of Agra, and the accused has been identified as constable Mohit Bhardwaj (35), a resident of Gautam Buddha Nagar posted in New Delhi district. His

father is also a sub-inspector in the force posted in the security unit.

The police said that they received a call around 11.30 p.m. regarding an accident at Barapullah flyover. When the police reached the spot, they found two vehicles in accidental condition. It was revealed that the constable's car was speeding and had hit the cab from behind.

The impact was such that the cab was completely crushed and the driver was severely hurt. Locals rushed him to a hospital.

Mr. Meena said that Prem Pal

was declared brought dead at the hospital and the constable was taken for medical examination. The accused was drunk at the time of the incident, a senior police officer said.

The police said that a case on charges of rash and negligent driving and causing death by negligence has been registered and further investigation is under way. Bhardwaj was on his way home after completing his duty and had two pegs of whiskey in his car before leaving, the police said. He has been working in the force since 2009.

## Draft MPD-2041 promotes cycling, walkability network

DDA yet to give nod to housing projects under land pooling policy

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

A cycling and walkability network will be a mandatory requirement under the land pooling policy, according to the draft Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) - 2041. Development of public plazas has also been laid out under the policy.

The draft MPD-2041 which was placed in the public domain recently, states, "The sector road network shall incorporate the road hierarchy and street design regulations of the plan. Cycling and walkability network shall be a mandatory requirement. All major roads [24 metres and above] shall be provided with underground utility ducts for accommodating trunk services."

**Public plazas**

"Existing revenue roads acting as major movement corridors within a sector shall be improved and/or widened and integrated into the sector layout, if feasible," it read.

The layouts are also required to incorporate public plazas of various scales to improve the availability of public spaces, according to the draft plan.

"Public plazas of minimum 2,000 square metre shall be



Under the land pooling policy, landowners with any plot size in identified areas may register to participate in the process. FILE PHOTO

planned at all major intersections of arterial-to-arterial roads as part of the sector layout plan. All mass transit stations shall provide 20% of the plot area as a single open access public plaza for spillover of passengers and multimodal integration," the draft plan stated.

Further, the draft MPD-2041 added, "All plots above a size of one hectare shall also provide 10% of the plot area as mid-street or corner public plazas."

The draft document also underscores sustainability features which multiple sectors or schemes can come together to meet the requirements.

"Physical infrastructure in the sector shall ensure 100% reuse of

treated waste water and segregation and 100% reuse of green waste. Optimum retention of stormwater for direct reuse and recharge of groundwater as per applicable norms," the draft plan read.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has not yet issued approvals to any housing project under the policy.

Under the land pooling policy, landowners with any size of land in identified areas may register and express their willingness to participate in the process. According to the policy, a minimum of 70% contiguous land of the developable area within the sector is required to be eligible for development in the area.

**J&K Lakes & Waterways Development Authority Srinagar**

**Head office:** J & K Lakes & Waterways Development Authority, Miskin, Bugh Khanar, District Srinagar - 19003  
email: - vhwda@yahoo.com

**Implementing Agency:** Executive Engineer, Executive Engineer Lake Division 1st, J & K LWDA  
email: - xeniakodiv1st@gmail.com

**Gist of e-N.I.T No. - 20 of 2021-22 Date: - 17/06/2021**

For and on behalf of The Honble Governor of J&K UT, e-tender (Two cover System), is invited from reputed and resourceful A class contractors/Firms/companies/joint venture of repute on comprehensive and extensive basis, which should be uploaded on the e-Procurement web portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> as per given bidding Schedule for below mentioned works as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification, to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed NIT/Tender Documents/ PWD Form NO.- 25 are accepted. The detailed tender document, Specifications and drawings can be downloaded on the e-procurement Portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> and also on departmental web site "[www.jkida.org](http://www.jkida.org)". The cost of the document (non-transferable/Non-refundable) should be in the shape Bank Payin Slip to be deposited in the given Divisional account No.

S. No.	Name of Work	Advertised Cost of Work	Class of Contractor	Cost of doc.	Period of completion	Tender receiving authority
01	Skimming of Dal Lake from RD 8000 Meters to 16000 meters (STP Lash to Habak) during the year 2021 and 2022 by using Algae and Floating Weed Cleaning Machines including carriage of skimmed material upto shoreline of lake and subsequent carriage by mechanical transport to final designated dumping site	Rs. 480.00 Lacs	AAY & Above	5000/-	1 August 2021 to November 2021 & April 2022 to November 2022	Vice Chairman J&K LWDA

Tender Fee to be deposited into account No. CDG/01850102 00 00 0004, JK Bank Upper Sathru (IFSC Code: JAKASATH00) through E-challan / treasury receipt/Pay in Slip

**Online bidding schedule:-**

01	Date of issue of Tender Notice	17/06/2021
02	Date of downloading of bidding documents	18/06/2021 from 10.00 A.M
03	Bid submission start date	18/06/2021 from 11.00A.M
04	Bid Submission end date	02/07/2021 up to 04.00 P.M
05	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	03/07/2021 at 2.00 P.M

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**DIPK-NB-1283/21**

Executive Engineer,  
Lake Division 1st, LDA

**HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG  
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS**

The executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Sarkaghat invites tender on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from eligible Government Contractors for the following work through offline process:-

S. No	Name of work	Estimated Cost In Rs.	Earnest money In Rs.	Cost of from In Rs.	Time
1.	GWSS Jamanl Samola in G.P Jamanl Tehsil Sarkaghat Distt. Mandi H.P (SH: C/O Intake chamber spring source, C/O Intake Chamber Nallah Source, 2 Nos, C/O 10000 Ltrs. Cap. at Node No.2 & C/O Storage tank 20000 Ltrs. Cap. at Node No.18)	3,64,709/-	7300/-	250/-	Three Months.
2.	C/O GWSS Rohan Bheyan in G.P Gounla & Rakhsoli Tehsil Sarkaghat Distt. Mandi H.P (SH: C/O Intake Chamber: spring source 2 No., C/O Intake chamber Nallah Source, 3Nos, C/O Storage tank 25000 Ltrs Cap. at Node No.2 C/O storage tank 20000 Ltrs. Cap. at Node No. 4 & C/O storage tank 5000 Ltrs. Cap. at node No.92).	4,88,477/-	9770/-	250/-	Three Months.

Last date sale of tender form from Divisional 02-07-2021  
The tender form and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the website [www.hphhp.org](http://hphhp.org), or from office above Executive Engineer upto date specified.

Executive Engineer,  
Jal Shakti Division, Sarkaghat

EEP / 1682/21-22

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that a person (depicted in the photo), **Name: Bal Kishan S/o Bhole Rahore R/o H. No. G-48, Gali No. 13, Post Office Wali Gali, Jagjeet Nagar, Delhi has been missing since 24.05.2021 from his house. In this regard a case vide DD No. 92A dated 24.05.2021 has been lodged at Police Station New Usmanpur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-**

**Age :** About 90 Years, **Height:** 6', **Complexion :** Fair, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing :** White colour kurta-doti & white colour safa and bare footed.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing person, may inform SHO, New Usmanpur, Delhi, at E-mail id - [cic@cbl.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbl.gov.in) or Website: <http://cbl.nic.in>

Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641  
011-24368638, 24368641  
P.S. New Usmanpur, Delhi  
North-East Distt., Delhi  
Ph. No. 011-22172410, 22175468  
DP/816/NE/2021

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that a person namely **Md. Sajid Saifi, S/o: Md. Khalid, R/o: H.No. B-84, Gali No. 2, Chand Bagh, Delhi has been missing since 19.03.2021 from her house. In this regard DD No. 157-A dated 23.03.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi.**

The description of missing person is as under:

**Name: Md. Sajid Saifi, Age: 44 Years, Height: 6', Face: Long, Built: Thin, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Checkdar Shirt, Black Jeans Pant and Black Shoes in Feet.**

If anyone has any information about this Missing person please inform P.S. Dayal Pur, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbl.nic.in>, Email: [cic@cbl.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbl.gov.in)  
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Police Station, Dayal Pur, Delhi  
Ph: 011-22800215, 875087025  
DP/712/NE/2021

## 40-year-old held for posing as Army officer

**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI**

A 40-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly posing as an Army officer to impress women on social media, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (South) Atul Thakur said that the accused has been identified as Dilip Kumar, resident of Sainik Enclave in Mohan Garden, who works as a security guard at a school.

The police said that on Friday around 3 p.m., following a tip-off, the accused was arrested near GK-I. He had come there to meet a date. "He was in an Army uniform. A fake ID card and a mobile phone were seized from him," Mr. Thakur said. The accused told the police that he posed as Captain Shekhar to impress women on social media.



'H.P. BJP leaders may join Cong'

There is discontent and factionalism within BJP, says Cong. leader Sanjay Dutt

After his week-long visit to Himachal Pradesh in the wake of his appointment as co-incharge for the party affairs in the State, Sanjay Dutt feels the Congress is all set to dethrone the BJP government in the Assembly polls due late next year. The party's mission is to 'Save Himachal' from the misrule of the BJP.



Himachal Pradesh Congress co-incharge Sanjay Dutt.

Mr. Dutt, who is also All India Congress Committee secretary, told The Hindu that the BJP government in the State has failed to fulfil its election promises and not only the people of the State, but many of its own leaders are annoyed and disappointed by the governance.

"The BJP in Himachal Pradesh is facing deep factionalism. The government has failed to deliver on all fronts. There are several disgruntled leaders in the BJP, who are in touch with us, who want to switch sides. While I can't name them till talks get material-

ised, but I can assure that there's a lot of discontent and factionalism within the BJP," said Mr. Dutt.

'BJP's misgovernance' "In the last four years there has been a complete misgovernance. The mishandling of COVID-19 is the latest example of poor governance. Especially in rural areas where health facilities are poor, people are suffering badly. The BJP's failed governance has taken the State back at least 20 years," he said.

"People expected development in the State when

they voted the BJP to power, but instead what they got is rise in unemployment, poor roads, collapsing health sector and pitiable development of infrastructure. The government failed to do anything concrete for the tourism and allied sectors. The people voted the BJP to power in Himachal as they fell for its 'double engine' story. Himachal Pradesh has been completely neglected by the BJP-led Centre," he said.

Dismissing that there's any factionalism in the Congress's State unit, Mr. Dutt said, "As far as the Congress is concerned, every senior leader has assured that they are united to bring back a Congress government in the State in 2022. I am positive and optimistic that everyone will put joint efforts to achieve the party's mission. We have to save Himachal and our party stands united to achieve this objective. Suggestions have come up about being more aggressive to raise people-centric issues at macro and mi-

cro levels," he added.

Mr. Dutt said during his recent visit, he had one-to-one interactions with senior party leaders, MLAs, office-bearers and workers and frontal organisations. He said he would reach out to the party workers at the block levels.

'Outreach plan'

"I will try to reach out to every worker at the block level in the Assembly segments. When we need to get the pulse of any Assembly and block segment, then the ideal way is to go there and meet workers and leaders. My priority is to focus on the 2022 Assembly election and upcoming bypolls for the Mandi Lok Sabha and the two Assembly segments of Fatehpur in Kangra and Jubbal Kotkhai in Shimla district. Besides, we are soon launching the COVID-19 outreach campaign. The party would be reaching out to the front-line health workers and those severely affected by the virus," he said.

Amarinder defends jobs for sons of Cong. MLAs

SAD seeks State govt.'s dismissal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHANDIGARH

Under fire from the Opposition over giving jobs to the sons of two Congress MLAs, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday defended his government's decision, saying it was in recognition of the sacrifices made by their grandfathers, who laid down their lives for the country.

The State Cabinet had on Friday decided to appoint Arjun Pratap Singh Bajwa as an inspector in the Punjab Police and Bhisham Pandey as a naib tehsildar in the Revenue Department as a "special case" on "compassionate" grounds.

Mr. Bajwa is the son of Qadian MLA Fareh Jung Singh Bajwa and Mr. Pandey is the son of Ludhiana legislator Rakesh Pandey. Mr. Bajwa is the grandson of former Minister Satnam Singh Bajwa who laid down his life in 1987 while Mr. Pandey is the grandson of Joginder Pal

'Merit should be criteria'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PATIALA

Former legislator Navjot Kaur Sidhu criticised the decision, saying only merit should be the criteria. Talking to reporters at Chaura village in Sanour constituency in Patiala, Ms. Sidhu said rather jobs could have been given to a sportsman or a ward of a freedom fighter.

Pandey was gunned down by the terrorists in 1987, the government had said. Capt. Amarinder said those who make a sacrifice for the nation can, and should, never be forgotten.

Meanwhile, the SAD urged the Governor to dismiss the government by taking suo motu notice of the manner in which the CM was allegedly "purchasing" the loyalty of the Congress legislators.

10-day-old child 'sold', rescued in Bhubaneswar

Parents parted with him for ₹10,000

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

A 10-day-old infant was rescued by the Bhubaneswar police after his biological parents, who were reportedly struggling to make both ends meet due to poverty, sold him for ₹10,000 to a couple in the city.

The incident had taken place on June 14, but it came to light on Friday. The woman, who had 'bought' the baby boy, was identified as Sumedin Bibi. She has admitted to have paid the money.

The infant was produced before the Child Welfare Committee, Khordha, a quasi-judicial body constituted as per the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

As per the CWC's order, the child was placed with Subhadra Mahataba Seva Sadan, a special adoption agency for rehabilitation of children, on Saturday. Ms. Bibi has been taken into custody.

"The parents have not been traced. They used to live near the Bhubaneswar railway station," said Arun Swain, Inspector-in-charge of Kharavelanagar police station.

District Child Protection Officer Banishree Patnaik received a videoclip regarding the 'sale', which she forwarded to Childline, an NGO which works for the protection of children.

"After receiving information about the 'sale', we constituted a team and took help of the city police. Following the intervention of the police, the baby was rescued from Malisahi area of Bhubaneswar," said Benudhar Senapati, Director of Childline.

Mr. Senapati said, "The woman told the investigators that the couple did not have any resources. So they offered to sell their child for ₹10,000. Since the woman did not have any children, she went for the deal."

Childline has lodged a police complaint in the city's Kharavelanagar police station.

THE HINDU CLASSIFIEDS LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU MATRIMONIAL BRIDEGROOMS WANTED COSMOPOLITAN NRI DOCTOR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PUNJABI TAMIL TELUGU MARRIAGE BUREAU REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL COLLEGES GENERAL SITUATION REQUIRED BUSINESS OFFER BUSINESS



IN BRIEF Sultana to appear before Kavarratti police today

Lakshadweep-based filmmaker Aisha Sultana will appear before the Kavarratti police for questioning on Sunday on a sedition case filed against her for her comment on a Malayalam news channel in connection with the pandemic situation in the archipelago.

EAPCET replaces EAMCET, to be held from August 19

The Andhra Pradesh Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (EAPCET)-2021, formerly called EAMCET, will be conducted online from August 19 to 25 in the State.

Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh said the notification for the test would be issued on June 24, and candidates could submit applications between June 25 and 26.

NGT closes proceedings against Mekedatu dam project

It finds merit in Karnataka govt's submission



A file photo of Mekedatu. The Karnataka government has submitted that environmental clearances are still pending.

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has closed proceedings against the Mekedatu dam project after finding merit in the Karnataka government's submissions that requisite environmental clearances were pending consideration before the statutory authorities concerned.

The observations came when the green panel took suo motu cognisance of media reports on allegations of violations of environmental norms in the construction of the dam.

A Bench headed by the NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "We find merit in the sub-

mission of learned A-G (Attorney General) for the State of Karnataka that the media report does not mention that the issue of statutory environmental clearances is already pending consideration before the statutory authorities concerned. Even the very same media report has raised the issue before the State of Tamil Nadu in its submission before the Ministry of Jal Shakti..."

Accordingly, proceedings before this Tribunal are closed without prejudice to rival contentions of the parties on the subject in proceedings pending before the statutory authority concerned and before the Supreme Court," the Bench said, while observing that the State of Tamil Nadu had raised the issue before the apex court.

The Karnataka government had contended that the media report had failed to disclose the fact that the process of obtaining necessary clearances was pending before authorities. All issues, including those of environmental, forest and wildlife clearances, were already a subject matter of consideration before the authorities, it had said.

However, the counsel appearing for the Tamil Nadu government opposed the stand and submitted that the environmental issue be examined by the Tribunal. "Further, the same issue has also been raised by the state of Tamil Nadu before the Supreme Court. Thus there is no need for this Tribunal to continue the suo motu proceedings," the NGT said.

The news report in question had stated that the construction of the dam would have adverse impact on forests and sanctuaries.

Sudhakaran-Pinarayi war of words escalates

KPCC chief says he was a victim of political violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

The ugly spat between Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president K. Sudhakaran escalated on Saturday, with the latter accusing his arch rival of being the fountainhead of political violence in Kannur.

At a press conference characterised by combative language and stormy rhetoric, Mr. Sudhakaran said Mr. Vijayan had orchestrated the murder of scores of political opponents in the State. The Congress, he said, lost 28

workers to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) violence in Kannur.

Mr. Sudhakaran said he was the prime victim of CPI (M) violence in Kannur. "They ambushed my car thrice. I never take the same route. Congress workers guarded my house. I travel in a cavalcade for protection. The CPI(M) foisted false cases on me, including two murders. The court threw both out," he said.

He said he had no blood on his hands. In contrast, Mr. Vijayan was the first accused in the murder of Bharatiya Janata Party activist Vadikkal Ramakrishnan. He reasserted that he had physically confronted Mr. Vijayan in the heat of a Brennan College



K. Sudhakaran

campus brawl between Left and Congress student unions in 1967.

Mr. Sudhakaran's claim, which appeared in a magazine, had provoked Mr. Vijayan to lambast him at a press briefing on the COVID situation on Friday.

