### on Sunday I



CBSE students move SC for cancellation of their private/repeat exams



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



India makes a cautious start in WTC final





Hard-line judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi wins Iran presidential poll

against New Zealand page 14



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# **NEARBY**

#### 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.



CLASSIFIEDS > PAGE 4

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

Gupkar alliance members will discuss strategy: Tarigami

PEERZADA ASHIQ

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 polit-ical 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 certifi-cate, officials said.



NC president Faroog Abdullah and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

"We have received a formal invite. The alliance will sit together and discuss the proposed meeting," CPI(M) leader and Gupkar alliance spokesman M.Y. Tarigami

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

Dr. Abdullah, the MP from Srinagar who heads the al-liance of five political par-ties, 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

## Monitor signs of surge: Centre

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 beharelaxing viour while 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 Se-cretaries 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



eady to roll: A KSRTC bus being disinfected in Bengaluru on Saturday. . MURALI KUMAR K

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

'I would like to highlight

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

'Act against those who assault doctors'

The Centre on Saturday isked 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. ) PAGE 8

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 Paswan 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 con-stitution, 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

Assam will apply "population norms" to all govern-ment schemes soon, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sar-ma said on Saturday.

"Whether it is waiver of loans or government schemes, we are going to imple-ment the population norms in the near future," Mr. Sar-

The number of children er woman or family would be kept on the higher side but would gradually be brought down, the Chief Minister added. The condition would initially not apply to people from the tea garden community, the Scheduled

Castes and the Scheduled

CONTINUED ON > PAGE 6

## **HC directs NHRC to examine** complaints of Bengal violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 com-

mittee 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 liveli hood". The order, issued on June 18, directed that "the persons prima facie responsible for crime and the offic ers who maintained calculat ed silence on the issue be pointed out".

The matter will come up for hearing on June 30.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

### Casting a spell

MOHAMMED IQBAL

Taking a pledge to treat the

plants as "green members" of their families, 100 women

each in 33 village panchayats

of Taranagar block in Rajas-

than's Churu district planted

a total of 5,100 saplings ear-

lier this week to mark the 'World Day to Combat Deser-

tification and Drought'. The

initiative was part of a unique

Harit Marubhumi (green

the crucial interconnection

between humanity and na-

The campaign highlighted

desert land) drive.



nsoon magic: Onlookers watch fishermen cast their net as dark monsoon clouds hover over the Brahmaputra river in Guwahati on Saturday. - RITU RAJ KONWA

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 authsits from orities to provide "relevant facts" and "possible reasons" for changes in depo-

sit 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 Switzer land 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 Sa-turday, Indian track and field bid a final adieu to its 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



GS Foundation Course for

**CSE 2022** 

Live-Online Classes with Facility to Convert

 L-6 Batch: 21st June, 2021 (9:00 am to 12:00 noon)

L-7 Batch: 1st July, 2021 (5:30 pm to 8:30 pm)

(5:30 pm to 8:30 pm) K-Batch: 15th July, 2021 (9:00 am to 12:00 noon)

Note: In case Offline classes get delayed due to Covid then Live-online classes will be provided till offline classes resume

Offline Classes

Spacious & sanitized classroor with COVID-19 safety protecols

J-Batch: 12th July, 2021

**Optional** Foundation Course for CSE 2021 & 22 (Live-Online)

17th June, 2021 (2:00 pm to 4:30 pm)

**Mathematics** 

**Economics** 

(9:30 am to12:30 pm)

Anthropology July, 2021 (2:00 pm to 4:30 pm)

Sociology 8" July, 2021 (2:00 pm to 4:30 pm) Note: Batches for Engineering Optionals Through Questions (CE, ME, EE) CSE 2021 starting from 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

> 10 Online Sessions (Recorded ADMISSION

**CSE 2020** INTERVIEW **GUIDANCE** 

...

- Mock Interviews.
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- Interview oriented study materials
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ture, making the tree an in-separable part of the "family consciousness", which in turn brings every issue relatand identified the land where the plantation drive could be ed to plant, tree, leaves and taken up. Block Developed with fruit-bearing saplings ment Officer Sant Kumar the climate to the ecosystem of lemon, guava, mulberry, Meena said the inaugural jamun and pomegranate for for generating environmen-



sensitivity and empowerment.

All the panchavats in Taranagar block joined the drive programme at Gajuwas panthavat witnessed the plantation of 251 saplings of desert species such as khejri, rohida neem berand sheesham. The women were also gift-

Rajasthan women vow to nurture 'green family

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

**UN** award

Shvam Sunder Ivani, 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 Conven-

tion to Combat Desertifica-

the plantation sites, which in-

The sarpanches of the

sor at Government Dungar College, Bikaner, in recogni-tion 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

Mr. Jyani, an associate profes

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.

PHOTOS BY SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA,

SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR





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

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 affectedon June 20," the

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

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 Budhha Nagar posted in New Delhi district. His

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

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

The impact was such that the cab was completely crushed and the driver was severely hurt. Lo-

cals 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 driv-ing and causing death by negligence has been registered and further investigation is under way. Bhardwaj was on his way home af-ter completing his duty and had two pegs of whiskey in his car be-fore leaving, the police said. He has been working in the force since 2009.

### HIMACHAL PRADESH

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS

No		Cost In Rs.	money in Rs.	from in Rs.			
1.	GWSS Jamani Samota in G.P Jamani Tehsil Sarkaghat Disti. Mandi H.P (SH:- C/O Intake chamber spring						
	n.i. (cm: CU marke charmer spring source, Co Intake Charmber Nailah Source, 2 Nos ,CIO 10000 Ltrs. Cap. at Node No.2 & C/O Storage tank 20000 Ltrs. Cap. at Node No.18)						
	C/O GWSS Rohan Bharyana in G.P Gounta & Rakhota Tehsil Serkaghat	4,88,477/-	9770/-	250/-	Three Months.		
	Distt. Mandi H.P (SH;- C/o Intake Chamber spring source 2 No., C/O Intake chamber Nallah Source , 3Nos C/O						

Tender receivin authorit Skimming of Dal Lake from RD i. August 2021 8000 Meters to 16000 meters (STPLaam to Habak) during the year 2021 and 2022 by using Algae and Floating Weed Cleaning Machines including November 2021 ii.April 2022 November 2022 Cleaning Machines incluing matter and serious control of the contr

J&K Lakes & Waterways Development

**Authority Srinagar** 

and on behalf of The Honbie Governor of J&K UT, e-tender (Two cover System), is invited fron ted and resourceful A class contractors/Firms/companies/joint venture of repute or orshensive and extensive basis, which should be uploaded on the e-Procurement web ports

Specifications and drawings can be downloaded on the e-procurement. Porta-tip://jikenders.gov.in and also on departmental web site "www.jklda.org. The cost of the

anders.gov.in as per given bidding Schedule for below mentioned works as per the ned in this e-tender notification, to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed NII ments/ PWD Form NO:- 25 are accepted. The detailed tender document

designated dumping site Tender Fee to be deposited into account No. CDG/01850102 00 00 0004. JK Bank Upper Sath

(IFSC Code: JAKA0SATHOO) 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			

or bidding please visit www.jkt

For and on behalf Of the Honble Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT

DIPK-NB-1283/21

n the given Divisional account No.

Lake Division 1st,LDA

### JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG

No		Cost In Rs.	money in Rs.	from in Rs.			
1.	GWSS Jamani Samota in G.P 3,64,709/- 7300/- 250/- Thi Jamani Teheli Sarkaghat Disti. 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)						
2.	C/O GWSS Rohan Bharyana in G.P Gounta & Rakhota Tehsil Sarkaghat	4,88,477/-	9770/-	250/-	Three Months.		
	Dist. Mandi H.P (SH; Clo Intake Chamber spring source 2 No., C/O intake chamber Nallah Source, 3Nos C/O Slorage 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).						

Last date sale of tender form from Divisional 02-07-2021 e tender form and other detailed constitutions can be some date specified.

whipiph.org. or from office above Executive Engineer upto date specified.

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division, Sarkaghat

SEARCH FOR MISSING

**BAL KISHAN** 

General public is hereby informed that a person (depicted in the photo), Namely: 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@cbi.gov.in or Website: http://cbi.nic.in

011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639 DP/816/NE/2021

P.S. New Usmanpur, Delh North-East Distt., Delh Ph. No. 011-22172410, 22175468

## Draft MPD-2041 promotes cycling, walkability network

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

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 have 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 ma-jor 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 with-in a sector shall be improved and or widened and integrated into the sector layout, if feasible," it

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



lanned 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 inte-gration," 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 un-erscores sustainability features which multiple sectors or schemes can come together to meet the requirements.
"Physical infrastructure in the

sector shall ensure 100% treat-ment and maximum reuse of

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

The Delhi Development Auth-ority (DDA) has not yet issued approvals to any housing project un-

der the policy.

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

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

STAFF REPORTER

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

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.

DP/712/NE/2021

The description of missing person is as under:

Shirt, Black Jeans Pant and Black Shoes in Feet.

Web: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

nform P.S. Dayal Pur, Delhi.

**SEARCH FOR MISSING** 

Name: Md. Sajid Saifl, Age: 44 Years, Height: 6', Face: Long,

Built: Thin, Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Checkdar

If anyone has any information about this Missing person ple

General public is hereby informed that a

person namely Md. Sajid Saifi, S/o: Md. Khalid, R/o: H.No. B-84, Gail 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.

Police Station, Dayal Pur, Delhi Ph: 011-22800215, 8750870725

#### Timings

DELHI SUNDAY, JUN. 20 RISE 05:24 SET 19:22 RISE 14:33 SET 01:41

MONDAY, JUN. 21 RISE 05:25 SET 19:23 RISE 15:40 SET 02:17

THESDAY, JUN. 22 RISE 05:25 SET 19:23 RISE 16:50 SET 02:58

Delhi City

Delhi Palam Today 38°C The weather will be very warm and humid. Night will be comfortable. Chances of rain

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 37°C The weather will be mostly dry. A very warm and humid weather to continue. Night will be comfortable.

