

Monsoon may be delayed by a week: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A westerly trough has impeded the rapid progress of the monsoon in northwest India and it will take 7-10 more days for the wind system to reach the Capital, the India Meteorological Department said on Tuesday. "The situation will be more clear on Wednesday," said Kuldeep Srivastava, head of IMD's regional forecasting centre. IMD had earlier predicted that the wind system may reach Delhi by June 15 - 12 days early. Normally, the monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27.

All terrorists criminals but not all criminals terrorists: HC

Court urges caution in use of the term for 'conventional offences'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding the fact that the definition of 'terrorist act' in Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) is "wide and even somewhat vague", the phrase 'terrorist act' cannot be permitted to be casually applied to criminal acts that fall squarely within the definition of conventional offences, the Delhi High Court remarked on Tuesday.

A bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said the word 'terrorism' or 'ter-

ror' has nowhere been defined in the UAPA.

Hence, the court must be careful in employing the definitional words and phrases used in section 15 (of the UAPA that defines 'terrorist act') in their absolute literal sense or use them lightly in a manner that would trivialise the extremely heinous offence of 'terrorist act', without understanding how terrorism is different even from conventional, heinous crime, the bench said.

The High Court's observation came while granting regular bail to JNU students Na-

tasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, and Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha, arrested in connection with the north-east Delhi riots.

UAPA's origin

The 'terrorist act', including conspiracy and act preparatory to the commission of a terrorist act, were brought within the purview of UAPA by an amendment made in 2004, on the heels of Parliament repealing Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

POTA's precursor, the Terrorist & Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) was repealed in 1995.

The High Court said the phrase 'terrorist act' must



get its colour and flavour from the problem of terrorism as was earlier addressed by the Parliament under TADA and POTA.

Defining 'terrorism'

To understand the concept and construction of 'terrorism', the High Court referred to various judgments of the Supreme Court where

the issue has already been dealt with.

"Terrorism is one of the manifestations of increased lawlessness and cult of violence... A 'terrorist' activity does not merely arise by causing disturbance of law and order or of public order. The fallout of the intended activity must be such that it travels beyond the capacity of the ordinary law enforcement agencies to tackle it under the ordinary penal law," the Supreme Court had said in *Hitendra Vishnu Thakur versus State of Maharashtra* case.

In the same judgment, the Supreme Court said, "Every 'terrorist' may be a criminal but every criminal cannot be

given the label of a 'terrorist' only to set in motion the more stringent provisions of TADA."

The High Court said, in its opinion, "The intent and purport of the Parliament in enacting the UAPA, and more specifically in amending it in 2004 and 2008 to bring terrorist activity within its scope, was, and could only have been, to deal with matters of profound impact on the 'Defence of India', nothing more and nothing less."

"Foisting extremely grave and serious penal provisions engrafted in sections 15, 17 and 18 UAPA frivolously upon people, would undermine the intent and purpose

of the Parliament in enacting a law that is meant to address threats to the very existence of our Nation," the court cautioned.

It reminded that a sacrosanct principle of interpretation of penal provisions is that they must be construed strictly and narrowly, to ensure that a person who was not within the legislative intent does not get roped into a penal provision.

"Also, the more stringent a penal provision, the more strictly it must be construed," the High Court remarked pointing at the use of the stringent provision under UAPA against the three students in the north-east Delhi riots case.

Teenager on joyride rams autorickshaw, kills driver

He was driving his father's luxury car

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An autorickshaw driver died after he was allegedly hit by a luxury car being driven by an 18-year-old boy in west Delhi's Moti Nagar on Saturday morning, the police said on Tuesday.

The victim, Brindeshwar Mahto, used to reside in Tri- lokpuri with his family.

The Class XII accused, from Punjabi Bagh, has been arrested.

The victim's brother, Chandeshwar Mahto, told the police that along with Brindeshwar, he had gone to Khyala with passengers in their respective autorickshaws at 6 a.m.

He said the accident hap-

pened when they were going towards Ramesh Nagar.

The accused, who was driving his father's car, was coming from the wrong direction when he hit Brindeshwar's autorickshaw.

The impact was such that the autorickshaw turned turtle. Chandeshwar, who was driving behind the victim's auto, rushed to the spot and nabbed the boy. Brindeshwar was declared dead at a nearby hospital.

The accused was with his three other friends at that time. A case on charges of rash and negligent driving and causing death due to negligence has been registered and the accused has been arrested.

Speeding car kills two in Daryaganj

Two arrested in the hit-and-run case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons were killed when a speeding car hit an e-rickshaw in Central Delhi's Daryaganj, the police said on Tuesday.

Two persons have been arrested in connection with the case, they said.

A senior officer said a PCR call was received on Monday night at 10.30 p.m. regarding a road accident near Delight Cinema. On reaching the spot, an e-rickshaw was found damaged. The police learnt that the injured were taken to a hospital.

Further inquiry revealed that a couple and their two

children were travelling in the e-rickshaw when they were hit by the car.

All five occupants of the e-rickshaw, including the driver, were injured. However, the driver and the woman passenger were declared brought dead at the hospital. The condition of the others is said to be stable.

The driver of the offending vehicle tried to escape but was chased by a man on a bike and nabbed near Jama Masjid. Next, two involved in the crime were held.

A case under relevant sections has been lodged and further investigation is under way, the police added.

'Bail for riots accused holds mirror to govt.'

Activists seek release of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, other anti-CAA protesters

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Students, activists and some political parties on Tuesday welcomed the Delhi High Court order granting bail to the three students, who were arrested under the UAPA in connection with the north-east riots, which took place in February last year.

Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha and Jawaharlal Nehru University students - Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita - were granted regular bail by the Delhi High Court.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said through the order, the court had "shown a mirror to the government".

"It is a step towards undoing the gross injustice com-



Children play in Shiv Vihar, where riots had broken out in February 2020. FILE PHOTO

mitted by the Home Ministry in manufacturing cases against activists protesting against the unconstitutional CAA [Citizenship Amendment Act]. The court has shown the mirror to the government. This applies to numerous cases in which any form of dissent is termed

anti-national and individuals are bullied, intimidated, threatened and imprisoned under UAPA and laws of sedition," a statement by the CPI (M) read.

Further, it added that similar standards should be applied to all the "false cases" and all political prisoners should be released.

Delhi University professor Apoorvanand, who was also questioned by the Delhi Police last year in connection with the riots, on social media said: "None of them should have been charged or arrested in the first place. All others must be freed. This whole exercise is a conspiracy to shield the real conspirators and perpetrators of the violence of Feb 2020 in Delhi. They are out and rul-

ing us. Spreading hate, planning violence [sic]."

The All India Students' Association (AISA) said the order had exposed the "legal and moral corruption" of the government.

It added: "While the bail has been granted, the struggle against UAPA and release of all political prisoners must continue. AISA demands immediate release of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam and other anti-CAA protestors arrested in Delhi violence case under UAPA."

Stating that it was one of the happiest days of her life, Safoora Zargar, a Jamia Millia Islamia scholar - who was also arrested last year and later granted bail - tweeted: "...Let more follow. Let justice prevail..."

NCRTC plans to harness blended renewable energy for RRTS project

Corporation signs MoU with SECI to explore electric mobility

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) on Tuesday signed an MoU with SECI (Solar Energy Corporation of India) to harness blended renewable energy for the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project.

According to the NCRTC, the MoU has provisions to explore possible opportunities in electric/transformation mobility, Hydrogen

based economy, and other alternative sources of fuels and energy. The MoU was signed in the presence of Jatin Nath Swain, Secretary (Fisheries), Vinay Kumar Singh, Managing Director NCRTC along with other senior officials of the NCRTC and SECI.

"NCRTC, as part of its Energy Management Policy, intends to maximize the use of blended renewable energy such as solar power for meeting full energy require-

ment of NCRTC. SECI, being an industry leader, will help in arranging blended renewable energy to NCRTC round-the-clock at affordable rates for Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Corridor and cooperation to extend the same for other future corridors," it said.

According to the NCRTC, 40% of the total energy requirement of the Delhi Meerut RRTS corridor is targeted to be procured or generated from renewable energy.

'Serving liquor in hotels, eateries not allowed yet'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital is in the middle of its second week of unlocking but serving of alcohol in bars in hotels, clubs and restaurants has yet to be given nod by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), the Excise department has clarified.

With a significant improvement in the COVID-19 situation in the city, liquor shops and restaurants that were closed as per DDMA order since April have reopened.

"Bars in the hotels, clubs and restaurants are not allowed to open till further orders," stated a clarification issued by the Excise Department Monday. All liquor shops in markets, malls and market complexes (outside containment zones) are allowed to operate between 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., it said.

The clarification is issued in view of queries related to serving alcohol in bars at hotels, clubs and restaurants after the govt. allowed restaurants to reopen.

AAP MP says nameplate defaced at residence, blames BJP 'goons'

Two persons arrested in connection with the incident: DCP

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh said the nameplate of his North Avenue residence was allegedly defaced by a few persons on Tuesday afternoon.

The MP blamed the BJP for the attack. Two persons have been arrested in connection with the case, said DCP (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav.

"My house in North Avenue - around 100m from the President's house - has been attacked just now. I want to tell the BJP government and their goons, you can launch attacks or murder me, but I will keep talking about theft of money collected from the public for Ram Mandir. The people who steal money collected for Ram Mandir should be put behind bars," AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said in a video on Tuesday.

Mr. Singh said the incident happened when he was sitting on the lawns of his residence with a few persons at 12 p.m. He told the police that at that time, a few men came to the spot and started raising slogans against him. They then tried to damage the nameplate and threw ink on it before fleeing the spot.



AAP MP Sanjay Singh stands near the defaced nameplate of his North Avenue residence in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Mr. Singh added that the people, who were with him at that time, managed to nab two of the accused and handed them over to the police.

The Aam Aadmi Party has been alleging that there is a "big scam" involving BJP leaders in the land bought for Ram Mandir by Ram Janmabhoomi Trust.

Mr. Singh tweeted: "The pace of construction of the temple of Lord Shri Ram has been stalled due to 'donation thieves'. The construction of Ram temple is not being done because thieves stole the money for the construction. I request crores of Ram devotees to demand back the money for the temple from the 'donation

thieves."

A scripted drama: BJP Reacting to the alleged attack, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said in a tweet that it a scripted drama. "Yesterday, he tried to malign Ram Mandir's construction. Today, he claimed an attack on house, everything is a scripted drama," Mr. Kapoor said.

Mr. Yadav said an FIR has been registered under Sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC and Sec 3 of Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act 2007.

He added that further probe is under way.

Man opens fire at Jamia Nagar resident

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A man was arrested and a juvenile apprehended for allegedly duping people on the promise of providing attractive offers and gifts, police said on Tuesday, adding that they were running a fake call centre.

DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena said the accused has been identified as Saidu Zafar. He has criminal records, including an attempt to murder. The incident happened on the intervening night of June 7-8. The juvenile involved in the case has been sent to observation home.

5 arrested for cheating people with offers, gifts

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Five persons, including four women, have been arrested for allegedly duping people on the promise of providing attractive offers and gifts, police said on Tuesday, adding that they were running a fake call centre.

DCP (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said the accused have been identified as Rahul Rathore (30), a resident of Saraswati Vihar; Muskan (21) and Kajal (22), residents of Burari; Sonam (26), a resident of Rohini; and Babita (22) of Mukundpur. Police said that on the in-

tervening night of Monday and Tuesday, they received information regarding a fake call centre running at Sector-16 in Rohini. "A raid was conducted and the accused were arrested," Mr. Tayal said.

During probe, Rathore allegedly told the police that he obtained contact and credit card details of people from Brijesh and Dinesh after which he made calls to dupe them. He gave them false assurances of providing attractive offers, gift cards, VIP money saving cards etc. by posing as credit card service provider.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER:
ASSAM BHAWAN
No.1,S.P. MARG,CHANAKYAPURI:NEW DELHI-110021
Phone:011-26877111/26116444, Fax:011-26117059
Email ID:rcofficeassambhawan@gmail.com

No.RC/E(Pest.C.)/21/2011/243-251

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders on behalf of the Resident Commissioner, are invited from reputed, experienced and financially sound Companies / Firms / Agencies for providing Pest and Rodent Control Services in Assam Bhawan and Assam House, New Delhi for a period of one year from the date of contract. The Desirous companies/firms/agency may obtain tender documents from office of the Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhawan, 1 Sardar Patel Marg, Chanakyapuri New Delhi from 20/06/2021 to 26/06/2021 and should submit the bids by 3.00 PM on 30/06/2021 through Registered Post/ by hand to office of the Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhawan, 1 Sardar Patel Marg, Chanakyapuri New Delhi - 110021, Phone: 011-26877111.

The bid shall consist of two parts- Technical Bid and Financial Bid. Both the bids are to be placed in two sealed envelopes (clearly super scribing "Technical Bid" and "Financial Bid") which both in term are to be placed in one single sealed cover. The bids of all parties whose financial bid is not in a separate sealed cover or the rates quoted by them finds mention in their technical bid shall be rejected forthwith. All the information sought under the head "Terms and Conditions" and other information to be supplied with technical bid, while the price quoted by them will have to be mentioned only in the Financial bids of only those parties shall be opened whose technical bids are found to be eligible while, the Financial Bids of disqualified technical bidders shall be returned unopened.

The technical bids shall be opened on 30/06/2021 at 4.00 PM in office of the Resident Commissioner, Government of Assam, Assam Bhawan, 1, Sardar Patel Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021 in presence of the Tender Committee and representative of each of the bidder who wishes to remain present. The decision of the Tender Committee shall be final with regard to technical bids. The financial bids of only those parties who qualify the technical bids shall be opened.

Details of terms and conditions of tender documents may be obtain at the undersigned office.

Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Assam
General Administration Department &
Officer on Special Duty
Janasanyog/C/1021/21 Assam Bhawan, New Delhi

Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE (QC&PD)
Division, HMT, Srinagar
Phone: 0194-2496307, E-Mail: xenmandp@gmail.com

Corrigendum-01

Subject: Supply of fully Automated mobile water testing laboratory (Including vehicle, chassis, fabrication of lab as a compact type housing body with fitment of desired equipment/instruments etc) for testing chemical parameters viz. (pH, TDS, Turbidity, Hardness, Iron, Fluoride, Nitrite, Arsenic, Nitrate, Sulphate, Zinc Sodium and Potassium, Residual Chlorine etc.) and Microbiological parameters complete in all respect. All the necessary equipment, DG Set Inverter is to be housed within the body of Vehicle.

Ref:

- This office e-NIT No. -PHE/QC&PD/05/e-Tender Dated: 31-05-2021.
- Representation of the Firm Dated 04-06-2021 received through mail.
- Nodal officer JMM /NABL/WQD JSD PHE Kashmir's Letter No. PHE/CE/JMM/195-197

It is to inform to all the intending bidders for the subject e-NIT that there is a need to change some of the technical specifications detailed here under:

- That in section-V, Page no 20, Total Arsenic mentioned at Sr. No. 15, may be treated as deleted as the Arsenic determination is performed by the spectrophotometer which is to be installed in mobile van.

Furthermore, the critical dates for said e-NIT are rescheduled here as under: -

S.No	Particular	Date	Time
1.	Clarification end date	17-06-2021	02.00PM
2.	Bid Submission end date	19-06-2021	02.00PM
3.	Bid Opening date	21-06-2021	03.00PM

No. - PHE/QC&PD/753-57
Dated:14-06-2021

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
QC&PD Jal Shakti
HMT Srinagar
DIPK-2965/21

e-Procurement Cell
JHARKHAND STATE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LTD., RANCHI

Short Term e-Procurement Notice Date : 15/06/2021

Sl. No	Tender Reference No.	Work Name	Amount in (Rs)	Completion Time
1	JSBCC/01/2021-22	Construction of Ramp at Sadar Hospital in Hazaribagh District	2,26,49,297/-	06 Months
2	JSBCC/02/2021-22	Conservation and Development of Megalith site, Chokahatu, Ranchi	9,80,00,000/-	12 Months
3	Date of Publication of Tender on Website 25.06.2021 at 11:00 AM			
4	Start Date of Submission of Bids 25.06.2021 at 11:00 AM			
5	Last Date/Time of Submission of Bids 07.07.2021 at 11:00 AM			
6	Last Date/Time of Submission of Bid Security Money and Tender Fee 09.07.2021 upto 11:30 AM.			
7	Date/Time of opening of Bid 09.07.2021 at 12:00 PM			
8	Name & Address of office Inviting tender e-Procurement Cell, Jharkhand State Building Construction Corporation Ltd., Ranchi.			
9	Helpline Number of e-procurement Cell 0651-2446259			
10	e-mail ID jsbcc@jharkhand@gmail.com			

Any change can be seen on Website <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in>. Sd/-
Any other information can be seen on <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in>. Nodal Officer
PR 248044 Jharkhand State Building Construction Corp. Ltd. (21-22)_D
e-Procurement Cell
Jharkhand State Building Construction Corporation Ltd., Ranchi.