He claimed that part of an interview that appeared in the magazine had been disclosed "off the record". It was not his intention to demean the Chief Minister or air a tall claim about his martial prowess.

"Nevertheless, I stand by what appeared in the magazine, though it was without my consent."

'Can disprove charge'

Mr. Sudhakaran denied Mr. Vijayan's insinuation that Left student activists had stripped him of his clothes and chased him in Brennan College.

He was ready to produce any number of the then students and teachers at the college to disprove the allega-

tions made by the Chief Minister.

The Congress leader said the allegations like plans to kidnap Mr. Vijayan's children were absolutely false. Mr. Vijayan should have approached the police when he learnt that there was a plot to kidnap his children. Instead, he kept the threat a secret from his wife, he said.

The CM had accused Mr. Sudhakaran of plotting to kidnap his children when they were school students.

He said the allegations against him were aimed at diverting attention from the serious accusations facing the government on the issue of illegal tree felling at Muttill in Wayanad district and other parts of the State.

Stop T.N.'s river linking project: panel

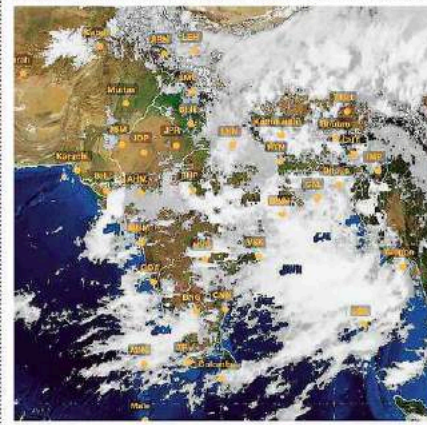
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

The Chairman of the Karnataka Border and Rivers Protection Commission has advised the State government to approach the Union government to restrain Tamil Nadu from taking up its project of inter-linking the Cauvery with the Gundar and the Vaigai till Karnataka's legitimate share of surplus water is determined.

K.L. Manjunath, chairman of the commission and former judge of the High Court of Karnataka, in his letter dated June 18 addressed to Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, said the State also had to approach the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) to settle equitable distribution of the Cauvery waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu by way of an amicable settlement.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17:00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over east Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Bihar, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh

Table with columns: CITY, RAIN (MM), MAX, MIN, CITY, RAIN (MM), MAX, MIN. Lists cities like Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, Allahabad, Bangalore, etc.

Red flags removed in Lakshadweep

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

Members of the Lakshadweep district panchayat and the village (dweep) panchayat in Kavaratti on Saturday removed red flags said to have been posted by the authorities to delineate several plots of land in the southern part of the island.

A panchayat member said they protested what they termed as 'land encroachment' by the administration. "The authorities had put up red flags in several areas which led to protests following which flags were removed from some of them," he said.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Table with columns: CITIES, SO2, NO2, CO, PM2.5, PM10, CODE, Yesterday. Lists cities like Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, etc.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

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

Ghaziabad assault case: SP worker arrested

Video was made with an intention to create disharmony: FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA GHAZIABAD

A Samajwadi Party worker was arrested on Saturday for allegedly instigating an elderly Muslim man to claim in a video that he was beaten up by four youths who also chopped his beard and asked him to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' in Loni area of Ghaziabad.

Ummaid Pehelwan Idrisi, absconding since Wednesday when an FIR was lodged against him at the Loni Border police station, was nabbed from Delhi on Saturday, a Ghaziabad police official said.

"The accused, identified as Ummaid Pehelwan, was held near the LNJP hospital in Delhi by a team of Ghaziabad police. He is being brought here for further proceedings in the case," Gha-

ziabad Senior Superintendent of Police Amit Pathak said.

The FIR, filed against Idrisi on the complaint of a local policeman, alleged that he had 'unnecessarily' made the video - in which Abdul Shamad Saifi narrates his ordeal.

It was made with an intention to 'create social disharmony' and shared through his Facebook account, the FIR said. He was booked under IPC sections 153A (promoting enmity between groups on ground of religion, class etc), 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious belief), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) and 505 (public

mischief).

A separate FIR was lodged against him on Thursday evening in Bulandshahr district that charged him and around 100 others with violation of the COVID-19 norms by holding a public gathering on June 16, the officials said.

Bulandshahr resident Saifi, who had made communal allegations in his video on June 14, had earlier on June 7 alleged in a complaint to the Ghaziabad police that he was assaulted by four youths on June 5 after being abducted by them and confined in a room in a secluded field in Ghaziabad's Loni area. On being asked about Saifi's allegations, Mr. Pathak had said earlier that the elderly Muslim man had made no communal allegations in his original complaint.

Cong. will be No. 1 party in Maharashtra: Patole

State unit marks Rahul Gandhi's birthday

STAFF REPORTER MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Congress on Saturday decided to observe June 19 as 'Resolve Day' to mark the birthday of former party president and Lok Sabha MP Rahul Gandhi.

State Congress chief Nana Patole said he would ensure that it would emerge as the No. 1 party in the State in the next Assembly election. He said, "When I became State Congress president and met Sonia Gandhiji, she told me that Maharashtra has always been Congress's turf and it should remain so. I promised her that I would bring back those days and started working with that aim from Day 1. We resolve to make Congress the No. 1 party in the State."

Mr. Patole was speaking at the inauguration of the refurbished Tilak Bhavan, the State party headquarters, in the presence of senior party lead-

ers. Former Congress leader and BJP MLA Dr. Sunil Deshmukh rejoined the party on the occasion. The move is likely to boost the party's electoral prospects, especially in Vidarbha.

Mumbai Congress president Bhaji Jagtap gave the call to fight the polls independently. "Please allow us to fight the upcoming elections independently. It is our turn to show the strength of the party," he said.

Several speakers, including three former chief ministers, pledged to strengthen the party and take it to the top. As part of the initiatives to mark Mr. Gandhi's birthday, the party pledged to provide food, check-ups, and medicines to 1,000 malnourished children in Mumbai's slums.

Last week, Mr. Patole said he was willing to be the face of the party in the polls with the high command's consent.

Dairy dept. to give land for NDRF base camp in Mahad

RAINIA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

Raigad Guardian Minister Aditi Tatkare has said the Maharashtra Dairy Department has given its in-principle nod to provide five acres of land to set up a base camp of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at Mahad.

"Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development Sunil Kedar confirmed the move in a meeting at Mantralaya," she said. With the Konkan region being prone to cyclones, especially Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts, the need was felt for a centrally located NDRF camp. "The State has submitted a

proposal to the Centre for further approval," she said.

District Collector Nidhi Choudhari said Raigad's geographical location exposed it to natural calamities. "The district has a large industrial network, the Mumbai-Pune National Highway and Expressway, Mumbai-Goa National Highway, waterways and railway lines. The 'Golden Hours' are very important for rescue operations in emergencies. If the NDRF team is permanently stationed at Mahad, rescue work can be speeded up and loss of life can be avoided. Usually, we wait for the team to arrive from Pune," she said.

Karnataka State Building & Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board. E-Auction Notification. Board is inviting competitive rate of interest through e-Bidding on the e-Procurement portal of Govt. of Karnataka from the Regional / Zonal / Head Offices of the Nationalized Banks for Non-Callable Fixed / Term Deposits of 'Surplus Funds' as below.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE. WE MISS YOU. BISHOP DR. M. PRAKASH. SISWA MINISTRIES (FOUNDER). 10.05.1949 - 20.05.2021. YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A PART OF US IN OUR HEARTS AND IN OUR MEMORIES. WE MISS YOU SO FONDLY AND REMEMBER YOU IN EVERY MOMENT OF OUR LIFE.

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES. U. LOGABABU. A. P. Mohandas. In memory of your loved ones. To dedicate a space in this section, please contact: 011-43579797. www.thehindus.com



## Notices to IMA over Ayurveda comments

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI**  
A Delhi court sought response from the Indian Medical Association, its president, secretary and others seeking an apology for alleged derogatory remarks against Ayurvedic treatment and medicines.  
Civil Judge Deeksha Rao issued the notices to IMA, Dr. J.A. Jayalal, Dr. Jayesh Lele, National Medical Commission and Bureau of Indian Standards on a suit filed by Rajender Singh Rajput and sought their reply by July 9. The suit sought a direction from the court to IMA to desist from making derogatory statements and hurting the sentiments of Ayurvedic believers.

# Left, Congress also demand withdrawal of W.B. Governor

Mamata says she has written to PM three times on the issue; Trinamool should write to the President on withdrawal, says Congress leader

**SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA**  
The Left parties and the Congress may be drifting apart with regard to their electoral alliance, but they have joined the Trinamool Congress in demanding the withdrawal of West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar.  
The Trinamool Congress has been officially demanding that Mr. Dhankhar be recalled by the Union government. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi three times on the issue.

government should officially write to the President on the withdrawal of the Governor.  
Earlier this week, Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and chairperson of the Left Front, Biman Bose, said the Governor was "identifying himself as a BJP man".  
"The way the Centre is intervening in affairs of the State and the State government isn't right. This includes the role of the Governor... What he is doing isn't right either," he observed.  
On their ties with the Left, Mr. Chowdhury said, "At this moment, we cannot say we are in alliance with the Left parties or not".  
The understanding with the Indian Secular Front



Widening rift: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar last year.

(ISF) had tarnished the image of the alliance and its acceptability among the public, he stated. The Congress had never allied with the

and the alliance was with the Left parties. "If we had an alliance with the ISF, then why they would put candidates against the Congress in Mur-

shidabad district?" the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha asked.  
Ever since the bad performance in the Assembly elec-

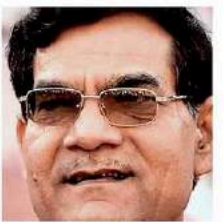
tion in the State, when the Left and the Congress failed to win a single seat, differences in the alliance started appearing.  
The Congress and the Left were also divided over fielding a candidate against Ms. Banerjee in the Bhawanipur bypoll.  
**New Delhi visit**  
Meanwhile, Mr. Dhankhar has completed his visit to New Delhi. In fact, he met the Congress leader there.  
During the day, he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the second time in the past few days of his visit to the national capital.  
Speaking to presspersons in New Delhi, he said the rule of law must be restored in

West Bengal.  
Before his visit to New Delhi, he had written a strongly worded letter to the Chief Minister on the post-poll violence in the State.  
"Your studied silence, coupled with absence of any steps to engage in rehabilitation and compensation to alleviate the unimaginable suffering of people, force an inevitable conclusion that all this is State-driven," he said.  
In response, the State Home Department said the Governor making the letter public was "violative of all established norms and disrupts sanctity of such communications" and the contents of the communication were "not consistent with real facts".

## Former IAS officer A.K. Sharma made BJP vice-president in U.P.

Formerly with the PMO, he takes charge ahead of the poll

**OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW**  
Arvind Kumar Sharma, the IAS officer who took voluntary retirement and joined the BJP, was on Saturday appointed a vice-president of the party's Uttar Pradesh unit.



Arvind Kumar Sharma

dance of seniors and support of my karyakarta friends, I will be involved in the service of the society, the State and the nation," Mr. Sharma said on Twitter.  
Archana Mishra of Lucknow and Amit Valmiki of Bulandshahr were also appointed as State secretaries by the BJP.  
In preparation for the State election, the BJP has also announced the heads of its various morchas (organisations) in the State. Former MP Narendra Kashyap was appointed the head of the Backward Morcha, while Kaushal Kishor, MP from Mohanlalganj, retains the BJP's Dalit wing.  
Geeta Shukla, Rajya Sabha MP from Auraiya, is the head of the women's wing.

## Mehbooba's uncle released after 6 months

**PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR**  
Sartaj Madani, uncle of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti, was released on Saturday after six months in preventive detention in Srinagar.  
An official said Mr. Madani's detention period under Section 107 and 151 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) was coming to an end. His release, however, comes amid a buzz that the Union government was formally inviting the political parties from Jammu and Kashmir to New Delhi for a dialogue in the last week of June.  
Mr. Madani was earlier arrested on August 5, 2019, when the Centre ended J&K's special constitutional position, and was released in 2020

## 'India misrepresenting ICJ verdict in Jadhav case'

Islamabad abides by all its international obligations, says Pakistan's Foreign Office

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD**  
Pakistan on Saturday accused India of "misrepresenting" the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case and asserted that it was ready to fulfil all obligations under international law.  
India on Thursday asked Pakistan to address the "shortcomings" in a Bill brought out to facilitate the

reviewing of the case, adding that the proposed law did not create a mechanism to reconsider it as mandated by the ICJ. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi in New Delhi said the Review and Reconsideration Bill, 2020, did not create a mechanism to facilitate the effective review and reconsideration of Mr. Jadhav's case as mandated by the ICJ judgment. He added that municipal courts could

not be the arbiter of whether a state had fulfilled its obligations under international law.  
Mr. Jadhav, a retired Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani court on the charges of espionage and terrorism in 2017. The ICJ ruled in 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of Mr. Jadhav's conviction.  
Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) on Saturday said Isla-

mabad abides by all its international obligations, and this applied to the ICJ judgment in Mr. Jadhav's case. "It is regrettable that the Government of India has chosen to misrepresent the ICJ judgment, which clearly states in Paragraph 147 that Pakistan is under an obligation to provide, by means of its own choosing, effective review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav," the FO said.

## 'Walking with pride remains only motto'

**STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI**  
In a scathing attack without naming the Congress, its ally in the Maharashtra government, which has repeatedly spoken of going solo in future elections, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said his party would "neither act feeble nor carry one's weight for the sake of power and walking with pride remains the only motto".  
In an online address to its workers on the party's 55th foundation day, Mr. Thackeray highlighted the importance of a federal structure by congratulating the voters of West Bengal, and reiterated that "no political party has a patent on Hindutva as Sena still maintains it [Hindutva] in its heart".

## As Rahul turns 51, birthday wishes pour in from allies

Cong. leader decides not to celebrate in view of COVID-19

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**  
Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi turned 51 on Saturday and with talks of a larger coalition to counter the BJP, his birthday in a way became a roll call for the Opposition parties who are on the same platform.  
At the last count, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, former Prime Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Deve Gowda, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supreme Sharad Pawar, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah wished him on the occasion.



Rahul Gandhi

that surrounds us."  
Mr. Stalin, who met both Mr. Gandhi and his mother on his first trip to Delhi after winning the Tamil Nadu Assembly election, tweeted: "Wishing my beloved brother Rahul Gandhi on his birthday and I join others in praising his selfless, untiring work to establish an egalitarian India in every aspect. His commitment to the ethos of the Congress Party has been exemplary." Even Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who faces the Congress in Delhi and Punjab and has kept his distance from the Opposition bloc, wished Mr. Gandhi.  
Mr. Gandhi decided not to celebrate his birthday in view of the pandemic.

## J&K delimitation panel begins work

It writes to all 20 DCs seeking basic demographic, topographic information

**NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI**  
The Delimitation Commission for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has kicked off the exercise by writing to all 20 District Commissioners (DC), seeking basic demographic, topographic information as well as the local administration's impressions of political aspirations of the district.  
According to government sources, the letter went out to all DCs in the first week of June. While the Commission asked for a response within two days, it was sent off, by all DCs, at the end of the week.  
The Commission was set up in February-March 2020 to delineate Assembly and parliamentary constituencies, and was given a year's extension last March. It is on-



New blueprint: Jammu and Kashmir was kept out of the delimitation exercise between 2002 and 2008.

sembly and Parliament seats. The Commission, headed by Justice (retired) Ranjana Prakash Desai and comprising two other members, had called for a meeting in February 2021, where only two of its five associate members - Union Minister Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore Singh, MP - attended. National Conference leaders Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Hasnain Masoodi, MP, and Mohammad Akbar Lone did not attend.  
The renewed push by the Centre for talks has raised hopes not only of early Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir but also of an eventual restoration of statehood, which was taken away under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, a reading down of Article 370 of the Constitution.

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एम्स), कल्याणी  
ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), KALYANI  
(स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के तवाकधान में एक सांविधिक निगम)  
(A Statutory Body under the Aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI)  
राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग-34, बसन्तपुर, सागुना, कल्याणी, जिला-नदिया, पश्चिम बंगाल-741245  
NH-34 Connector, Basantapur, Saguna, Kalyani, District Nadia, West Bengal 741245  
Date: 18.06.2021

VACANCY NOTICE FOR FACULTY POSTS IN AIIMS, KALYANI  
APPLICATIONS FOR THE POST OF ASSISTANT PROFESSORS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS, ADDITIONAL PROFESSORS AND PROFESSORS, IN AIIMS, KALYANI, WEST BENGAL

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Kalyani, an Institute of National Importance is one of the new upcoming AIIMS and apex healthcare institute under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) has been established by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India, with the aim of correcting regional imbalance in quality tertiary level healthcare in the country, and attaining self-sufficiency in graduate, postgraduate and higher medical education and training.  
Online applications from Indian citizens/persons registered as Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder under Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 as permissible under the applicable Act/Rules are invited for the following faculty posts on DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Kalyani (West-Bengal).