#### THE総総無HINDU

## 14 days of Covishield stock for youth: Atishi

Cases continue to decline, only 135 infections over 24 hours

STAFF REPORTER

The downward trend in CO-VID-19 cases continued in the national capital with 135 new infections being reported over 24 hours, ac-cording to a health bulletin released by the Delhi go-

vernment on Saturday.

The total number of cases now stands at 14,32,168, Seven deaths were also

reported, pushing the toll to 24,907. A total of 75,687 tests were conducted in a day, the bulletin added.

Of the total cases, 14,04,889 people have recovered and there are 2,372 active cases. The test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.18%. The TPR was as high as 36% on April 22 and has been coming down since then.

Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi on Saturday said Delhi received 1.67 lakh doses of Covishield on Friday for



RT-PCR tests under way at weekly bazaar near Majlis Park metro station in New Delhi on Saturday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the 18 to 44 age group and now the government has 2.95 lakh vaccines available for the youth.

Low on Covaxin

'Two days of Covaxin and 14 days of Covishield stock are available for the youth. We appeal to the youth of Delhi to book slots through the CoWin app and get themselves vaccinated... A total of 8.46 lakh vaccine doses are available for the above 45 years age category, six days Covaxin and 58 days Covishield stock is available," the AAP leader

### Police form panels for emergencies in 'next wave'

To gear up and tackle the next possible wave of CO-VID-19 cases, Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava on Saturday announced the formation of the district and thana-level committees for public healthcare mergencies. Delhi Police, in a state-

ment, informed that Mr. Shrivastava, during a crime

and COVID-19 review meeting, said the committees will provide a professional res-ponse to situations arising out of public health emergencies, movement of migrant labourers, care for the destitute, elderly citizens and women, food or ration for the needy and hungry. and maintaining essential

The COVID cell at Police Headquarters will be upgraded to a public health management emergency emergency management cell, which shall function as the PHQ node for supervising these district and thanalevel committees, it said.

Important objective

"One of the most important objectives of these committees will be to work towards public acceptance of COVIDappropriate behavior and placing measures for systemic and voluntary adoption, thus minimising the need for coercive enforce-ment," the statement read.

The CP said COVID-appropriate compliance can be ensured only when all ci-tizens voluntarily observe it out of a sense of responsibility and duty.

"Police are to prosecute the violations, which should be the minimum occurrence and not a norm," he said.

## Adapting to a year of disruption

The pandemic forced many workers to change the way they do business

ASHOK KUMAR JATIN ANAND NEW DELHI/GURUGRAM

The year of disruption - 2020 not only threw challenges on the health front but also impact many other aspects of life. In times of COVID-19, a large population, espe-cially daily wagers, saw a sudden loss of livelihood. Several professions, where maintaining social distancing was implausible, were impacted more than the others.

Faced with questions on survival, people engaged in various jobs experimented and innovated for the "new normal". In 2021, we see the fruits as many have managed to overcome hurdles and remain afloat.

Sex workers were, perhaps, among the worst-hit. But the practitioners of the world's oldest profes-sion have gradually embraced technology over the past year to overcome the economic hardship caused by the contagious nature of the novel coronavirus

While the nature of their work remains mostly the same, many sex workers and their clients in Delhi have, given the circumstances imposed on them by the virus, taken to video and phone calling for business.

### Virtual sex workers

This change happened right after the national lockdown last year. We were getting negligible to no clients since people feared getting infected by COVID due to what we do for a living and a significant proportion of the social class we cater to had migrated back home," said 'Jyoti, a "virtual sex worker"

Associated with the trade for seven to eight years, Ms. Jyoti said she now worked over the phone from an office with five to six other professionals like her. Though the fee is less compared to what was charged offline, it happens to be their sole means of sustenance.

Delhi's red-light district on Garstin Bastion (GB) Road, officially called Shradhanand Marg, with an estimated 68 kothas (brothels) and around 5,000 sex workers, has borne an increasingly debilitating brunt due to the ongoing pandemic.

A large number of the profession-als remain put despite earnings slashed by as much as 75%. Some have reportedly left for their hometowns while others have branched



Santosh Tripathi turned his autorickshaw into a vegetable cart in Gurugram.

out becoming either "domestic sex workers" who invite patrons' homes or into the virtual realm.

"I go to an office with a few other girls where clients connect with us over the phone or video calls. It's mostly video calls. Old clients are among the ones we serve the most, but we also get new ones. Sometimes people default on making payments, so we make it a point to receive the digital payment first," she added.

"In fact, these old clients and NGOs have helped us survive over the last year, not any government. Our old clients sent money without even being asked for help and NGOs helped us with food. All we got from the government was 4kg of bad quality wheat," Ms. Jyoti complained.

Thousands of autorickshaw drivers, mostly migrants, across the National Capital Region too were badly impacted due to COVID-induced lockdown last year and the continued closure of offices, schools, and scaled-down operations of metro services and trains till date.

Though many left for their hometowns, a few took up odd jobs to survive. But a few like, Santosh Tripathi from Gurugram, thought innovatively to turn their autorickshaws into mobile vegetable carts. More than a year later, Mr. Tripathi does not regret his decision.

Two of my brothers also worked as autorickshaw drivers before the pandemic hit. But they were reluctant to adapt to the changed circumstances. They have gone back home hoping to return after the things become normal," said Mr. Tripathi.

But it was not easy for Mr. Tripathi to adapt to the new way of life.

"I drove around for two days after the lockdown was lifted last year but it was hard to find a passenger. Since I had earlier worked as a vegetable vendor, I decided to return to my old

work. I contacted my old customers in the group housing societies in Sector 15 Part-II and started selling the vegetables," said Mr. Tripathi. He may not be earning much, but it is enough to sustain his family of four. 'It is difficult to know what lies ahead, but after this experience I am prepared to face come what may." sighed Mr. Tripathi.

### Taking advantage of apps

The past year has also seen the shutting down of many saloons across the National Capital Region, rendering countless hair-dressers jobless. Many of them have now registered them selves with the apps offering life-style

services to tide over the crisis.
"Saloon owners were also among those impacted by the pandemic, said Shahzad Ahmad, who shut his decade-old saloon in HUDA Market Sector 5 last year during the

For the first few months of lockdown, Mr. Ahmad paid the shop's rent – around ₹40,000 per month – and salary to his staff of four but soon realised that it was unsustainable.

"Meanwhile four saloon shops in the market area were also shut. I soon realised that I need to adapt to a new way of doing things. Since customers were scared to return to saloons, we needed to reach out to them at their homes. I then registered myself with an app for saloon services," said Mr. Ahmad.

A year later, Mr. Ahmad earns almost at par with his earnings before the pandemic. "Initially I had difficulty in adapting to the new way of working. I had support staff for cleaning earlier, but now I need to do it on my own. But I have learnt it," said Mr. Ahmad, proudly proclaiming that he was among those with the highest

rating on the app. \*(Name changed on request)

### Govt. to give ₹1 cr. each to families of 6 officials

They died protecting the nation: Sisodia

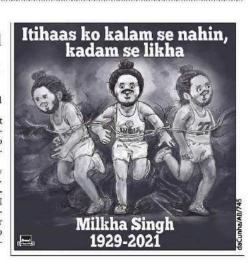
STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi government on Saturday announced ex gratia of ₹1 crore each to families of six defence personnel and policemen who died in the line of duty.

"Three out of the six per sonnel belonged to the Indian Air Force, two to Delhi Police and one was from Defence," said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

He said the government respects the bravery of evsoldier in uniform, who has risked their lives to protect people and the nation.

"Honouring the bravery of our personnel, CM Ar-vind Kejriwal initiated financial assistance for personnel in Delhi Police, Defence, Paramilitary forces and other forces who risk their lives to protect our nation," the Mi-



### Govt. has no right to ask pvt. sector to implement minimum wages: LoP

'Anganwadi workers paid ₹3K-₹9K instead of ₹15K-₹19K'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Leader of the Opposition, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, on Saturday said the Delhi government "had no right" to ask the private sector to implement minimum wages in the Capital when its own departments were under scrutiny for not follow-

ing this order.

Several Delhi govern-ment departments, including the Delhi Jal Board, the DTC, Social Welfare and other departments, ran day to day work on outsourcing to contractors who do not

pay minimum wages to workers, he said.

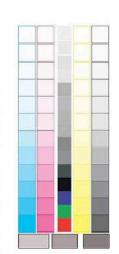
The Aam Aadmi Party had come to power with the slogan of putting an end to this outsourcing to contractors and give permanent jobs. Forget the permanent jobs, the workers are not even being paid minimum

wages," he alleged. Mr. Bidhuri alleged that in Delhi, the Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and other such communi-ties were being paid bet-ween ₹3,000 to ₹9,000 whereas under the Minimum Wages Act they

should be given between ₹15,492 to ₹19,291.

What is the use of a hike in minimum wages when the Delhi Government is not ensuring its implementation in its own departments?" Mr. Bidhuri asked.

"We must ensure that the decisions taken by a government are implemented in letter and spirit for the welfare and larger interests of the people or the beneficiaries. These decisions should not only be announced or taken for the sake of publicity,"



## 500 astronomy labs yet to see light of day

Aryan Mishra and three others now working towards making low-cost telescopes

HEMANI BHANDARI

Aryan Mishra, 21, son of a newspaper seller, made headlines when he discovered an asteroid at the age of 14.