Timings
DELHI

WEDNESDAY, JUN. 16		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:21
RISE	10:27	SET 23:58
THURSDAY, JUN. 17		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:22
RISE	11:28	SET 00:00
FRIDAY, JUN. 18		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:22
RISE	12:28	SET 00:32

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	39	27
Safdarjang	39	27
Palam	39	28

Delhi Palam Today
35°C Rain and thunderstorm may occur at some places. Warm weather would continue with partly cloudy to cloudy sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Light rain and thunderstorm likely at few places. Warm and humid day with partly cloudy sky.

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'BJP-led civic bodies failed to clean drains'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Tuesday claimed that the BJP-led municipal corporations have failed to clean drains, which has resulted in increased waterlogging.

"The BJP-led civic bodies is playing with the lives of Delhiites by not cleaning the drains," AAP leader Durgesh Pathak said.

"The AAP demands that the civic bodies should immediately start cleaning all the drains under their jurisdiction. On behalf of the AAP, I also want to appeal that the work should be done immediately and later they should not blame others for their failure," he added.

He said monsoon can arrive in Delhi anytime soon now and every year the national capital faces a massive waterlogging problem. "Last year, a child died due to waterlogging and in Karol Bagh, many jhuggis were washed away due to waterlogging. The reason behind this repeated waterlogging is that the BJP-ruled civic bodies does not clean the drains. In Delhi, around 90% of drains are under its jurisdiction," Mr. Pathak said.

He claimed that only 20% of the drains have been cleaned before the monsoon.

'50% of jab centres for 18-44 age group shut, rest will close today'

AAP MLA Atishi says stock will last one day; city reports 228 new COVID-19 cases

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

AAP MLA Atishi on Tuesday said that half of the government-run vaccine centres for the people of 18-44 age group were shut down on Tuesday and the rest will be shut down on Wednesday due to vaccine shortage.

"Only 31,000 doses of vaccine are available for the youth in Delhi. For 18-44 age group, less than one day's stock is available. Half the centres in Delhi are closed today and the rest of the vaccination centres will be closed tomorrow," she said.

Vaccine stocks

Both Covishield and Covaxin stocks for the age group will last for less than a day, as per the bulletin released by the government on Tuesday.

"Delhi is being unlocked and the vaccination of youth is most important at such a time. The youth are going back to their office. That is why our appeal to the Central government is to provide the vaccine to the youth of Delhi at the earliest," Ms. Atishi said.

She said that the pace of vaccination of youth in Delhi has started slowing down again due to the shortage.

Meanwhile, the downward trend in COVID-19 cases continued in the national capital with 228 new cases being reported in the past 24



A health worker administers a dose of vaccine to an 18-44 age group beneficiary at a government school in Mandir Marg, New Delhi, on Tuesday. • R.V. MOORTHY

hours, taking the total cases to 14,31,498, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

Also, 12 deaths were reported and the total number of deaths stood at 24,851. A total of 71,291 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said.

Of the total cases, 14,03,569 people have recovered and there are 3,078 active cases.

The test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.32%, which means that less than one person out of 300 people taking COVID-19 tests are now positive for the virus. The TPR was as high as 36% on April 22 and has been coming down since then.

Statistics related to COVID-19 collated by the Delhi government state that 40,470 citizens tested positive over a 32-day interval - an average of more than 1,264 per day.

As the city enters its third week of the 'unlock' process with more activities allowed and new cases dipping on a daily basis, records state that the population most engaged in these activities was among the most vulnerable.

A majority of those who tested positive - 20,672 -

In last 30 days, over 50 tested positive for virus every hour

Out of 40K cases, around 1,500 were children aged below 14

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Over 52 residents in the Capital tested positive for the novel coronavirus every hour during the last month out of which at least two were children below the age of 14. Over half were aged between 30 and 60, and a quarter were below 30 years of age.

According to Delhi government records, more than 1,500 people found COVID-19 positive between May 15 and June 15 were below 14 years of age. Senior citizens accounted for over 17% of recorded infections.

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A majority of those who tested positive - 20,672 -



A man gets tested for COVID in New Delhi on Tuesday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the total caseload for those above 60 compared to 2,878 women. In the 30-60 age group, 12,308 men were found to have been infected against 8,364 women and, in the below 30 category, 6,548 men tested positive compared to 4,879 women.

For the below 14 category, 909 male children were infected as opposed to 680 female children.

District-wise data

The data also posited that most infections were found in the South West district of the Capital which reported 1,292 cases in the 60+ category, 4,091 cases in the 30-60 age group, 2,147 cases in the less than 30 years category and 337 cases in the below 14 group.

The North West district accounted for 786 cases in the 60+ group, New Delhi district had 2,769 cases in the 30-60 category, the South district for 1,463 cases in the less than 30 years of age group and the New Delhi district, again, for 209 cases in the below 14 category.

According to records, over 1,589 COVID-19 patients were aged less than 14 years and 6,782 were aged above 60.

More males were found to have been infected compared to women in each age group, according to the data. Men accounted for 3,904 of

Males more vulnerable

More males were found to have been infected compared to women in each age group, according to the data. Men accounted for 3,904 of

Delhi prisons see only single COVID-19 case this month

Number of active cases till June 8 stood at 12: official data

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi prisons on Tuesday stated that only a single inmate had tested positive for COVID-19 this month so far.

According to the prison administration, the last inmate to have tested positive for COVID-19 was reported on June 8 and the last staff member tested positive for the virus on May 29.

"COVID-19 cases have decreased but we are taking all the precautions. COVID-appropriate behaviour, including social distancing among the inmates, is being strictly followed. The new inmates are initially isolated and later shifted to barracks," Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel said.

According to the data from prison administration, the number of active CO-

VID-19 cases in Delhi prisons till June 8 stood at 12, which includes two staff members.

Till Tuesday, a total number of 1,139 inmates above 45 years of age and 680 below 45 years lodged at Tihar jail have been vaccinated; 132 inmates above 45 years and 200 below 45 years have received the vaccine at the Rohini jail. At the Mandoli Jail, 412 inmates aged above 45 years and 132 below 45 years have been vaccinated, according to the data.

Since March this year, 382 cases of COVID-19 infection have been reported among inmates. Of them 364 have recovered while there are 10 active cases, according to data. Eight inmates have succumbed to the virus too. Among the prison staff members, 221 have been infected since March and of

them, 219 have recuperated while two are still undergoing treatment.

Interim bail

According to officials, over 2,000 undertrial prisoners were released on interim bail and around 700 convicts released on emergency parole under the department's decongestion drive.

The first COVID case was reported from Rohini jail on May 13 while two COVID-19 positive inmates lodged at the Mandoli jail, both senior citizens, had passed away on June 15 and July 4.

Jail officials have maintained that the Prisons Department remained vigilant and instructed its staffers to not only maintain hygiene and social distancing but also spread awareness about the infection.

Ready for visitors



Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi on Tuesday. Monuments in the Capital will reopen for the public from today. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

North corporation Mayor inspects Kishanganj ahead of monsoon

He directs officers to ensure completion of desilting work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Tuesday inspected the Kishanganj Rail Under Bridge (RUB) and its vicinity to check the preparations of the corporation before the monsoon onset.

Mr. Prakash was accompanied by Municipal Commissioner Sanjay Goyal along with engineer-in-chief K.P. Singh and other officials of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation.

During the inspection, the Mayor directed the officers of the Engineering Department to ensure that the de-

silting work was completed from all the drains.

Water stagnation

Mr. Prakash also directed the officials to ensure that all arrangements had been made to ensure that water does not stagnate inside the RUB and residents do not face any inconvenience.

"The Railways' work on a part of the Kishanganj Railway Under Bridge is under way which is almost 90% complete. The corporation has passed a ₹10-crore budget for the construction of roads on both sides of the RUB," he said.

According to Mr. Prakash, the construction work of the RUB would be completed by December after which there will be much relief from traffic problems in the area.

The Mayor said the North body would also start the work of beautification of the Azad Market Chowk very soon.

Plantation work and paintings are among the components of the beautification program, he said.

"The North Corporation is working at its best level to provide all possible facilities to the residents," Mr. Prakash said.

AAP govt. yet to fulfil its 2015 poll promise of water supply, says BJP

'It claims to have laid pipelines in 93% of the colonies'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday accused the AAP-led Delhi government of not being able to fulfil its initial poll promise of providing safe and pure water through every tap in the national capital over the last seven years.

"The government claims to have laid pipelines in 93% of the colonies. When there was a Congress government in Delhi before 2014, ₹1,109 crore used to be spent on water tankers as most of the colonies had no water supply, now ₹1,783 crore is being spent on wa-



Vijender Gupta

ter tankers," Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta alleged.

"The CM had declared employees of the DJB 'Corona Warriors' and even pro-

mised that if they died in the line of duty their families would be given ₹ crore compensation. But, over 100 of them have died so far, and their families are still making rounds of Mr. Kejriwal's house but to no avail," Mr. Bidhuri alleged.

In a related development, the Rohini MLA said Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal had informed him that a three-member fact-finding committee had been formed to look into allegations of graft in the procurement of 1,000 buses by the Delhi Transport Corporation.

L-G speaks to U.P. CM over Delhi water supply

Bajjal to talk to Haryana CM as well

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal has spoken to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and will be speaking to Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal with regard to the supply of water to the Capital, administrative source said here Tuesday.

According to sources, the L-G has been monitoring the situation of water supply in the Capital and had sought detailed reports from the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) after incidents of shortage,

especially in jhuggi colonies, were reported over the last few days.

"It is felt that apart from the issue of supply of water, its management and distribution in terms of limiting leakage and wastage, as also addressing the issue of unequal distribution per person per day in different localities needs to be addressed at the earliest," a source said.

In this regard, the source added, Mr. Bajjal has sought a comprehensive status report from the DJB that will be followed by a detailed time-bound action plan over the coming days.

150 people booked for meeting at Khori Basti

Nirmal Gorana arrested on charges of instigating mob, flouting COVID-19 norms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
FARIDABAD

Nirmal Gorana, general secretary of Bandhua Mukti Morcha, was on Tuesday arrested by the Faridabad Police on charges of instigating the mob at a public meeting in Khori Basti, flouting the prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPc, and not adhering to COVID-appropriate behaviour.

The Supreme Court had on June 7 ordered demolition of the structures on 170-

acre Khori Basti on the forest land within six weeks. Social activists and politicians have been demanding that Khori Basti residents be rehabilitated before carrying out of the demolition drive and compensated.

The police, in a press statement, claimed that around 150 people were holding a meeting at Khori Basti, making provocative speeches and were hatching a conspiracy to attack police team during the demolition

drive. They also did not adhere to COVID-19 guidelines. A case was registered against around 150 people and the prime accused Gorana was arrested.

Various social groups expressing solidarity with the residents, in a press statement, said Mr. Gorana had gone to Khori Basti to examine the situation. He was arrested from his car on his way back.

"The police have been terrorising the residents and ig-

noring official notices which grant the villagers of Khori another three days before eviction...They are beating people as soon as they exit their houses," said a joint statement by Basti Suraksha Manch, Working Peoples' Charter, Bandhua Mukti Morcha and National Alliance of People's Movements.

Faridabad Police spokespersons Sube Singh denied the allegations made by the solidarity groups.

NGT dismisses review plea alleging environmental violations in Aravali

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has dismissed a plea which alleged violation of environmental norms by construction of illegal roads and unauthorised mining in the Aravali in Gurugram district.

While dismissing the plea which sought a review of an earlier order, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said that the grounds taken by

the review applicant, that he was not an encroacher was not the issue for consideration before the tribunal.

"The matter in issue in the original application was illegal mining and encroachment of forest land and on the basis of the [forest department] report, the statutory authorities were directed to take further action in accordance with the law...no substantial ground for maintenance of the review ap-

plication is made out," the Bench said. The tribunal added, "The review application is devoid of any merit and deserves to be dismissed. For the determination of the right title and interest of any party, the aggrieved may approach the appropriate forum if so advised."

Earlier, the NGT had sought a report from the forest department on the allegations of illegal construction in a forest area.

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Curbs eased in Punjab as positivity rate drops to 2%

Eateries, cinemas can be opened at a maximum of 50% capacity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

With the positivity rate coming down to 2%, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday announced easing of the restrictions including allowing restaurants and other eating joints as well as cinemas and gyms to open at 50% capacity beginning June 16.

He said now 50 persons can attend weddings and funerals.

Under the new guidelines which will remain in effect till June 25 when they will be again reviewed, night curfew from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.

and weekend curfew from 8.00 p.m. on Saturday up to 5.00 a.m. on Monday will be in place. All essential activities, including those covered under existing 'Exemptions', will remain exempted from curfew restrictions.

Chairing a virtual review meet, the Chief Minister ordered opening of all restaurants (including in hotels), cafes, coffee shops, fast food outlets etc., cinemas, gyms at a maximum 50% of capacity, subject to all their employees having received at least one dose of vaccination. AC buses can also ply with 50% occupation.

Bars and pubs shall, however, continue to remain closed. All educational institutions i.e. schools and colleges will also continue to be closed.

SAD-BSP alliance may not deliver in Punjab Assembly polls

While the BSP is barely relevant, the SAD is trying to recover lost ground in the farming community

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) recently decided to jointly contest the Punjab Assembly elections, due early next year. The announcement has set the tone for the upcoming polls, even as keen political observers feel the alliance may not yield the "desired" results for either party.

In Punjab, which has the highest percentage of Dalit population among the States at close to 32%, the BSP used the Dalit vote as a political plank for the first time in 1992. However, since then, the party has received a declining response in the State. In 1992, it secured over 16% votes winning nine seats in Punjab, but that dropped to around 4% in the 2012 Assembly polls. In 2017, the BSP's vote share percentage hit a further low of 1.5%. Now, with the new alliance, the BSP is attempting to remain "relevant" in State politics.

On the other hand, the SAD has faced wrath of farming community, its key support base, which is de-



BSP chief Mayawati

manding the repeal of the three farm laws. The party is hoping to neutralise its negative political impact through the newly formed alliance, hoping to win over the votes of the Scheduled Castes.

Crucial Dalit votes

Parties are aware of the importance of Dalit votes and have been making all efforts to garner it. The newly formed alliance is being seen as critical for the SAD, especially after it broke its alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the farm laws issue. The SAD has already announced it would appoint a Dalit as Deputy Chief Minister if it forms the next government.



SAD chief Sukhbir Badal

Ashtosh Kumar, Professor of Political Science at Panjab University and author of *Electoral Politics in Punjab: Factors and Phases* believes that the SAD-BSP alliance is nothing more than a poll optic, which is going to be insignificant in the upcoming polls. "This alliance is not going to have a major impact on the electoral outcome. The BSP has an almost negligible base in the State. It has been losing its support base. Its last win was one Assembly seat in 1997. SCs are divided on not only caste lines but also on religious lines. The BSP hardly has a base that the Akali Dal could capitalise on," he told *The Hindu*. "On the other hand, the

SAD is in trouble of even losing the traditional support base surrounding the 2015 Bargari sacrilege and subsequent police firing incident. Akalis supporting Jats (the farming community) is unlikely to go for Dalit candidates. Eventually, there would hardly be any significant gain for either of the two parties," added Mr. Kumar.

On June 6, the SAD-BSP inked an electoral alliance for the 2022 Assembly polls, in which the SAD will contest 97 seats and the BSP 20 – including eight seats in the Doaba region, seven in Malwa and five in Majha region of the State.

There are a total of 117 Assembly constituencies in Punjab.

Ronki Ram, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Professor of Political Science at Panjab University, pointed out that both the SAD and the BSP are currently entangled within their respective adverse political circumstances. "If the SAD is finding it difficult to maintain its heritage status – being a Panthic party of the Sikhs – for not defending the inter-

ests of the farmers of the State, who mostly happen to be Jat Sikhs, the BSP has been struggling hard at least to keep itself alive in its birth place," he said.