Sl. No.	Departments	Name of the Posts & Numbers of Vacancy							
		Professor		Additional Professor		Associate Professor		Assistant Professor	
		Category	Total	Category	Total	Category	Total	Category	Total
1	Physiology	1-UR	1			2-UR, 1-OBC	3	1-OBC	1
2	Anatomy			1-UR	1	1-UR	1	1-UR, 1-SC, 1-OBC	4
3	Biochemistry			1-UR	1	1-SC	1	1-UR, 1-ST	2
4	Microbiology	1-OBC	1	1-UR, 1-OBC	2	1-UR, 1-OBC	2	1-UR, 1-OBC	2
5	Pathology/Lab Medicine			1-UR, 1-SC	3	1-EWS	1	2-UR, 1-SC, 2-OBC	6
6	Pharmacology	1-UR	1	1-UR	1	1-UR	1	1-SC, 1-ST, 1-OBC	3
7	Community Medicine/Family Medicine							2-UR, 1-SC	4
8	Forensic Medicine/Toxicology	1-OBC	1	1-UR	1	1-SC	1		
9	General Medicine	1-SC	1			1-OBC	1	1-UR, 1-SC, 1-OBC	4
10	Paediatrics	1-EWS	1	1-OBC	1	1-ST	1	1-UR, 1-EWS	3
11	Psychiatry	1-UR	1					1-UR	1
12	Anaesthesiology	1-OBC	1	1-SC, 1-ST	2	1-SC, 1-OBC	2	1-UR, 2-OBC	3
13	Dermatology			1-OBC	1	1-EWS	1	1-SC	1
14	Obstetrics & Gynaecology	1-ST	1	1-UR	1	2-UR	2	1-OBC	1
15	Ophthalmology	1-SC	1	1-UR	1	1-SC	1	1-UR, 1-ST	2
16	Orthopaedics	1-OBC	1	1-EWS	1	1-OBC, 1-ST	2	1-SC, 1-OBC	2
17	ENT	1-UR	1			1-OBC	1		
18	General Surgery	1-UR	1	1-EWS	1	1-UR, 1-EWS	3	1-OBC, 1-EWS	2
19	Pulmonary Medicine	1-SC	1			1-OBC	1	1-UR, 1-OBC	2
20	Transfusion Medicine & Blood Bank	1-OBC	1	1-OBC	1	1-UR	1	2-UR	2
21	Nuclear Medicine							1-OBC	1
22	Radio Diagnosis	1-EWS	1	1-UR	1	1-UR, 1-OBC	2	1-SC, 1-ST	2
23	Radio Therapy	1-UR	1					1-UR	1
24	Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	1-UR	1			1-UR	1	1-OBC	1
25	Gastroenterology	1-OBC	1					1-EWS	1
26	Medical Oncology/Hematology	1-SC	1	1-OBC	1			1-UR	1
27	Neonatology	1-UR	1	1-SC	1	1-SC	1		
28	Nephrology	1-ST	1					1-SC	1
29	Neurology	1-OBC	1					1-OBC	1
30	Cardiology	1-UR	1					1-UR	1
31	Endocrinology & Metabolism					1-UR	1	1-UR	1
32	Neurosurgery							1-UR	1
33	Paediatric Surgery	1-EWS	1	1-UR	1			1-OBC	1
34	Surgical Gastroenterology							1-SC	1
35	Surgical Oncology	1-SC	1					1-ST	1
36	Urology							1-EWS	1
37	Burns & Plastic Surgery	1-OBC	1					1-OBC	1
38	Cardiothoracic Surgery							1-UR	1
39	Dentistry	1-UR	1			1-OBC	1	1-UR, 1-SC	2
	Total	10-UR, 5-SC	28	10-UR, 3-SC	22	12-UR, 6-SC	32	22-UR, 12-SC	65

\* 4% of the total vacancies is horizontally reserved for PwBD (OH-OL and BL) candidates and also PwBD as per the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's Notification No. 16-15/2010-DD.III dated 29th July, 2013 as amended from time to time as applicable. For details of advertisement including educational qualifications, age and eligibility criteria etc., kindly visit the Institute's website <https://www.aiimskalyani.edu.in>. The last date for submission of online applications is 30 days from the date of publication of advertisement in the Employment News/Rojgar Samachar.  
Previous advertisement for the Recruitment of Faculty Posts (Group-A) in various Departments at AIIMS Kalyani on Direct Recruitment Basis vide advertisement no: AIIMS/KALYANI/RECT./FAC-III/2020-21/853 dated 03.12.2020, as published in Employment News, various news papers and institute website hereby stands as CANCELLED due to administrative reason. Those candidates who applied for the same against the said advertisement on payment of application fees may apply through email: [recruitment@aiimskalyani.edu.in](mailto:recruitment@aiimskalyani.edu.in) for refund of the paid application fees with proof of depositing the same. Any updates including corrigendum or addendum for this advertisement will be published in the institute website only.

Sd/-  
Executive Director  
AIIMS Kalyani



**DPIIT Secretary G. Mohapatra passes away**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI  
Guruprasad Mohapatra, Secretary, Department of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), died of COVID-19 related complications at AIIMS on Saturday. Mohapatra, 59, was admitted to AIIMS in mid-April. He is the first serving Secretary to the government of India to have succumbed to COVID-19. Prior to his role as DPIIT Secretary, Mohapatra served as chairman of the Airports Authority of India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences to the family.

**'Act against those who assault health workers'**

Home Secretary calls for FIRs and fast-tracking of cases

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday advised the States and the Union Territories to register cases against those involved in assaulting doctors and healthcare professionals. "In the present circumstances, it has become imperative that strict action be taken against those who assault healthcare professionals," he said in a letter to the States and the Union Territories. He said institutional first information reports (FIRs) should be registered against the offenders and such cases should be fast tracked. "You may also like to invoke provisions of the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Act, 2020, where applicable," he said.



**On the frontline:** A doctor taking a short break in the midst of COVID-19 duty in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. •K.R. DEEPAK

Mr. Bhalla said a close watch should be kept on any objectionable content in social media that might exacerbate such situations. "Concerted efforts should be made through posters in hospitals, social media, etc. to emphasise the valuable contribution being made by doctors and other healthcare personnel in the fight against COVID-19," he said. He urged the States and the Union Territories to take all necessary measures on a priority basis and proactively engage with members of the medical fraternity to assuage their concerns.

**3.6% of population fully vaccinated**

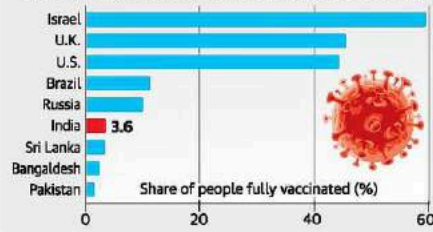
43.8% of those aged above 45 and 47.2% of those above 60 have got one dose

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

India recorded 56,687 new COVID-19 cases and 1,527 new deaths till 9.15 p.m. on Saturday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,98,79,477 cases and 3,86,694 deaths. Kerala reported 12,443 new infections, followed by Maharashtra (8,912) and Tamil Nadu (8,183). Maharashtra recorded 682 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (180) and Karnataka (161). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports. The figures do not include cases and deaths from Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins. Around 19.02 lakh samples were tested in the coun-

**Long way to go**

Only 3.6% of India's population has received both doses (fully vaccinated) of a COVID-19 vaccine. The corresponding figure for Brazil and Russia stood at 11.35% and 10.21% respectively



try on Friday (the results for which were made available on Saturday).

**30 lakh jobs**  
Over 30 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Saturday, which is around 41,000 doses more than what was recorded in the previous 24

hours. However, it is 1.34 lakh doses fewer than what was recorded during the same period a week ago. The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 31.05 lakh on June 18, which is slightly more than the 29.96 lakh recorded a week before (June 11). However, it is significant-

ly higher than the average daily doses recorded a month before (May 18) which stood at 14.68 lakh. About 23.8% of adults in India, 43.8% of those aged above 45, and 47.2% of people aged above 60, have been administered at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8.45 p.m. on Saturday. While 16.3% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 3.6% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021. The share of people who are fully vaccinated in comparable economies such as Brazil and Russia is 11.35% and 10.21% respectively. Among neighbouring countries, about 2.58% of Bangladesh's population is fully vaccinated while the figure for Pakistan and Sri Lanka stood at 1.5% and 3.5% respectively.

**Medha seeks release of elderly prisoners**

Activist approaches SC with plea

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL**  
NEW DELHI

Activist Medha Patkar has approached the Supreme Court, saying its intervention to release prisoners to avoid spread of COVID-19 was hardly helping elderly people, especially those aged above 70, who lived in anxious isolation behind bars. The court had, in *suo motu* hearings, ordered the States to form high-power committees (HPCs) to consider and release prisoners on interim bail or parole to decongest prisons on a war footing. Prisoners who were more susceptible to the infection should get priority and be released on an urgent basis. "The most susceptible ones are the aged/elderly prisoners, who have a higher chance of getting infected, specifically septuagenarian prisoners," Ms. Patkar noted in a petition filed through advocate Vipin Nair.

nerable to the virus. Many elderly inmates, after decades behind prison walls, were prone to cognitive decline and dementia. There may be others who needed care due to anxiety, anger issues, stress and agitation caused by isolation during the pandemic. "Chances of law and order situation on account of release of elderly prisoners are less, as the tendency to indulge in repeated offences reduces at such an age," she argued. **Uniform method** Ms. Patkar asked the Supreme Court to direct the Centre and the States to "adopt a uniform method for release, either on interim bail or emergency parole, to safeguard the interests of the elderly prisoners who have been incarcerated for years together". Ms. Patkar contended, "Unless the aged prisoners are given special treatment and considered for release either on interim bail or emergency/special parole, the possibility of their exposure to infection and ultimately succumbing to the virus is very high". A prisoner too had the right to life and dignity. Living in congested prisons during a pandemic was a threat to their lives. The Health Ministry had issued a "Health Advisory for Elderly Population of India" during COVID-19, highlighting the essentiality of maintaining social distancing so as to reduce the mortality rate within prisons, she pointed out.

**State action**  
Only the HPCs in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana had taken steps to release the aged prisoners. "Most of the remaining States have not even discussed the issue of releasing the aged prisoners nor seem to do so in future meetings of their HPCs," the petition said. The "conditions in some of the States like Gujarat and Rajasthan are the worst". The petition said the aged may form only a minuscule part of the prison population but were the most vul-

*All is quiet*



**No buzz:** Although Odisha has started a partial relaxation of curbs in some districts, roads remained deserted in Bhubaneswar on Saturday during the weekend shutdown. •BISWARANJAN ROUT

**BJP demands White Paper on COVID-19 toll in Odisha**

Party MLAs say ex gratia should be paid to kin of victims

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha unit of BJP on Saturday demanded that the Naveen Patnaik government present a White Paper on the actual number of lives lost in the State during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The rising number of deaths has made people of the State distraught. The daily death figures put out by the government does not match with reports appearing in media and cremations being conducted as per COVID-19 guidelines," said Mohan Charan Majhi, BJP chief whip in the State Assembly,

addressing a press conference in the capital Bhubaneswar. The government's hesitance to reject media reports about COVID-19 deaths indirectly proved the authenticity of media reports, Mr. Majhi alleged. The government should present a White Paper taking into account the cremations being conducted in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines. **Letter to CM** In a letter addressed to Mr. Patnaik, all BJP MLAs wrote that the State government should announce ex-gratia

for the people who succumbed to virus as the COVID-19 pandemic. They alleged the State government was not implementing Ayushman Yojana due to political reasons. "The State government should take advantages of all Central schemes by keeping itself above any party affiliation. Though the State claims to be implementing Biju Swasthya Yojana, the scheme only helps those who live in Odisha whereas Odias outside State are not able to access healthcare in the best medical facilities," the MLAs wrote.

**Youth held for murder of his family in Malda**

Bodies exhumed from the house

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
KOLKATA

The West Bengal police on Saturday arrested a 19-year-old youth at Kaliachak in the State's Malda district for allegedly killing four family members and burying them in a room of their house four months ago. Four bodies, which could be of the father, mother, sister and grandmother of the accused, were exhumed from the house and sent for post-mortem examination, Superintendent of Police, Malda, Alok Rajoria told journalists. The police officer said the accused, on February 28, 2021, had spiked the drinks

of the family members with sleeping pills and after they fell unconscious, tied their hands and gagged them with duct tape before the murder. The incident came to light after the elder brother of the accused informed the police. The elder brother had fled to Kolkata after the incident. The police said they were also investigating the role of the elder brother, who claimed that he had fled in February when other members of the family were killed. The police said that an investigation was on to find the motive behind the murders.

**Drugs seized in Assam, Arunachal**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

The drive against drugs in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam has led the security forces to a few women-run operations. The anti-drug squad of the police in Arunachal Pradesh's Tirap district on June 18 arrested a woman identified as P. Gangsa for carrying 5.69 gm of brown sugar concealed in seven plastic containers. The driver of an Assam-registered vehicle she was travelling in was also arrested. Tirap's Superintendent of Police Kardak Riba said the woman, on the radar for quite some time, led to the arrest of the kingpin of the drug racket from the Tissa area in the district. On June 17, the Assam Police arrested two persons, including a woman, at Khatkhati in Karbi Anglong district. They seized from the duo's possession 164 packets of high-grade heroin weighing 2.12 kg and worth ₹7 crore in the grey market. Khatkhati is close to Nagaland's Dimapur, seen as the hub of illegal drug, arms and wildlife body parts trade. Kevin Movi, who was arrested with Didi, is from Dimapur. The woman turned out to be Th. Paone, referred to as Didi by drug buyers. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma referred to her arrest as a major breakthrough, praising the police for busting a "big supply chain network with narco-terror angle" in Karbi Anglong. The district police said the trap to nab Didi was laid after the seizure of 723 grams of heroin at Barpathar.

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**Poetry comes to the rescue during the pandemic**

Kolkata writer puts together healing collection

**BISHWANATH GHOSH**  
KOLKATA

To respond to the pandemic with poetry – the idea came to Kolkata poet Kiriti Sengupta in April 2020 when, during the COVID-19-forced nationwide lockdown, he chanced upon a piece in the *Irish Times*. Chris Fitzpatrick, the author of the article, had said: "In time, we will need poets and writers of the imagination to look through the looking glass – and tell us the stories of this strange, upside-down world. We will need more than a vaccine and a rebooted economy to heal us." In a matter of just one month, *Hibiscus* was ready,



Kiriti Sengupta with the anthology. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

brought out by Hawakal Publishers, the publishing house Mr. Sengupta is associated with. As many as 104 poets across the world – including some of India's biggest names such as Keki N. Daruwalla, Sudeep Sen, Marmang Dai, Sanjeev Sethi – contributed to the collection, which rolled off the

press in the midst of the lockdown. "Our contributors couldn't believe we got the book out so quickly. The Okhla unit of Thomson Press [in Delhi] was operational, and I remember Bitan [Chakraborty, owner of Hawakal] and I going to the DTDC office [in Kolkata] one after-

noon to collect the books," said Mr. Sengupta, a dentist-turned-poet who has edited seven anthologies apart from publishing 11 books of his own poetry and prose. *Hibiscus* turned out to be Hawakal's best-selling title in 2020. Amid the pandemic gloom, it sold close to 400 copies – a big number for a book of poems – and the first reprint appeared in July 2020. Its success encouraged Mr. Sengupta to seek submissions for a subsequent collection, titled *Shimmer Spring*. It came out in November 2020, when India was emerging from the first wave of COVID-19, and showcased works of 39 poets (including those from India, the U.S., the U.K., Norway, Pakistan and Peru). "Hawakal published *Shimmer Spring* as a stun-

ning, all-colour, hardcover coffee-table book. They even offered the contributors an honourarium. Tagore's words – 'light that emanates from the core of gloom is your glow. Goodness, wide-awake among all discord, is your truth' – were the most significant motivation as I conceived this book. I was curious to explore how contemporary writers derive and disperse light," said Mr. Sengupta. For many years the light Mr. Sengupta, 46, was himself most familiar with was the one he shone into his patients' mouths. After graduating from the North Bengal Dental College in 1998, he worked as a dental surgeon in government institutions and also in a private capacity before giving it all up in 2011 for his writing.



# Judiciary chief Raisi wins Iran presidency

He won nearly 62% of ballots in an election that recorded lowest turnout; Mohsen Rezaei came second

**ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DUBAI**

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief won a landslide victory on Saturday in the country's presidential election, a vote that both propelled the supreme leader's protégé into Tehran's highest civilian position and saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history.

The election of Ebrahim Raisi, already sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, became more of a coronation after his strongest competition found themselves disquali-



**Power booster:** Supporters of Ebrahim Raisi during the election campaign in Esfahan, in this file photo. •A.P.P.

from running.

That sparked calls for a boycott and many apparently did stay home — out of over 59 million eligible voters, only 28.9 million voted. Of

those voting, some 3.7 million people either accidentally or intentionally voided their ballots, far beyond the amount seen in previous elections and suggesting

some wanted none of the four candidates.

Iranian state television immediately blamed challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and U.S. sanctions for the low participation. But the low turnout and voided ballots suggested a wider unhappiness with the tightly controlled election, as activists criticized Raisi's ascension.

**Amnesty's call**

"That Ebrahim Raisi has risen to the presidency instead of being investigated for the crimes against humanity of murder, enforced disappearance and torture is a grim

reminder that impunity reigns supreme in Iran," Amnesty International's Secretary-General Agnes Callamard said.

In official results, Mr. Raisi won 17.9 million votes overall, nearly 62% of the total 28.9 million cast. Had the voided ballots gone to a candidate, that person would have come in second place. Following Mr. Raisi was former hard-line Revolutionary Guard commander Mohsen Rezaei with 3.4 million votes.

Former Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati, came in third with 2.4 million votes.

# A loyal ally of the clerical establishment

The 60-year-old, believed to be close to Khamenei, has held various positions in the judicial system

**STANLEY JOHNS**

With the victory of Ebrahim Raisi, the conservative chief of Iran's judiciary, in Friday's presidential election, the country's clerical establishment has tightened its grip on the Islamic Republic. Mr. Raisi, who won 62% of the vote, would replace the moderate President Hassan Rouhani, whose tenure was marked by international diplomacy, pressure, regional tensions and growing protests and crackdown at home.