He was set to build astro-nomy labs in government schools in 2019 after being approached by the Central government. The idea hasn't ta-ken off yet and he and his colleagues Shishirant Rahul, Shakeel Ahmad, and Naveen Sharma have been able to set up only 15 labs across the country, including in only three government schools in

Jammu, Leh and Kargil. "The government's idea was to set up 500 astronomy labs across the country. don't know why the idea hasn't taken off yet. Delhi government schools have done well over the last few years. I hope we can take the idea forward. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to meet Delhi Deputy Chief Minster Manish Sisodia. I have tried many times though," Mr. Mishra, now a third-year BSc student



Aryan Mishra (second from left) had made headlines when he discovered an asteroid at the age of 14. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

a private university said. He is studying on scholarship.

Could not fund studies

The idea of astronomy lab – a start-up called Spark Astronomy - was conceived in 2018 when Mr. Mishra had just graduated from Class 12 and had got into several universi-ties in the U.S. but had to cancel his plans because he couldn't arrange the funds.

"Honestly, I thought that with this start-up, I'll also be able to fund my education but unfortunately, that didn't

happen. And the whole idea behind it was to make science accessible and easy for those who are interested," he said.

The lab – which roughly costs ₹4.5 lakh – has telescopes, planispheres, moon mapping catalogue among other articles.

Now, this group of four is working towards making lowcost telescopes so those who want to see the sky can see it freely. The feeling was invoked because of Mr. Mishra's personal experience as a child and the hardships he

had to face coming from a humble background. He was born to Birbal Mis-

hra and Shashi Mishra, both uneducated who had come to the city from their hometown in Uttar Pradesh in search of a better life.

"While living in the slums at Kusumpur Pahadi, I got a clear view of the sky. There were no big buildings that blocked my view and I was a curious child who had so many questions about what goes on up there. I used to ask my teachers at school and finally joined the astronomy club, he said, adding that a cyber cafe in the vicinity helped

After the asteroid discovery, he got appreciation from different corners and was invited for talks but all the fame never really translated into anything tangible, he added.

"I never received any mo-netary or other help from anyone to enable me to do anything. I have done everything on my own and with my family's help," he said.

### 'Take remedial measures for restoration of Najafgarh lake'

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the Chief Secretaries of Delhi and Haryana to take remedial measures for the restoration of the Najafargh lake.

The tribunal observed that despite the issue being a significant environmental one, it had not received the attention it required from authorities. An NGT Bench said: "We have consi-

dered the matter and find that the issue of restoration of water body in question is significant for the environment but has

from the authorities," "Harvana has neither prepared Environment Management Plan [EMP] nor given any explanation for not doing so. None appears for the State of Haryana. The Delhi government has prepared the draft Environmental Management Plan but execution thereof has to be ensured after complet ing the EMP," the Bench said.

The Tribunal has also directed the Chief Secretaries to remain present via videoconference on the hearing and provide a status of compliance.



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## 'H.P. BJP leaders may join Cong.'

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

VIKAS VASUDEVA

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 BIP.

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 gover-

"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-



co-incharge Sanjay Dutt. •

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 heath facilities are poor, people are suffering badly. The BJP's failed governance has taken the State back at least 20 years,"

"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 heath 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 en-

story. Himachal Pra-

desh 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 mis-sion. We have to save Himachal and our party stands united to achieve this objective. Suggestions have come

up about being more ag-gressive to raise people-cen-

tric issues at macro and mi-

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cro levels," he added.

Mr. Dutt said during his recent visit, he had one-to-one interactions with senior party leaders, MLAs, officebearers 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 CO-VID-19 outreach campaign. The party would be reachout to the front-line health workers and those severely affected by the vi-

### Amarinder defends jobs for sons of Cong. MLAs

SAD seeks State govt.'s dismissal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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, saving 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 "compassion-ate" grounds.

Mr. Bajwa is the son of Qa-dian MLA Fateh 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

PATIALA

tuency in Patiala, Ms. Sid-hu said rather jobs could have been given to a sportsperson or a ward of a freedom fighter.

of the Congress legislators.

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

Parents parted with him for ₹10,000

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

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 wo-man, who had 'bought' the baby boy, was identified as Sumedin Bibi. She has admitted to have paid the mo-

ney.
The infant was produced before the Child Welfare Committee, Khordha, a qua-si-judiciary 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 Mahatab Seva Sadan, a special adoption agency for rehabilitation of children, on Saturday. Ms. Bibi has been taken into cus-

"The parents have not

been traced. They used to live near the Bhubaneswar railway station," said Arun Inspector-in-charge of Kharavelanagar police sta

District Child Protection Officer Banishree Patnaik re-ceived a videoclip regarding the 'sale', which she for-warded 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. Fol-lowing the intervention of the police, the baby was res-cued from Malisahi area of Bhubaneswar," said Benud-har Senapati, Director of

Childline. Mr. Senapati said, "The woman told the investiga-tors 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 Kharvelnagar police station.

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### Pandey who was gunned down by the terrorists in 1987, the government had said. Capt. Amarinder said

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

should, never be forgotten.

## be criteria'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Former legislator Navjot Kaur Sidhu criticised the decision, saying only merit should be the criteria. Talking to reporters at Chaura village in Sanour consti-

those who make a sacrifice for the nation can, and

ALLIANCE INVITED from family of-ented Telugu Brahmin glifs (em-ployed or not) for Telugu Brahmin Boy, B.Com, M.B.A., Age 33, 185cm employed as Manager with bank presently at Bangalore. Contact 8146281195

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SMU SYED boy 33/5.9 BE Wrkg Qetar Sook Engg & Grad, Religious namazi hijabi sunni urdu girl eerly mar-riage only PH 9442577760 

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QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



Sultana to appear befo Kavaratti police today

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

### EAPCET replaces EAMCET, to be held from August 19

VIJAYAWADA 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

STAFF REPORTER

statutory

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has closed proceed-ings against the Mekedatu dam project after finding merit in the Karnataka go-vernment's submissions that requisite environmental clearances were pending consideration before the

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

authorities

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



A file photo of Mekedatu. The Karnataka government has

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 been mentioned by the State of Tamil Nadu in its submission before the Ministry of Jal Shakti..."

"Accordingly, proceedings

to disclose the fact that the process of obtaining necessary clearances was pending before authorities. All issues, including those of environ-mental, 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

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

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Chairman of the Kar-nataka 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 interlinking the Cauvery with the Gundar and the Vaigai till Karnataka's legitimate share of surplus water is determined.

K.L. Manjunath, chair-man 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. Yedivurappa, said the State also had to approach the Cauv-ery Water Management Authority (CWMA) to settle equitable distribution of the Cauvery waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu by way of an amicable settlement.

### Red flags removed in Lakshadweep

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Lakshadweep district panchavat 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 admi-nistration. "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.

**WEATHER WATCH** 

ecast 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

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galuru		28.2	20.8	Mangaluru	45.5	28.0	
ipal	4.1	35.0	24.0	Mumbai	17	32.0	
haneswar.	0.1	30.7	25.8	Mysuru		28.8	
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nnai		37.5	29.3	Patna			
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aballi		24.0	21.0	Shillong		23.2	
ferabad		31.0	23.7	Shimla		26.5	
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#### Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Pollutants in the air you are breathing
Critiss So Hois Co PM2.5 PM10 CODE
Ahmediahad ... 3 15 105 ... 46 ... 58 ...
Bengaluru 11 ... 3 ... 111 ... 75
Chennai ... 9 ... 5 ... 47 ... 101 ... 74 ...
Delhi ... 4 ... 11 ... 48 ... 61 ... 157
Linghabad ... - 70 ... 13 ... 25 ... 42 ...
Kolikata ... 9 ... 21 ... 30 ... 60 ...
Kolikata ... 9 ... 3 ... 56 ... 57 ... 71
Lurkhow ... 7 ... 55 ... 57 ... 71
Lurkhow ... 6 ... 5 ... 58 ... 107 ...
Pune ... 5 ... 22 ... 74 ... 68 ... 102 ...
Visakhapatnam 12 ... 49 ... 32 ... 66 ... 143 ...

In observation made at 4,00 p.m., Fatehabad, Naryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 191 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesir recorded a healthy.

**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES** 

Mr. Daniel Justin James

25 October 1934 - 20 June 2020

"The Son of Man did not com

to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

'As thou Lord hast lived for

And, you did Appa.

We love you! We miss you!

**Neelu and Vinnie** 

For enquiries on

hers, so may we for others live."

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

pathcles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monument losside. 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.

PMZ-5.8. PMD: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartheat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and prematur death in people with heart or lung disease.

## Sudhakaran-Pinarayi war of words escalates

**KPCC** chief says he was a victim of political violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The ugly spat between Kera-la 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 cha-

racterised 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 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 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. ijayan was the first accused in the murder of Bharativa Janata Party activist Vadikkal Ramakrishnan. He reassert-ed that he had physically confronted Mr. Vijayan in the heat of a Brennan College



K. Sudhakaran

campus brawl between Left and Congress student unions

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

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 mar-

before this Tribunal are

closed without prejudice to rival contentions of the par-

ties on the subject in pro-ceedings pending before the

statutory authority con-cerned and before the Su-

preme Court," the Bench said, while observing that

the State of Tamil Nadu had

raised the issue before the

The Karnataka govern-ment had contended that the media report had failed

tial prowess. "Nevertheless, I stand by what appeared in the maga-zine, though it was without

'Can disprove charge' Mr. Sudhakaran denied Mr.

Vijayan's insinuation that Left student activists had 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 allegathe allegations like plans to kidnap Mr. Vijayan's children were absolutely false. Mr. Vi-jayan 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.

tions made by the Chief

The Congress leader said

Minister.

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 Muttil in Wayanad district and other parts of the State

## NORTH & WEST

## Ghaziabad assault case: SP worker arrested

Video was made with an intention to create disharmony: FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA HAZIABAD

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 in Loni area of Ghaziabad.

Ummaid Pehelwan Idrisi, absconding since Wednes day when an FIR was lodged against him at the Loni Border police station, was nabbed from Delhi on Saturday, a Ghaziabad police offi-cial 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 reli-gious belief), 504 (intentionprovoke breach of the peace) and 505 (public

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

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 d earlier that the elderly al insult with intent to 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

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 ne inauguration of the refurparty headquarters, in the presence of senior party leaders. Former Congress leader and BJP MLA Dr. Sunil Desh-mukh rejoined the party on the occasion. The move is likely to boost the party's electoral prospects, especially in Vidarbha.