Divisive factor

"Moreover, given the divisive factor of the caste divide in the State, it seems quite unlikely that the SC votes would be transferred to the SAD. Besides, the SCs of Punjab, like their counterparts in other parts of the country, are not a homogeneous category. They are sharply divided into 39 castes among themselves and got further fragmented into different religions and syncretic faiths, which metamorphosed into *deras*. The SAD-BSP alliance may not fetch SC votes for SAD across the socio-religious divisions within Dalits. Similarly, the BSP may also have to pay the price for signing the alliance with the SAD. Those SC affiliates of the BSP who were not comfortable with the SAD may like to dissociate themselves from the former for its political marriage of convenience," said Mr. Ram.

Budgam's 'killer' leopard captured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The elusive "man-eater", which killed a four-year old student of the Delhi Public School after dragging her from the lawns of the house in an urban locality in central Kashmir's Budgam district on June 3, was captured alive on Tuesday.

"Scat samples of the leopard will be collected for DNA sampling. It will be matched with the samples taken at the site where the minor was found dead, to establish if the animal is the same," Chief Wildlife Warden, Kashmir, Rashid Naqash said.

The leopard was spotted and captured on Tuesday morning inside the premises of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Budgam.

On June 3, the animal pounced on the UKG student who was riding a bicycle on the lawns of her house and dragged her away. Her mutilated body was found in a nursery the next day after several hours of search.

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PERSONAL

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2. Because the Agreement to sell written in para 1 is not registered so with the help of this notice it is informed that the transfer of the above plot on the basis of Agreement to Sell/G.P.A. goes in favour of MR. BABU KHAN S/o MR. RISAL KHAN R/o VILLAGE SALARPUR, POST OFFICE DHANKAUR, DISTT BULANDSHERE, U.P. if anyone has any objection, he/she can submit his/her objection in the residential department of NOIDA Authority within 15 days of publication of this notice.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, (SUMIRA DEVI) W/o. LATE HARI SINGH born on (05/05/1953) R/o. B-106, New Ashok Nagar, Vasundhara Enclave, New Delhi - 110096, have changed my name to (SUMEDA DEVI) for all future purposes.

I Balesh Dagar s/o Anil Kumar, Resident of F-45, Sadh Nagar, Palam, Delhi have changed my Name from Balesh Dagar to Balesh Dwide affidavit dated 15/12/20 before notary NCT of Delhi.

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Notice Inviting Quotation (NIQ)

NIQ No. 06/PR/JUN/21-22

Sealed quotations are invited from experienced, reputed and financially sound firms for compliance of the various provisions of Companies Act 1956/2013 for one year in respect of Patratu Energy Limited (PEL), a subsidiary of Jharkhand Urja Utpadan Nigam Limited. Quotation containing criteria for selection of agency, scope of work, terms & conditions may be obtained from the office of General Manager (Project), JUUNL, Engineering Building, HEC, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004 on any working days during working hours.

Last Date & time of submission of Quotation	25.06.2021 upto 03:00 PM
Date and time of opening of Quotations	25.06.2021 at 04:00 PM

Sd/-
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ENTERPRISE CONNECT

A Business Initiative

NFL records profit of Rs. 343.46 crores in 2020-21

Riding on the best-ever fertilizer sale of 59.37 Lakh MT, NFL has achieved a profit (PBT) of Rs.343.46 crores during 2020-21. The net profit of the company was registered at Rs. 249.63 crore. The results of the company were approved by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 10.06.2021. During 2020-21, the company sold 50,160 Lakh MT of urea, including imported urea, compared to 47.93 LMT recorded in previous year. Company also fared well in marketing of other fertilizers like DAP, MoP, NPK etc. where a sale of 9.27 Lakh MT was registered in 2020-21 as compared to 9.10 Lakh MT in previous year. The company produced 37.99 Lakh MT of urea in its own plants during the year by recording a capacity utilisation of 117.59% as against production of 37.27 Lakh MT during the previous year.

Petronet LNG records highest ever PBT & PAT in current FY.

Petronet LNG records highest ever PBT of Rs 3,968 Cr and PAT of Rs 2,949 Cr in a financial year. During the FY 2020-21 (current year), Daje terminal processed 849 TBTU of LNG as against 885 TBTU processed during the previous year. The overall LNG volume processed by the Company in the current year was 896 TBTU, as against the LNG volume processed in the previous year of 927 TBTU. During the quarter ended 31st March, 2021 (current quarter), Daje terminal processed 204 TBTU of LNG, as against 206 TBTU processed during the corresponding quarter (Q4, FY 2019-20). In the previous quarter (Q3, FY 2020-21), 222 TBTU of LNG was processed. The overall LNG volume processed by the Company in the current quarter was 218 TBTU, as against 219 TBTU processed in the corresponding quarter. In the previous quarter, LNG volume processed was 235 TBTU. The Company has reported highest ever PBT of Rs 3,968 Cr in the financial year ending 31st March, 2021 (current year), as against Rs 3,111 Cr in the previous year. The PAT for the current year was reported at Rs 2,949 Cr as against the PAT of the previous year of Rs 2,698 Cr. The Company has reported PBT of Rs 856 Cr in the current quarter, as against Rs 486 Cr in the corresponding quarter. In the previous quarter, PBT was Rs 1,172 Cr. PAT for the current quarter was reported at Rs 623 Cr as against PAT of the corresponding quarter which stood at Rs 359 Cr. PAT of the previous quarter was Rs 878 Cr. The Board of Directors have recommended a final dividend of 35% on equity for approval of the shareholders in the AGM. The strong financial results were achieved due to robust operational efficiency and effective commercial planning by the Company.

IRCTC offers "work from Hotel with Nature" travel plans amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

IRCTC's efforts to rekindle the confidence among guests to step out for availing hospitality services in the post COVID world has met with resounding success. "Work from Hotel with Nature" Packages for Puri, Konark & Gopalpur (Beach Destinations of Odisha) are launched. Booking started from 09.06.2021. As remote working becomes the new norm, and with location independence becoming an increasingly viable option, it's no surprise that more and more people are looking for inspiration beyond their four walls of their home office. Over time, there is an increased demand for more secluded and private environments due to health and safety concerns. Keeping this evolving trend in mind, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) has launched exclusive packages for professionals who want to continue with their work with a different yet amongst natural environment near beach, forest from the comfort of hotel rooms, wherein they can relax and enjoy along with their routine. Working away from the typical office setting is expected to become the new trend during these pandemic times. Professionals can choose destinations among Puri, Konark and Gopalpur. The duration of package would be for a minimum of 03 nights which can be extended on prorata basis.

Similar packages for other locations are also being explored.

Oil PSUs take up initiative to support various Art & Handicraft projects

In line with the government's commemoration of 75 years of Indian Independence - Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, an initiative by Oil PSUs to support various Art and Crafts in the country, Bamboo Craft project of Madhya Pradesh supported by ONGC was launched in a webinar organized by National Oil Company Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on 11 June 2021. As part of a larger initiative, central public enterprises under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas will take up 75 projects in different districts across the country. ONGC has launched the initiative to revive the struggling handicraft projects and empower the local artisans. ONGC will take up 15 of the 75 projects. The Bamboo handicraft of Madhya Pradesh has been launched on 11 June 2021. ONGC will address the challenges faced by the artisans and the art and handicraft forms, thereby improving the rural livelihoods associated with the handicrafts and handloom sectors. ONGC, in association with local NGOs and forums, is initially undertaking five projects across the country to support the handicraft sector, with an outlay of around 1.3 crore rupees. Speaking during the launch, ONGC CMD Subhash Kumar said, "Oil PSEs have always stood with the community wherever we have operational presence; these projects along with other flagship initiatives planned as a part of Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsava, will significantly contribute to a resurgent, Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

PSPCL commits daily 8 hours of uninterrupted power to agriculture tubewell consumers for paddy season

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited is committed to provide daily 8 hours uninterrupted power supply to its 14 lacs agriculture tubewell consumers in Punjab for the coming paddy season from 10th June, 2021. This was disclosed by PSPCL CMD Shri A.Venu Prasad here today in a press note. Sh.A.Venu Prasad also assured that all esteemed consumers of state would be provided 24 hours continued, uninterrupted and quality power supply in Punjab. CMD said that PSPCL has already made level best arrangements to cater electricity supply to its consumers. In order to ensure supply to agriculture consumers during paddy season, PSPCL has also strengthened the electrical infrastructure of the villages. He said that PSPCL is anticipating to meet successfully more than 13000 MW demand during the paddy season. He said that in addition to existing sources at disposal of PSPCL, power arrangements under short term and banking with other states to the tune of 2700 MW have been made for this paddy season. He added that daily power supply to all AP consumers in the state has been divided into 3 groups at each sub-station. He also added that AP consumers of the PSPCL will be provided 8 hours power supply in day timings along with the international border of Punjab.

IREDA invites bids for Rs. 4500 crore Solar PLI scheme

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA), a PSU under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has invited bids from solar module manufacturers for setting up solar manufacturing units under the central government's Rs. 4,500 crore Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. MNRE has appointed IREDA as the implementing agency for the scheme. The Union Cabinet had earlier approved Rs. 4,500 crore scheme to boost domestic manufacturing of solar PV modules. The last date for submitting application is 30th June. The selection process for the successful bidders is to be completed by 30th July. IREDA had floated the invitation for application document on 25th May on its website and the electronic application process went live on 31st May. The applicants are required to set-up either brownfield or greenfield manufacturing facility for the entire capacity allotted under the

scheme. Applicants are not allowed to set-up mix of brownfield and greenfield facility under the scheme. Manufacturing capacity/unit, for which required capital goods have been imported before the last date of bid submission, will not be eligible for participation under this PLI scheme. The minimum capacity of the manufacturing unit to be installed shall be 1,000 Megawatt. The PLI will be disbursed to the successful applicants annually for a period of five years.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya -Gorakhpur features among top 100 in QS world university ranking list

Gorakhpur QS World University ranking (Quacquarelli Symonds) for academic session 2020-21 has been announced. Along with international ranking, QS has also ranked some of the countries and regions like India, Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, Mexico and Europe. QS has ranked DDU Gorakhpur university among top 100 universities of India and has placed it at 96th position in the country. Among UP State government Universities only DDU Gorakhpur University has figured in the list. This clearly indicates first position of DDU Gorakhpur University in Uttar Pradesh. Sharing this news with Deans/Heads of the Departments and officers of the University, DDU Gorakhpur University Vice Chancellor Rajesh Singh congratulated the faculty member for this big achievement. Prof Singh said that I am happy that DDU Gorakhpur University is the only university among government universities of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which figured in top 100 in the ranking. The QS has obtained data from UK based Thomson Reuters the most prestigious agency which calculate impact factor of papers in science. Per person quality publication comes out to be 11.5 which is quite high considering the facilities in state universities to meet the demand of scientific research. VC Prof Singh said that state government should come forward to promote universities like DDU Gorakhpur University to establish it as center of excellence in research out put. QS has graded DDU Gorakhpur university with high grade research output, he added.

CVPPPL Celebrates its 11th Raising Day

Chenab Valley Power Projects [P] Ltd. (CVPPPL) celebrated its 11th Raising Day on 13th June, 2021 at CVPPPL Corporate Office, Jammu; Project Sites at Kishtwar and Camp Office, Faridabad. Sh. Suresh Kumar, IAS (Retd) Chairman and Sh A.K. Choudhary, Managing Director congratulated the employees and their families on this occasion. CVPPPL was incorporated on this day in the year 2011 to tap the vast hydro potential of Chenab basin in J&K. Sh. A.K. Choudhary also informed that the CVPPPL Board has approved to raise the Authorised Share Capital of the company from Rs. 3500 crores to 5100 crores & the same shall be placed in the next General Meeting of shareholders for approval. All the approved activities during FY 2020-21 under CSR initiative of CVPPPL have been completed with a total expenditure of Rs.42.58 lacs in the field of Education, Health and Disaster Management.

IDP Education ties up with Air Canada to provide discounted airfares to international students

IDP Education, the global leader in international education services, has entered an agreement with Air Canada to help international students avail budgeted air travel. The tie-up would allow Canadian education aspirants applying via IDP to fly from any part of the world to Canada with a 15% discount on Air Canada flights. To access the same, students can book their flights at www.aircanada.com. International students can access the offer only if they book their tickets by 31st August 2021, scheduling their travel to Canada on or before 31st December 2021. The company clarified that the flight would also be entertaining codeshares with Lufthansa, Swiss Air, Brussels Airlines, Austrian Airlines, Germanwings, and Eurowings(EW).

Akali-BSP protest over 'vaccine scam'

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh hits back at the 'motivated hue and cry'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MOHALI

Punjab police on Tuesday resorted to the use of water cannons to disperse Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) workers and leaders as they marched to gherao the residence of Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh at Siswan in Punjab's Mohali over an alleged "vaccine scam".

The protesters were demanding the arrest of Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu. Police detained the protesters, including SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal. They were later released.

Mr. Badal said it was not just the Health Department, corruption was rampant across all Ministries under the ruling Congress government. "All Congress Ministers who have indulged in corruption will be taken to task and



SAD-BSP workers protesting in Mohali on Tuesday. PTI

booked as per law once the SAD-BSP alliance is voted to power in 2022," said Mr. Badal, accusing Chief Minister Amarinder Singh of shielding corrupt Ministers.

Mr. Badal alleged there have been "a number of scams in the current government". He said they included the "drug deaddiction tablet scam, the PPE kit scam, the vaccine scam and the Fateh kit scam", apart from the

"Scheduled Caste scholarship scam and seed scam".

"Not only this, patronage is also being extended to the sand and liquor mafia, which had looted the State with several crores of rupees," he alleged.

"In their latest vaccine scam, the Congress government sold COVID-19 vaccines at a hefty profit to private institutions," Mr. Badal said.

Rejecting and terming the Opposition's allegations on supply of vaccines to some private hospitals and procurement of Fateh kits as "politically motivated", Capt. Amarinder Singh said there was no question of the State government making profits amid the pandemic.

Accusing the Akalis and the Aam Aadmi Party of spreading misinformation to further their political ambitions and weakening the

State's war against COVID-19 by raising non-issues, the Chief Minister charged the two parties with "motivated hue and cry" to push their electoral agendas with an eye on the 2022 Assembly elections.

'No wrongdoing'

Asserting that the State government had not indulged in any wrongdoing, the Chief Minister said quick and unusual decisions had to be taken in an emergency war-like situation. All protocols were strictly followed and emergency rules were invoked to meet the crisis [of the pandemic], he added. All decisions were taken in the interests of the people of the State and all due procedures followed, he said, terming media reports on the alleged scams as nothing but sensationalism.

7 arrested in Assam rape-murder case

Bodies of two minor girls were found hanging from a tree

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The police in western Assam's Kokrajhar district have arrested seven persons in connection with the "rape and murder" of two minor tribal girls.

The bodies of the two girls from the same family were

found hanging from a tree in a forest in the Kokrajhar district on the night of June 11. They were aged 16 and 14 years.

"The rape and murder of two minor tribal girls have been solved... Feeling extremely a sense of satisfaction that the culprits have

been identified," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who visited the girls' house after the incident, tweeted.

Inspector-General of Police in charge of Bodoland Territorial Council, L.R. Bishnoi said a special investigation team had probed the case.

Foodgrain 'scam' hits Meghalaya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

An alleged foodgrain scam involving the Food Corporation of India (FCI) has added to the embarrassment of the Meghalaya government facing flak for poor management of the COVID-19 crisis.

Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma has denied his government's involvement in the "scam" detected in adjoining Assam a few days ago. But the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a constituent of his coalition government, and the Opposition Congress, have demanded a probe.

NGOs in the State have also slammed the government for shielding the supplier-official nexus and giving a long rope to "tainted companies".

Officials said the rice was procured by FCI, Shillong but the owner of the warehouse had repackaged the rice to the Assam Rifles.

Mr. Sangma insisted the rice bags seized had no connection with the public distribution system (PDS) in Meghalaya. He said the State had already received its quota of PDS rice for May and June.

"We have no idea if rice belonging to Meghalaya is lying in Assam," he added.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

We deeply mourn the passing away of our Chairman



Mr. Y.M. ELIAS
4th May 1934 - 15th June 2021

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IN BRIEF



Steps taken to tackle foot-and-mouth disease

ALAPPUZHA
The Animal Husbandry Department in Kerala has ramped up measures to tackle the spread of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Alappuzha. Around 3,000 head of cattle have been affected by the outbreak in the district in the last one-and-a-half months. At least 193 cattle died of the disease during the period.

Indigo flight reports tyre burst at Hubballi

HUBBALLI
Passengers of an Indigo aircraft from Kannur to Hubballi had a narrow escape after the flight reported a tyre burst on landing at the Hubballi airport on Monday night. The Bengaluru-bound flight 6e-7979 was grounded on the runway and was subsequently towed away. An official statement from Indigo Airlines said all the crew and passengers in the flight were safe.