The 60-year-old Mr. Raisi, who traces his lineage back to the Prophet Mohammed (which allows him to wear a black turban), is a senior figure in Iran's establishment. He contested the 2017 Presidential election, but lost to Mr. Rouhani.

But the defeat did not deter Mr. Raisi's rise as one of the most important clerics in the country's tightly held politico-religious system. In 2019, Mr. Raisi was appointed the Chief Justice. In the same year, he was named deputy chief of the 88-member Assembly of Experts, the clerical body that will pick the next Supreme Leader when Ayatollah Ali Khomei-

nei departs.

In the presidential election, there were complaints that the establishment was favouring Mr. Raisi. Mr. Rouhani, a popular figure among reformists and moderates, is constitutionally barred from seeking a third consecutive term. Prominent moderate candidates, former Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani and outgoing Vice-President Eshaq Jahangiri, were excluded from running by the Guardian Council.

The 12-member Council, which vets potential candidates, allowed only seven contestants to run. Mr. Raisi was the only prominent candidate on the list. Closer to the election, two more candidates dropped out, boosting Mr. Raisi's chances. There were no surprises when the results were announced.

Born in 1960 in a village near the holy city of Mashhad, Mr. Raisi, as a teenager, studied in a Qom seminary. When Iran erupted against the rule of the Shah in the late 1970s, Mr. Raisi, like many other seminary students, liberals and leftist activists, joined the protests. After the Pahlavi dynasty was



Ebrahim Raisi

overthrown and Iran became an Islamic Republic, Mr. Raisi began his judicial career as a prosecutor in the city of Karaj. He moved to the capital in 1985 after he was appointed a deputy prosecutor of Tehran. It was this time Mr. Raisi got the attention of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic.

**'Death Commission'**

After the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88, Khomeini issued secret decrees condemning thousands of political prisoners (mostly members of the People's Mujahedin of Iran, a dissident group backed by Saddam Hussein that carried out attacks after Iran accepted a ceasefire, and supporters of leftist factions such as the Fedaiyan and the Tudeh Party) to death. Then a four-man commission, which is widely

known as the "death commission", was set up to carry out the executions. Mr. Raisi was reported to be a member of the commission.

A 2019 U.S. Treasury Department release, which imposed sanctions on top Iranian officials, including Mr. Raisi, "for advancing domestic and foreign oppression", states that "as deputy prosecutor general of Tehran, Mr. Raisi participated in a so-called 'death commission' that ordered the extrajudicial executions of thousands of political prisoners in 1988." Iran has never acknowledged the killings. Mr. Raisi has never talked about it publicly.

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

Always a loyal ally of the establishment, Mr. Raisi has held several important positions in Iran's judicial system. From 2004 to 2014, he was the First Deputy Chief Justice. In 2014, he was named the Attorney-General of Iran, a position which he held until 2016. Then Mr. Khamenei appointed him to run the Astan-e Quds-e Raza'i (Imam Reza charity foundation), which manages a

wide network of businesses and endowments. When he was appointed to the foundation, Mr. Khamenei called Mr. Raisi a "trustworthy person with high-profile experience", a rare praise from the Supreme Leader that fuelled speculations that the Ayatollah could be grooming him as a potential successor.

**Challenges ahead**

After his election victory, Mr. Raisi could now claim some popular legitimacy. Mr. Khamenei himself was a two-term President before he was chosen as the Islamic Republic's second Supreme Leader in 1989. But as President, big challenges are awaiting Mr. Raisi.

Iran's economy is practically in shambles. Negotiations to restore the nuclear deal, which Mr. Raisi has supported, are under way. More importantly, the country has seen repeated mass protests in recent years, which the regime has put down using force.

Mr. Raisi ran a campaign promising that he would tackle "poverty and corruption, humiliation and discrimination". Now it's time for him to deliver.

# Afghan President replaces top Ministers as Taliban advance

Ghani reshuffles Defence and Interior Ministry portfolios

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL**

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani replaced two top Ministers charged with managing the country's faltering security on Saturday, as the Taliban pressed on with their campaign to capture new territory in fierce battles with government forces.

The shake-up of the Defence and Interior Ministry portfolios comes as violence surges and peace talks remain deadlocked, with the Taliban claiming to have seized more than 40 districts in recent weeks across the rugged countryside.

The presidency announced in a statement that General Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, who fought under the late anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Massoud during a 1990s civil war, has been appointed the new Defence Minister.

Gen. Mohammadi has previously held the Defence



Bismillah Khan Mohammadi

and Interior Ministry portfolios and also served as the chief of army staff after the fall of the Taliban regime following a U.S.-led invasion in 2001.

Mr. Ghani also appointed General Abdul Sattar Mirzawal as Interior Minister, the presidency said. Mr. Mirzawal has previously held several regional posts.

Gen. Mohammadi replaced Asadullah Khalid, who has repeatedly flown out of the country for treatment to wounds suffered after a sui-

cide bomber attacked him in 2012.

The latest Cabinet changes, which have to be approved by Parliament, come with violence increasing since early May after the U.S. military began the formal withdrawal of its last remaining troops. U.S. President Joe Biden has set September 11 — the 20th anniversary of the attacks in the U.S. — as the deadline for withdrawal of American soldiers.

The insurgents claim to have seized more than 40 districts since early May, forcing military leaders to strategically retreat from a number of rural districts.

The Taliban are now present in almost every province and are encircling several major cities — a strategy the insurgents employed in the mid-1990s when they overran most of Afghanistan until they were ousted by invading U.S.-led forces.

# Kim rejigs politburo, tightens party discipline

He urges measures to tackle food crisis

**REUTERS  
SEOUL**

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has reinforced the ruling Workers' Party discipline and appointed new members of its powerful politburo, state media KCNA reported on Saturday.

The party's central committee held a plenary meeting for a fourth and last day where it reviewed organisational and ideological issues for its central leadership organ.

Some members of the leadership expressed "remorse for failing to live up to the expectations," after Mr. Kim pointed out "serious problems" with their lifestyle, KCNA said, without elaborating.

The party gathering



Kim Jong-un

kicked off on Tuesday.

During earlier sessions, Mr. Kim called for measures to tackle the "tense" food situation, blaming the coronavirus pandemic and last year's typhoons. He urged preparation for both dialogue and confrontation with the United States in his first direct comment on U.S. President Joe Biden's administration.

# Palestine nixes vaccine deal with Israel

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RAMALLAH**

The Palestinian Authority said on Friday it cancelled a swap deal that would have seen Israel provide it with one million COVID-19 jabs, as the doses were "about to expire".

Israeli officials had announced the deal, saying the Jewish state was to provide the doses to the Palestinian Authority.

The PA had confirmed the delivery "in the coming days" of a million vaccine doses, without mentioning an agreement with the Jewish state. PA spokesman Ibrahim Melhem said on Friday that an initial delivery of some 90,000 Pfizer doses failed to conform "to the specifications contained in the agreement."

# Putin makes spending promises for ruling party ahead of polls

He names Shoigu, Lavrov to United Russia's candidates' list

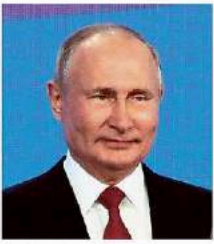
**REUTERS  
MOSCOW**

President Vladimir Putin sought on Saturday to give Russia's ruling party a pre-election boost by promising to spend big on infrastructure, education and health.

Mr. Putin, 68, also announced his key allies, the Defence and Foreign Ministers, would front the campaign for the ruling United Russia party for September's parliamentary elections.

The jailed Alexei Navalny, Mr. Putin's most prominent domestic critic, and his allies, are barred from the elections after they were declared "extremists".

Speaking at its party congress, Mr. Putin praised United Russia for its "ability to renew and constantly develop".



Vladimir Putin

and top diplomat Sergei Lavrov to head the list of party candidates at the elections.

"I'm sure that United Russia sets the highest bar for itself, which is to confirm its leadership position and to clinch a win at the elections," he said.

Mr. Putin did not name Dmitry Medvedev, the party leader and former President and Prime Minister, among the top candidates. Opinion polls have shown Mr. Medvedev has a low popularity rating.

Andrei Kolesnikov, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Moscow Center, said Mr. Lavrov and Mr. Shoigu were the most popular Ministers.

"It's enough to show those two guys to the population, and it's obvious that this is Putin's party," he said.

# Saudi Arabia destroys 10 Houthi drones

**REUTERS  
DUBAI**

Saudi Arabian air defences on Saturday destroyed 10 armed drones launched by Yemen's Houthi movement towards the south of the Kingdom, state TV cited the Saudi-led coalition as saying.

The Houthi military spokesman said on Twitter that one drone was launched at a military base in Khamis Mushait.

The military coalition led by Riyadh later in the day said two more drones were fired at Khamis Mushait while seven drones were fired towards the south of the kingdom. All of these were intercepted.

The Iran-aligned Houthi is frequently targeted Khamis Mushait and other Saudi cities along the frontier in the more than six-year-old Yemen war.

# Ebola outbreak in Guinea is over: WHO

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
NZERÉKORÉ**

The World Health Organization on Saturday officially announced the end of Guinea's second Ebola outbreak which was declared in February and claimed 12 lives.

At 16 confirmed cases and seven probable infections, according to WHO figures, the limited size of the latest flare-up has been credited to experience from the 2013-16 epidemic, which killed more than 11,300 people mostly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Just 12 people died this time around.

"I have the honour of declaring the end of Ebola" in

Guinea, WHO official Alfred Ki-Zerbo said at a ceremony in the southeastern Nzérékore region, where the disease surfaced at the end of January.

International rules meant that Guinea had to wait 42 days — twice the virus' incubation period — without a new case before declaring

the epidemic over.

That wait was over on Friday, weeks after the last person was declared cured on May 8, a senior Health Ministry official said.

Health Minister Remy Lahmah also declared the outbreak finished "in the name of the head of state" President Alpha Conde.

# Lebanon leaders may face sanctions, says EU

'Strike a deal with IMF to end crisis'

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIRUT**

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned on Saturday that Lebanese leaders could face sanctions unless they pull the country away from financial collapse and strike a deal with the IMF.

Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has described as one of the world's worst economic crises since the 1850s.

A political crisis has left the country without a functioning government since

the last one resigned after a massive explosion killed dozens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in 2020.

Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese President Michel Aoun, Mr. Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of the EU".

"The crisis Lebanon is facing is a domestic crisis, is a self-imposed crisis, not a crisis coming from abroad or from external factors," he said.

# Venezuela opposition camp to seek U.S. support

Lifting of sanctions is on the agenda

**REUTERS  
CARACAS**

A committee of Venezuelan opposition politicians will travel to Washington and Brussels to seek support and consult its allies on their positions about an eventual lifting of sanctions, Opposition leader Juan Guaido said on Friday.

Mr. Guaido told reporters that the committee travelling to the U.S. and Europe is the same group that has been meeting with officials from Norway in recent

weeks in an attempt to establish a dialogue with President Nicolas Maduro's government, which stands accused of vote-rigging and rights violations.

Mr. Guaido, who has proposed a "national salvation agreement" to help Venezuela emerge from economic collapse and political crisis, last month said he would support lifting of sanctions on government on the condition that Mr. Maduro agrees to hold "free and fair" presidential elections.

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Tender through e-procurement portal mode are invited from contractors/agencies who are reputed individuals/company and having past experience for the work of "In-Situ reconditioning of boiler stop valves (50 Nb/Motor operated gate valve/C2500SPL/WC9/BW) of RITPS units 1 to 8 for the year 2021-22" EMD: Nil. Interested Bidders may submit the bids through GOK e-procurement portal only. Last date for queries / clarification: 28-06-2021 up to 16:00 hrs. Last date for submission of completed bids (2 Parts): 30-06-2021 up to 16:00 hrs. Opening of technical bid (Part 1): 02-07-2021 @ 11:00 hrs. Opening of financial bid (Part 2): 05-07-2021 @ 11:00 hrs. Further details can be had from the office of: The Superintending Engineer (Mechanical Maintenance-1), RITPS, Shaktinagar-584170, Raichur District. Mobile: 9449597966

**The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd.**  
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)  
(An ISO 9001, ISO 14001 & OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company)  
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Phone: 0476-2651215 to 2651217  
Fax: 91-476-2680101, 2688721. E-mail: contact@kmmml.com, URL: www.kmmml.com

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Competitive tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal <https://tenders.kerala.gov.in> or [www.kmmml.com](http://www.kmmml.com)

Tender ID	Items
1 2021_KMML_425766_1	For the supply of Roaster Exhaust Stack
2 2021_KMML_426227_1	For the Supply of PVC Pipe and Fittings
3 2021_KMML_426208_1	For the supply of HT Soft Starter for 1250 KW, 6.6 KV, 50Hz, 3 Phase Squirrel Cage Induction Motor
4 2021_KMML_425181_1	For the supply of Digester Gear Box
5 2021_KMML_426214_1	For the supply of High Tension Roll Separators

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**Ph.D ADMISSION NOTIFICATION FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-22**  
The Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad in collaboration with Telangana University, Nizamabad invites applications for Admission into Ph.D Programme in Development Studies for the Academic Year 2021-22. The Programme is offered in the following subjects:  
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Last date for receiving Applications: 20 July 2021  
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20 June 2021 DIRECTOR

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S. No.	Name of the Posts	Vacancies	Pay Matrix Level and Basic Pay
<b>TECHNICAL</b>			
1	Chief Manager (Technical / Associate Professor)	05 (UR-4, OBC-1)	VII CPC Pay Matrix Level 13 (Basic Pay: Rs. 123100/- p.m.) with applicable allowances.
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Filed in applications strictly in the prescribed format along with requisite self attested enclosures must reach to "Sr. Officer (Admin./HR), CIPET Head Office, T.V.K. Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032" latest by 30.07.2021 by Registered / Speed Post.

The Candidate should clearly mention "Adv. No. with date" and Name of the post applied for, on top of the envelope. Candidates who have applied against our earlier Advertisement No. CIPET/HO-AI/1/2021 dtd. 17.02.2021 for Posts under Sl. No. 2 & Sl. No. 4 above, need not apply again.

## SNAPSHOTS



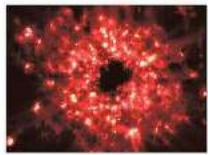
## Bird song captured

By mathematically modelling the changes that happen to a zebra finch's vocal organ — the syrinx — researchers were able to recreate its song, down to the pitch, volume and timbre. This approach, according to the researchers, is easier than mapping the neural activity directly to the songs. The study was published in *Current Biology*. This can be the first step towards providing vocal prostheses.



## Bypassing barriers

A major challenge in the treatment of neurological disorders is in getting past the blood-brain barrier. Now, in an article published online in *Nature*, scientists have imaged a transporter protein molecule called MFSD2A which pulls omega-3s across the blood-brain barrier. Their study suggests that this molecule can, if better understood, help deliver drugs to the brain.



## Seeding a giant

Supermassive black holes have masses a million or even a billion times our sun. One such is found at the centre of our galaxy and it is about a million solar masses. Since it is believed these existed even in the very early universe, scientists are looking for a mechanism for their formation. New research published in *The Astrophysical Journal* says that they could have been seeded by the collapse of a dark matter halo.

## Do excess deaths suggest mortality crossed one million?

Besides models, all-cause mortality numbers from India's Civil Registration System suggest that official figures may have been exceeded by far

R. PRASAD

If the official count as on May 15 was over 0.27 million deaths in India since the pandemic began, based on modelling, *The Economist* had estimated around one million COVID-19 deaths as on May 15. Against a daily tally of over 4,000 deaths in May this year, the report estimated between 6,000 and 31,000 excess deaths per day. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) estimated that India will have one million COVID-19 deaths by August 1.

Based on modelling, a few Indian researchers outside India too had predicted that unrecorded COVID-19 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic might be at least five times greater, taking the total COVID-19 deaths in India to over one million. "We have estimated death underreporting by a factor of two-five in the first wave. Now with the surge, the reporting infrastructure has probably eclipsed dramatically. So I expect the underreporting of deaths to be massive right now," Dr. Bhramar Mukherjee, Professor of Epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of Michigan told *The Hindu* on April 24.

## State-to-State variation

"I think that underreporting varies a lot from State to State, and possibly also over time. Even within States, it is probably different in urban and rural areas. Many of the estimates (including my own median estimate of five times) are based on 2020 data. It's too early to know whether underreporting has been higher during this wave, but as more data comes in, this will become clearer," Dr. Murad Banaji who has been modelling COVID-19 and a senior lecturer in Mathematics at Middlesex University, London says in an email to *The Hindu*. "It may be that the speed of the surge meant that fewer of the deceased were tested, fewer received hospital care, and more died at home. All of these factors would tend to increase underreporting."

While the official cumulative COVID-19 death toll stands at over 0.385 million (3.85 lakh) as on June 18, the actual count might far exceed the one-million mark if the



Collective grieving: Mass cremations of recently deceased on the banks of the Yamuna river in Garh, Uttar Pradesh. • BLOOMBERG

models are to be believed. Besides modelling studies, all-cause mortality numbers from India's Civil Registration System (CRS) from Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Assam do indicate that COVID-19 deaths in the country might be much greater than the official figures.

## Excess deaths registered

Based on data from the Civil Registration System, from January to May this year Madhya Pradesh reported 42 times excess deaths while Andhra Pradesh reported 34 times excess deaths. In comparison, Tamil Nadu reported 6.2 times more deaths from April last year to May 2021, and Karnataka reported five times the reported deaths in 2021.