Mumbai Congress president Bhai 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 medi-cines to 1,000 malnourished children in Mumbai's slums.

Last week, Mr. Patole sai bished Tilak Bhavan, the State he was willing to be the face of the party in the polls with the high command's consent.

### **OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**

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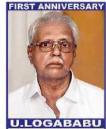


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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES





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

RAINA ASSAINAR

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 Na-tional 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 geo-graphical location exposed it to natural calamities. "The district has a large industrial network, the Mumbai-Pune National Highway and Expressway, Mumbai-Goa Na-tional Highway, waterways and railway lines. The 'Gol-den Hours' are very important for rescue operations in emergencies. If the NDRF 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

Kalyana Suraksha Bhavan, ITI College Compound, Bannerghatta Road, Bengaluru-560029 Ph: 080-29753350 email: karbuildworkerswelfare@gmail.com No: KBOCWWB/E-Auction T4 to T5/FD-04/CR-04/2021-22

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DOL/2021-22/ vestment of Cess amoun AUCTION9 of Rs. 1000 Crore (Term 4) DOL/2021-22/ Investment of Cess amount **AUCTION10** of Rs. 187 Crore (Term 5) ction documents should be submitted electronically through e-Procurement porta (https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in) under department of Labour for further information p contact Deputy Secretary of the Board Phone: 080-29753350/54/56, Mob: 944853379

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### Centre invites 14 J&K leaders to meet PM

The octogenarian NC leader, along with hundreds of mainstream leaders and workers, was arrested in 2019 in the wake of the Centre's move to abrogate J&K's special status. The Gupkar alliance,

which is scheduled to hold a meeting in the next few days, is likely to put up a joint front and a common narrative when they meet the Prime Minister. The alliance has demanded the restoration of the pre-August 5 position of J&K.

The invitation has been extended to NC's Dr Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdul-lah; Congress' Ghulam Nabi Azad, Tara Chand and G.A-.Mir; PDP's Mehbooba Mufti; Peoples Conference's Sa-jad Gani Lone and Muzaffar Hussian Baigh; Apni Party's Altaf Bukhari; BJP's Ravinder Raina, Nirmal Singh and Kavinder Gupta; CPI(M)'s M. Y. Tarigami, and National Panthers Party's Prof. Panthers

Spell out agenda: Mufti However, sources close to Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti. strong critic of the

Centre's 2019 decision, said she is reluctant to be a part of the meeting with the Prime Minister "unless the Centre spells out its agenda" and "takes concrete initia-

Ms. Mufti has already been spoken to on the phone about the meeting by officials from New Delhi, according to PDP spokesman

"Ms. Mufti has called a meeting of the party's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) on Sunday to take a final call on the proposed meeting," Mr. Bukhari said.

Meanwhile, Sartaj Mada-ni, uncle of Ms. Mufti, was released after a six-month preventive detention from a Srinagar sub-jail on Satur-day. Officials said Mr. Madani's detention period under sections 107 and 151 of the CrPC was coming to an end.

Leaders from the Jammu region also expressed their willingness to join the dia-logue. National Panthers Party leader Harsh Dev Singh said the party would participate if invited. J&K Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari welcomed the Centre's

### Monitor signs of surge, Centre urges States

It would be extremely important to follow the fivefold strategy of pandemic-appropriate behaviour, test, track, treat and vaccinate, he stressed.

"However, easing of restrictions in some States has led to resumption of crowd-ing of people in markets etc. without adherence to the norms of COVID-appropriate behaviour. It is, there

fore, essential to ensure that complacency does not set in," the letter stated. "As the situation is dy-

namic, a close watch needs to be kept on early signs of a surge in active cases or high positivity rates. A system should be in place at the micro level to ensure that whenever cases rise in a smaller place, it gets checked there

### Population norms in all govt. schemes: Assam

The government has already implemented the Population and Women Empower-ment Policy of Assam that makes any person with more than two children ineligible for government jobs and election to panchayats and civic bodies.

The policy came into effect on January 1.

The Chief Minister had last week appealed to migrant Muslims in the State to adopt "decent family planning" measures, predicting conflicts over living space, if the population continued to explode.

and its ally All India United Democratic Front cited the December 2020 National Family Health Survey data released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to pick holes in the Chief Minister's view. They pointed out that the

The Opposition Congress

fertility rate across most States declined in the past five years. "According to the survey, the fertility rate in Assam declined from 2.2 in 2015-16 to 1.9 in 2020-21, indicating the population is showing a decreasing trend," the Congress said. decreasing

### HC tells NHRC to submit report on Bengal violence

In the 12-page order, the Bench, comprising Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Justices I.P. Mukerji, Harish Tandon, Soumen Sen, and Subrata Talukdar, the State had been denying allegations of political violence from the very beginning but the facts as had been placed on record were different.

"In our view, this exercise of filing of affidavit and counter-affidavit will continue. It may not lead us anywhere because State. from the very beginning, had been denying everything, but the facts as have been placed on record by the petitioners and also as is evident little bit from the report dated June 3, 2021, filed by the Member Secretary of the West Bengal State Legal Services Authority, are different," the order

The court observed that against some of the com-plaints compiled by the West Bengal State Legal Services Authority (WBSLSA). the remarks were that no from the authority conmanner it liked.

"In a case like where the allegation is that life and property of the residents of the State is in danger on account of alleged post-poll violence, the State cannot be allowed to proceed in the manner it likes. The complaints required immediate action," the order said.

The WBSLSA member-secretary, as well as a member and representative of the State Human Rights Commission, would be part of the NHRC committee. The court directed the State to provide all logistic support to the committee wherever and whenever they wished to visit any place, "The State shall ensure there is no obstruction of any kind in this process. Such obstruction shall be viewed seriously, which may entail action under the Contempt of Courts Act besides others," the or-

der read. The court pointed out that the WBSLSA, in its report to the court, had mentioned that the number of persons who had reported suffering was 3,243 till 12 noon of June 10, 2021.

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

Finance Ministry says customer deposits had fallen from 2019-end, seeks facts from bank authorities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 the "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, banks through 2020, claimed customer deposits had actually fallen from the end of 2019.

#### Other factors

However, it cited several factors that could "potentially explain the increase in deposits", such as Indian compa-nies holding more funds in Switzerland due to increased business transactions.

"The Swiss authorities have been requested to pro-

### Counting the money

The Finance Ministry has denied that undeclared incomes of Indians deposited in Swiss banks rose to over ₹20,700 crore (CHF or Swiss Franc 2.55 billion) at 2020-end from ₹6,625 crore (CHF 899 million) at 2019-end. It said:

■ The reports about the spurt in Swiss bank deposits 'allude' to official figures reported by banks to Swiss National Bank and do not indicate the quantum of the much-debated alleged black money held by Indians in Switzerland

Further, these statistics do not include the money that Indians, NRIs or others might have in Swiss banks in the names of third-country entities

vide the relevant facts along with their view on possible reasons for increase/decrease in the light of media reports," the statement said, referring to reports that funds of Indians in Swiss banks rose from ₹6,625 crore

at the end of 2019 to ₹20,700

and Indian banks or a capital increase for a subsidiary of a Swiss company in India

crore at the end of 2020. The reported surge in de-posits has been reported as the highest in 13 years, it ad-

The Ministry said that reports about the spurt in Swiss bank deposits "allude" to official figures reported by

banks to Swiss National Bank (SNB) and do not indicate the quantum of the much-debat-ed alleged black money held by Indians in Switzerland. "Further, these statistics

do not include the money that Indians, NRIs or others might have in Swiss banks in the names of third-country entities," the statement added. The increase in depothe Ministry argued, could also be due to the business of Swiss bank branches located in India, increasing inter-bank transactions between Swiss and Indian banks or a capital increase for a subsidiary of a Swiss compa-ny in India.

#### Derivatives issues

Another factor could be an increase in the "liabilities connected with the out-standing derivative financial instruments"

The funds held through fiduciaries have also more than halved from end of

2019. The biggest increase is customers. These are in the form of bonds, securities and various other financial instruments," it said in a

statement on Saturday. "In view of the existing le gal arrangement for ex-change of information of financial accounts (which has a significant deterrent effect on tax evasion through undisclosed assets abroad). there does not appear to be any significant possibility of the increase of deposits in the Swiss banks, out of unde-clared incomes of Indian residents," the Ministry said. India and Switzerland

have been sharing such in-formation since 2018 and both are signatories to multi-lateral treaties relating to mutual administrative assistance in tax matters. Bringing back black money held by Indians abroad was a key plank in the 2014 Lok Sabha election for the BIP.

### Transgender portal in more languages

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry's portal for application of certificates of identity for transgender persons was made available in 10 anguages this week, an official said.

The portal, which is available at transgender-.dosje.gov.in, was launched on November 25, 2020 for facilitating ID cards for trans persons. However, it was available only in English.

The Hindu had reported

on Thursday that the De-partment of Social Justice and Empowerment would soon be making the portal available in languages.

As on Saturday, the por-tal was available in Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Hindi, apart from English.

## 'IAF ready for China challenge'

Air Force played a crucial role in fight against COVID-19, R.K.S. Bhadauria says

R. RAVIKANTH REDDY

India's security preparedness was in full swing in view of China's posturing in the Galwan region and the changing geopolitical situation in neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria said here on Saturday.

The deployment of forces would be based on the ground level need, which was being monitored closely. Continuation of deployment of forces post Galwan would depend on the varying situa-Basic deployment would

continue to maintain security. As far as the IAF was concerned, it had the deploy-ment capability at a short notice as per requirement, he told presspersons.