ATS recovers one more gelatin stick in Kerala

KOLLAM
The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of the Kerala police on Tuesday recovered one more gelatin stick from a cashew plantation in Pathanapuram where explosives and detonators were found. The Pathanapuram police have been combing the area since the stash was discovered by forest beat officers on patrol duty on Monday.

₹248.47 crore released under YSR Vahana Mitra

GUNTUR
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy released ₹248.47 crore for the beneficiaries of the YSR Vahana Mitra scheme on Tuesday. Under the scheme, the government is providing ₹10,000 to auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers.

SC closes trial against Italian marines

Govt. plea to stop proceedings follows UN tribunal decision in May last year

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the closure of court proceedings in India against the two Italian marines who allegedly killed two fishermen off the Kerala coast after mistaking them for pirates in 2012.

A Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah agreed to the Union government's plea to stop the criminal trial and other proceedings against Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre, detailed on vessel *Enrica Lexie*, following a decision of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in May last year that the duo would be tried in Italy.

The court recorded that Italy had transferred ₹10 crore to India as compensation to the fishermen's families. The families have given their consent. The money has already been transferred to the Supreme Court Registry by the Ministry of External Affairs.

"We are satisfied that the compensation of ₹10 crore, over and above the ex-gratia amount already paid to the heirs of the deceased fishermen, can be said to be a reasonable amount of compensation...", the court recorded in a 11-page order.

Justice Shah, who read out the order, concluded that this was a "fit case to close all proceedings in India".



Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre. •PTI

The Bench ordered the amount to be transferred from the Supreme Court Registry to the Kerala High Court. The apex court asked the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court to nominate a judge to hear the fishermen's families and disburse/invest ₹4 crore each to their rightful legal heirs. It said care should be taken that the money

reached the heirs and was not "diverted" into wrong hands.

"While disbursing the amount of compensation to the heirs, i.e., ₹4 crores each, their [heirs] interest is required to be protected so that the amount of compensation paid to them is not frittered away," the court noted.

It suggested investing the money in the name of the dependents/heirs of the deceased in a fixed deposit in a nationalised bank for some time.

The balance ₹2 crore, the court ordered, would be paid to the owner of the fishing boat that came under attack from the marines.

It urged Italy to resume the criminal proceedings against the marines in compliance with the U.N. tribunal.

The court also asked Italy, India and the State of Kerala to cooperate with each other to bring justice in the case.

On April 9, the court told the Union government that it would consider passing an order to quash the criminal proceedings only after Italy deposited ₹10 crore as compensation.

Honoured for ending period poverty

Amika George received an MBE for her campaign for free menstrual products

SOMA BASU
MADURAI

On Saturday, 21-year-old Amika George was honoured as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to education.

As her extended family, spread across Kumplampoi, Kozhencherry and Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, celebrated the news, she told *The Hindu* that the honour was a brilliant indication that young people were being taken seriously as players with real power to enact change when they see injustices.

Ms. George, who crusades for free hygiene products for girls living in poverty with no access to menstrual products, is from Edgware in North West London, and is currently pursuing the study of Indian colonial history at



Amika George

Cambridge University.

At 17, she read a newspaper article about young school and college girls in the U.K. missing up to a week's classes every month because they could not afford to buy sanitary products. "It seemed unfair that a natural biological process was responsible for girls falling behind. To imagine being absent from school hit me," she said in an e-mail interview.

The thought that these girls were no different from her except for their financial circumstances made Ms. George start a 'Free Periods' petition in April 2017, seeking government intervention.

It met with an unexpected response. She was flooded with emails from girls from Asian communities and other ethnic backgrounds, who told her their families struggled to afford two square meals and they knew there wasn't money for sanitary napkins. In particular, she remembered one girl who wrote that every month, she searched her parents' wallets or behind boxes and sofas for coins to buy pads and felt embarrassed asking for help or talking about periods to her friends.

"The taboo was still deeply entrenched and I felt angry that girls were being overlooked. It fuelled my determination to take the campaign to a meaningful completion," she said.

When her petition attracted 1,80,000 signatures, Ms. George was inspired to lead a protest outside the British Prime Minister's residence on Downing Street on December 20, 2017. She kept demanding change through media interviews and school visits, even though nothing tangible happened. She then launched a not-for-profit organisation, Free Periods, in January 2019 to persuade the U.K. government to pay for menstrual products.

Last March, the Chancellor announced special funds for every school and college in England for period products for all students, with monitoring of supplies.

UAE extends flight ban till July 6

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

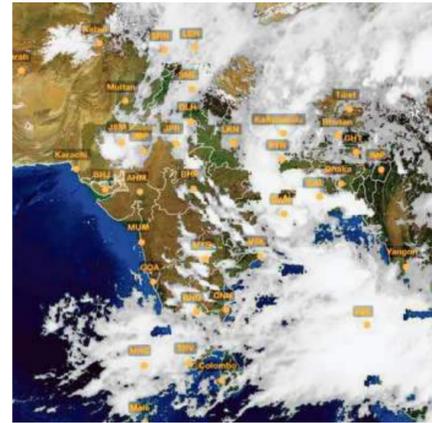
The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has extended its suspension of flight services from India to the seven emirates till July 6.

The movement of passengers, excluding UAE nationals, diplomats, and holders of the UAE golden visa, to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Fujairah, Ajman, and Ra's al-Khaimah from India has also been suspended till July 6. "The General Authority of Civil Aviation, UAE, has suspended all inbound passenger movement to the UAE from India (excluding UAE nationals) till 6th July 2021," Air India Express said in a tweet.

The extension is in view of the prevailing situation due to COVID-19.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few/isolated places over Uttarakhand, Assam, Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.3	34.1	27.2	Kozhikode	66	31.0	22.8
Ahmedabad	40.6	29.1	20.0	Kurnool	33.5	26.0	20.0
Aizawl	0.4	26.7	20.2	Lucknow	9	32.6	25.3
Allahabad	33.7	26.1	20.2	Madurai	37.5	26.1	20.2
Bangaluru	0.4	26.7	20.2	Mangaluru	3.4	28.4	22.8
Bhopal	0.4	26.7	20.2	Mumbai	1	32.3	27.6
Bhubaneswar	31.0	25.4	20.2	Mysuru	5	32.9	21.4
Chandigarh	36.0	27.6	20.2	New Delhi	38.7	27.2	20.2
Chennai	38.2	28.0	20.2	Patna	43	32.2	24.4
Coimbatore	0.9	31.8	23.0	Port Blair	13	30.7	24.6
Dehradun	33.7	24.3	20.2	Puducherry	37.6	25.4	20.2
Gangtok	14	19.2	17.5	Pune	2.2	29.5	22.8
Goa	119	27.3	24.1	Raipur	31.8	23.4	20.2
Guwahati	11	35.0	26.0	Ranchi	2	30.2	23.1
Hubballi	23.0	22.0	20.2	Shillong	2	26.4	18.0
Hyderabad	0.4	33.0	23.5	Shimla	7	25.6	15.9
Imphal	2	29.4	21.7	Srinagar	2.5	23.6	16.2
Jaipur	13	39.0	26.6	Thiruvananthapuram	3	31.5	24.6
Kochi	27	29.8	22.6	Tiruchi	38.2	26.2	20.2
Kohima	6	26.6	18.6	Vijayawada	34.2	27.0	20.2
Kolkata	11	30.3	26.5	Visakhapatnam	34.2	28.2	20.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	30	45	41	43	156	■	In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhiwadi, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 181 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Gadag, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 10
Bangaluru	4	47	29	18	44	■	
Chennai	8	5	43	40	73	■	
Delhi	9	27	46	155	167	■	
Hyderabad	4	37	15	19	16	■	
Kolkata	9	21	26	36	45	■	
Lucknow	7	28	60	35	52	■	
Mumbai	55	37	31	38	60	■	
Pune	7	15	76	97	66	■	
Visakhapatnam	5	56	39	50	92	■	

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

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

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze as it reacts with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

Seeking hike in milk price, AIKS to protest tomorrow

It says private unions slash purchase cost citing low demand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Demanding an increase in the per litre price of milk for dairy farmers, the Left-affiliated All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) has alleged that milk farmers were given a raw deal by private and co-operative milk unions who cut costs by claiming a low demand for milk during the pandemic-induced lockdown.

The AIKS has said that private and co-operative milk unions had slashed the purchase price of milk by ₹10 to ₹15 per litre, while keeping the selling rate unchanged for consumers. To protest this, the outfit has planned a Maharashtra-wide

agitation on June 17.

It has demanded that farmers be given the pre-lockdown rates of ₹35 per litre. "We demand that the State government audit all private and co-operative milk unions, which have reduced the purchase price of milk, claiming that the demand for milk has decreased during the lockdown period. It must take stern action against these cooperatives and recover the amount looted by them and return it back to the farmers," said Dr. Ajit Nawale of the AIKS.

He urged the government to make the anti-looting law applicable to private and co-operative milk unions so that milk producers could not be

looted in future. "Like sugarcane growers, milk producers, too, should be given fair and remunerative price (FRP)," said Dr. Nawale.

In their list of demands to the State government, the AIKS has urged the government to adopt a one-brand strategy to prevent undesirable 'brand wars' in which ordinary milk farmers always lost out.

"The government should also ban toned milk and ensure that adulteration is stopped by strictly enforcing anti-adulteration laws. They must provide legal guarantees that pure milk will be available to consumers at reasonable prices," said Dr. Nawale.

'CET may be held by first week of Aug.'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NAGPUR

The CET or the common entrance test for professional courses after Standard XII in Maharashtra could be held in the last week of July or first week of August, Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant said on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters, he also said that in-person classes in colleges would not start as of now, considering the pandemic situation. "The CET can be held in July last week or the first week of August," he said.

The State government had already filled up around 1,200 of 4,084 college teachers' posts but the process halted due to COVID-19, he said.

CM aspirations: Pawar takes a dig at State Congress chief

He says 145 MLAs required for top post

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Taking a jibe at Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole over the latter's alleged Chief Ministerial aspirations, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday said that while there was nothing wrong in someone expressing their desire to become CM, the magic figure of 145 MLAs was needed to become one.

Mr. Pawar said that as per the formula worked out by the heads of the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party and the Shiv Sena, Uddhav Thackeray would remain the State's Chief Minister, leading the tripartite 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' (MVA) government.

"Even if all three parties are together in this government, all three have the right to increase their strength. The 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' has been formed by the agreement of Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray and Sonia Gandhi and under the formula, Mr. Thackeray will head it... While there is nothing wrong with anyone expressing a desire to become Chief Minister, he must realise that the magical figure of 145 is required to become the CM," said Mr. Pawar.

Earlier this week, the Congress chief had reportedly remarked that if his party's high command gave him the responsibility of the Chief Ministerial post, he would take it up. A video clip of Mr. Patole shows him exhorting new party workers to begin working with the aim of getting the Congress on the top in the 2024 Assembly elections while positioning himself as a possible future CM.

Hitting out at the BJP over the Maratha reservation issue, Mr. Pawar said the Opposition had no work but to stoke fumes of resentment between communities.

Meanwhile, in a bid to send out a message of social harmony, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi chief Prakash Ambedkar is said to be joining BJP Rajya Sabha MP Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati's rally on Wednesday.

'Sexual dating': JNPT official cheated of ₹41.87 lakh

Police searching for gang including women

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

The cyber cells of the Navi Mumbai and Nhava Sheva police are looking for a gang including women for cheating an official of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust of ₹41.87 lakh in the name of 'sexual dating'.

The 52-year-old complainant had in February received a call from a woman named Preeti asking him that if he became a member of Mariana Web Solutions by paying ₹10,200, he would get enrolled in friendship and nature clubs, other than being eligible for 'sexual dating' with interested women

in his area. Days later, another woman named Kirti, who introduced herself as the profile manager of the firm, offered him a Mariana web dating card for dating women and getting paid for it by them.

The complainant paid ₹10,200 following which Preeti gave him the mobile number of a woman named Shreya Sharma. The complainant and Ms. Sharma indulged in vulgar chats on WhatsApp and exchanged obscene photos. Ms. Sharma made him believe that she was eager to meet him after which Kirti asked the complainant to pay ₹23,600 to date her. Ms. Sharma requested him to pay her fees as well on the promise of returning it, following which the complainant paid

After realising that he was being cheated, he gave an application to the Navi Mumbai cyber cell which forwarded it to us, and a case was registered last week

OFFICER
Nhava Sheva police station

₹47,200. On February 24, the duo was supposed to meet, but Ms. Sharma cancelled it citing that her mother had died. For the second date, the complainant paid ₹1.44 lakh, but the meeting was again cancelled after Ms. Sharma said she had fractured her hand. The complainant then

asked Kirti to cancel his membership and refund his money to which Kirti said he would have to pay ₹2.93 lakh towards cancellation charges. After that payment, the complainant was asked to pay another ₹7.47 lakh to block his profile. Later, Kirti started blackmailing the complainant that she would make his chats with Ms. Sharma viral and kept on extorting money till April.

"After realising that he was being cheated, he gave an application to the Navi Mumbai cyber cell which forwarded it to us, and a case was registered last week. The bank accounts where the money was transferred were in West Bengal. Investigations are on," an officer from Nhava Sheva police station said.

WEST

No need for prior sanction to prosecute Deshmukh: CBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The CBI told the Bombay High Court that it did not need prior sanction to prosecute former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh.

Mr. Deshmukh had moved the court to quash the FIR registered against him by the Central agency. He said the CBI needed sanction to prosecute him as he

was a public servant. He also contended that the case against him was dubious.

The CBI affidavit said, "The offence of an attempt to obtain undue advantage for improper and dishonest performance of their public duty is not covered under the purview of recommendation made or decision taken by such public servant in discharge of duties."

OPPORTUNITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

GENERAL

CHENNAI METRO RAIL LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Tamil Nadu)
Admin Building, CMRL Depot, Poonamallee High Road
Koymbedu, Chennai - 600 107. Phone: 044 2379 2000

EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION NO.: CMRL/HR/CON/05/2021

Chennai Metro Rail Limited is entrusted with the implementation of Metro Rail Project requires efficient, experienced and competent person for the under mentioned posts on contract basis for a period of 2 years:-

Post Code	Name of the Post	No. of Post	Consolidated Pay (Per Month)	Min. Exp. (Yrs)	Max. Age Limit (Yrs.)
1	Joint General Manager (BIM)	1	Rs.1,00,000/-	15	43
2	Deputy General Manager (Finance & Accounts)	2	Rs. 90,000/-	13	40
3	Deputy Manager (Planning)	2	Rs.70,000/-	4	35

Note:
Age, qualification & experience stipulated above should be as on 16.06.2021. Age will be relaxed for deserving and experienced candidate. Please refer to the detailed employment notification published in CMRL website vide URL: <https://chennaiMetroRail.org> for further details regarding qualification, experience and application format etc., for the respective post.
Last date for receipt of application is 15.07.2021.
DIPR/467/DIS/2021 Joint General Manager (HR).

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ANDHRA PRADESH
Near National Highway No. 16, Kadakatta, Tadepalligudem-534 101
West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India

NIT Andhra/NTS/2021/01

RECRUITMENT OF NON-TEACHING STAFF

National Institute of Technology Andhra Pradesh, Tadepalligudem is an Institution of National importance declared by an Act of Parliament, offers several undergraduate, postgraduate & doctoral programmes in Technology, Science, Humanities, Management and allied areas and also provides excellent ambience for academic research and co-curricular activities.

Applications in the prescribed format are invited from Indian Nationals for various Non-Teaching staff posts of the Institute. The prescribed online application form & other details are available in the Institute website www.nitandhra.ac.in. Last date for filling and submission of online application is 10-07-2021 up to 05:00 PM. Sd/- Director



The invisible tax

Emergent action is needed to rein in inflation as people face income losses, medical costs

The pandemic's second wave may have subsided but hopes of a smooth rebound in the economy in tandem with easing restrictions remain muddled, with the inflation numbers for May compounding the problem. The soaring pace of rising prices, both retail and wholesale, in the month that saw widespread lockdown-like restrictions, has come as a negative surprise. Inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index is reckoned to have hit a 25-year record of nearly 13%, while retail inflation touched a six-month high of 6.3%. While runaway fuel prices, that include high excise duties and taxes, were a key factor in driving up both the inflation indices, they were not the only ones at work. Retail inflation in food hit a six-month high of 5%, from barely 2% in April, with pulses and eggs as well as edible oils leading the surge. 'Fuel and light' inflation hit 11.6%, the highest in over nine years, and no respite is in sight on this front as pump prices for petrol raced past ₹100 a litre in even more parts of the country this month. Diesel has also crossed the century mark in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar, where freight costs add up on top of State and central taxes. Even if one were to discount food and fuel prices, core inflation has crossed the 6% mark for the first time in 31 months and is estimated at 6.6%.