The excess deaths in the four large States have exceeded 0.5 million in the first five months of 2021 as against around 46,000 reported COVID-19 deaths in these States this year. "Not all these 'excess deaths' need to be COVID-19 but they are pandemic-related, in the sense that we would not be seeing them if the pandemic was not around," says Chinmay Tumbbe, Assistant Professor at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad and author of the book, *'The Age of Pandemics'*. "These four States comprise 21% of India and collectively are showing an under-reporting factor above 10. I would estimate the lower bound

for excess deaths for all-India for the first five months of 2021 at 1.5 million."

Dr. Banaji is a little more cautious while interpreting excess deaths based on civil registration data but does agree that it serves as a pointer to huge underreporting of COVID-19 deaths. "Civil registration data is not always easy to interpret, and we have to remember that civil registration is not complete in every State. Bearing this in mind, and bearing in mind that we can't assume that the excess deaths are all from COVID-19, the all-cause mortality data coming through strongly suggests — as suspected — that underreporting of COVID-19 deaths is a major and widespread problem," he says.

Additional, indirect evidence of the shocking rise in mortality during the second wave came from far in excess cremations seen in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and a huge number of bodies floating in Ganges and buried on the banks of the river in Uttar Pradesh. "The speed of the surge means that the rise in mortality became very clear whether we look at obituaries, cremations, news reports from villages, or registration data," Dr. Banaji says.

"The excess cremations and bodies floating in the river may provide some empirical evidence for underreporting of deaths, but any conclusive statement cannot be made without reviewing linked

medical certificates and/or verbal autopsies," cautions Dr. Tanmay Mahapatra, epidemiologist and public health expert in an email.

Despite ICMR guidelines on appropriate recording of COVID-19 deaths, many States simply did not record deaths as due to COVID-19 in the absence of positive test results, leading to many COVID-19 deaths being missed. According to the guidelines, suspected COVID-19 deaths which are not confirmed through testing should be reported as such. The same applies to comorbidities. States such as Gujarat wrongly claimed to be following ICMR guidelines when deaths of patients with comorbidities were not counted.

## Role of variants

Besides testing capabilities being stretched beyond capacity during the second wave, Dr. Mahapatra points out the role of variants in returning negative results even when the patient has COVID-19 symptoms. "There was some concern that newer variants are somewhat altering the sensitivity of the tests," he says.

"If we applied our current protocols to the 1918 influenza pandemic, we would find that no one died of influenza in India even though the estimates are now placed at 20 million," says Dr. Tumbbe. "The reason: No one was 'tested' for influenza back then and the government had the common sense to note that if you died

there is limited cause of death data, verbal autopsies have been recognised as a scientifically valid method of estimating cause-specific mortality," says Dr. Mahapatra.

Emphasising the importance of verbal autopsy Dr. Banaji says, "Jharkhand has set a good example by doing this survey. Trying to accurately measure mortality over the course of the pandemic is crucial to understanding its impact. Verbal autopsies can be a valuable element in such surveying."

Though Mumbai and Delhi witnessed a huge number of cases in both waves, one can expect underreporting in cities to be on a lower scale than in rural areas but cannot be ruled out. "We know that underreporting in cities can also be high. The impacts on marginalised communities may not be captured in death registration data. So, even in cities, it's crucial to have civil registration data, and ideally mortality surveying to assess the pandemic's impact," says Dr. Banaji.

## Incorrect classification

For instance, excess deaths that went unrecorded were five times in Bengaluru since January this year and 10 times in Hyderabad during the period April 2020 to May this year. "It is hard to know why this factor is so high, and whether we'll see similarly high underreporting from other cities during this wave when they release mortality data. It is possible that the speed and scale of the surge meant that more people died at home without being tested. It is also possible that a large number of deaths were incorrectly classified," says Dr. Banaji.

"These examples show that while we might, in general, expect reporting from cities to be better than from rural areas, we cannot always assume that this will be the case," Dr. Banaji adds.

In most cases, cities have access to medical certification and have the data within the public system to know what the actual number of excess deaths is. So it should not take much time to analyse the data. It is important to note that transparency and timeliness in death reporting are integral for the success of health emergencies and in ensuring better preparedness.

## Are your staple rice and wheat losing their nutrients?

One reason could be that the rate of yield increase is not compensated by the rate of nutrient uptake by plants

ASWATHI PACHA

Rice, domesticated by humans over 10,000 years ago has now become the staple food for more than three billion people. But today's rice does not have the same density of essential nutrients as those cultivated 50 years ago, notes a new study. Researchers from various institutes under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya found depleting trends in grain density of zinc and iron in rice and wheat cultivated in

India. The findings were published last month in *Environmental and Experimental Botany*.

The team collected seeds of rice (16 varieties) and wheat (18 varieties) from the gene bank maintained at the ICAR-National Rice Research Institute, Chinsurah Rice Research Station and ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research.

## Cultivar repositories

"These are nodal institutes that preserve and archive the old cultivars or varieties from our country. These in-

stitutes are repositories of genetic materials. If you want to study the genuine variety, or as botanists call them, 'the true type' of a plant, these institutes are your source," explains Professor Biswapati Mandal from the Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya, West Bengal, and one of the corresponding authors of the paper.

The collected seeds were germinated in the laboratory, sown in pots and kept under an ambient environment outdoors. They were treated with the necessary fertilizers and the post-harvest seeds

were studied for their nutrient content.

## Falling nutrients

The team noted that zinc and iron concentrations in grains of rice cultivars released in the 1960s were 27.1 mg/kg and 59.8 mg/kg. This depleted to 20.6 mg/kg and 43.1 mg/kg, respectively in the 2000s. In wheat, the concentrations of zinc and iron — 33.3 mg/kg and 57.6 mg/kg in cultivars of the 1960s, dropped to 23.5 mg/kg and 46.4 mg/kg, respectively in cultivars released during the 2010s.

Sovan Debnath, the first author of the paper explains: "There could be several possible reasons for such depletion: one is a 'dilution effect' that is caused by decreased nutrient concentration in response to higher grain yield. This means the rate of yield increase is not compensated by the rate of nutrient take-up by the plants. Also, the soils supporting plants could be low in plant-available nutrients." He is a doctoral researcher at Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya and a scientist for ICAR. "Zinc and iron deficiency

affects billions of people globally and the countries with this deficiency have diets composed mainly of rice, wheat, corn, and barley. Though the Indian government has taken initiatives such as providing supplementation pills to school children, it is not enough. We need to concentrate on other options like biofortification, where we breed food crops that are rich in micronutrients," he adds.

## Not sustainable

The paper concludes that "growing newer-released



Depleted soils: Another reason for low nutrients can be that the soils supporting plants could be low in plant-available nutrients • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

(1990s and later) cultivars of rice and wheat cannot be a sustainable option to alleviate zinc and iron malnutrition in Indian population. These negative effects need

to be circumvented by improving the grain income (that is, nutritional make-up) ...while releasing cultivars in future breeding programmes"

## Dog language now falls in line: pattern analysis study

The analysis is a tool for behavioural biologists to study their model animals

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

A pattern-analysis study of free-ranging dogs has come up with an interesting result that compares the language used by dogs with that of humans and other phenomena. The interdisciplinary study, which used a dataset of about 5,000 sightings of stray dogs, showed the existence of a power law dependence of dog behaviour that was a lot similar to graphs of human language.

A member of the team walked on randomly chosen streets and whenever a dog was seen, its behaviour at that instant was noted by them. "This way, we got a population-level random sample of behaviours of dogs at different places and times. We had a corpus of 93 unique [examples of] behaviour," says Arunita Banerjee, a PhD student at the Behaviour and Ecology Lab, in the Department of Biologi-

cal Sciences at Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata. She is an author of the paper describing the work which has been accepted for publication in the journal *Heliyon* and has been posted online.

## Power laws

Power law dependencies are seen in many places in nature and in structures made by humans. An example of this is the set of words in a corpus — namely, if you take each word, count its frequency of occurrence and rank the words according to their frequency, and then make a log-log plot of the rank on the X-axis and frequency on the Y-axis, you will see that the plotted points all fall on a straight line with a slope -1 (minus one).

"Power-law dependencies suggest that there is, or are, underlying mechanism(s), but extracting those mechan-



Canine culture: The dogs' language is a complex one involving intricate behavioural displays — gestures, vocalisations, movements, mating rituals etc. • ANINDITA BHADRA

isms is not enabled by the power-law distribution, and requires further analyses of the time series," says Ayan Banerjee from the Department of Physical Sciences of Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata, who is a corresponding author of the paper. The present study works on the premise that the dogs' language is a complex one involving intricate behavioural displays — gestures, vocalisations, movements, mating rituals etc. From the dataset of

5,000 sightings, the group ranked the gestures according to the frequency of use and constructed a log-log plot. The plot approximated a straight line with a slope equal to -1.7 (minus 1.7).

## Multifractal behaviour

The group also observed a multifractal characteristic of the data. As explained by Nirmalya Ghosh, from the Department of Physical Sciences, IISER Kolkata, and an author of the paper: "When we plot the rank-frequency

The log-log plot of the rank-frequency curve was approximately a straight line with negative slope equal to -1.7

curve in a log-log scale, we observe that different sections of the data fit different straight lines (that is, they have different slopes). This implies they have different power law dependencies which is indicative of a multifractal nature."

As Ayan Banerjee explains, "From a pure probability-based statistical analysis, one would expect that a high probability event would be the most likely to happen, and thus a rare-occurrence event would be immediately followed by a common one."

Thus, it would seem likely that a dog barking, would be followed by it sleeping — which is not what actually occurs in reality. "However, the multifractal analysis tells us that behaviours of particular ranks are clustered together. This implies that a be-

haviour of a particular rank is likely to be followed by one of a similar rank," he adds.

The idea for this study came up to Anindita Bhadra, a corresponding author of the paper, from the Behaviour and Ecology Lab, Department of Biological Sciences at IISER Kolkata, when she heard a talk by Ronojoy Adhikari, of The Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai. He presented a very interesting piece of work in which they had used the Zipf-Mandelbrot law to claim that the markings of the Indus valley seals are a language. She says, "I started wondering, whether we could do the same with data on animal behaviour and proposed doing this with Arunita's data. She had been collecting the data for a different study, and she jumped in."

According to Dr. Bhadra, this is a tool that can be explored by other behavioural biologists to understand the mysteries of their model systems.



## Question Corner

## Magical setae of spiders

## Do spiders have sticky feet?

Spiders do not have sticky or adhesive pads like frogs and lizards, instead, they have toe pads covered in tiny, branched hairs. Called 'setae', these hairs are also found in geckos and certain beetles. Each hair is just one-hundredth of one millimetre thick.

The feet of wandering spider *Cupiennius salei* is made up of about 2,400 'setae' and a study published last month (*Frontiers in Mechanical Engineering*) found that each hair showed unique adhesive properties. The research team

from Germany studied how each hair sticks to rough and smooth surfaces, including sandpapers, glass, epoxy resin. They also looked at how the hairs stuck at different contact angles. Group leader Clemens Schaber of the University of Kiel said in a release that the adhesion forces largely differed between the individual hairs, for example, one hair adhered best at a low angle with the substrate while the other one performed best close to a perpendicular alignment. The team writes that this variety helps spiders climb different surfaces.

The team studied the hairs under hi-tech microscopes to understand their structure. They found that each hair was different and had previously unrecognised structural arrangements.

Readers may send their questions/answers to [questioncorner@thehindu.co.in](mailto:questioncorner@thehindu.co.in)



■ AFP

## Abuzz with cicadas

Why do the 'periodical' species lay underground for over a decade and when do they emerge?

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

**The story so far:** The latest phenomenon that has taken America by storm is the song of the cicadas. Billions of cicadas have emerged across eastern parts of the United States. Periodical cicadas, so called because of their 13- or 17-year life cycle, most of which is spent underground, emerge from their earthy digs to romance, reproduce and retire. This year is the year of the Brood X periodical cicadas. Here, X stands for the Roman numeral and refers to the sequence of emergence. Certain questions arise in the research on cicadas – how do they grow underground, what do they eat during their 13- or 17-year nymph stages spent burrowed in, or how do they know it is time to emerge?

**When was this phenomenon first recorded?** Periodical cicadas of the genus *Magicalicadae* have intrigued entomologists since they were noticed. Though Native Americans in the east of America knew about them earlier, the earliest recorded mention of these insects was in 1633 (there is some doubt whether this was in 1631 or 1634) by William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth Colony in America, according to Gene Kritsky's article in *American Entomologist* in 2001. This area later developed into the town of Plymouth, Massachusetts. The next mention was in 1666 by an unsigned note published by Henry Oldenberg where he referred to "swarms" of "locusts". However, these insects are neither locusts nor do they swarm.

**How did the evolution of lineages take place?** As species, periodical cicadas are older than the forests they inhabit, writes Chris Simon in an article in *The Conversation*. Molecular analysis has shown that about 4 million years ago, the ancestor of the current *Magicalicadae* species split into two lineages. Some 1.5 million years later, one of those lineages split again. The resulting three lineages are the basis of the modern periodical cicada species groups, *Decim*, *Cassini* and *Decula*. Each of these three species has 13-year and 17-year broods.

Periodical cicadas come out only once every 13 or 17 years. Occasionally, part of a population will come out four years early or four years late. With climate warming, we are seeing more four-year early emergences

**Why is the present emergent population called Brood X?** The term 'brood' is used to refer to all periodical cicadas that emerge the same year and occupy a geographically contiguous area. Charles Marlatt assigned roman numerals to designate their year of emergence, and the sequence started arbitrarily in 1893. The brood with the 17-year

cycle that emerged in 1893 was denoted Brood I, and so on. So, the 17-year broods were designated I to XVII, and the 13-year broods were designated XVIII to XXX.

**Why are they called 'periodical' cicadas?** These cicadas spend most of their lives underground. They grow burrowed in their earthy homes by feeding on root xylem for 13 or 17 years. During this time, they complete five developmental stages, known as "instars", entirely underground. The fifth-instar nymphs emerge from the ground by making holes and then transform into adults, only to perish approximately four weeks later. As adults, they gather in so-called chorus groups, where the males sing to woo the females. After mating, the female lays eggs in thin twiggy branches of trees, and then dies. The eggs hatch and the nymphs drop into the earth like rain, burrowing into it. About 95% of the nymphs die, and the ones that are left feed on root sap and remain underground, till it is time to emerge. This is described in an article by Kathy S. Williams and Chris Simon in *Annual Review of Entomology* (1995).

**In which parts of the U.S. are they found?** They are found to the east of the Great Plains in the U.S. and north of Florida, says Chris Simon, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut, in an email. "They emerge earlier in the warmer southern areas (late April-May) and later in the colder zones (late May-June)," she adds.

**How does climate impact them?** "In any given place, they come out only once every 13 or 17 years. Occasionally, part of a population will come out four years early and part four years late. With climate warming, we are seeing more four-year early emergences in larger numbers," says Prof. Simon. For instance, the Brood X periodical cicadas were documented in 2017 too, according to an article in the *Washington Post*.

**Are there periodical cicadas in India?** There are three species of cicadas found in the Indian subcontinent – *Chremistica mixta* (found in Sri Lanka), *C. seminiger* (found in the Nilgiri hills) and *C. ribhoi* (discovered in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya). Mass emergence has been noticed only in the case of *Chremistica ribhoi*. The emergence takes place after dusk and once in four years. The phenomenon is well-known among villagers, who refer to the insect in the local Khasi language as "niangtaser" (*niang* stands for "insect" and *taser* is believed to be derived from the name of the village "Iewisier", which refers to the area in which the phenomenon occurs, and the forest region around it). This periodical cicada is used as food and fish bait and has been observed in May 2006 and in May 2010, according to a 2013 article in *Zootaxa* by Sudhanya Ray Hajong and Salmah Yaakop.

# Row over study on bat viruses in Nagaland

What is the controversy surrounding the 2019 research on filoviruses and why is it back in focus now?

SUHASINI HAIDAR

**The story so far:** This week, *The Hindu* carried a government inquiry report on a 2019 study conducted by Indian institutions on bat viruses in the Mimi village area of Kiphire district in Nagaland. The report referred to the need to ensure that studies follow all regulations in order to pandemic-proof the future.

**Why is it in the news?** In December 2019, the Union Ministry of Health began an inquiry into the study as it felt that appropriate permissions had not been taken by the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) from the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) before accepting foreign funding and collaborations for the study. The study, published in October 2019, was funded by "a United States Department of Defense, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Broad Agency Announcement grant for the project 'Bat Harvesting in India: Detection, characterization and mitigation of emerging infectious disease risk'", the Biological Defense Research Directorate of the U.S. Naval Medical Research Center, as well as the Indian Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Of the 12 authors, three were from India, five from the Duke-National University of Singapore Medical School, and two each from the U.S. Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences and the Wuhan Institute of Virology. The government investigation and subsequent queries spoke of "concerning lapses" in the study protocols and also questioned whether the bat samples (nucleic acid extracts) should be stored at the NCBS, Bengaluru or at the National Institute of Virology lab in Pune run by the ICMR, which has a higher Biosafety Level-4 standard rating.