On the current situation on the Ladakh front, he noted that disengagement plans on the friction points were on through 11 rounds of

### MiG-21 accidents

On the series of accidents involving the MiG-21, he said they were not due to age factor alone and stopping the flights was not the answer. The aircraft were upgraded between 2005 and 2010 and the current accident rate had remained more or less the

same. The MiG-21s would be re-



placed with new aircraft in phased manner, he pointed

The Indian Air Force (IAF) chief, who was in Hyderabad to review the Combined Graduation Parade held at the Air Force Academy at Dundigal here, said the induction of Rafale jets into the IAF was on as per plan and would be done by 2022. COVID-19 did not have much impact on the plan. Earlier, addressing the pa-

rade, he said the IAF was fo-cussing on rapid infusion of

technologies due to the evolving security challenges on all fronts and also

Niche technologies

The infusion of niche technologies and combat power had never been as intense as now to meet the security challenges. The role of air power was crucial in any conflict and the IAF was pre paring to meet those challenges. He also referred to the crucial role played by the IAF in the fight against COVID-19.

Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria reviewed the Combined Graduation Parade, in which 161 flight cadets of flying and ground duty branches were as officers.

He presented 'wings' and 'brevets' to the cadets who successfully completed the flying and navigation train-

He also awarded 'wings' to officers of the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard on successful completion of their flying training at the

### Plea to drop exams for private, repeat students

Over 1,000 CBSE students move SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

Over 1,100 CBSE students have moved the Supreme Court for cancellation of compartment, private and repeat exams for Class 12 in the physical mode amidst the pandemic.

The students, represented by advocate Abhishek Choudhary, said their per-formance should be evaluated through an assessment formula in line with the regular CBSE students.

The government, nudged by the Supreme Court, has cancelled the Class 12 Board exams this year. The court has also given in-principle clearance to an assessment formula devised by the CBSE for the regular students.

Clause 29 of the 'Policy for Tabulation of Marks for Class XII Board Examinations 2021', proposed and placed on record by the CBSE before the apex court on June 17, had specified the examination would be conducted for private, patra-char, second chance compartment candidates, etc., by the Board as and when conditions become conducive.

"Owing to the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the country, it cannot be con-clusively said as to when exactly we will be able to have



Exams for the regular candidates were cancelled in view of the pandemic

ment necessary for the conduct of physical mode examinations," the students said in their plea.

"If the examinations are delayed beyond a reasona-ble time, till a conducive environment is achieved, we will not only loose opportunity to apply and seek admission in these universities/ colleges, but will also be denied our fundamental right to education," the students voiced apprehension.

They said a decision to conduct private/compartment/ repeat examination for Class 12 CBSE Board candidates would endanger the lives of students. They would be "forced to appear in this physical-mode-board examination, which would clearly violate their right to life and health as guaran-teed by Article 21".

### SC 'shocked' by delay in bail hearing

Top court urges HC to take up plea

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A "shocked" Sunreme Court found that a bail application had not even been listed for hearing for more than before the Punjab and Haryana High Court, that too at a time when judiciary is going the extra distance to ear cases virtually. A Vacation Bench of Jus-

tices Hemant Gupta and V. Ramasubramanian noted that "denial of hearing is an infringement of right and liberty assured to an ac-The top court said it normally did not intervene with

the operations of the High Courts, but in this case, it was "constrained" to take note of the delay in hearing the bail plea. "Even during the pan-demic, when all courts are

making attempts to hear and decide all matter, nonlisting of such an applica-tion for bail defeats the administration of justice," the Bench recorded in a recent

The court was hearing a special leave petition filed in an Enforcement Directorate



application for regular bail impinges upon liberty.

case. "Under the prevailing pandemic, at least half of the judges should sit on alternate days so that hearing is accorded to the person in distress. Non-listing of application for regular bail, irrespective of seriousness or lack thereof, of the offences attributed to the accused, impinges upon the liberty of the person in custody," the Supreme Court observed.

The Bench said it hoped the High Court would be "able to take up the application for bail at an early date so that the right of the accused of hearing of applica-



No meeting scheduled between the two officials

SUHASINI HAIDAR

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is expected to at-tend a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisa tion in Dushanbe, Tajikistan next week, which Pakistan's NSA Moeed Yusuf will attend as well, officials in Delhi and Islamabad confirmed.

While the officials said no meeting had been scheduled between the two NSAs, the SCO meeting, of the "Secretaries of the Security Council", comes months after India and Pakistan embarked on a series of decisions to defuse tensions, with a backchannel dialogue led by Mr. Doval and military officials in Pakistan, according to several reports, that have not been denied, beginning with the announcement of a ceasefire agreement at the Line of Control.

The NSA level meeting will be held on June 23, preceded by a Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on June 22. In addition to other security concerns to be discussed, the security officials will set the course for the annual



'Regional Anti-Terror Structure" mechanism joint exercises by SCO member troops, to be held in Pakis tan this year, where Indian troops are due to attend.

The participation of the Indian and Pakistani NSAs in person comes several months after a stormy encounter at last year's SCO meeting in September 2020. Mr. Doval had walked out of the meeting after Mr. Yusuf, who was then the Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Security Affairs, had appeared with a map in the background that showed many parts of Indian territory, including Junagadh and

J&K, as a part of Pakistani

...

Since then, however, both sides have attended the SCO meetings, which include Russia, China, Central Asian States, India and Pakistan. The presence of senior security officials from India and China will also be watched closely, given the continuing standoff at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh between the Indian Army and the PLA troops,
Afghanistan and Iran,

which are observer States, are not expected to attend

this meeting.
The SCO conference in Dushanbe comes just ahead of the Prime Minister's allparty meeting of leaders of I&K, the first such outreach to mainstream politicians in the Union Territory, most of whom had been arrested and held in custody after the decision to amend Article 370 in August 2019. According to a 'blueprint' reportedly discussed by Indian and Pakistani officials during the back-channel steps towards political normalisation in J&K, restoring its Statehood status was included in talks.

### India abstains on resolution on Myanmar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India has abstained on a U.N. General Assembly resolution on Myanmar, saying its views have not been reflected in the draft and New Delhi does not be the resolution, tabled hastily, is conducive to "aiding our joint efforts towards strengthening democratic process" in the country. The General Assembly

adopted the draft resolu-tion "The situation in Myanmar" on Friday with 119 Member States voting in favour, including Myanmar while 36 nations abstained, including Myanmar's neighbours India. Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Laos, Nepal and Thai-Russia also stained. Belarus was the sole country voting against it. "This resolution was tabled in the U.N. General Assembly in a hasty manner without adequate consultations with countries. This is not only unhelpful but may also prove counterproductive to efforts of the ASEAN to find a solution, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambas sador T.S. Tirumurti said.

response had been received cerned. The State could not

### Notices to IMA over Ayurveda comments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 govern-ment. Chief Minister Mamata Raneriee said she had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi three times on the

'Write to President'

Congress leader Adhir Ran-jan Chowdhury on Saturday said the Trinamool Congress

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

"The way the Centre is in tervening in affairs of the State and the State government isn't right. This includes the role of the Gover nor... 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



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

and the alliance was with the Left parties. "If we had an alliance with the ISF, then why they would put candidates ngress in Murshidabad 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

#### 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 rehabilita tion 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 com-munications" and the contents of the communication were "not consistent with

### 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

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 un-

The announcement puts an end to months of specula-tion that Mr. Sharma could be handed a plum post in Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's Cabinet ahead of the 2022 Assembly election.

Mr. Sharma, who was elected an MLC after joining the party, was given the new responsibility by BJP State president Swatantra Dev

An 1988-batch IAS officer of the Gujarat cadre, Mr. Sharma had closely worked



with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, both in the Chief Minister's Office (Gujarat) and the Prime Minister's Office in New Delhi for almost two decades.

Mr. Sharma hails from Mau in Purvanchal.

Mr. Sharma thanked the national and State leadership of the BJP for his ap-pointment. "With the guidance 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 ap-pointed 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 Shakya, 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

Pakistan on Saturday accused India of "misrepresenting" the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICI) in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case and asserted that it was ready to fulfil all obliga-tions under international

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

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 ICI judgment grettable 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.



#### अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एम्स), कल्याणी ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), KALYANI

(स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के तत्वावधान में एक सांविधिक निकाय) (A Statutory Body under the Aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI) राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग-34, बसन्तपुर, सागुना, कल्याणी, ज़िला-नदिया, पश्चिम बंगाल-741245 NH-34 Connector, Basantapur, Saguna, Kalyani, District Nadia, West Bengal 741245

VACANCY NOTICE FOR FACULTY POSTS IN AIIMS, KALYANI

PPLICATIONS 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 insalance in quality tertary 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/Bules are invited for the following faculty posts on DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS IN VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Kalyani (West-Bengal).