Reacting to the April retail inflation print of 4.3%, after averaging a steep 6.2% through 2020-21, the RBI Governor had remarked earlier this month that it brought some relief and 'elbow room' for sticking with growth-supportive policy. If anything, May's inflation prints leave no such room for manoeuvre. Though the bank's Monetary Policy Committee may not switch away from its dovish policy, no further easing of interest rates can be expected at these price levels. Most economists expect inflation to remain higher than the average 5.1% estimated by the central bank for this year. If the Government wants the RBI to persist with its accommodative approach to facilitate growth, it must take some actions of its own to curb price rise, including meaningful cuts in fuel taxes that the RBI Governor has been advocating since February. So far, it has only obfuscated the issue with arguments ranging from 'the States should cut taxes first' to 'let's bring petroleum products under GST', and the latest claim by the Petroleum Minister who admitted that the prices are problematic, but the Government is 'saving money to spend on welfare schemes' and buying vaccines. For a population already reeling from job and income losses and higher medical costs since the pandemic's onset, the persistently high inflation is untenable. No welfare scheme can offset its disproportionately adverse impact on the poor.

Bracing for a threat

India must be alive to the dangers of emerging variants of the coronavirus

An emerging form of the Delta variant called AY.1 is raising global concern. Five of India's leading laboratories, since May, have submitted data to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) on its presence in India. Public Health England, a body in the United Kingdom, has said that of the 63 genomes in its repository as of June 7, six were from India. AY.1, or B.1.617.2.1, is a variant of Delta (B.1.617.2) and has all its characteristic mutations along with one called K417N. This particular one has previously been identified in the Beta variant (first detected in South Africa), which is an international variant of concern as it is highly infectious and known to reduce vaccine potency. The Delta variant is reportedly the most prevalent coronavirus variant in India and comprises close to a third of the genome samples, sourced from those with no international travel history, processed until late May. An additional concern with the K417N mutation is that some studies have found that it was associated with resistance to a newly developed monoclonal antibody treatment drug cocktail, Casirivimab and Imdevimab, for those assessed with a moderate to severe disease risk.

Scientists have said that AY.1 marks the continued evolution of the Delta variant. The Delta variant has become globally prominent in the same way as a mutation, D614G, increased the infectivity of coronavirus in March and April last year. Coronaviruses are marked by 'convergent evolution'; some defining mutations that emerge in different strains from around the world start to become more common in subsequent variants. These mutations are beneficial to the virus and, through a process of natural selection, help it infect human cells more efficiently as well as thwart defensive antibodies. Evolution is an incessant process, and it is impossible to forecast if SARS-CoV-2 will become a part of the human ecosystem – less contagious, and manifesting in sporadic outbreaks but ever present or buckling into oblivion under the force of counter-offensive measures such as vaccines, masks, lockdowns. As the virus and people continue to be engaged in a dialectical battle, humanity has a tool that has been absent in previous global pandemics – that of rapid genome sequencing. Several countries, including India, have the infrastructure and the resources to track threatening mutations. Unfortunately, the potency of a mutation to increase infectivity in a region can only be known retrospectively. However, this knowledge can help improve vaccines and enable researchers to perform quick tweaks, or in the parlance of software, develop upgraded patches that can blunt the threat from emergent variants. India has chosen to restrict genome sequencing studies to 10 government labs and not involve private labs, some of which have the capability and the expertise. Time and again, the country has suffered the consequences of a lack of preparedness. It is important not to downplay the seriousness of the threat.

America's mistakes in the 'forever war'

The U.S. misread the situation in Afghanistan, with the long war now leaving the Taliban at the height of their influence



STANLY JOHNY

President Joe Biden has set the September 11 deadline for all American troops to leave Afghanistan, winding up 20 years of the invasion by the United States. Military officials say the withdrawal would be complete about two months ahead of the schedule. The peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban that started in Doha last year have been frozen for months. The bid by the U.S. to hold a summit in Istanbul between the warring parties has been a non-starter. On the ground, the Taliban are making steady advances. Since May 1, the Taliban have seized eight districts in four different regions. At least six provincial capitals, including Kabul, Lashkar Gah (Helmand) and Kandahar, have the insurgents at their gates. As of now, about 22% of Afghanistan's 398 districts are in the Taliban's control and 24% with the government, while more than half of the country's territories are contested.

A neocon war

The longest war in America's history is also turning out to be one of its most disastrous. After 20 years of war, when the world's mightiest military is exiting Afghanistan, the Taliban, which it sought to perish, are at the height of their influence since they were driven out of power. Terrorist networks, which the U.S. vowed to destroy when it launched its global war on terror in Afghanistan, are now scattered across Asia and Africa, from eastern Afghanistan to the Sahel region. What went wrong for the U.S.?

The U.S. made three fundamental mistakes, which led to the superpower's humiliating exit from this clichéd 'graveyard of empires'.

First, the U.S. went into Afghanistan without learning anything from the country's history, or was blindsided by the unipolar hubris. Afghanistan was invaded by great powers in the 19th and 20th centuries as well. The British empire, which feared a Russian invasion to India via Afghanistan, sent troops to the country in 1839, ousted its ruler Dost Muhammad and established a client regime of its ally, Shah Shujah. But the British had to withdraw in the face of Afghan warriors, mostly Pashtun warriors; while retreating in 1842, all of the British and Indian troops, except one doctor, were massacred by Afghans. In 1979, the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan to salvage the country's nascent communist regime, orchestrated a coup and established a friendly regime. The Soviets, faced with a bloody Mujahideen resistance (which was bankrolled and trained by the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), had to pull back in 1989 in ignominy. The U.S. might have thought that history would have been kinder to them when they launched the Afghan invasion in October 2001. It wasn't.

Once they invaded Afghanistan, the U.S., given the mistakes the British and the Soviets committed, could have had a strategically focused campaign, targeting its enemy, al-Qaeda, which was behind the September 11 attacks. It should have gone after the terrorists, destroyed their networks and then withdrawn. That is what a realist power would do. But the U.S., driven by the neoconservative globalism of the Bush administration, had set more ambitious goals for itself. It wanted to topple the Taliban and rebuild a centralised "de-



FILE PHOTO/AFIP

mocratic" state in Afghanistan. How did building democratic institutions in Afghanistan from top-down serve America's foreign policy interests? The neoconservatives in Washington might have found it fascinating, but the move made little strategic sense. And now, the U.S. is retreating, practically leaving Afghanistan to the mercy of the Taliban, in return for assurances from them that they would not assist the terrorists such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Strategic failure

After the Taliban regime was toppled and al-Qaeda driven back into the caves and mountains, the U.S. still had a chance to stabilise the country with help from its different factions and leave. In December 2001, Taliban spokesperson Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef had offered to surrender. The Taliban sought modest terms – Mullah Omar, their leader, should be allowed to return home. But the Americans rejected the offer and promised to destroy the Taliban in every corner of the country. The Taliban are an indigenous militancy with deep roots in Afghanistan's Pashtun majority. Toppling them from power was easy, but defeating them in their country was not. And after vowing to defeat them, the U.S. launched the Iraq invasion to topple Saddam Hussein and export democracy there. This was the second mistake.

The U.S. took Pakistan's tactical

support for its war on terror for granted, overlooking the fact that Pakistan had deep strategic ties with the Taliban. Pakistan played a double game by supporting the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan while at the same time offering refuge and support to the Taliban. For Pakistan, the Taliban have been their wild card to check India's influence in Afghanistan. When the U.S. declared victory in Afghanistan prematurely and went on to invade Iraq in 2003, it became easier for Pakistan to assist the Taliban's regrouping, at a time when the Afghan government was grappling with corruption and infighting on ethnic lines. For the ordinary Afghans living outside the provincial capitals, life did not change much under the new government. When the U.S. got stuck in the morass of the Iraq war, the Taliban were steadily making a comeback in Afghanistan's hinterlands. By the time the U.S. shifted its focus back to Afghanistan, after defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and amid growing calls at home to end the "endless wars", the Afghan war had already been lost.

Surrender to the Taliban

Granted, there is a realist case for the U.S. to leave Afghanistan. It seems to have reached the conclusion long ago that the war was one that could not be turned around. The war was also becoming increasingly unpopular at home, prompting Presidents, from Barack Obama to Donald Trump and Joe Biden, to promise to wind it up. The U.S. has also been shifting its focus to East Asia where China is rising. And given the foreign policy challenges the U.S. is facing now elsewhere, continuing troops and commitments in Afghanistan makes little sense. But the U.S. could have opted for a more orderly withdrawal. Instead, it surren-

dered to the Taliban's terms to pull back its troops. This was the third mistake.

The Taliban have not defeated the Afghan troops yet. The Afghan government has about 200,000 battle-hardened soldiers, including the U.S.-trained elite special forces. The government still controls most of the country's population centres. The Taliban's efforts to take over provincial capitals were successfully thwarted in the recent past, with air power help from the U.S. With the U.S. being present in Afghanistan, the conflict has been in a stalemate – the government not being able to defeat the insurgents and the Taliban unable to overrun the cities. The U.S. should have used this stalemate, coupled with mounting pressure on Pakistan, to extract concessions from the Taliban. Instead, the Trump administration went for talks with the Taliban on their terms. The Afghan government was kept out of the whole process because the Taliban do not recognise them as being legitimate. And the U.S. struck a direct deal with the Taliban, without addressing any of the Afghan concerns.

The American exit would now decisively shift the balance of power in favour of the Taliban. The insurgents have always known this. They have stepped up attacks and carried out targeted killings aimed at weakening the Afghan government and terrorising society immediately after signing the agreement with the U.S. in February 2020. And ever since the remaining U.S. troops started pulling back from Afghanistan on May 1, the Taliban have started capturing more territories. The war may be winding down for the Americans. But for Afghans, it will continue in one form or another.

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An acquittal with no good, but the bad and the ugly

The criminal justice system must observe the basics of a proper investigation, judicial fairness, and the survivor's rights



R.K. VIJ

The recent judgment of a trial court acquitting Tarun Tejpal, a former editor of a newsmagazine, who was charged, in 2013, of having sexually assaulted an employee, a young woman journalist, during an event the newsmagazine had organised in Goa, has created a furore and raised many questions about the law. The investigating officer has also been pulled up not only for the lapses in investigation but also for gaps in her knowledge of technology. The Goa government filed an appeal against Mr. Tejpal's acquittal in the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court requesting an immediate hearing. The Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta, during the hearing, said that the lower court's judgment lacked sensitivity regarding crimes against women and awareness of the sections of criminal laws. "The law has evolved. The entire judgement proceeds as if the victim is on trial," he added.

Key changes

Back in 2002, based on the recommendations of the 172nd report of

the Law Commission of India, two major changes were made in the Evidence Act (<https://bit.ly/3xpoEIk>). First, the Act was amended to prohibit the defence counsel from asking questions to the prosecutrix in a rape case about her general character to impeach her credibility. Second, the defence was not permitted to put questions to a witness in the cross-examination about the general immoral character of the prosecutrix and adduce evidence. Even if it is hypothetically assumed that the survivor had had sexual relations with someone, it does not give any person the licence to sexually assault her. The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly said that the purpose of cross-examining a survivor of rape is not to humiliate her but to get to the truth of the case. Therefore, questions about the past sexual life of the survivor should not have been permitted to be asked by the defence counsel as they violated the survivor's right to a fair trial. The law does not permit the character assassination of a victim any more.

Stereotypical evaluation

Second, the conduct of a survivor of sexual assault cannot be cast in a straitjacket formula. Every individual behaves differently under the given circumstances. When in this case, the survivor had been entrusted with an important task/s by her boss during the event and



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was afraid of losing her job by exposing her boss's crime, her dual behaviour (i.e., in the public gaze and with acquaintances) cannot be termed unnatural. It would be too stereotypical and patriarchal to expect a survivor to be seen traumatised all the time in front of everyone. The Supreme Court in *Aparna Bhat and Ors. vs the State of Madhya Pradesh & Ors.* (2021) specifically said that courts should desist from expressing any stereotype opinion, in words spoken during proceedings, or in the course of a judicial order about women. Stereotyping excludes any individualised consideration of a person's actual circumstances and their abilities. It affects women's right to a fair trial. Therefore, the judiciary must be careful not to create inflexible standards based on preconceived notions.

Details and omissions

Third, every omission does not amount to a contradiction; omission which by necessary implica-

tion leads to conflicting versions between the statements made before the police and the court would amount to contradiction. It is trite law that the previous statements of the prosecutrix and witnesses can be used to shake their credibility. However, it is quite natural for a survivor to share the incident in different words and details to different individuals. She is not expected to share the same graphic details of the sexual assault on her to every individual she meets or wishes to reveal the details to. Therefore, if the statement given during the trial is substantially consistent with the statement given to the police and judicial magistrate during the investigation, the difference of details given to other individuals through email or otherwise in the form of written statements, cannot be rejected by terming them as untrustworthy. The High Court, therefore, must clarify on this vital question of the law keeping in view the nature of the offence.

Protection of identity

The Indian Penal Code was amended in 1983 and disclosure of identity of the survivor of rape by anyone was made punishable under a newly added Section 228-A. The publication of name or any matter which may make known the identity of the survivor since then is thus prohibited.

The Supreme Court in *State of*

Punjab vs Ramdev Singh (2003) held that the name of the victim should not be mentioned in the judgments, be it of that Court, High Court or lower court, and she should be described as 'victim' in the judgment. It therefore implies that anything such as the survivor's husband's name, her email address, etc which could reveal her identity, should not have been mentioned in the judgment. It is against the spirit of the law.

Sensitisation is a must

It is true that the investigation must be unbiased, honest, just and in accordance with the law. The entire emphasis on a fair investigation has to be to bring out the truth of the case before the court. However, some lapses in investigation and ignorance about technical terms such as 'hash-value' with regard to electronic evidence, should not lead to a total rejection of the prosecution case. Many amendments have been made in the criminal laws since 1983 with regard to crimes against women. The police must pull up their socks to improve investigation skills, and the application of the law should not elude justice due to a lack of proper sensitisation among other stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

R.K. Vij is a senior IPS officer in Chhattisgarh. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Education in Kerala

The article, "Higher education in Kerala needs a new chapter" (Editorial page, June 14), has overlooked the fact that "the linear expansion of arts and science colleges and even professional colleges" in Kerala was part of the strategy to enhance Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the State. It is well known that Kerala could not transmit the success in its school education to its higher education sector. There are social, economic, political and historical reasons for the inter- and intra-regional inequalities in access to higher education in Kerala. According to baseline data of the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) State Higher Education Plan (I), the GER in Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode,

Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod was much lower than the State average of 21.9%, thus justifying the establishment of more higher education institutions in these districts. Setting up of more government colleges and government-regulated aided or self-financing colleges will increase the access to higher education with a very low, or reasonable and affordable fee structure. Twenty arts and science colleges from the State including four government colleges have found a place in the list of top 100 colleges in 2020 in the NIRF ranking for India by the HRD Ministry. Similarly, four aided colleges have been recently reaccredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council with a superlative grade of

A++.

It is worth mentioning that all these are government-aided colleges. Concerted efforts are needed for more expenditure on higher education, both public and private. To increase the expenditure on higher education as a proportion of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) from the present 1% to the targeted 2%, Kerala needs a revamped model of public private partnership (PPP) in higher education.

M. USMAN,
Pazhamballur, Malappuram, Kerala

In Kerala, the poor state of affairs prevalent in its universities needs highlighting. It is everyone's knowledge that the top university administration including the appointment to teaching posts is in accordance with the interests

of powerful communities and partisan politics. The introduction of a choice-based credit and semester system has not resulted in quality enhancement. The extreme parochialism in the affiliated colleges in terms of student diversity and the recruitment of teachers has diminished the dynamics of the teaching-learning processes. To overcome this issue, all-India exchange programmes and exposure to outside institutions are needed. The details of the knowledge society have not been worked out so are we talking about a knowledge-based economy as in the developed world?

CHANDRAN KOMATH,
Kottayam, Kerala

Bank turnaround

A close look at the numbers announced by the IOB ('Business' page, "IOB net

surges twofold to ₹350 cr. as income rises", June 15) reveals that the public sector bank has done excellently well in all key parameters. The Government has time and again pumped in additional capital into most public banks and has also floated a new bad bank. After using tax-payer money to cleanse the balance sheets of public sector banks, how justified is the Government in planning to hand them over to private players?