**What did the NCBS claim?** The NCBS denied all the charges in a statement in February 2020. Recently, its director, Satyajit Mayor, told *The Hindu* that he had no knowledge of any lapses. He had earlier said the government had given NCBS an "all-clear". The NCBS also said that it had received its clearances from the DAE, although the government's 1987 rules on funding collaborations give the Health Ministry



The study conducted by NCBS and TIFR looked at filoviruses, such as Ebola and Marburg. ■ ISTOCK

As demands grow for transparency in collaborations with the Wuhan Institute, which was inspected as part of the WHO's study into the origins of the pandemic, there is a renewed focus on the Indian study

**Is there a Wuhan connection to the Indian study?** No, say both officials and scientists. The Indian study looked at filoviruses (such as Ebola and Marburg), while the Wuhan studies, which originally collaborated with the U.S. University of North Carolina (UNC) and were funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), looked at coronaviruses SARS and MERS. However, as demands grow for more transparency in collaborations with the Wuhan Institute, which was inspected as part of the World Health Organization's study into the origins of the pandemic, there is a renewed focus on the NCBS-TIFR study. In the U.S., Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases under the NIH, was questioned at a Congressional hearing in May this year about the NIH

funding and the Wuhan-UNC studies. In an interview to *The New York Times* this week, Dr. Shi denied that any regulations had been flouted at her labs, saying there was "no evidence" for theories of an accidental release of the SARS-CoV-2. The WHO study also concluded that the "lab-leak" theory was unlikely, but required more study. U.S. President Joseph Biden has ordered intelligence agencies to provide a conclusive finding by the end of August on whether the COVID-19 pandemic was caused by natural transmission or a lab-leak. Earlier this month, Canada's Parliament voted to have their Public Health Agency (PHAC) release documents on the collaboration between its National Microbiology Lab in Winnipeg and the Wuhan Institute of Virology, on Ebola and Henipah viruses.

**What next?** Significantly, the Centre has not pursued its questioning on the U.S. funding and the Wuhan collaboration in the case of the Nagaland study with NCBS-TIFR without ICMR approval, and has confined its inquiry to the storage of samples. However, the ongoing pandemic with new variations is expected to trigger more public scrutiny into future research. Some scientists have voiced concerns about a "chilling effect" in the name of bio-security, on much needed scientific freedoms for research, which involves the collection of possibly infectious samples and studies on mutations. As long as the issue of the origin of the virus that was first detected in Wuhan remains unresolved, questions will linger.

# The debate around gain-of-function research

Do the benefits of such studies on possible future therapies outweigh the risk of pathogens escaping from labs?

RAMYA KANNAN

**The story so far:** With the re-emergence of the lab-leak origin theory for the SARS-CoV-2, questions are also being raised on what gain-of-function research is, and whether the benefits of conducting such research outweigh the risk of pathogens escaping from labs. The Wuhan Institute of Virology was said to have conducted gain-of-function research on coronaviruses.

**What is gain-of-function research?** In virology, gain-of-function research involves deliberately altering an organism in the lab, altering a gene, or introducing a mutation in a pathogen to study its transmissibility, virulence and immunogenicity. It is believed that this allows researchers to study potential therapies, vaccine possibilities and ways to control the disease better in future. "Gain-of-function research involves manipulations that make certain pathogenic microbes more deadly or more transmissible. This is done by genetically engineering the virus and by allowing them to grow in different growth mediums, a technique called as serial passage," says Abdyl Ghafur, senior consultant, infectious diseases, Apollo Hospitals. There is also 'loss-of-function' research, which involves inactivating mutations, resulting in a significant loss of original function, or no function to the pathogen. When mutations occur, they alter the structure of the virus that is being studied, resulting in altered functions. Some of these significant mutations might weaken the virus or enhance its function.

Some forms of gain-of-function research reportedly carry inherent biosafety and biosecurity risks and are thus referred to as 'dual-use research of concern' (DURC). This indicates that while the research may result in benefits for humanity, there is also the potential to cause harm – accidental or deliberate escape of these altered pathogens from labs may cause even pandemics. Thomas Briese of Columbia University described gain-



that all institutions involved in research, development and handling of these microorganisms must comply with.

of-function research done in the laboratory as being a "proactive" approach to understand what will eventually happen in nature, during a 2014 seminar on 'Potential Risks and Benefits of Gain-of-Function Research'. Kanta Subbarao, who was then with the Laboratory of Infectious Diseases at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), U.S., said in the seminar that current medical countermeasures are often insufficient largely because of resistance mechanisms that lead to 'escape mutants', i.e., drug-resistant strains. There is, hence, a continual need to develop new antiviral drugs and additional options, such as immunotherapy, based on neutralising monoclonal antibodies. Ultimately, gain-of-function studies, which enhance viral yield and immunogenicity, are required for vaccine development.

**What is the situation in India?** In India, all activities related to genetically engineered organisms or cells and hazardous microorganisms and products are regulated as per the "Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells Rules, 1989". Last year, the Department of Biotechnology issued guidelines for the establishment of containment facilities, called 'Biosafety labs', at levels two and three. The notification provides operational guidance on the containment of biohazards and levels of biosafety

**Should research continue?** Scientists have differing opinions on the issue, particularly since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. While those on the side of gain-of-function research say that it makes science and governments battle-ready for future pandemics, there have been a rising number of calls to suspend such research. Proponents of gain-of-function research believe that "nature is the ultimate bioterrorist and we need to do all we can to stay one step ahead".

Dr. Ghafur, who thinks it is time to stop such research, says, "Unfortunately, scientists have crossed all boundaries and created monster chimeric viruses." In the U.S., after COVID-19 struck, concerns were raised to ensure greater transparency about such research. In 2014, the country paused funding for three years for such research until steps could be taken to ensure the safety of the procedure. The *Scientific American* says in a report that science policymakers "must wrestle with defining the rare instances in which the benefits of experiments that enhance a virus's capacity to survive and flourish in human hosts outweigh any risks."

At the World Health Organization (WHO), the Science Division leads activities on DURC and responsible use of life sciences research, focusing on mitigation and prevention of biorisks and associated ethical issues. Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist, WHO, says that in 2020, the Department organised three DURC Dialogues with academics and councils, science editors and publishers, and donors of life sciences research. The stakeholders also called on the WHO to develop a Global Guidance Framework for member states to follow. The organisation initiated the development of that Framework and organised a consultative meeting in March 2021. Work is on to address key topics as part of the Framework.

# 'Delta plus' and an emerging public health threat

How prevalent is the new SARS-CoV-2 variant and can the K417N mutation escape existing treatment methods?

JACOB KOSHY

**The story so far:** Scientists around the world and in India are concerned about 'Delta plus', an emerging form of the Delta variant of the novel coronavirus, which allows it to "escape" antibodies in recently approved treatment regimes.

**What is the Delta plus variant?** Formally known as AY.1 or B.1.617.2.1, it's a variant of Delta (B.1.617.2), which was first identified in India. It has an additional mutation called K417N, which has previously been identified in the Beta variant (first found in South Africa) and the Gamma variant (first detected in Brazil). These variants are characterised as being highly infectious and may reduce the potency of vaccines. Five Indian labs submitted data on this modified variant in May and June to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID). Seven of the around 28,000 coronavirus genomes sequenced out of India so far reportedly belong to the AY.1 lineage. Globally, 143 genomes have been labelled as AY.1 so far and reported from Nepal, Portugal, Switzerland, Poland, Japan, Russia, Turkey, United Kingdom, France, United States and Canada, besides India. At 45, the U.K. has reported the maximum number of instances, followed by Switzerland (23), and Portugal (2). The number of cases reported from a country is not always indicative of the prevalence of the variant and has to do with the extent of genome

sequencing of virus samples. The U.K. has sequenced nearly 466,437 samples and reported 45 cases, the U.S. has sequenced 549,164 samples and reported 12 cases, whereas the number of samples India has sequenced is only about 3% (28,065) of these figures.

**Why is it an area of concern?** The Delta variant is now regarded as the most prevalent one in India, comprising nearly 31% of the 21,000 community samples processed until late May. This variant has significant differences compared to the strain that has been used by pharma companies to design vaccines, and tests are needed to check if the existing vaccines continue to be effective against the variants dominant now. Tests in the U.K., South Africa, and Brazil have shown that vaccines, while effective, appear to produce fewer antibodies when confronted with variants such as Delta. The concern is that because the Delta variant has a cascade of mutations that have allowed it to dominate in several countries, including India, another form may pose new challenges to the management of the pandemic in India. The ICMR-National Institute of Virology and the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad have conducted laboratory tests to determine the potency of Covishield and Covaxin against the Delta variant. While antibodies continued to be produced

against the variant, they were fewer than those produced against the strain used by companies to prepare their vaccines. However, antibody levels are not the only markers of immunity. There is little evidence so far specifically linking AY.1 to large outbreaks and significant disease transmission, which is why it has not yet

appeared in the World Health Organization's list of 'Variants of Concern', which includes Alpha, Beta, Delta, and Gamma variants. Early reports say AY.1 is diverging into two sub-lineages – one cluster has been found in California, and a larger cluster comprises sequences from eight other countries including Nepal, India and the U.K.

**Can existing drugs help?** An additional concern with the AY.1 is the presence of the K417N mutation. According to a database of the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB), the mutation was associated with resistance to a newly developed monoclonal antibody treatment drug, Casirivimab and Imdevimab, for those with moderate and severe disease but at high risk. Marketed by Roche and Cipla in India, the drug was recently approved by India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation. The price of each patient dose (a combined dose of 1200 mg – 600 mg of Casirivimab and 600 mg of Imdevimab) will be ₹59,750, inclusive of taxes.

NATO

# A Cold War relic that's seeking a new purpose

The U.S. is pushing the trans-Atlantic military alliance, originally formed to counter the Soviet Union, to take a stronger position towards China

G. SAMPATH

In a communiqué issued following the June 14 summit of its member-states in Brussels, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), for the first time, explicitly described China as a security risk. China has never figured in NATO summit declarations before, except for a minor reference in 2019 to the "opportunities and challenges" it presented. But this year's communiqué bluntly states: "China's stated ambitions and assertive behaviour present systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to areas relevant to Alliance security."

China has reacted sharply, calling the statement a "slander". It has urged NATO to "view China's development rationally, stop exaggerating various forms of 'China threat theory' and not to use China's legitimate interests and legal rights as excuses for manipulating group politics [while] artificially creating confrontations".

The other two threats identified by the NATO communiqué are on predictable lines: Russia and terrorism. Tensions with Russia are an inevitable outcome of NATO's bid to expand eastward into what Russia considers its sphere of influence. Trying to bring countries such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova under the NATO umbrella was bound to cause a confrontation with Russia, and so it has. As Russia sought to protect its interests by "annexing" Crimea and stationing troops in Georgia and Moldova, NATO accused it of acting irresponsibly and breaking the "rules-based international order".



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

There is a significant difference, however, between a strategic focus on countering Russia and casting China as a "systemic challenge", and this goes back to NATO's founding mandate and subsequent history. NATO, the planet's largest – and largest ever – military alliance, was formed in 1949 by 12 Allied powers to counter the massive Soviet armies stationed in Eastern and Central Europe after Second World War.

According to Paul-Henri Spaak, the second Secretary-General of NATO, it was, ironically enough, Joseph Stalin who is the true father of NATO. It was Stalin's overreach – especially with the Berlin blockade of 1948-49 and the orchestrated coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 – that convinced a diverse set of war-ravaged European nations to come together under an American security blanket. The collective defence principle enshrined in NATO's Article V states that "an

attack against one ally is considered as an attack against all allies". The formation of NATO, and its Soviet counterpart, the Warsaw Pact, in 1955, inaugurated the Cold War era.

NATO was completely successful in its mission of protecting the "Euro-Atlantic area" from Soviet expansion and preventing war between the two superpowers. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, questions were raised about NATO's relevance and future. After all, if the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) became irrelevant when the Communist bloc disappeared, how does one justify the continuation of a military alliance formed to protect Europe from Communist expansion? Wouldn't Europe's security be better served by a collective force managed by the Europeans themselves? While some in Europe did think so, they underestimated the resilience of the powerful NATO bureaucracy, which remains an integral

The picture that emerges post the G-7 and NATO summits in Europe is of the U.S.'s growing conviction that China is a threat to its global supremacy and must be contained

element of what U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower described as "the military-industrial complex".

**Post-Cold war era**

This bureaucracy succeeded in refashioning NATO for the post-Cold war era. The refashioning rested on a paradigm shift – from collective defence, which implied a known adversary, to collective security, which is open-ended, and might require action against any number of threats, including unknown ones and non-state actors.

Another factor in the persistence of NATO is that, like all successful alliances, it has been a mutually beneficial arrangement. For Europe, it was an attractive bargain where, in exchange for a marginal loss in autonomy, it enjoyed absolute security at a cheap price.

For the U.S. on the other hand, NATO has been an ideal vehicle for power-projection around the world – in places beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, such as Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. It views NATO as a tool to ensure the primacy of American interests across the globe.

Unsurprisingly, NATO's post-Cold War role has evolved in tandem with U.S. foreign policy priorities. The NATO doctrine of "enlargement", which Russia calls "expansion", is essentially about extending the American military footprint by bringing in new members. That is how NATO's membership today stands at 30, having added 14 members between 1999 and 2020.

Member-states, of course, have some leeway in terms of the degree to which they commit themselves – not all of them send troops to every conflict outside Europe, and most contribute less than their share of financial resources. This has been an area of friction between the U.S. and the European states, as the former foots nearly 70% of NATO's bills. While the cost of 'protection' is likely to go up for Europe, they are also wary of being dragged into confrontations that, while perhaps necessary from an American viewpoint, may not serve Europe's interests.

Soon after the NATO communiqué was issued, both France and Germany sought to put some distance between NATO's official position and their own perception of China. French President Emmanuel Macron said, "NATO is a military organisation, the issue of our relationship with China isn't just a military is-

sue. NATO is an organisation that concerns the North Atlantic, China has little to do with the North Atlantic. It's very important that we don't scatter ourselves and that we don't bias our relationship with China." Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany also underscored the danger of overreacting to China.

The picture that emerges post the G-7 and NATO summits is of the U.S.'s growing conviction that China is a threat to its global supremacy and must be contained. If one were agreeable to a bipolar or a multi-polar world, it is difficult to see how China alone presents a "systemic challenge" to the world order. U.S. foreign policy, however, remains rooted in American exceptionalism. It is plausible that today the strongest challenge to the doctrine of American supremacy comes from China, the world's second largest economy.

**Containing China**

The Biden administration, therefore, wants to mobilise NATO member-states behind its larger objective of containing China. NATO's European member states may view China as an economic rival and adversary, but they are unconvinced by the American line that it is an outright security threat. This line also, in a way, points to the underlying logic behind NATO's persistence in the post-Soviet world. Unlike the Soviet Union, China offers no alternative vision of society that could make Western capitalism insecure.

In fact, its own economy is already deeply integrated into Western markets. China, nonetheless, is perceived as posing a 'threat'. It remains to be seen how far an ageing Europe would be willing to commit itself to a strategic path that prefers confrontation to collaboration, given that NATO is essentially a military alliance, and for all the talk of hybrid and cyber-war, there is zero risk of China invading the Euro-Atlantic area.

**In Focus**

NATO, the planet's largest military alliance, was formed in 1949 by 12 Allied powers to counter the massive Soviet armies stationed in Eastern and Central Europe after the Second World War

After the Cold War, the refashioning of NATO rested on a paradigm shift – from collective defence to collective security

The alliance offers security to Europe, while for the U.S., it has been an ideal vehicle for power-projection around the world

APPLE DAILY

## In the line of fire

Hong Kong daily remains defiant after its office was raided and editors arrested

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Apple Daily vows to carry on and publish as usual, read a headline in Friday's edition of Apple Daily, the outspoken tabloid newspaper that is at the centre of attention in Hong Kong. On Thursday morning, some 200 Hong Kong police officers raided the newspaper's headquarters and arrested five of its top editors and management, in what is being seen by many journalists in China's Special Administration Region (SAR) as the most significant action targeting a Hong Kong media outlet since the 1997 handover, and one that may well herald a darker future for the once free-wheeling Hong Kong press.

Apple Daily has occupied a curious position on the spectrum of Hong Kong's vibrant media. The tabloid was founded in 1995 by businessman Jimmy Lai, who came to then British-ruled Hong Kong in 1959, aged 12, started out as a child labourer in textile factories, and rose to found the clothing brand *Giordano* when he was 22.

He entered the media business and set up *Next Media* (later renamed *Next Digital*), publishing a daily newspaper and a weekly magazine. Both were hardly the standard-bearers of good journalism, popular for their tabloid-style coverage. One of Mr. Lai's magazines in 2006 caused an uproar for using a hidden camera and publish-



ing photos of popular singer Gillian Chung when she was undressing backstage at a concert.

The newspaper's coverage wasn't only on matters salacious. It also garnered a following for its strong political stand. Mr. Lai was a firm supporter of the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong and an outspoken critic of Beijing.

In 2019, when millions of Hongkongers took to the streets over many months to protest a new extradition Bill that would allow suspects to be repatriated to the mainland to stand trial, seen by many as the latest and most significant dilution of the "one country, two systems" model that had ensured freedoms in Hong Kong, including that of the press, Mr. Lai and his newspaper became among the strongest backers of the protest movement.

The newspaper's popularity and reputation grew with the protest movement.

An annual survey on "public evaluation on media credibility", conducted in 2019 by the City University of Hong Kong, ranked it as the third most credible newspaper, after the *South China Morning Post* and *Ming Pao*. It ranked far higher than two most prominent pro-Beijing papers, *Tu Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*.

**Security law**

The paper was also critical of the new national security law passed by Beijing in June 2020 for its broad definitions of what constituted secession and collusion with the "foreign forces" blamed by Beijing for the 2019 protests.

The law paved the way for tightening the noose on a newspaper that had grown to become a thorn in the side of both the HKSAR government and Beijing, and was cited to justify a raid on Apple Daily in August last year when Mr. Lai was arrested.

After the five arrests and the raid on Thursday, the paper's fate is now "hanging in the balance", reported the *South China Morning Post*, noting that beyond the arrests of its top leadership, a freeze on its assets "could send it over the edge financially".

Hong Kong's Secretary for Security John Lee Ka-chiu insisted the operation "was not targeting the press at large but only going after a publication that had used 'news coverage as a tool' to harm national security," the *Post* reported.