Name of the Posts & Numbers of Vacancy Additional Professor | Associate Professor Departments Category Total Category Category Category Total 1 Physiology 2-UR. 1-080 1-OB0 -UR, 1-SC, 1-OBC Anatomy 3 Biochemistry 1-UR 2 1-UR, 1-OBC 4 Microbiology 1-UR, 1-OBC Pathology/Lab Medicine 1-UR, 1-SC 2-UR, 1-SC, 2-OBC 1-EWS 1-SC, 1-ST, 1-OBC 1-UR 1-UR 1-UR 1-OBC 8 Forensic Medicine/Toxicology 1-OBC 1-UR 1-SC General Medicina 1-080 1-UR. 1-EWS 1-ST Paediatrics 1-EWS 1-OBC 11 Psychiatry 1-UR 1-UR 1-SC, 1-ST 1-SC, 1-OBC ermatology 1-EWS 1-080 14 Obstetrics & Gynaecology 1-ST 2-UR 1-UR Ophthalmology 1-SC 1-UR 1-UR, 1-ST 1-SC Orthopaedica 1-OBC 1-OBC, 1-S' 1-EWS 17 ENT 1-UR 1-UR, 1-EWS 1-SC 1-OBC, 1-EWS General Surgery 1-EWS 1-UR 19 Pulmonary Medicine 1-UR, 1-OBC 1-SC 1-OBC Transfusion Medicine & Blood Ban 1-0BC 1-OBC 1-UR 2-UR 2 21 Nuclear Medicine 22 Radio Diagnosis 1-EWS 1-UR 1-UR, 1-OBC 1-SC, 1-ST 23 Radio Therapy 1-UR 1-UR hysical Medicine & Rehabilitation 1-UR astroenterology 1-OBC 1 1 Medical Oncology/Hematology 1-SC 1-OBC 27 Neonatology 1-UR 1-SC Nephrology 1-ST 1-OB0 Neurology 1-OBC 1-UR Cardiology 31 Endocrinology & Metabolism 1-UR 1-UR Neurosurgery 1-UR 33 Paediatric Surgery 1-EWS 1-UR 1-OB0 Surgical Gastroenterology 1-SC 35 Surgical Oncology 1-SC 1-ST

2-EWS 3-EWS \* 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. 16-15/2010-0D.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

1-ST, 6-OBC

1-OBC

1-UR

10-UR, 5-SC 2-ST, 8-OBC

3-EWS

28

...

https://www.aiimskalyani.edu.in. The last date for submission of online applications is 30 days from the date of publication or advertisement in the Employment News/Rojgar Samachar.

Previous advertisement for the Recruitment of Faculty Posts (Group-A) in various Departments at AlIMS Kalyani on Direct Recruitment Basis vide advertisement no: AlIMS/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 for refund of the paid application fees with proof of depositing the same. Any updates including corrigendum or addendum for this advertisement will be Sd/-

1-EWS

1-OBC

1-UR, 1-SC

5-ST, 19-OBC

2

65

1-OBC

12-UR, 6-SC

### Walking with pride remains only motto'

STAFF REPORTER

out 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 carsaid his ry one's weight for the sake of power and walking with pride remains the only

In a scathing attack with-

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 Hindutya as Sena still maintains it [Hindutva] in

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

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 Op position parties who are on the same platform. At the last count, Tamil

Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, form-er Prime Minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Deve Gowda, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pa war, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and National Conference leader Omar Ab-



Rahul Gandhi

One of the more interesting comments came from Mr. Gowda who wrote on Twitter, "Rahul Gandhi has always come across as a fine person, deeply committed to a humane and inclusive society. It is his birthday today. I wish him well, and sincerely pray that his view of sion defeats the narrowness

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) convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Ar-

that surrounds us." Mr. Stalin, who met both

Mr. Gandhi and his mother

on his first trip to Delhi after

vind 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 view of the pandemic.

## J&K delimitation panel begins work

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

NISTULA HEBBAR

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 constituen-cies, and was given a year's extension last March. It is on-



delimitation exercise between 2002 and 2008. • NISSAR AHMAD

ly after the completion of the delimitation exercise that elections for the Assembly can be held, although Dis trict Development Council (DDC) polls were held last year on earlier natterns and based on the 2011 Census.

The then State of Jammu and Kashmir was kept out of the delimitation exercise

when it was carried out in the rest of country (between 2002-2008), as delimitation of Assembly seats was under the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution and its separate Representation of People Act. After becoming a Union Territory, the Delimitation Commission was constituted and asked to mark out As-

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 – attend-National Conference leaders Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Hasnain Masoodi, MP, and Mohammad Akbar Lone did not attend. The renewed push by the

36 Urology

39 Dentistry

37 Burns & Plastic Surgery

38 Cardiothoracic Surgery

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.



### **DPIIT Secretary** G. Mohapatra passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guruprasad Mohanatra. Secretary, Department of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), died of CO-VID-19 related complications at AHMS on Saturday.

Mohapatra, 59, was admitted to AIIMS in mid-April. He is the first serving Secretary to the government of India to have suc-cumbed to COVID-19. Prior to his role as DPHT Secre-tary, 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

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 circum-stances, it has become imperative that strict action be taken against those who assault healthcare profession-als," 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 ap-



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

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 proactiveengage with members of the medical fraternity to as-

## 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

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.

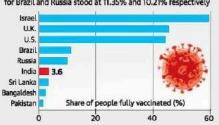
Kerala reported 12,443 new infections, followed by Maharashtra (8,912) and Tamil Nadu (8,183). Maharashtra recorded 682 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (180) and Karnataka (161). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous

eports.

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 counLong 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

30 lakh jabs Over 30 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours end-ing 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 significantly 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 peo-ple 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 com-parable 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% res-

### Medha seeks release of elderly prisoners

Activist approaches SC with plea

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

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

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.

#### 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 dis-cussed 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

The petition said the aged may form only a minuscule part of the prison population but were the most vul-

**SUDOKU** 

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nerable to the virus. Many elderly inmates, after de-cades behind prison walls, were prone to cognitive de-cline 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 Su-preme 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, sure to infection and ultimately succumbing to the

virus is very high". A prisoner too had the right to life and dignity. Liv-ing 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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★公公

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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### 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. •візwакамдан конт

### WHO hoping for more doses from SII

UN agency flags concerns on shortage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The World Health Organization (WHO) is "urgently" trying to work with AstraZeneca, the Serum Institute of India (SII) as well as the Indian government to restart shipments of COVID-19 vaccines to countries that had to suspend the roll-out of the second dose amid a disruption in supplies, a senior official at the UN health agency said.

"We have a huge number of countries that had to suspend the roll-out of their second doses of vaccines," Bruce Aylward, Senior Adviser to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said on Friday at a press briefing.

"We are now urgently try ing to work with AstraZene ca, as well as SII and the In-dia government, to restart

these shipments so that we can get those second doses into the populations... We are running into a longer interval than we would have liked," he said.

Mr. Aylward added that several countries, particu-larly those in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, West Asia and South Asia, have been hit hard by the disruption.

He noted that donation of vaccines was a "short-term' solution in the face of a very imperfect market and those countries that had financial resources and were produc-ing the products had access to vaccines. "That is what we are trying to change, particularly in this period from June through September," he said. He said WHO expected SII volumes to open up again in the fourth quar-

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

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

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Odisha unit of BJP on Sa turday 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 CO-VID-19 guidelines," said Mohan Charan Majhi, BJP chief

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. Maj-hi alleged. The government should present a White Paper taking into account the cremations being conducted in accordance with CO-

VID-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 CO-VID-19 pandemic.

They alleged the State government was not imple menting Ayushman Yojana due to political reasons.

"The State government should take advantages of all Central schemes by keeping itself above any party affilia-tion. Though the State Though 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."

### 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

The police said that an investigation was on to find the motive behind the mur-

ning, all-colour, hardcover coffee-table book. They even

offered the contributors an honorarium. Tagore's words

the core of gloom is your

glow. Goodness, wide-awake among all discord, is your

truth' - were the most significant motivation as I con-

ceived this book. I was cu-

rious to explore how

contemporary writers derive

and disperse light," said Mr.

'light that emanates from

### Drugs seized in Assam. Arunachal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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 lissa 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. Khatkati is close to Nagaland's Dima-pur, 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 ou to be Th. Paone, referred to as Didi by drug buyers. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma referred to her arrest as a major break-through, praising the police for busting a "big sup-ply chain network with narco-terror angle" in Kar-bi Anglong. The district police said the trap to nab Didi was laid after the seizure of 723 grams of heroin at Barpathar.

## Poetry comes to the rescue during the pandemic

Kolkata writer puts together healing collection

BISHWANATH GHOSH

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, 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 eco-

nomy to heal us."

In a matter of just one month, *Hibiscus* was ready,



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 big-gest names such as Keki N. Daruwalla, Sudeep Sen, Mamang Dai, Sanjeev Sethi contributed to the collec-tion, which rolled off the press in the midst of the lockdown.

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 of-fice [in Kolkata] one after-

noon to collect the books," said Mr. Sengupta, a dentistturned-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 col-lection, 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

tan and Peru). published "Hawakal Shimmer Spring as a stun-

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 U.S., the U.K., Norway, Pakisin government institutions and also in a private capacity before giving it all up in 2011 for his writing.

Sengupta.

...

## Judiciary chief Raisi wins Iran presidency Afghan President replaces top

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

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief won a landslide victory on Saturday in the country's presidential election, a vote that both propelled the su-preme leader's protege 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 Eslamshahr, in this file photo. • AFP

fied from running.

That sparked calls for a boycott and many apparent-ly 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 some wanted none of the

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

#### 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 over-all, 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 former hard-line Revolution ary Guard commander Mohsen Rezaei with 3.4 million

Abdolnasser Hemmati, came in third with 2.4 million

tles with government forces. The shake-up of the De-

Former Central Bank chief

## 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

STANLY JOHNY

With the victory of Ebrahim Raisi, the conservative chief of Iran's judiciary, in Friday's presidential election, country's clerical establishment has tightened its grip on the Islamic Republic, Mr. Raisi, who won 62% of the vote, would replace the mod-erate 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 fi-gure 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 de-puty chief of the 88-member Assembly of Experts, the clerical body that will pick the next Supreme Leader when Ayatollah Ali Khamenei 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 Parlia-ment 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 Mash-had, 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 leftwing 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 atten-tion 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 pri-soners (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 Fedaian and the Tudeh Party) to death. Then a four-man comknown 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 im-posed 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 socalled 'death commission' that ordered the extrajudicial executions of thousands of political prisoners in 1988." Iran has never ack-

#### NEWS ANALYSIS

nowledged the killings. Mr. Raisi has never talked about it publicly.

Always a loyal ally of the establishment, Mr. Řaisi has held several important posi-tions 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 Razavi (Imam Reza charity foun-dation), which manages a

wide network of businesses 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 corrup-tion, humiliation and discrimination". Now it's time for him to deliver.