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

AIADMK developments

Ever since the passing of AIADMK leader Jayalalithaa, there has been much speculation about the future of the AIADMK, but Monday's developments (Page 1, "OPS is dy. leader of AIADMK legislature party", June 15) should prove that

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the party's second rung leaders can pull through on contentious issues. If the party manages to stonewall any attempt by its former interim general secretary V.K. Sasikala to "capture the party" and also stay united, it has a chance of knocking on the door of power again.

TASMAC sales

The report, "On day one, ₹164 cr. worth liquor sold" (Tamil Nadu, June 15), was stunning. The volume of sales points to a rush and crowding. The public must realise that the goal now is to flatten the pandemic curve and not wantonly try and break the rules under the pretext of freedom.

A.J. RANGARAJAN,
Chennai

Needed: full disclosure on electoral bonds

The Supreme Court's suggestion to 'match the following' on political donations is impractical and incorrect



RAKESH DUBBUDU
& INAYAT SABHIKHI

In 2014, the Delhi High Court held that both the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were guilty of illegally accepting donations from two companies registered in India but whose controlling shareholder was Vedanta, a foreign company. The court held that this was in contravention of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976, as the donations accrued from "foreign sources" within the meaning of law.

Following this indictment, the two parties came together in the last memorable bipartisan move. In 2016 and 2018, the government amended the FCRA through the annual Finance Bills, to retrospectively legalise the violations. The amendments and subsequent changes brought in by the current government enabled new and regressive pathways that afford full anonymity to corporate and foreign political donors.

A new form of anonymity

While recently hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), the Supreme Court downplayed the concerns of the corrupting influence of anonymous corporate and foreign money. It offered us voters the suggestion of "match the following".

Earlier, only profit-making domestic companies could contribute to political parties; now loss-making companies can too. Earlier, foreign companies or companies where the controlling stake was held by a foreign company couldn't contribute; now they can. India's political parties could theoretically be fully funded by a foreign company operating in India or by a foreign entity through a shell company.

In 2017, the then Finance Minister said anonymous cash donations to political parties would be reduced from ₹20,000 to ₹2,000 to ensure greater transparency in political funding. However, the concurrent introduction of electoral bonds brought a new form of anonymity to



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thousands of crores of donations. It drastically reduced public and legislative oversight. Only the ruling party via the State Bank of India (SBI) has a full account of all donations being made via electoral bonds, to itself and to Opposition parties. Parliament, the Election Commission and the Opposition parties do not have this information, nor do the public.

The ADR PIL challenges electoral bonds as unconstitutional. In March 2021, the Supreme Court refused to stay the sale of electoral bonds before the West Bengal elections. Instead, the judgment listed several documents which supposedly establish a paper trail on donations – "all that is required is a little more effort to cull out such information from both sides (purchaser of bond and political party) and do some 'match the following'."

This is impractical and plainly incorrect. The Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005 enables easier access to information held by public authorities. No ordinary person has the resources to navigate documents on obfuscating government websites or pore over income tax returns. The few civic and non-profit organisations that attempt to simplify information to enable accountability have been systematically delegitimised.

Suggesting a "match the following" is incorrect for three reasons. If we set aside individual donors and focus just on registered entities, we will find that the full scale of registered entities is unknown. Even if registered companies filed annual financial statements, many do not disclose political donations. Crucially, political parties do not need to disclose their electoral bond donors either.

According to back-of-the-envelope calculations, there are close to 25 lakh potential donors comprising just companies and firms. This includes about 12.6 lakh active private limited companies as of January 31, 2021. Unlike what is stated in the judgment, the annual reports of all these companies are not readily accessible on the website of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. More than 12 lakh firms filed income tax returns for the assessment year 2018-19. Firms, unlike companies, have no regulatory mandate to submit their annual reports except for filing their annual tax returns, since their functioning is regulated by Acts other than the Companies Act of 2013.

Even if these documents are indeed filed and available in the public domain, they will not specify donations to parties. Conveniently, the Finance Bill of 2017 amended Section 182 of the Companies Act of 2013 to remove the requirement for declaring disaggregated donations to political parties. At best, company statements might have a total aggregate amount of all donations, including philanthropic ones. If we are lucky, these might be sub-categorised as "political contributions through electoral bonds." Nowhere are donations to specific political parties required to be mentioned.

Even if one combs through these documents to find an actual political donation, there is nothing to match it with. Political parties do not need to disclose their electoral bond donors. Strictly speaking, political parties are not even supposed to know their electoral bond donors. The only requirement is the annual audit reports with a total of all donations received via electoral bonds. These

reports are submitted with great delays. For instance, the audit reports for 2019-20 of major national parties were made available on the Election Commission's website only a few days ago. The BJP's report is not yet available as the Election Commission extended the deadline for the submission of Annual Audit Reports for 2019-20 to June 30, 2021. Even if these reports are submitted on time, there is no way to match a donation of a company to that received by a political party as only aggregate amounts are available.

Hence, the "match the following" suggestion of the Supreme Court falls flat on its face. It is impossible for an average voter to pore over documents of lakhs of entities and track potential company and firm donors. Further, recipient-wise information is unavailable. Unlike the tall claims of electoral bonds enabling transparency, it is only RTI applications with the SBI that offer a glimpse into the crores of money funding political parties, and therefore influencing public policies. If they chose to, the Supreme Court or the legislature could order full and real-time disclosure, to the actual benefit of transparency and accountability. Instead, meagre civil society resources are expended in filing PILs and RTI applications, at significant personal risk.

Winners and losers

In effect, electoral bonds give political power to companies, wealthy individual donors, and foreign entities, thus diluting the universal franchise of one voter-one vote. Every vote is not equally valuable if companies can influence policies through hidden donations. The winner of this arrangement is the ruling party, whether at the Centre or in a State, and the loser is the average voter. Companies and political parties could exercise moral leadership and voluntarily disclose the identity of recipients and donors, as the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha recently did. Till then, voters are stuck with a ruling party with war chests of resources, being subject to relentless election campaigns, while donors surreptitiously and directly influence policy.

Rakesh Dubbudu is the founder of @FactlyIndia, Inayat Sabhikhi is associated with the National Campaign for People's Right to Information

A paradigm shift in vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccination drive demonstrates that India has become Atmanirbhar in vaccination against infectious diseases



VIJAY CHAUTHAIWALE

In his address to the nation about the new vaccination policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "If you look at the history of vaccinations in India... you will see that India would have to wait decades for procuring vaccines from abroad. When vaccination programmes ended in other countries, it wouldn't have even begun in our country." His remark reflected the harsh reality of the past. Further, indigenous manufacturing of vaccines not only started late but also fell short of the demand for long. This forced the government to continue relying on imports.

Delay in vaccination

Infectious diseases have been an enormous challenge for independent India. Innumerable lives were lost due to delayed response or government apathy. The best example for this is the case of polio. The Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) and Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) were licensed abroad in 1955 and 1961, respectively. But it took two decades since international availability for India to initiate mass vaccination. The OPV was introduced through the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) in urban and rural populations in 1978 and 1981, respectively. Prior to the launch of mass vaccination, India was witnessing more than 10,000 officially recorded cases of polio annually, a severe underestimate due to poor official records. India could have saved lakhs of people from the disease if governments had been vigilant and started vaccination earlier.

Moreover, India had to rely on imports for both OPV and IPV. The OPV was produced by the Pasteur Institute of India, Tamil Nadu, but the Health Ministry closed down this unit in 1974. The IPV could not be manufactured as it was licensed only in 2006.

Similarly, India started mass vaccination for Hepatitis B two decades after commercial availability of the vaccine in the U.S. in 1982. The Hepatitis B vaccination was introduced in India's Universal Immunisation Programme in 2002. And even then, it was only introduced in merely 14 cities.

Earlier, the shortage of indigenously manufactured vaccines led to international dependence and delayed smallpox eradication in India. In 1962, almost a decade after North America and Europe had eradicated smallpox, India launched the National Smallpox

Eradication Programme. Most countries had shifted to the highly potent freeze-dried vaccine for better results. While India had adequate stock of domestically produced low-potency liquid vaccine, there was no production of the freeze-dried vaccine. The country depended almost entirely on the Soviet Union and the World Health Organization (WHO) for supply of the freeze-dried vaccine. Domestic production started in the early 1960s with assistance from the WHO and UNICEF. However, it took the country more than a decade to gradually expand domestic production. This might have been too late. States like Bihar and West Bengal witnessed a smallpox outbreak in 1974 which led to the death of close to 31,000 people. This could have been avoided if the Indira Gandhi government did not neglect smallpox eradication and augmented indigenous manufacturing of the freeze-dried vaccine. India also had to rely on the WHO for bifurcated needles required for the smallpox vaccine as these were not manufactured domestically. In sharp contrast now, Indian companies not only fulfill the domestic demand but are also supplying syringes for COVID-19 vaccination to countries.

A remarkable achievement

As Mr. Modi noted, the COVID-19 vaccination drive demonstrates that India has become Atmanirbhar in vaccination against infectious diseases. One must appreciate the scale of mass vaccination happening in the country; in a single day, up to 4.3 million beneficiaries received the COVID-19 vaccines. It is a remarkable achievement that India is conducting the world's largest vaccination drive ever and has already administered more than 25 crore doses. Moreover, rather than starting from selected areas, citizens across the country are simultaneously getting vaccinated. Indians did not have to wait longer than the developed world to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Covishield and Covaxin, manufactured in India, have been available to the people since January 16, 2021. India is one of the few countries across the globe with an indigenously developed vaccine. It is expected that a few more COVID-19 vaccines manufactured in India will be available in the second half of 2021.

The government's decision to make the vaccine available free of cost for the public shows a strong commitment to public health. There is little doubt that the COVID-19 vaccination drive marks a paradigmatic shift for the country.

Dr. Vijay Chauthaiwale is a Molecular Biologist and In-Charge of the Foreign Affairs Department of the BJP. Views are personal

Embracing cryptocurrency

The fact that cryptocurrency has no legal classification should not be the impetus to prohibit its use in India

NAKUL DEWAN & ROHAN ANDREW NAIK

On June 9, El Salvador became the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender. This is illustrative of the rising global trend of embracing cryptocurrencies with all its attendant risks. While not every country's approach has been as open as El Salvador's, the dominant theme has been to permit the growth of the cryptocurrency market subject to certain safeguards. As India finds itself at a crossroads of prohibition and regulation in its trust with cryptocurrencies, globally, the inclination towards permissive regulation recognises the freedom of choice given to people for using a medium of exchange other than a central bank-backed fiat currency.

Swinging between extremes

The cryptocurrency market in India has developed in a largely laissez-faire regulatory space since the first recorded cryptocurrency transaction in 2010. Between 2013 and 2018, the government's response to the rise of virtual currencies was cautionary, alerting users to the potential risks posed by cryptocurrency transactions. These fears were legitimate and stemmed from cryptocurrencies' volatility, their susceptibility to hacking, and the fact that they could potentially facilitate criminal activities such as money laundering, terrorist financing and tax evasion. Instead of developing a regulatory framework to address these issues, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in April 2018, effectively imposed a ban on cryptocurrency trading. This ban was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2020. The court reasoned that there were alternative regulatory measures short of an outright ban through which the RBI could have achieved its objective of curbing the risks associated with cryptocurrency trading. While the court had an opportunity to put a label on the legal nature of cryptocurrencies, it stopped short of doing so.

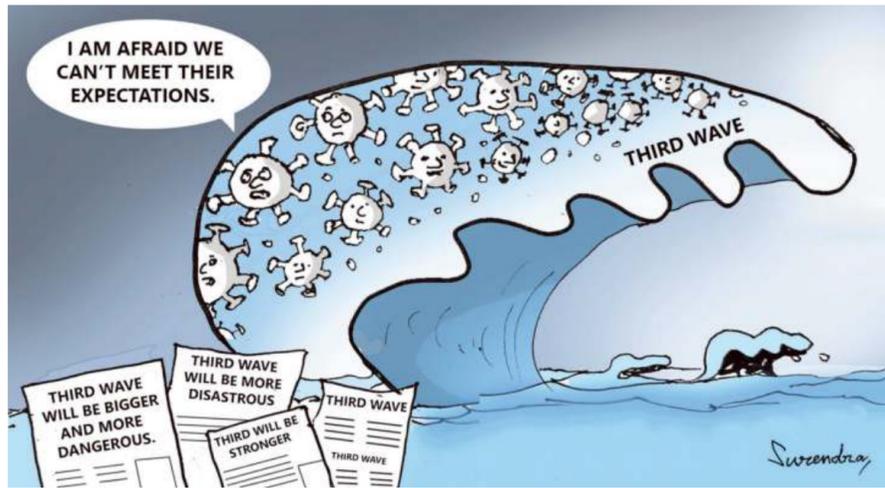
After swinging between the extremes of non-interference and prohibition, a clue as to India's next move lies in the draft Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021. The draft Bill propos-

es to criminalise all private cryptocurrencies while also laying down the regulatory framework for an RBI-backed digital currency. The Minister of State for Finance, in response to a question in Parliament, stated that regulatory bodies do not have a legal framework to directly regulate private cryptocurrencies owing to their imprecise legal nature in India. As the draft Bill is yet to be tabled in Parliament, there is some hope that his concerns will be addressed in the form of a tailored regulatory approach rather than another ban.

Lessons from other countries

There are lessons in this regard from the U.K., Singapore and the U.S. The U.K. has classified cryptocurrency as property and this has paved the way for cryptocurrencies to be encompassed within a regulated legal framework in the country's economy. The U.K. has sought to regulate the functioning of crypto-businesses while still imposing some restrictions to protect the interests of investors. On the other hand, while there is no exact legal classification of cryptocurrency in Singapore, the amenability of cryptocurrency transactions to the contract law framework of the country has been firmly established and there is now a legal framework for cryptocurrency trading. In the U.S., the open approach taken by the authorities has resulted in the trade in cryptocurrency being both taxed and appropriately regulated. While the approaches are specific to the countries' economic realities and cannot be blindly implemented in India, the global regulatory attitude towards cryptocurrencies offers valuable insights into the alternative ways to achieve balanced regulation. In India, the absence of an existing legal classification of cryptocurrency should not be the impetus to prohibit its use. The government should use this as an opportunity to allow private individuals the freedom to harness a powerful new technology with appropriate regulatory standards.

Nakul Dewan is Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India and was the lead counsel who argued against the RBI's cryptocurrency ban; Rohan Andrew Naik is Advocate, Supreme Court of India, who assisted in the case

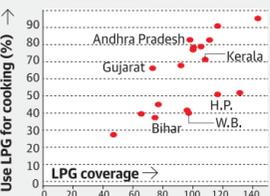


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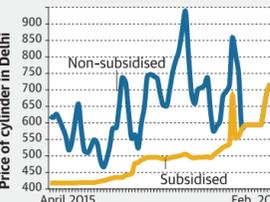
Not cooking with gas

Though most Indian households have an LPG connection, many don't use it for cooking, the NFHS-5 data show. For instance, in West Bengal, though 97% of the households had an LPG connection, only 40% used it for cooking. Such disparities existed in all the States surveyed. The difference between availability of LPG and usage was much higher in the rural parts. Low usage can be attributed to the cost of the subsidised cylinder, which has increased over the past two years. By Jasmin Nihalani, Sumant Sen and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

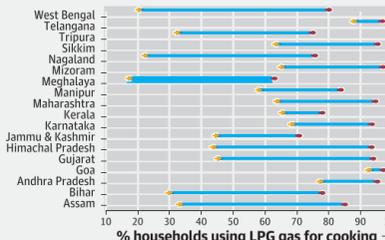
LOW USAGE | In Himachal Pradesh, LPG coverage stood at 116.6% as of Jan. 2020, while only 51% of households used it for cooking, according to the health survey conducted between July and November 2019



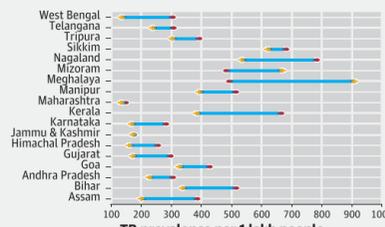
POOR SUBSIDY | The price of subsidised cylinders has been steadily increasing over the last two years, thereby reducing the subsidy amount, despite a drastic fall in international LPG cost after FY14



WIDE DISPARITY | The use of LPG for cooking was significantly lower in rural areas. In Gujarat, LPG usage was as high as 94% among the urban households while it was only 45.2% in rural households



AT HIGHER RISK | According to NFHS-5, there was a higher prevalence of tuberculosis in households that were using solid fuels compared to those that were using clean cooking fuels in most States



SOURCE: PPAC, NFHS

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 16, 1971

Bangla Desh solution receding: PM

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, told the Rajya Sabha to-day [New Delhi, June 15] that with each passing day the possibility of a political settlement in Bangla Desh was becoming more remote. She dismissed fears that India would acquiesce in a political settlement at the cost of democracy and the rights of the people fighting there and said that any settlement "must be arrived at with those people who are to-day being suppressed." The Prime Minister who was replying to a four-hour debate on the situation caused by the influx of six million refugees, assured the House that this nation would make all the sacrifices and even "go through hell" to look after the refugees. Stressing the responsibility of the international community in a situation which not only resulted in a colossal refugee influx, but also involved the question of democracy and human rights, Mrs. Gandhi said India's Ministers and other emissaries who had gone abroad had some successes in bringing home the reality of the situation to those countries. "We are not going to allow the international community to get away with it. They have to realise it is their responsibility," she said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 16, 1921

Ceylon and the Civil Service.