That is not, however, the view of most Hong Kong journalists. The national security law, with its broad definitions of crimes, has in their view led to a wider chilling effect. "Journalists are more cautious than ever when they criticise the HKSAR Government and the Central Government, and managements have put more pressure on them," said the Hong Kong Journalists Association's 2020 press freedom report. Of 367 responding journalists, 91% said press freedom in Hong Kong had worsened compared to the previous year.

The paper, however, said it is undeterred, even live-streaming the raid. It said it would print 500,000 copies on Friday, five times more than its usual circulation. Some news stands, reported the *Hong Kong Free Press*, said copies of Friday's edition were sold out within two hours after going up on the stands at midnight.

SATYA NADELLA

## The man who rebuilt Microsoft

The CEO will now shape the vision of the company as its chairman

SRIRAM SRINIVASAN

In his book *Hit Refresh*, Satya Nadella, the Microsoft CEO, reminisces about his first day in that role, way back in early 2014. "If there was any one theme I wanted to emphasize that day," he writes, "it was that we must discover what would be lost in the world if Microsoft just disappeared." The man who is just the third CEO in Microsoft's history then writes, "We had to answer for ourselves, what is the company about? Why do we exist? I told them it was time for us to rediscover our soul – what makes us unique."

More than seven years later, Mr. Nadella has now been given the opportunity to shape Microsoft's vision as its chairman as well. He will be only the third chairman in the company's 46-year history, and will be only the second, after its iconic co-founder Bill Gates, to hold the positions of chairman and CEO at the same time.

When Mr. Nadella took over as CEO in 2014, Microsoft was seen as a company whose best years were behind it. Toward the end of his predecessor Steve Ballmer's term, pressure was mounting on the company to come up with a roadmap that would place it among the most dominant technology companies once again. This was a time when Microsoft was struggling to shape a future that moved away from its dependence on the Windows operating system,

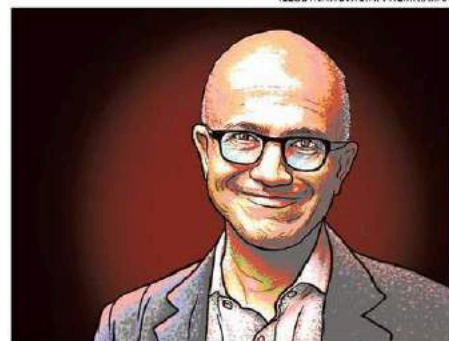


ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

which served it well during the years of the personal computer boom. Times had, however, changed.

In the years leading up to 2014, as the world adopted mobile devices in a big way, Microsoft struggled to make a success of its new ideas and ventures. Its forays into mobile devices, for instance, were a failure. The stock price reflected its state and was largely stagnant for a long time.

In the seven years since taking over, Mr. Nadella has been widely acknowledged for the revival of Microsoft's fortunes. It is once again one of the most valuable companies in the world today. According to current prices, it is in fact No. 2 in terms of market capitalisation just behind Apple and just ahead of Amazon. Its market capitalisation is in striking distance of \$2 trillion. What Mr. Nadella did was not just move away from the Windows past but also build and fund future

business such as cloud computing. Two years ago, a *Bloomberg Businessweek* article, with the title "The Most Valuable Company (for Now) Is Having a Nadellaissance", wrote: "Under Nadella, it cut funding to Windows and built an enormous cloud computing business – with about \$34 billion in revenue over the past year – putting it ahead of Google and making progress in key areas against the dominant player, Amazon Web Services". In fact, the article says, "His first email to employees ran more than 1,000 words – and made no mention of Windows."

**A marathon**

The Hyderabad-born Mr. Nadella once said in a Stanford GSB event, "My father was a Marxist economist and civil servant... He looked at my grades and was amazed someone could be so bad! But he said, 'It's a marathon. You'll catch up.' My mother's only question

to me was 'Are you happy?'" He got his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Mangalore University, and then did his MS in computer science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He also has an MBA degree from the University of Chicago. Mr. Nadella, who grew up wanting to be a professional cricketer, now uses analogies from the sport he loves liberally to make sense of real-life situations. He also also spoken quite a bit in recent years about how the disability of his son profoundly impacted his ideas of leadership.

As CEO, Mr. Nadella had to take tough decisions, one of which was the writing off of the over \$7 billion acquisition of Nokia's handset business, leading to thousands of job cuts. He also put more money in growing businesses such as cloud computing, and also led big-ticket acquisitions such as those of LinkedIn, Nuance and GitHub. He reorganised the company and made sure its products were compatible with products and devices from other stables.

This was in line with what he had put in a memo to the board, before he was picked as CEO. He had bet on a plan toward a "renewal of Microsoft". This was to cater to a world where "humans will interact with experiences that span a multitude of devices and senses." The success of the plan has put Mr. Nadella at the top-most position of a company he joined 29 years ago.

# 'Infosys set for another year of market-leading performance'

Nilekani tells shareholders firm well positioned to leverage cloud-first, digital era

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Infosys is well-positioned for another year of market-leading performance in a post-pandemic, cloud-first, distinctly digital era, said chairman Nandan Nilekani.

Unprecedented technology transformation driven by cloud and the digitalisation of business models was shaping the next normal for all, he told shareholders at the company's 40th AGM.



**Riding change:** Unprecedented technology transformation is shaping the next normal, says Nilekani. \*G.R.N. SOMASHEKARA

In the last fiscal, he said.

Mr. Nilekani said Infosys continued to strengthen its talent pool in the last financial year by recruiting 19,230 graduates in India and 1,941—both graduates and associate degree holders—outside the country to serve clients' burgeoning demand for digital acceleration.

"We expanded our U.S. hiring commitment to 25,000 by 2022 with an additional 12,000 new American jobs across a variety of roles. We will also double our Canadian workforce to 4,000 by 2023," he said.

"In the U.K., we announced plans to create 1,000 digital jobs to fuel post-pandemic growth."

**'Critical capability'**

"Whether it's the uptick in online demand, mastery over digital demand fulfilment or tackling the threat of cyberattacks, technology has become an urgent and critical business capability," Mr. Nilekani said. "Adjusting to this new reality can be daunting," he added.

Firms could no longer afford the long wait for business returns or settle for the sometimes underwhelming

outcomes of large transformation projects, he said.

The company's digital business grew to 48.5% of total revenue, while its large transformation deals rose to an all-time high of \$14.1 billion, with 66% being net new

cal business capability," Mr. Nilekani said. "Adjusting to this new reality can be daunting," he added.

Firms could no longer afford the long wait for business returns or settle for the sometimes underwhelming

# AWS eyes financial services, media clients for expansion

Customer investments in cloud at inflection point: Dhawan

**YUTHIKA BHARGAVA**  
NEW DELHI

Witnessing an inflection point in customer spending on cloud technology, Amazon Web Services (AWS) is eyeing expansion in the 'critical' India market by leveraging 'huge opportunities' in sectors such as financial services, media and entertainment, and telecom, a senior company official said.

"This is the perfect storm for digitalisation in India, and we are seeing a huge inflection point towards customers investing in cloud technology," said Ashish Dhawan, MD, enterprise, mid-market and global business, South Asia, AWS.

"AWS is growing its footprint in India, and we are



committed to investing in India and putting the power of AWS Cloud directly in the hands of our customers, our partners, and developers."

Mr. Dhawan added that India was a very critical market for AWS and the company's announcement of its second region (Hyderabad) here is testament to the fact it is seeing more customer demand here and is investing to cater to that demand.

"The growth in India, is not just in the enterprise segment which I manage, but also in segments like Digitally Native Businesses and Independent Software Vendors, because India is home to a number of B2B software-as-a-service firms," he said.

He said last year was 'great' for customers migrating critical workloads such as SAP to AWS. It also saw new investments in analytics and machine learning.

To a query, Mr. Dhawan said India presented a large opportunity for AWS to aid financial services customers transform their banking and insurance platforms. "The media and entertainment industry is also an opportunity for us," he added.

# UCO Bank may raise up to ₹500 crore

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

State-owned UCO Bank on Saturday said its board of directors will meet next week to consider raising up to ₹500 crore as tier-II capital.

The board of directors will consider the proposal for raising tier-II capital of up to ₹500 crore at its meeting scheduled to be held on June 23, the public sector lender said in a regulatory filing.

Tier-II capital of a bank consists of undisclosed reserves, revaluation reserves, general provisions and loss reserves, hybrid capital instruments, subordinated debt and investment reserve account. The loss absorption capacity of tier-II capital is lower than that of tier-I capital.

# 'Ekki to start making partner Homa's pumps in six months'

JV to produce range of waste-water technology products

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

Water technologies provider Ekki Group said it plans to commence assembly of German joint venture partner Homa's products, including pumps, at its Coimbatore facility in the next six months.

Ekki, which had been selling imported Homa products since the JV was set up in 2018, has started an assembly-test-and-paint unit.

"We have tested the products at more than 100 locations in the last year and have had overwhelming results," said Kanishka Arumugam, co-CEO Ekki Homa Pvt. Ltd. "We hope to start assembling Homa products in



the facility in the next six months," he added.

Ekki Homa will produce a range of waste-water technologies, including pumps, targeted at India and the neighbouring markets, Hans Hoffmann, CEO, Homa Pumps, said in a statement.

Asked if specific segments helped Ekki tide over the pandemic-induced slowdown, Mr. Arumugam said, "Agriculture, from which segment we derive 70% of revenue, helped generate demand during the first wave. This time, that has not been the case."

"Further, we have had to raise our market prices by about 20% in the recent past due to input cost pressures, despite having absorbed some of these costs. The market may not be able to take any more price increases," he added.

"We are hopeful that the situation will improve going forward," he said.

# 'Digital surge not to unduly raise emissions'

Green power to help, says Schneider

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Information technology-related electricity demand is expected to increase by almost 50% by 2030. Yet, as the electricity system decarbonises, emissions will not rise by more than 26% by then, said Schneider Electric, an energy management and automation firm.

"When the world locked down, it also logged on and Internet traffic soared," said Pankaj Sharma, EVP, Secure Power, Schneider Electric.

"It's misleading to assume that digital activity will inevitably result in a deeply-problematic increase in CO2 emissions." Analysis from the Schneider Electric Sustaina-



bility Institute puts to rest many of the worst-case scenarios predicting IT-related power use will double every 5 years, as per the report titled Digital Economy and Climate Impact, released by Schneider. "That said, as an industry, we must remain vigilant in finding new sources of sustainability gains while ensuring resiliency as digital keeps life moving forward," it cautioned.

# Flipkart eyes 200-300 mn customers through grocery

Orders rose threefold in six months, says the company

**MINI TEJASWI**  
BENGALURU

Flipkart aims to expand its grocery business and add another 200-300 million customers through doorstep delivery of household essentials, the Walmart Inc.-owned Indian e-tailer said.

"Flipkart has seen a 3X [threefold] increase in grocery orders in the last six months," the company said in an e-mailed response to questions. "We have also witnessed increased demand for groceries from tier 2 cities," it added.

With smartphones currently accounting for about 40% of Flipkart's GMV (gross merchandise value), fashion



contributing about 30%, and the rest spread over categories including appliances, books and furniture, grocery has so far accounted for a relatively small share in the firm's overall GMV.

**Slice of the pie**  
With the Indian online grocery market estimated to reach \$18.2 billion in 2024,

from \$1.9 billion in 2019, according to the India Brand Equity Foundation, Flipkart is targeting to enlarge its share of a business segment that counts Big Basket, Amazon's Pantry and Fresh and Reliance Industries' Jio Mart as the major players.

Flipkart, which entered the e-grocery space in early 2020, introduced Flipkart Quick, a 90-minute grocery service, in April this year.

The company, which invested in fresh produce supply chain firm, Ninjacart and other local vendors to build a supportive ecosystem, has also roped in logistics firm Shadowfax to build last-mile support for Flipkart Quick.

# TV PICKS

**NBA:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m.

**WTC 2021 final:** India vs New Zealand: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.

**F1:** France GP: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.

**Euro 2020:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m. & 9.30 p.m.

**Golf:** USGA: US Open championship, Eurosport (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.

**Copa America 2021:** Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. (Monday) & 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

# IN BRIEF

**Clippers in first conference final**

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles Clippers beat Utah Jazz 131-119 to advance to a first NBA conference final on Friday.

**The results (semifinals):** EC: Philadelphia 76ers 104 bt Atlanta Hawks 99 (Series tied 3-3); WC: Los Angeles Clippers 131 bt Utah Jazz 119 (Clippers win series 4-2).

# Ankita loses in doubles

**NOTTINGHAM**

Ankita Raina and Renata Zarazua of Mexico lost 6-3, 6-2 in the doubles semifinals of the \$100,000 ITF women's tennis tournament here on grass Nottingham.

**Other result: \$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia:** Doubles (semifinals): Seong Chan Hong & Jisung Nam (Kor) bt Alexander Kotzen (US) & Siddhant Banthia 6-1, 6-3.

# Rublev in final

**HALLE**

Andrey Rublev will take on Ugo Humbert in the final of the Halle Open.

**The results (semifinals):** Halle Open: Andrey Rublev bt Nikoloz Basilashvili 6-1, 3-6, 6-3; Ugo Humbert bt Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 3-6, 7-6(5).

**Queen's Club:** Cameron Norrie bt Denis Shapovalov 7-5, 6-3; Matteo Berrettini bt 6-4, 6-4.

**German Open:** Belinda Bencic bt Alize Cornet 7-5, 6-4; Ludmilla Samsonova bt Victoria Azarenka 6-4, 6-2.

# Bland, Henley share the lead

Oosthuizen and Wolff close on their heels

## US OPEN GOLF

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
LAJOLLA (USA)

England's Richard Bland and American Russell Henley shared the lead after Friday's second round of the US Open with South African Louis Oosthuizen and Matthew Wolff one stroke adrift.

Henley lipped out a two-foot par putt on his final hole to fire a one-under 70 and settle for a share of the lead on five-under 137.



**Easy does it!** Richard Bland seems to be coaxing the ball into the hole on the sixth green. \*AP

**Age no bar**

After shooting a 67 on Friday, 48-year-old Blanda has the possibility to become the oldest winner in US Open

history, breaking the mark of 45 set by American Hale Irwin in 1990.

Oosthuizen fired 71 to

share third on 138 with 22-year-old American Matthew Wolff, last year's runner-up, who is coming off a two-

month mental health hiatus.

Two-time Masters champion Bubba Watson and third-ranked Jon Rahm of Spain shared fifth on 139.

## McIlroy struggles

Meanwhile, defending champion Bryson DeChambeau shot 69 to share 13th on 142 and four-time Major winner Rory McIlroy struggled to a 73 to share 21st on 143.

**Leading scores:** 137: Richard Bland (Eng) 70, 67, Russell Henley (USA) 67-70; 138: Louis Oosthuizen (RSA) 67, 71, Matthew Wolff (USA) 70, 68; 139: Bubba Watson (USA) 72, 67, Jon Rahm (Esp) 69, 70; 140: Kevin Streelman (USA) 71, 69, Mackenzie Hughes (Can) 73, 67, Xander Schauffele (USA) 69, 71.

# Verstappen claims pole

## FRENCH GP

**REUTERS**  
LE CASTELLLET

Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen put on a blinding display in Saturday's qualifying to seize pole position ahead of title rival Lewis Hamilton.

The 23-year-old lapped the 5.8km long Paul Ricard

circuit in one minute 29.990 seconds in his Red Bull, 0.258 clear of Mercedes' Hamilton, who trails Verstappen by four points in the overall standings and will line up alongside him on the front row.

Valtteri Bottas, in the other Mercedes, was third while Sergio Perez was fourth for Red Bull.

# Sajan, Srihari fall short

## SWIMMING

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
BELGRADE

Sajan Prakash and Srihari Nataraj fell short of the A-mark Olympic Qualifying Time for Tokyo 2020, at the Belgrade Trophy swimming championships on Saturday.

Sajan won the 200m butterfly in 1:56.96s, a new National record, breaking his

own previous mark of 1:57.73s set in 2018. But it was still nearly half a second short of the Tokyo A-mark (1:56.48s).

Srihari won the 100m backstroke in 54.45s but it was well below the required 53.85s.

The duo will next race in the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome (June 25 to 27), in what appears to be the last chance to qualify for Tokyo.

# Argentina edges Uruguay

Goes joint-top of Group A with Chile

## COPA AMERICA

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
SAO PAULO

Argentina beat Uruguay 1-0 on Friday in its second match at Copa America, making Lionel Messi's team co-leader of Group A with Chile with four points each.

Midfielder Guido Rodriguez scored the only goal in Brasilia with a header in the 13th minute after Messi crossed from the left. The ball hit goalkeeper Fernando Muslera's right post before going in.

Earlier Chile beat Bolivia 1-0 on a goal by English-Chilean striker Ben Brereton.



**The winner:** Argentina's Guido Rodriguez is ecstatic after heading in against Uruguay. \*REUTERS

**Controlling the game**

Argentina controlled nearly all of the game against an Uruguayan team that included the powerful offensive duo of Luis Suarez and Edinson Cavani.

Argentina midfielder Rodrigo de Paul said his team deserved to finally win - it had not won since November 2020. The result also provided some relief for Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni, who was criticized after his team's opening 1-1 draw against Chile on Monday.

**The results: Group A:** Chile 1 (Brereton 10) bt Bolivia 0; Argentina 1 (Rodriguez 13) bt Uruguay 0.

## TODAY'S SCHEDULE

**GROUP B**

Venezuela vs Ecuador 2.30 a.m. (Monday)

Colombia vs Peru 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

Live on Sony Ten 2 and Sony 6 (SD & HD)

# SPORT

# Japan imposes stricter rules on Indians

## TOKYO OLYMPICS

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

The Indian athletes and officials travelling for the Tokyo Olympics have been asked by the Japanese Government to undergo daily COVID-19 tests for a week prior to their departure and not interact with anyone from another country for three days on arrival, strictures that have left the IOA fuming.