## Ministers as Taliban advance Ghani reshuffles Defence and Interior Ministry portfolios

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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 bat-

fence and Interior Ministry portfolios comes as violence surges and peace talks re-main 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 Mo-hammadi, who fought under the late anti-Taliban com-mander 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

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

Gen. Mohammadi replac es Asadullah Khalid, who has repeatedly flown out of the country for treatment to cide bomber attacked him in

The latest Cabinet changes, which have to be ap-proved 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. that led to the invasion of Afghanistan as the deadline to withdraw 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 militants 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

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 com-

mittee 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, without KCNA said, 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 dia-logue and confrontation with the United States in his first direct comment on U.S. President Joe Biden's admi-

## Palestine nixes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

said on Friday it cancelled a swap deal that would about to expire".

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

the specifications con-tained in the agreement.

## Putin makes spending promises for ruling party ahead of polls

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

REUTERS

President Vladimir Putin sought on Saturday to give Russia's ruling party a preelection boost by promising to spend big on infrastructure, education and health. Mr. Putin, 68, also an-

nounced 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 par

gress, Mr. Putin praised United Russia for its "ability to renew and constantly develop".

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BEIRUT

EU foreign policy chief Jo-

sep Borrell warned on Sa-turday that Lebanese lead-

ers could face sanctions

unless they pull the country

away from financial collapse

and strike a deal with the



With real wages falling and inflation rising, its ratings are at a multi-year low, according to a poll by the Levada Center, an independent pollster

It showed that just 27% of ty in March, down from 31% in August.

Mr. Putin proposed Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu

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 elec-tions," he said.

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

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

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

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 Houthhave frequently targeted Khamis Mushait and other Saudi cities along the frontier in the more than sixvear-old Yemen war.

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NZÉRÉKORÉ

The Houthi military spokesman said on Twitter that one drone was launched at a military base

weeks in an attempt to esta-

blish a dialogue with Presi-

dent Nicolas Maduro's go-

## Ebola outbreak in Guinea is over: WHO

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, experience from the 2013-16 epidemic, which killed more than 11,300 people mostly in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Just 12 people died this

flare-up has been credited to

time around.

"I have the honour of de-claring the end of Ebola" in

Guinea, WHO official Alfred Ki-Zerbo said at a ceremony in the southeastern Nzerekore region, where the dis-ease 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

day, weeks after the last per-

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son was declared cured on May 8, a senior Health Ministry official said. Health Minister Remy La-

That wait was over on Fri-

mah also declared the out-break finished "in the name of the head of state" President Alpha Conde.





### Short Term Tender Notification

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No. KPCL/2021-22/PS/Work Indent 11145 Date: 18-06-2021 Tender through e-procurement portal mode are invited from con-tractors/agencies who are reputed individuals/company and having past experience for the work of "In-Situ reconditioning of boile stop valves (350 Nb/Motor operated gate valve/C2500SPL/ WC9/BW) of RTPS 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 com pleted 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), RTPS, KPCL, Shaktinagar-584170, Raichur District. Mobile: 9449597966

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### the country without a functioning government since

#### IMF. Lebanon is facing what the World Bank has dethe EU". scribed as one of the world's worst economic crises since A political crisis has left

Lebanon leaders may

face sanctions, says EU

'Strike a deal with IMF to end crisis'

zens and destroyed swathes of Beirut in 2020. Speaking in Beirut after talks with Lebanese Presi-

massive explosion killed do-

dent Michel Aoun, Mr. Borrell said he had "a message of firmness to all Lebanese political leaders on behalf of

"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

### 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.

vernment, which stands accused of vote-rigging and rights violations. Mr. Guaido, who has proposed a "national salvation agreement" to help Venezuela emerge from econom-

ic collapse and political cri-Mr. Guaido told reporters sis, last month said he would support lifting of that the committee travelling to the U.S. and Europe is sanctions on government on the same group that has been meeting with officials the condition that Mr. Maduro agrees to hold "free and from Norway in recent fair" presidential elections.

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### vaccine deal with Israel

RAMALLAH The Palestinian Authority

have seen Israel provide it with one million COVID-19 iabs, as the doses were

The PA had confirmed

the delivery "in the coming days" of a million vaccine doses, without mentioning an agreement with the Jew-ish state. PA spokesman Ibrahim Melhem said on Friday that an initial delivery of some 90,000 Pfizer doses failed to conform "to



Bird song captured 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



A major challenge in the treatment of neurological disorders is in getting past the blood-brain barrier. Now, in an 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.

Supermassive black holes have masses a million or even and billion times our sun. One such is found at the centre of our 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

## 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 Econo mist 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 va-ries 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 mebased 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 few-er 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



Collective grieving: Mass cremations of recently deceased on the banks of the Yamuna river in Garh, Uttar Pradesh. \*8LOOMBERG

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

#### Excess deaths registered

Based on data from the Civil Registration System, from January to May this year Madhya Pradesh re-ported 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

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 Tumbe, 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 under-reporting factor above 10. I

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 re-gistration 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 CO-VID-19, the all-cause mortality data coming through strongly sug-gests – 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 Guiarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, and a huge number of bodies floating in Ganges and buried on the banks of the river in Ut-tar 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

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

Despite ICMR guidelines on ap propriate recording of COVID-19 deaths, many States simply did not record deaths as due to CO-VID-19 in the absence of positive test results, leading to many CO-VID-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 ap-plies 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 some-what altering the sensitivity of the tests," he says.
"If we applied our current pro-

tocols 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. Tumbe. "The reason: No one was 'tested' for influenza back then and the government had the comof a fever in late 1918, there was a We need to acknowledge that we have missed out on a large number of deaths due to the insistence that only those tested positive can be

considered COVID-19 dead." If Maharashtra added 1,328 deaths and Delhi reconciled 437 deaths after an audit in June 2020, Chennai added 444 deaths to CO-VID-19 toll in July last year based on the recommendations of a Death Reconciliation Committee. Bihar recently added nearly 4,000 deaths to its tally after auditing CO-VID-19 deaths. But these were res tricted to private hospitals and clinics. But the auditing did not include rural areas and deaths that had happened outside the healthcare facilities, "It is unlikely that a reconciliation like the one which occurred would capture these deaths. As civil registration in Bihar is also weak, to capture the scale of mortality in the State, surveying (as in Jharkhand) will be needed," Dr. Banaji says.

Jharkhand became the first State to conduct a door-to-door counting of deaths during April-May 2021; it covered three-fourths of the total population. The State added nearly 25,500 more CO-VID-19 deaths, which is 43% more than the reported data. Verbal autopsy fills a critical gap in measuring mortality from COVID-19 for that occur outside healthcare settings and in rural there is limited cause of death data, verbal autopsies have been re cognised as a scientifically valid method of estimating cause-spec-

ific 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 cru-cial to understanding its impact. Verbal autopsying can be a valua-ble element in such surveying."

Though Mumbai and Delhi wit-nessed a huge number of cases in both waves, one can expect un-derreporting 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 da-ta. 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 num ber 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 suc cess 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-In-dian 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 institutes 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 institutés 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 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

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 Viswavidya-laya and a scientist for ICAR. "Zinc and iron deficiency

trients," he adds.

Not sustainable The paper concludes that

affects billions of people glo-

bally and the countries with

this deficiency have diets

composed mainly of rice,

wheat, corn, and barley. Though the Indian govern-

ment has taken initiatives

such as providing supple-

mentation 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 micronu-



that the soils supporting plants could be low in plantavailable 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.

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

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.

Schaber of the University

Group leader Clemens

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

while the other one

alignment. The team

writes that this variety

The team studied the

helps spiders climb

hairs under hi-tech

structure. They found

previously unrecognised

structural arrangements

microscopes to

understand their

that each hair was

different and had

different surfaces.

, perpendicular

angle with the substrate

performed best close to a

## 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 Baner-jee, 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 Helivon and has been posted online.

### Power law dependences 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 mechanisms(s), but extracting those mechan-



Canine culture: The dogs' language is a complex one involving intricate behavioural displays - gestures, vocalisations, movements, mating rituals etc. • ANNINDITA 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, vocalisatuals 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 multi-

fractal nature." As Ayan Banerjee ex-plains, "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-occurence 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 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, De-Biological partment 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

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

...

Magical setae of spiders

Do spiders have sticky

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

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.ir



### 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 romand 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 Magicicadae 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 Magicicada 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 fouryear 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

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?

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 "Iewsier", which refers to the area in which the phenomenon occurs, and the forest region 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.

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

and the ICMR the final say. The NCBS also denied that the contribution of Shi Zhengli, known as China's 'Bat Woman' for her studies on virus transmissions, was anything more than the supply of "chemical reagents". However, the study lists Dr. Shi as having "reviewed writing and editing" of the paper.

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.

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-offunction 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 Abdul 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-



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 o 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-offunction 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

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

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,

ays, "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 academies 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

### '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

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.I lineage. Globally, 143 genomes have been labelled as AY.I 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 (21). 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 5% (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 cavalcade 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.

colder zones (late May-June)," she adds.

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).

around it). This periodical cicada is used as food and fish

## 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

n a communiqué issued following the June 14 summit of its member-states in Brussels, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NA-TO), 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

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 NA-TO'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".



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

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 NA-TO'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 NATO was completely suc-

cessful in its mission of pro-

tecting 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 Nonaligned Movement (NAM) be came irrelevant when the Communist bloc disap-peared, 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 po-werful NATO bureaucracy,

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 para-digm 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

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 "enlarge-ment", 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, hav-ing 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 view point, may not serve Europe's interests.