"The unfair and discriminatory" rules have drawn sharp criticism from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), which has written to the Games Organising Committee requesting it to ensure that mechanisms to prevent

# Elgar, de Kock on song

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**DEAN-ISALE (ST. LUCIA)**

Dean Elgar's five-hour occupation of the crease in compiling an invaluable 77 and Quinton de Kock's 96 lifted South Africa from 37 for three to 298 all out at lunch on the second day of the second Test against the West Indies here on Saturday.

Elgar's knock spanned 237 deliveries and included eight fours.

His watchful style contrasted sharply with that of de Kock, who took just 162 deliveries for his 96 (8x4).

**The scores:** South Africa 298 in 112.4 overs (Dean Elgar 77, Quinton de Kock 96, Kemar Roach 3/45, Kyle Mayers 3/28) vs WI.

# CHESS ROUND-UP

## Thirty-two players share lead

**NEW DELHI**

Thirty-two players shared the lead with three points after as many rounds of the National girls (under-14) online rapid chess championship on Saturday.

Many higher seeds, led by second seed Anupam Sreekumar, dropped points to lower-rated rivals. Anupam drew twice before registering a win and fell back in the standings.

Fourth seed Sneha Haldar could score only 1.5 points while many other unfancied players fared better than expected.

**Nihal, Pragg get World Cup 'wild cards'**

**NEW DELHI**

In a surprise development, Grandmasters Nihal Sarin and R. Praggnanandhaa

have received the last two 'wild cards' from the FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich for the World Cup chess beginning in Sochi, Russia, on July 12.

**The teams:** Men: P. Harikrishna, Vidit Gujrathi, Arjun Erigaisi, B. Adhiban, Aravindh Chithambaram, D. Gukesh, Nihal Sarin and R. Praggnanandhaa.

**Women:** D. Harika, Padmini Rout, Bhakti Kulkarni and R. Vaishali.

**Trainers:** Abhijit Kunte and N. Srinath.

**Vaishali bows out in Women's Speed Chess**

**KOZHIKODE**

R. Vaishali went down to China's Lei Tingjie in a first round game of the Women's Speed Chess championship. She was beaten 6-14. D. Harika is the only remaining Indian in the tournament. Koneru Humpy had lost in the opening fixture.

## Nation bids farewell to 'Flying Sikh'

Punjab Government accords State funeral to Milkha who passed away on Friday

UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI

At five in the evening on Saturday, Indian track and field bid a final adieu to its first post-independence superstar.

Padma Shri Milkha Singh succumbed to COVID – after battling it for a month and five days after losing his wife Nirmal Kaur – in Chandigarh on Friday. Befitting his stature, he was accorded a State funeral on Saturday with the Punjab government announcing a day of mourning in his honour.

They had been married for 59 years and the family, led by golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, made sure they weren't separated in death, cremating the 'Flying Sikh' at the same place and with a photo of his wife in his hands on the final journey.

Besides Jeev, Milkha is survived by three daughters – Mona Singh, Aleeza Grover and Sonia Sanwalka.

The 91-year-old Milkha had initially been hospitalised on May 24 after testing positive for COVID-19 on May 20.

He was discharged after stabilising on May 30 before



Milkha Singh. • FILE PHOTO

being re-admitted to PGIMER on June 3 with dipping Oxygen levels.

The 1958 Commonwealth Games champion and 1960 Rome Olympian was moved out of the COVID ICU after testing negative on Thursday but his condition worsened early on Friday before finally breathing his last at 11.30 p.m.

Born in Gobindpura in present day Pakistan, Milkha remained the lone Indian

athletics winner at the CWG for more than 50 years after Cardiff before discus thrower Krishna Poonia emulated the feat in the 2010 edition.

While his four Asian



The original superstar: Milkha Singh inspired generations of Indian athletes with his exploits. • AP

Games golds – 200m and 400m in 1958 and 400m and 4x400m relay in 1962 – put him firmly in the pantheon of legends, ironically his biggest and most memorable

moment was also the most tragic when he finished fourth at the 1960 Rome Olympics in a photo-finish with a then National record of 45.6 seconds.

## For God and country, a race well run!

RAKESH RAO

Milkha Singh, the name synonymous with running to survive and succeed, has moved to a better world.

"Life has given me more than what I deserved." Milkha often repeated this line. "I can't help saying this each time I am asked to reflect on my life".

Having lived through the horrors of partition to become the best-remembered Indian athlete for generations.

"God wanted me to play a part in bringing glory to India and bestowed me and my family with all the goodness. My country and countryman gave me more than what I could ever expect," Milkha used to say.

## Military discipline

A die-hard devotee of discipline and fitness, Milkha attributed this to the role played by the Indian Army: "The Army gave me a second life. For three or four years, after partition, I roamed around doing odd jobs. Always wanted to join the Army but I succeeded on my fourth attempt.

"It was in the army that



Close to his heart: The gold he won in the 440-yard race in Cardiff in 1958 was a special moment for Milkha Singh, left. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

I got a chance to run in the cross-country run. Army saw some talent in me and encouraged me.

"For Southern Command and later for Services, I won a number of races in 200 and 400 metres."

Milkha held the 1958 Commonwealth Games 440-yard gold medal (in Cardiff) very close to his heart.

"This was really a very special moment. The other moment was when I was honoured with the Helms Trophy for the best athlete. That felt incredible."

His best days came between 1958 and 1962 but the heartbreak of missing a medal in the 1960 Rome

Olympics left behind a lingering pain.

"I cried for many days after that loss. But Nehruji (then Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru) was very kind and told me that the nation was proud of me and I should not despair having given my best," he once shared.

"Running on those cinder tracks (later replaced by the synthetic tracks from the 1968 Olympics) took a lot out of the athletes.

"We had to train harder and did not know how much training was enough.

"Wish we had these kind of even tracks and to-

day's guidance, in our days," he said.

In his later years, Milkha was a regular in walking the course when his golfer son Jeev played the Indian Open, the country's flagship golf event.

In fact, golf became his second love after running.

## Similarity

"There is a similarity between golf and running," he would say and continue, "in both, your rivals don't stop you from doing what you are capable of doing. In other words, in both these disciplines, you 'run' your race."

Milkha surely ran his race well.

## TRIBUTES TO THE FLYING SIKH

**President Ram Nath Kovind:** The passing of sporting icon Milkha Singh fills my heart with grief. The story of his struggles and strength of character will continue to inspire generations of Indians.

**Vice President Venkaiah Naidu:** Through his scintillating performances on the world stage, the legendary athlete has stirred and inspired every Indian – and not just in sports.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi:** We have lost a colossal sportsman, one who captured the nation's imagination and had a special place in the hearts of countless Indians.

**Kiren Rijju:** The biggest Olympic delegation in the history of our nation will aim to fulfil the dream of Milkha Singh Ji at Tokyo 2020.

**Sachin Tendulkar:** Your demise has left a deep void in every Indian's heart today, but you shall keep inspiring several generations to come.

**Kapil Dev:** My Hero Milkha Uncle. India's Pride. Love you for ever.

**Amitabh Bachchan:** The pride of India... a great athlete... a greater human... Waheguru di Mehr.

**Mary Kom:** Really sad about the demise of our national hero and a legend Shri Milkha Singh Ji.

**Abhinav Bindra:** May god give strength to his family to overcome this irreparable loss.

**Virat Kohli:** A legacy that inspired a whole nation to aim for excellence. To never give up and chase your dreams. You will never be forgotten.

**Ravi Shastri:** India's greatest Olympics runner. Shook the

world in 60s with his competitive spirit in spite of the most limited facilities.

**Sourav Ganguly:** You have made young Indians dream of becoming an athlete.

**Farhan Akhtar:** Your story was a constant source of inspiration and a reminder of humility in success.

**Anju Bobby George:** His speeches were very inspirational. He was 91 and I could not believe that he was that energetic and healthy even at that age.

**T.C. Yohanan:** He was an inspiration to all Indians because sports promotion improved after Milkha's Commonwealth Games gold (in 440 yards) in 1958.

**Sharath Kamal:** Indian sports has lost a true gem. An athlete par excellence, and a genuine role model.

**Vijender Singh:** Legends never die.

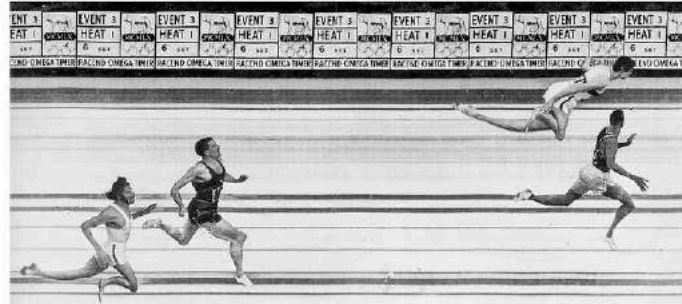
**Pankaj Advani:** Sad to hear about the demise of champion Milkha Singh.



Milkha. • FILE PHOTO: K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

## 'Milkha would have got Olympic medals if he had been running now'

Usha says his Rome run is her favourite Indian performance



Heartbreak: Milkha, left, missed a bronze at the Rome Olympics in 1960. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

STAN RAYAN  
KOCHI

The starting block once flew off when Milkha Singh took off for a race. He turned and looked at the man, who had fixed it, in anger. But though the others had taken a big lead, Milkha still managed to win the race.

PT. Usha narrated this as one of the many stories her coach O.M. Nambiar had told when she was a 13-year-old at Kerala's Kannur Sports Division.

"There were so many stories about Milkha so I was very keen to meet him," Usha told *The Hindu* from Patiala, ahead of Monday's Indian Grand Prix-4, on Saturday.

But when they finally met, language was a bit of a barrier.

"We had gone to Korea for the 1982 World junior invitation meet, he as the chief de mission and I as an athlete. I did not understand much because I did not know Hindi well," said Usha.

## Full of life

But as years went by, Usha found Milkha very warm and witty, full of life and laughter.

"If Milkha had been running now, he would be getting us medals at the Olympics and World championships. He was so talented, the time that he set

in 1960 stood as a national record for nearly four decades.

"For me, my favourite Indian performance is Milkha running that 400m at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Even though many had broken his record, I still consider it as the best Indian performance considering the facilities our current athletes have."

Milkha had an eventful life, he was ready to face death bravely too.

"When I met him three years ago, he said 'I'm ready to die, ready to say good bye. I have given my medals and spikes to the museum,'" revealed Usha. "I was stunned when I heard that."

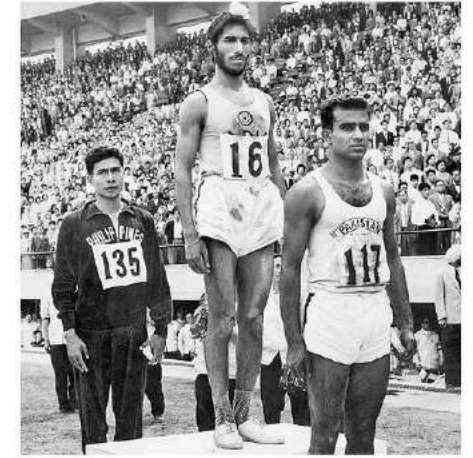
## Career highlights

■ **1958:** 440 yards, gold, British Empire and Commonwealth Games, Cardiff (the only men's athletics gold till discus thrower Vikas Gowda won the yellow metal in 2014 Glasgow C'wealth Games)

■ **1958:** 200m and 400m gold, Asian Games, Tokyo

■ **1960:** 400m, fourth, Rome Olympics (his 45.6s was an Indian National record that stood for 38 years until Paramjit Singh broke it in 1998)

■ **1962:** 400m gold, 4x400m relay gold, Asian Games, Jakarta



Golden double: Milkha Singh finished on top of the podium in 200m at the Tokyo Asian Games in 1958. He also won the 400m, outclassing the field. • THE HINDU ARCHIVES

## Kohli and Rahane stage a fightback

New Zealand pulls things back after India's promising start

## WTC FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SOUTHAMPTON

Virat Kohli's watchful innings (44 batting) in challenging conditions and an equally gritty knock from Rahane (29 batting) helped India reach 146 for three when play was called off due to bad light in the third session on day two of the World Test Championship (WTC) final here on Saturday.

Earlier, New Zealand had won the toss and elected to field. Rohit Sharma (34 off 68) and Shubman Gill (28 off 64) staved off the initial swing threat with disciplined batting before New Zealand fought back to leave India at 69 for two at lunch.

India added 51 runs in the second session for the loss of Cheteshwar Pujara (8 off 54) and when early tea was taken due to bad light, India had progressed to 120 for three.

India decided to stick to the same eleven it announced two days ago while New Zealand went in with an all-pace attack for the summit clash.



Battling it out: Kohli batted with caution on a helpful day for the New Zealand bowlers. • AP

## SCOREBOARD

**India – 1st innings:** Rohit Sharma c Southee b Jamieson 34 (68b, 6x4), Shubman Gill c Watling b Wagner 28 (64b, 3x4), Cheteshwar Pujara lbw b Boult 8 (54b, 2x4), Virat Kohli (batting) 44 (124b, 1x4), Ajinkya Rahane (batting) 29 (79b, 4x4); Extras (lb-2, nb-1); 3; Total (for three wkts. in 64.4

overs): 146.  
**Fall of wickets:** 1-62 (Rohit, 20.1 overs), 2-63 (Gill, 24.3), 3-88 (Pujara, 40.2).  
**New Zealand bowling:** Southee 17-4-47-0, Boult 12-4-23-1, Jamieson 14-9-14-1, de Grandhomme 11-6-23-0, Wagner 10-3-28-1.  
**Toss:** New Zealand.

## Sneh, Taniya help India to a draw

Share 104-run unbroken partnership for the ninth wicket

## INDIA IN ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BRISTOL

The one-off women's Test between India and England ended in a draw on the fourth and final day here on Saturday, with the visitors defying the home attack to score 344 for eight in the second innings.

India was forced to follow-on on Friday after conceding a 165-run first innings lead. But it recovered from a middle-order collapse to defy the home bowlers on a sluggish pitch.



Gritty show: Debutant Sneh Rana defied the England attack with an unbeaten 80 off 154 deliveries. • GETTY IMAGES

No. 8 Sneha Rana topped with an unbeaten 80 off 154 balls. She and No. 10 Taniya Bhatia (44 not out) shared 104 for the unbroken ninth wicket as they frustrated the England bowlers for 30.4 overs.

Shafali Verma made 63 in the second innings to add to her 96 in the first essay.

Another debutant Deepthi Sharma came good with a 54 to add to her 29 in the first innings.

India took an overall lead of 179 with two wickets in hand when the two sides decided to end the match.

## SCOREBOARD

**England – 1st innings:** 396 for nine decl.

**India – 1st innings:** 231.

**India – 2nd innings (following on):** Smriti Mandhana c Sciver b Brunt 8 (13b, 1x4), Shafali Verma c Brunt b Ecclestone 63 (83b, 11x4, 1x6), Deepthi Sharma b Ecclestone 54 (168b, 8x4), Punam Raut c Ecclestone b Sciver 39 (104b, 5x4), Mithali Raj b Ecclestone 4 (12b, 1x4), Harmanpreet Kaur c Jones b Ecclestone 8 (34b, 1x4), Pooja Vastrakar b Knight 12 (21b, 3x4), Sneha Rana (not out) 80 (154b, 13x4), Shikha Pandey c Jones b Sciver 18 (50b, 3x4), Taniya Bhatia (not out) 44 (88b, 6x4); Extras (b-6, lb-6, w-1, nb-1); 14; Total (for eight wkts. in 121 overs): 344.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-29 (Smriti, 4.3 overs), 2-99 (Shafali, 29.6), 3-171 (Deepthi 57.5), 4-175 (Mithali, 61.5), 5-175 (Punam, 64.3), 6-189 (Pooja, 70.4), 7-199 (Harmanpreet, 73.3), 8-240 (Shikha, 90.2).

**England bowling:** Brunt 21-5-49-1, Shrubsole 13-2-52-0, Ecclestone 38-10-118-4, Cross 15-6-43-0, Knight 15-2-41-1, Sciver 16-9-21-2, Elwiss 3-1-8-0.

**One-off Test drawn.**

**Next match: First ODI:** June 27, Bristol.

## Intense Germany too hot for Portugal

France labours to draw with Hungary

## EURO 2020

AGENCIES  
MUNICH

Germany finally got its Euro 2020 campaign on track with a commanding Group F performance against Portugal here on Saturday.

The holder succumbed to some intense pressure from the Germans to concede two own goals – defenders Ruben Dias and Raphael Guerreiro turning the ball into their own net within the space of five first-half minutes – and the advantage after taking an early lead.

Kai Havertz and then Robin Gosens added two more quick goals in the second half for an eventual 4-2 win.

## Shock lead

Earlier in Budapest, Hungary took a shock lead against France in a pulsating match, but Antoine Griezman equalised for a 1-1 draw inside the packed Puskas Arena.

In Friday's late Group D

## TODAY'S MATCHES

**GROUP A**  
**Italy vs Wales**  
9.30 p.m.  
**Switzerland vs Turkey**  
9.30 p.m.  
*Live on Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD)*

match, a lacklustre England was held goalless by a determined Scotland.

**The results: Group F:** Hungary 1 (Fiola 45+2) drew with France 1 (Griezman 66); Portugal 2 (Ronaldo 15, Jota 67) lost to Germany 4 (Dias 35-og, Guerreiro 39-og, Havertz 51, Gosens 60).

**Group D:** England 0 drew with Scotland 0.



Robin Gosens. • REUTERS