Soon after the NATO com-muniqué was issued, both France and Germany sought to put some distance between NATO's official position and their own perception of China. French President Em-manual Macron said, "NATO is a military organisation, the issue of our relationship with China isn't just a military isthat 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 bipo-lar or a multi-polar world, it is difficult to see how China alone presents a "systemic challenge" to the world or-der. 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 second 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 in-to 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 cyberwar, there is zero risk of China invading the Euro-Atlantic

NATO, the largest military alliance, wa formed in 1949 by 12

Allied powers to counter the massive Soviet armie stationed in Eastern and Central Europe after the Second World War

After the Cold War, the refashioning rested on a paradigm shift collective collective The alliance

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

### APPLE DAILY

### In the line of fire

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

ANANTH KRISHNAN

pple 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 headquar-ters and arrested five of its top editors and manage-ment, in what is being seen by many journalists in Chi-na's Special Administration Region (SAR) as the most significant action targeting 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

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 hidden camera and publish-



ing photos of popular singer undressing backstage at a concert. The newspaper's cover-

age 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 dilu-tion 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 bility", 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, Ta 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 ar-

rested.

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

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

That is not, he 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 res ponding journalists, 91% said press freedom in Hong Kong had worsened com-pared to the previous year.

The paper, however, said it is undeterred, even livestreaming 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

n 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 sou

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 46year 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

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 technol ogy 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,



which served it well during business such as cloud comcomputer 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 in-stance, 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

...

Bloomberg Businessweek article, with the title 'The Most Valuable Company (for Now) is Having a Nadellais-sance', wrote: "Under Na-della, 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's 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 pro-fessional 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 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 a 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

Infosys is well-positioned for another year of market-leading performance in a postpandemic, 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.

'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 criti-



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

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 outcomes of large transformation projects, he said.

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

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 1,941both 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.

## AWS eyes financial services, media clients for expansion

Customer investments in cloud at inflection point: Dhawan

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

Witnessing an inflection point in customer spending on cloud technology, Ama-zon Web Services (AWS) is eyeing expansion in the 'crit-ical' India market by leveraging 'huge opportunities' in sectors such as financial services, media and entertain-ment, 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 se cond 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 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 migrat-ing 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

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 reg ulatory filing. Tier-II capital of a bank

consists of undisclosed reserves, revaluation reserves, general provisions and loss reserves, hybrid capital instruments, subor-dinated 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

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

Ekki, which had been sell-ing imported Homa products since the JV was set up in 2018, has started an as sembly-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 as-sembling Homa products in



Kanishka Arumugam

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 CEO. Homa Hoffmann,

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 as-sume that digital activity will inevitably result in a deeply-problematic increase in CO2 emissions.' Analysis from the

Schneider Electric Sustaina-



many of the worst-case sce-narios 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

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 mand for groceries from tier 2 cities," it added.

With smartphones cur-rently 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 re latively 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 in-vested in fresh produce supply chain firm, Ninjacart and other local vendors to build a supportive ecosystem, has also roped in logistics firm Shadowfay to build last-mile support for Flipkart Quick

NBA: SS Select 1 (SD & HD),

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.

Sur 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)

Clippers in first conference final

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 tennis tournament here on grass Nottingham.

Chan Hong & Jisung Nam (Kor) bt Alexander Kotzer (US) & Siddhant Banthia 6-1,

### Rublev in final

Andrey Rubley 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 Bencio 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 LA JOLLA (USA)

England's Richard Bland and American Russell Henleyshared 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.

### Age no bar

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



sy does it! Richard Bland seems to be coaxing the ball into the hole on the sixth green. • AS

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

Oosthuizen fired 71 to

share third on 138 with 22year-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

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, Mat-thew Wolff (USA) 70, 68; **139**: Bubba Watson (USA) 72, 67, Jon Rahm (Esp) 69, 70; 140: Kevin Streelman (USA) 71, 69, Mack-

### Japan imposes stricter rules on Indians

### TOKYO OLYMPICS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 Committeerequesting it to ensure that mechanisms to prevent COVID-19 do not have any 'adverse and detrimental impact" on performance of

India has been clubbed in Group 1 alongside Afghanistan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

IOA president Narinder Batra and secretary-general Rajeev Mehta, in a joint statement, questioned the new regulations.

"Athletes are allowed to arrive in the Games Village only 5 days before their event. Now 3 days will be wasted, this is the time the Athletes need to be moving towards their mode to Peak. Highly unfair for Indian Aththe joint statement

### on song

Elgar, de Kock

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

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 Satur-

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

His watchful style con-trasted 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.

wild cards' from the FIDE

Dvorkovich for the World

Cup chess beginning in Sochi, Russia, on July 12.

Harikrishna, Vidit Guirathi,

Arjun Erigaisi, B. Adhiban,

Aravindh Chithambaram, D.

Gukesh, Nihal Sarin and R.

Women: D. Harika, Padmini

Rout, Bhakti Kulkarni and R.

Trainers: Abhijit Kunte and N.

president Arkady

The teams: Men: P.

Pragonanandhaa.

Srinath.

### Verstappen claims pole

Sajan, Srihari fall short

### FRENCH GP

REUTERS

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

The 23-year-old lapped

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

Valtteri Bottas, in the oth-

### er Mercedes, was third while Sergio Perez was fourth for Red Bull. the 5.8km long Paul Ricard

53.85s.

### 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 Srihari won the 100m

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.

backstroke in 54.45s but it

was well below the required

### Argentina edges Uruguay

Goes joint-top of Group A with Chile

### COPA AMERICA

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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

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

#### Controlling the game Argentina controlled nearly

all of the game against an Uruguayan team that included the powerful offensive duo of Luis Suárez and Edinson Cavani.



The winner: Argentina's Guido Rodriguez is ecstatic after heading in against Uruguay. • REUTER

drigo 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 O; Ar-



Argentina midfielder Rogentina 1 (Rodriguez 13) bt

### **TODAY'S SCHEDULE** GROUP B

Venezuela vs Ecuador 2.30 a.m. (Monday)

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

## Colombia vs Peru 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

### have received the last two

CHESS ROUND-UP

#### Thirty-two players share lead

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 Sneh 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

**Women's Speed Chess** R Vaishali went down to China's Lei Tingjie in a

Vaishali bows out in

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.

CM C

of the \$100,000 ITF women's Other result: \$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Doubles (semifinals): Seong

## Nation bids farewell to 'Flying Sikh' | For God and country, a race well run!

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

UTHRA GANESAN

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

He was discharged after stabilising on May 30 before



Milkha Singh, • FILE PHOTO

being re-admitted to PGIM-ER 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

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 big-gest 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.

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 be come 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-heart devotee of dis-cipline and fitness, Milkha attributed this to the role played by the Indian Army: "The Army gave me a se-cond life. For three or four years, after partition, I roamed around doing odd obs. Always wanted to join the Army but I succeeded on my fourth at-

"sIt 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. •тнен

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

"For Southern Com-mand and later for Services, I won a number of rac-es in 200 and 400 metres."

Milkha held the 1958 Commonwealth Games 440-yard gold medal (in Cardiff) very close to his "This was really a very

special moment. The other moment was when I was honoured with the Helms Trophy for the best ath-lete. That felt incredible."

His best days came bet-ween 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 Nehru Ji (then Prime Minister Jawa-har 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 cin-der tracks (later replaced by the synthetic tracks from the 1968 Olympics) took a lot out of the ath-

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

"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 bet-ween 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 sportsperson, who captured the nation's imagination and had a special place in the hearts of countless Indians.

**Kiren Rijuju:** 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 In-dian's heart today, but you shall keep inspiring several

generations to come Kapil Dev: My Hero Milkha Un-cle. India' Pride. Love you for

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 he-ro 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 will never be forgotten.

Ravi Shastri: India's greatest

world in 60s with his competitive spirit inspite 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 inspira-tional. He was 91 and I could not believe that he was that energetic and healthy even at

ration to all Indians because sports promotion improved af-ter Milkha's Commonwealth Games gold (in 440 yards) in Sharath Kamal: Indian sports

has lost a true gem. An athlete par excellence, and a genuine role model. **Vijender Singh:** Legends never

Pankai Advani: Sad to hear bout the demise of champion Milkha Singh.



Milkha. • FILE PHOTO

### 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

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.

P.T. Usha narrated this as one of the many stories her coach O.M. Nambiar had told when she was a 13-yearold at Kerala's Kannur Sports

"There were so many sto ries about Milkha so I was very keen to meet him," Usha told The Hindu from Patiala, ahead of Monday's Indian

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

"We had gone to Korea for the 1982 World junior invitation meet, he as the chef 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

"If Milkha had been running now, he would be getting us medals at the Olym-

championships. He was so

in 1960 stood as a national record for nearly four

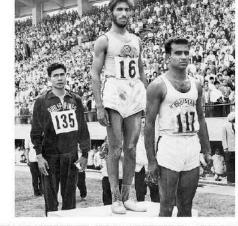
"For me, my favourite Indian performance is Milkha running that 400m at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Even though many had broken his record, I still consider it as the best Indian performance considering the facilities our current athletes have."

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

### 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 vellow 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

### Kohli and Rahane stage a fightback

New Zealand pulls things back after India's promising start

### WTC FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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 disci-plined 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

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.



### 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

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 12.4-2-32-1. Jamieson 14-9-14-1. de Grandhomme 11-6-23-0, Wag-ner 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

The one-off women's Test veen 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.

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

the second innings to add to her 96 in the first essay. Another debutant Deepti

Shafali Verma made 63 in

Sharma came good with a 54 to add to her 29 in the first

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



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

### SCOREBOARD

England - 1st innings: 396 for

India – 1st innings: 231. India — 2nd innings (followin on): Smriti Mandhana c Scive

b Brunt 8 (13b. 1x4). Shafali

Verma c Brunt b Ecclestone 63 (83b, 11x4, 1x6), Deepti 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). Sneh 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 (Deepti 57.5), 4-175 (Mithali, 615), 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 Sciver 3-1-8-0. One-off Test drawn.

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

### Intense Germany too hot for Portugal

France labours to draw with Hungary

### EURO 2020

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 Griez-mann equalised for a 1-1 draw inside the packed Puskas Arena.

In Friday's late Group D Robin Gosens. • REUTERS

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

**TODAY'S MATCHES** 

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

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

Group D: England O drew with