We understand that under the new rules made by the Ceylon Government to regulate the admission of Ceylonese to the Civil Service, the door has been shut against Indians. The Service in Ceylon will be recruited in future on a percentage basis, two-thirds being Britishers and one-third Ceylonese. The Ceylon Daily News comments thus on the change: "When the Government minute giving effect to this arrangement was published, we early warned the Government that this is bound to provoke India to retaliate. India, as soon as it becomes aware of the ban placed on her own, will effectively bar her doors against the admission of Ceylonese into the Indian Civil Service. Thus, under the plea of enlarging opportunities for Ceylonese in Ceylon, the Government is going about the best way of depriving the Ceylonese of the splendid and more profitable opportunities they have enjoyed in India... It would be well for the Government to remember while there is still time that not in the Civil Service alone are Indians employed. Quite a good few of them are employed in other places."

FROM PAGE ONE

Delhi riots: 3 student activists granted bail

Ruling that no offence under the anti-terror law is made out against any of the three student activists, the High Court said, "the phrase 'terrorist act' cannot be permitted to be applied in a cavalier manner to criminal acts or omissions that fall squarely within the definition of conventional offences as defined inter alia under the IPC (Indian Penal Code)".

The Delhi police had maintained that the accused engaged in "sloganeering and instigating the public against the government" and tried to create a "communally surcharged environment" with the intent to disrupt the unity and strike terror.

Responding to this, the High Court observed, "We find ourselves unpersuaded and unconvinced with this submission since we find it is not founded on any specific factual allegation and we are of the view that the mere use of alarming and hyperbolic verbiage in the subject charge-sheet will not convince us otherwise".

'Stronger foundations'
"The foundations of our nation stand on surer footing than is to be likely to be shaken by a protest, however vicious, organised by a tribe of college students or other persons, operating as a coordination committee from the confines of a University situated in the heart of Delhi," the High Court observed.

Noting that protests against governmental and parliamentary actions are legitimate, the High Court said though such protests are expected to be peaceful and non-violent, it is not uncommon for protesters to push the limits permissible in law.

AY.1 not a variant of concern yet: Centre

On vaccination, Dr Paul said reserves of the Novavax vaccine had come into India on Monday, and are likely to be produced domestically in "very large" quantities.

"What we know is that it is extremely safe and has a very high efficacy. There is a bridging trial of this vaccine underway in India. The positive results of this augur very well for our country. We should be proud that another vaccine appears to be the horizon in our country," he added.

The United States company, that has partnered with the Pune-based Serum Institute of India, tested its two dose 'NVX-CoV2373' vac-

cine on a population of around 30,000 adults in the U.S. and Mexico. Novavax said it plans to apply for authorisations in the third quarter (July-September) and is on track to manufacture 100 million doses per month by the end of September and 150 million doses per month by the end of 2021 and most of these doses are expected to go to low and middle income countries.

Earlier in June, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had given permission to SII to go ahead with Phase 2/3 trials, of the vaccine that will be branded as "Covavax" in India.

Twitter yet to appoint compliance officer

"Twitter continues to make every effort to comply with the new Guidelines. We are keeping the MeitY [Ministry of Electronics and IT] apprised of the progress at every step of the process," says an emailed response from the company.

In its latest communication to the MeitY on June 13, Twitter has only said that it has posted job descriptions to hire Chief Compliance Officer (CCO), Nodal Contact Person (NCP) and Resident Grievance Officer (RGO), and that it will endeavour to fill these roles as quickly as possible, the source said, adding that this is contrary to Twitter's own promise and assurance. "They have not appointed a CCO even on an interim basis."

"Twitter has further conveyed a purported advice of a purported consultant that establishing an India office of Twitter Inc. is necessary for hiring Chief Compliance Officer on a permanent basis. No one prevented Twitter from appointing a CCO as an

interim arrangement," the source added.

The source further added that in its email sent on June 2, Twitter told the government that they have appointed a lawyer working in a law firm - Dharmendra Chatur - as an interim Nodal Contact Person and Resident Grievance Officer. Mr Chatur was not an employee of Twitter as required by the Guidelines.

The Rule 7, the source said, clearly states that where an intermediary fails to observe these rules, the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 79 of the Act shall not be applicable and the intermediary shall be liable for punishment under any law for the time being in force including the provisions of the Act and the Indian Penal Code.

"Since, the Rules came into effect on May 26, and Twitter has not complied, the Rule 7 and the course suggested therein appears to have come into effect," the source said.

SC adjourns W.B. riots hearing

Centre makes the plea on petitions seeking a CBI or SIT investigation

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to a request by the Union government to adjourn the hearing on the petitions seeking a CBI or a SIT (special investigation team) investigation into incidents of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

Appearing before a Vacation Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta asked the court to schedule the hearing on June 18.

The court was primarily hearing a joint petition filed by the family members of BJP activists Abhijit Sarkar and Haran Adhikari, who were killed allegedly in the violence following the Assembly polls in May.

'Total inaction'
The families have alleged "total inaction" and even "subversion" of the investi-



Spot visit: A Union Home Ministry team conducting an investigation into the post-poll violence in Birbhum. •PTI

gation by the State administration and police. The State government has replied that first information reports had been registered and several arrests made in connection with the murders.

In an affidavit filed on Monday on allegations of State complicity in the post poll violence, the Mamata Banerjee government maintained that these were "concocted stories" spread on so-

cial media by miscreants.

It said, "It is untenable to categorise each and every act of violence following the declaration of elections results as 'post-poll violence' while adopting a premise that such violence is ongoing in West Bengal to which the State machinery is turning a blind eye". False allegations of State complicity was drawn on the basis of hearsay reports disseminated on social media by miscreants.

IUML gets two weeks to reply to affidavit

Party has said the May 28 order is a deliberate ploy to implement CAAs 'designs'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday gave the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) two weeks to respond to an affidavit by the Union Home Ministry that its May 28 order, delegating power to the Collectors of 13 districts in five States to grant citizenship to non-Muslims from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, has "no relation whatsoever" with the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) of 2019.

Appearing before a Vacation Bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and V. Ramasubramanian, senior advocate



Kapil Sibal and advocate Haris Beeran, for the IUML, sought time to file its rejoinder to the government's reply to their petition challenging the legality of the May order.

Petitions, including that filed by the PFI (Popular

Front of India) and a private individual, have drawn parallels between the CAA and the May 28 notification, which facilitates non-Muslims from the three countries residing in 13 districts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Punjab to apply for citizenship.

The IUML said the May 28 order was a deliberate ploy to implement the CAAs "malafide designs".

'Delegation of power'

In its response, the Union Home Ministry said that the May order "merely delegates the power of [granting citizenship by registration and naturalisation] to the local

authorities in particular cases".

"The Central Government used its authority under Section 16 of the Citizenship Act... It is merely a process of decentralisation of decision-making aimed at speedy disposal of the citizenship applications of such foreigners... It has no relation whatsoever to the CAA," the MHA affidavit said.

The government reasoned that the notification did not "provide for any relaxations to the foreigners and applied only to foreigners who had entered the country legally". The applicants should possess valid documents such as passports and Indian visa.

Sonia says no clarity yet on Galwan clashes

'Jawans' sacrifice must not go in vain'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

On the first anniversary of the Galwan valley clashes between troops of India and China, Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday said the disengagement process with Beijing "appears" to have worked to India's disadvantage. She asked the Union government to take the nation into confidence over the progress made in restoring the status quo ante.

In a statement, she noted that there was still no clarity on what caused the unprecedented clashes on the borders.

She urged the government to ensure its performance matched the commitment of the soldiers protecting the borders.

"Having patiently waited for the government to come clean and inform the nation about the circumstances in which the unprecedented incident happened and



Sonia Gandhi

reassure the people that the sacrifice of our brave jawans was not in vain, the Congress Party reiterates its concern that no clarity is yet available and the Prime Minister's last word on the subject a year ago was that no transgression had occurred," she observed.

"We have repeatedly sought details of the episode in light of the Prime Minister's statement, as well as details of what progress has been made towards restoring the status quo ante prior to April 2020," she stated.

Myanmar province CM in Mizoram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Chief Minister of a province of Myanmar is the newest high-profile lawmaker to have taken refuge in Mizoram following a military coup in the country in February.

Officials in Mizoram said Salai Lian Luai, Chief Minister of Chin State, crossed over to Champhai town on Monday night. Champhai is the headquarters of Champhai district bordering Myanmar.

Mr. Luai is a leader of the National League of Democracy (NLD), the party headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been detained by the military rulers. He became the Chief Minister of the Chin State in 2016 when the NLD came to power.

He is one of 24 lawmakers of the country to have taken shelter in Mizoram. Among the more than 9,000 refugees are Army and police personnel.

FCI rice to be used for ethanol production

78,000 tonnes of stock to be diverted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central government has allocated 78,000 tonnes of rice procured for food security purposes to be diverted to ethanol production instead this year, at a subsidised rate of ₹20 a kg, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Tuesday. However, he insisted that the share of rice in ethanol production was "minuscule and transitory", emphasising that maize would form the primary feedstock for grain-based ethanol production instead.

This is part of the government's plan to double distilling capacities by 2025, partly by encouraging an increase in the share of grain-based ethanol production from the current focus on molasses-based production.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a road map advancing the target date for

Research must follow protocol, says Ministry

'New mechanisms will be in place'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

All research work has to follow a process and action will be taken if protocols are not followed, said the Health Ministry on Tuesday to a question on a probe into a filovirus study of bats in Nagaland undertaken by the Bengaluru-based National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR).

The Ministry's response follows the report "Government report flags 'lapses' in Nagaland bat study" published in *The Hindu* on June 15.

The Hindu first reported the study in February 2020 on the inquiry being initiated into whether adequate permissions had been sought for the study that according to a Central government report now specified "concerning lapses" in the conduct and protocols followed.

Health Ministry Joint Secretary Lav Aggarwal on Tuesday said: "There are protocols for all research work undertaken and wherever there are lapses action

will be taken to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to rectify the situation."

The Ministry is also concerned about the storage of the Nagaland bat samples. The Ministry wants the samples to be at the Biosafety Level-4 (BSL-4) standard facility at the National Institute of Virology laboratory in Pune rather than NCBS's Bengaluru facilities that are rated BSL-3. It said samples must be handled in a laboratory equipped for "biosafety and biosecurity conditions" as they can pose a "significant public health hazard".

This when the Department of Atomic Energy noted that the samples were "non-infectious" and had been checked for the presence of filoviruses (Ebola and Marburg). Asked about the zoonotic pathogens and need to protect against any spill-over - the Nagaland bat study on filoviruses (Ebola and Marburg) is in no way related to the coronavirus (SARS) studies at Wuhan - Mr. Aggarwal said laboratories had to be supported to ensure that pandemics are prevented.

Comments sought on draft rules on compensation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Labour and Employment Ministry on Tuesday said it had notified the draft rules relating to employees' compensation under the Code on Social Security, 2020 and invited objections and suggestions.

It said the draft rules were notified on June 3 and comments would be accept-

ed for 45 days from the date of notification. "The Code on Social Security, 2020 amends and consolidates the laws relating to social security to extend social security to employees and workers in the organised and the unorganised sectors. The draft rules include provisions for application for claim or settlement and interest for delay.

IN BRIEF



HC to hear Kangana's plea on passport renewal

MUMBAI
The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said it would hear on June 25 a plea filed by actor Kangana Ranaut alleging that her passport is not being renewed because of an FIR against her. A bench of Justices P.B. Varale and S.P. Tavade was hearing an application filed by Ms. Ranaut contending that the Passport Authority had refused to renew her passport citing the FIR against her and her sister Rangoli by the Bandra police.

EPFO extends Aadhaar seeding deadline

NEW DELHI
The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Tuesday extended the deadline for mandatory seeding of Aadhaar numbers for filing of electronic challan-cum return by employers to September 1. In a circular, the EPFO modified its June 1 circular that said employers would only be able to file the ECR for those employees whose Aadhaar numbers are seeded and verified with effect from that date. However, on Tuesday, the EPFO modified the earlier circular to change the deadline to September 1.

West Bengal Governor flags Mamata's 'inaction'

KOLKATA
Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday wrote a letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee questioning her "continued silence and inaction" over post-poll violence and urged her to discuss it in the Assembly. The Home Department responded saying the contents of the letter are "not consistent with real facts". "The letter has been written to Hon'ble Chief Minister & released to public media through tweets simultaneously, which disrupts sanctity of such communications," the Home Department said in a tweet.

The Hindu scores in responsible suicide reporting

Survey evaluates nine newspapers across India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Hindu has topped in an assessment of multiple English newspapers for responsible reporting of suicide-related news.

The study - The Application of a Scorecard Tool for Assessing and Engaging Media on Responsible Reporting of Suicide-Related News in India - was conducted by the Department of Psychiatry, Voluntary Health Services and SNEHA Suicide Prevention Centre, Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society and Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, Nos-

Sensitive reporting

The Hindu topped the list of newspapers in a scorecard that rates media reports on suicides

Newspaper	Positive score	Negative score
The Hindu	2.71 (0.92)*	2.35 (1.15)
The Indian Express	1.32 (0.68)	3.32 (1.33)
Mirror	1.32 (0.73)	4.13 (1.35)
Hindustan Times	1.31 (0.69)	3.28 (1.22)
The Economic Times	1.13 (0.83)	3.25 (1.83)
The Times of India	1.12 (0.66)	3.37 (1.27)
The New Indian Express	1.07 (0.91)	3.42 (1.18)
The Telegraph	1.03 (0.55)	3.37 (1.31)
The Tribune	1 (0.62)	4.04 (0.98)
Total	1.32 (0.87)	3.31 (1.31)

*Values are presented as Mean (SD)

sal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne.

The authors developed a scorecard to assess and rate

media reports on suicides. The scorecard consisted of 10 positive and 10 negative parameters. They applied the scorecard to 1,318 re-

ports on suicide from nine English newspapers with the highest readership in the country, between April 1 and June 20, 2020.

The average positive score across all newspapers was 1.32 and average negative score was 3.31.

The Hindu scored 2.71 in positive parameters and 2.35 in negative parameters. In comparison with other newspapers, it had the highest score in positive parameters and lowest in negative parameters.

The positive parameters in the scorecard included presence of help-seeking information such as national or state-level support services, 24/7 crisis helplines, report establishes a link to poor mental health, link to drug/alcohol abuse, com-

ments from mental health and suicide prevention experts and links to hopeful stories.

Use of criminalising language, attention-grabbing headlines, mentioning and describing method of suicide/attempted suicide in the article, has accompanying photographs and is on the front page of the newspaper were among the negative parameters.

However, the findings also revealed that most newspapers performed poorly on both scorecards. There was a higher prevalence of negative reporting practices in the articles compared to positive practices.

The study was published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

Paras group had the blessings of BJP and JD(U)

The saffron party worked meticulously behind the scenes, but maintained that the events were 'internal matter' of LJP

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The breaking away of the majority of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) parliamentary unit from Lok Sabha MP Chirag Paswan to form an independent group in the Lower House, had the full backing of the BJP as well as the Janata Dal (U), and will have far-reaching consequences for the NDA equations in Bihar.

According to those aware of the run-up to the dramatic developments on Monday, the seeds of this split were sown on the day the results of the Bihar elections were being announced last November. The BJP had almost immediately reached out to the LJP's lone MLA, Raj Kumar Singh to secure his support in a delicately balanced House and got his backing for the Speaker's election.

"We were still talking to

him when the Janata Dal (U) got him to join their party. We were of the opinion that if he had stayed as an Independent he could have been made Minister," said a senior Bihar BJP office-bearer.

Personal equations

After that, both NDA partners were in constant touch with the five MPs of the LJP, in effect isolating Mr. Chirag Paswan.

"Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai has excellent equations with Chandan Singh (MP from Nawada) who is also Suraj Bhan Singh's (a trusted lieutenant of late Ram Vilas Paswan) brother. Also, another MP, Veena Devi is actually from the BJP but fought from an LJP ticket as the seat she wanted to contest from (Vaishali), went to the LJP kitty in the alliance division,"



A house divided: Posters of rebel LJP leaders painted black by Chirag Paswan supporters in Patna on Tuesday. ■ PTI

said the source.

A week before the events of Monday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda met with the party's Bihar unit president Sanjay Jaiswal, Mr. Rai, and BJP general secretary in charge of Bihar, Bhupendra Yadav in New Delhi.

The BJP remained in the background of events, however, and continues to be tight-lipped. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Bhupendra Yadav's only comment was that

the events "were an internal matter of the LJP".

Within hours of the split in the LJP, Mr. Paswan's uncle Pashupati Nath Paras was recognised as the parliamentary party leader of the LJP in the Lok Sabha. Significantly, there was no talk of merging the party into JD(U), with Mr. Paras insisting on maintaining a separate entity.

Significance of split

The fact that the breakaway LJP has been recognised as a separate party with five MPs, means that the split between the two NDA allies - the BJP and the JD(U) - remains at 17 and 16 seats respectively in the Lok Sabha, with Mr. Paras in a strong position to claim the single Ministerial berth in the Union Council of Ministers promised to the LJP, whenever the next reshuffle happens.

"If the LJP had merged with the JD(U) parliamentary party, they would have had 21 seats, four more than the BJP; their claim on multiple Ministerial berths would have been stronger, and the struggle with which we (BJP) have shrugged off the junior partner status to JD(U) in Bihar would have been for nought in future negotiations," said a source.

This intricate cut and thrust of alliance politics in a State which is considered to have the most political of electorates is far from over. Mr. Paras will have to do his best to emulate his canny elder brother, the late Ram Vilas Paswan, to stay afloat, while Mr. Chirag Paswan will have to go back to the starting point, albeit much diminished. The BJP and JD(U)'s complicated pas de deux in Bihar will continue.

Coup in LJP is part of JD(U)'s long-term plan

Nitish bid to bolster party in Bihar

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The coup in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), culminating in the isolation of Chirag Paswan, son of its founder, Ram Vilas Paswan, is just one of the series of attempts made recently by the Janata Dal (U) and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to bolster his party after its below par performance in the 2020 Assembly election.

Within seven months of returning as Chief Minister for a record fourth time, Mr. Kumar has been trying to put the house in order. The JD(U) won 43 seats (15.39% of the vote share) in the election, relegated to the third position behind the RJD (75 seats and 23.11% vote share) and the BJP that got 74 seats and 19.4% of votes.

"We did not lose this election, we were tactically defeated by those with us and those against us. The LJP's campaign, which could not have happened without a tacit understanding of the BJP, defeated 46 of our candidates," a JD(U) leader said.

While sitting in the driving seat, the BJP expected him to play the second fiddle, a position he has never been comfortable with.

Nitish's moves

His first step was to put his own house in order. So in December, he appointed R.C.P. Singh in his place as the party's national president. Mr. Singh belongs to the Kurmi caste. To balance the caste arithmetic, two weeks later, Umesh Kushwaha, a low-key leader, replaced Bhashist Narain Singh as the State president. Mr. Kushwaha belongs to the Koeri caste.

Then Mr. Kumar got down to bringing others in to the fold. On January 22,

the lone BSP MLA, Mohamad Jama Khan, joined the JD(U). In March, the JD(U) engineered the return of Upendra Kushwaha, a former protégé of Mr. Kumar. He had walked out in 2013 to form the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party. In the 2020 elections, where the party fought in alliance with the BSP and the AIMIM, Mr. Kushwaha hurt the JD(U) in 25 seats.

In April, the lone LJP MLA, Rajkumar Singh, joined the JD(U), taking the BJP by surprise. Mr. Singh

NEWS ANALYSIS

had walked out of the BJP to join the LJP ahead of the 2020 polls and the BJP was expecting his return.

"The script that Pashupati Nath Paras read out on Monday was definitely not his own. This is the signature style of Mr. Nitish Kumar, who had, post 2010, tried to break the RJD too. Engineering the LJP coup, Mr. Kumar also wants to send a message to the BJP," RJD MP Manoj K Jha told *The Hindu*.

Speculation is on that the LJP split is not the last political event on the cards. The JD(U), sources claim, is talking to the 19 Congress legislators and five AIMIM MLAs too. It wants to be on an equal keel as the BJP, free from its pressure and influences.

Party general secretary K.C. Tyagi denied any direct role of the JD(U) in the LJP coup. He said his party was doing essential housekeeping. "Our aim and goal is to return to the position we were in 2009 when we won 118 seats, to revive the same acceptability that Mr. Nitish Kumar enjoyed then," he added.

After LJP split, eyes on Congress legislators

10 MLAs are in touch, say JD(U) leaders

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

After the split in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), now speculation is rife in Bihar for a possible break among 19 State Congress legislators. Congress leaders, though, have strongly denied it and said "such rumours are being spread by leaders of a party to create confusion".

If some ruling Janata Dal-United (JD-U) party leaders are to be believed, as many as 10 out of 19 Congress MLAs in the State are in constant touch with them and ready to break away from their party "at any time". "We now need the support of only three Congress

MLAs to make a split in the party by two-thirds to avoid action under the anti-defection laws," said a senior JD (U) leader, adding, "but, very soon these three too would come".

Party sources also told *The Hindu* that these 10 Congress MLAs include three legislators from the minority community, and two who have won elections in the 2020 Assembly elections from the Bhagalpur area.

With its dismal performance in the 2020 Assembly elections - winning only 19 out of 70 seats - the Congress in Bihar has been agog with internal bickering.

Ownership war begins in LJP

Chirag Paswan says he made every attempt to keep the party together

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after the internal coup in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), an intense ownership battle emerged between the two factions, one headed by Chirag Paswan and the other by his uncle Pashupati Nath Paras, who led the rebellion.

A notice released by the Paswan faction claimed that at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, a national executive meeting was called by the party, in which all the five MPs, Mr. Paras and Mr. Paswan's cousin Prince Raj were removed from the primary membership of the party. The notice is signed by the secretary general of the LJP, Abdul Khaliq.



Chirag Paswan

While the other faction claimed that they, too, had called a national executive meeting and decided to appoint Suraj Bhan, elder brother of party MP Chandan Singh and a close associate of the late Ramvilas

Paswan as working president.

Both factions have also simultaneously shot off letters to the Election Commission of India.

"According to the party's constitution, only the president and the secretary general have the right to call for the party's national executive to meet. And the national executive not only has MPs and MLAs but also the secretary general, treasurer, 16 general secretaries, 16 national secretaries, and nearly 15 presidents of frontal organisations and presidents of State units," Mr. Khaliq told *The Hindu*.

The Paswan faction has also written to Lok Sabha

Speaker Om Birla to recant the appointment of Mr. Paras as the Parliamentary party leader of the LJP, claiming that only the chairperson of party's Parliamentary board had the right to nominate the leader according to its constitution.

Mr. Paras's faction, meanwhile, is confident that it will be able to win the legal battle. "Our letter to the Election Commission on the appointment of Mr. Suraj Bhan as working president precedes their notice on removing all of us," Khagaria MP Mehboob Ali Kaiser said.

The question of ownership of the party, though, will be settled only by the Election Commission.

House Standing Committee on IT summons Twitter representatives

It will hear views on steps taken to prevent misuse of social media

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Standing Committee on Information and Technology, headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, has summoned Twitter representatives to appear before the panel on June 18 to hear their views on the steps they had taken to prevent the misuse of social media and online news.

Parliamentary standing committees are resuming work after a long gap on Wednesday. Most of them have not met since April due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fireworks are expected in Thursday's meeting of the IT panel, with the Opposition and the BJP warring over Twitter tagging a few posts of BJP leaders as "manipulated media".

In May, Mr. Tharoor wrote to the Ministry of Electronics and In-



Shashi Tharoor

formation Technology (MeitY) on Twitter's "manipulated media" tag drawing the ire of panel member and BJP leader Nishikant Dubey, who wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker, demanding the ouster of Mr. Tharoor claiming that he is using the standing committee as an "extension of the Congress".

Mr. Tharoor had to issue a long

clarification, where he said that the committee decided to communicate with the MeitY through e-mail, because the standing committees have not been meeting and that the MeitY's response would be circulated to the members.

The agenda for Thursday's meeting is, "To hear the views of representatives of Twitter followed by evidence of representatives Electronics Technology 'Safer-guarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space."

Other than the differences between the Congress and the BJP on the "manipulated media" tag, the MeitY's ultimatum to Twitter to comply with the amended IT rules is also expected to come up for discussion.

With Pilot losing support, no early Cabinet expansion in Rajasthan

Several MLAs have expressed faith in CM Ashok Gehlot's leadership

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

With former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot losing his grip on the MLAs who sided with him during the last year's political crisis, the Cabinet expansion and political appointments in Rajasthan are likely to get delayed.

Several of the MLAs considered loyal to Mr. Pilot have expressed faith in CM Ashok Gehlot's leadership.

Sardarshahar MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma, oldest legislator in the Assembly at 76, said here on Tuesday though he considered Mr. Pilot his leader, Mr. Gehlot was above him in his capacity as the CM.

"Even Mr. Pilot will have to respect him as his leader," Mr. Sharma, who had stayed with the former Deputy CM during his rebellion, told reporters here.

Mr. Sharma said he had camped along with Mr. Pilot outside Rajasthan during the rebellion because the public works in his constituency were not being done by the State government. "I have no complaints against the government now... The issue of resentment in Congress is being exaggerated."

Future moves

The septuagenarian Congress leader is the third Pilot loyalist, after Viratnagar MLA Indraj Gujjar and Todabhim MLA P.R. Meena, to praise Mr. Gehlot for the works done in their constituencies in the recent days. Deeg-Kumher MLA Vishvendra Singh, who was sacked as the Tourism Minister during the turmoil, also met Mr. Gehlot recently, triggering speculation about his future moves.

Mr. Gehlot has given enough indications that the Cabinet reshuffle and expansion would not be carried out under pressure from the Pilot camp.

The Chief Minister's Office said in a statement released on Monday that Mr. Gehlot would not meet anyone in person for the next one to two months as a precaution in view of his condition following his recovery from the COVID-19 infection.

The sources in the Congress said this situation would automatically result in the Cabinet expansion being deferred by a couple of months.

"This is an astute move by Mr. Gehlot. He has tactfully conveyed to both Mr. Pilot and the AICC committee that he is not going to bow under their pressure," Sikar-based political analyst Ashfaq Kayamkhani remarked.

राजस्थान कौशल एवं आजीविका विकास निगम
Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation
(A Government of Rajasthan Enterprise)
ई.एम.आई. परिसर, जे-8-ए, झलाना संस्थापक क्षेत्र, जयपुर-302004 (राजस्थान)
EMI Campus, J-8-A, Jhalana Institutional Area, Jaipur-302004 (Rajasthan)
F (No. RSLDC/PMKVY 3.0/2021-22/33847 Dated: 15.06.2021

Corrigendum
Subject :- Extension of last date of EoI under PMKVY-CSSM 3.0, (2021-26).
Reference :- RSLDC/PMKVY3.0/2020-21/33147 Dated 13.05.2021
In reference to above subject, it is informed that the last date for submission of online proposals for EOI under PMKVY-CSSM 3.0 (2021-26) is extended till 22nd June-21. The online portal will be accepting proposals till 5.00 pm on 22nd June 21. Further, timeliness for submission of hardcopy is also being extended till 30 June-21.
Raj.Samwad/CI/21/2243 Managing Director

Karnataka Veterinary, Animal & Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar
E-PROCUREMENT MODE
15 Days Short Term Tender Notification
No. R/TPC/KVAFSU/eProc.59/2021-22/678 Dt.: 11.06.2021
KVAFSU Bidar invites bids through e-procurement in 2 covers system for Supply of **Biologicals, Specialized work, Bottles, Vials and GEMM for IAH&VB, Bengaluru** of KVAFSU, Bidar from Tenderers registered in e-procurement cell of Government of Karnataka, Total cost of the tendered amount is **Rs. 198.00 Lakhs**. The detailed notification of tender can be obtained by logging on to website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> on or after 15.06.2021. The last date for uploading tender documents is 30.06.2021 up to 5:00 PM. Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.
Sd/-
Dr. M.K. Tandle, Coordinator, TPC,
KVAFSU, Bidar-585226. Ph.: 9448569337
COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Lakes Division-2,
Room No. 309, 3rd Floor, New Building, BBMP,
N.R. Square, Bengaluru-560002
No.: EE-2(Lakes)/TN-06/2021-22 Date: 15.06.2021
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only) Two Cover System
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the work mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations. (Standard Tender Document - KW4)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Approx. Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	"Development of Arekere Lake-1st Ward No. 193" - Call-5	260.95
2	"Development of Hulimavu Lake-1st Ward No. 193" - Call-5	435.00

EMD Declaration form as specified in the Tender Document as per G.O. No. FD 675 Expenditure -12/2020 Dated: 22.12.2020
Calendar of Events: (1) Tender document can be downloaded from GOK e-Procurement website (<https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>). (2) Pre bid meeting of Tender: 21.06.2021, 3:00 p.m. in the Office of the Chief Engineer, Lakes Division, Room No. 202, 2nd Floor, New Building, BBMP, N.R. Square, Bengaluru-02. (3) Last Date & Time for receipt of Tenders: 28.06.2021 upto 4:00 p.m. (4) Opening of Technical bid Tender Document: 30.06.2021 at 11:00 a.m. Further details may be obtained from the above office, during office hours or website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Lakes Division-2, BBMP
COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH
HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ROADS TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (HPSRTP)
Request for Bids (RFB)
(Bidding Process with e-Procurement)
The Chief Engineer-cum-Project Director, State Roads Project, HPRIDCL Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar Shimla-171002, Himachal Pradesh India invites the online Bids for the Construction of Tunnel as mentioned below:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Document
1.	Construction of 2 Lane Road Tunnel parallel to the existing Dhalli Tunnel including all relevant E&M Works, Reconstruction of existing Approach Road and Maintenance at Shimla, Himachal Pradesh under Shimla Smart City Mission on Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) Mode	Rs. 10,000/-

The detailed Request for Bids (RFB) Notice, Bidding Document along with other necessary information will be available on <http://hptenders.gov.in> from 15th June, 2021 at 3:00 PM.
Note:- Any further addendum/Corrigendum to this Request for Bids (RFB) Notice shall be available to all the interested bidder on <http://hptenders.gov.in>
Chief Engineer-cum-Project Director,
State Roads Project, HPRIDCL,
Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar,
Shimla-171002
HP/0153/2021-2022 Facsimile: +91-177-2620863; Tel: +91-177-2627602.

कार्यालय आयुक्त चिकित्सा शिक्षा
बर्धो मॉडल, सतपुड़ा भवन, भोपाल (म.प्र.)
दूरभाष क्र. 0755-2551719, फैक्स: 0755-2578844
ई-मेल: dme12001@yahoo.com, वेबसाइट: www.medicaleducation.mp.gov.in
क्रमांक: 912/नर्सिंग/संचिधि/2021 विज्ञापित भोपाल, दिनांक: 11/06/2021
वीएससी नर्सिंग पाठ्यक्रम में प्रवेश हेतु काउंसलिंग संबंधी सूचना
व्यापक द्वारा पी.एन.एस.टी. 2020 के घोषित परिणाम के आधार पर चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय, इंदौर, भोपाल, न्यालियर, रीवा, जबलपुर, सागर से संबंधित नर्सिंग महाविद्यालयों में सत्र 2020-21 के लिए शासन द्वारा स्वीकृत 810 वीएससी नर्सिंग पाठ्यक्रम में प्रवेश हेतु ऑनलाइन काउंसलिंग दिनांक 18/06/2021 से प्रारंभ होगी, यह काउंसलिंग एम.पी. ऑनलाइन के पोर्टल www.mponline.gov.in के माध्यम से संचालित होगी, काउंसलिंग से संबंधित विस्तृत जानकारी एवं समय सारणी (Time Schedule) संचालनालय की वेबसाइट www.medicaleducation.mp.gov.in एवं एम.पी. ऑनलाइन के पोर्टल www.dme.mponline.gov.in पर उपलब्ध होगी।
G-13342/2021 संचालक चिकित्सा शिक्षा, मध्यप्रदेश

Project Management Unit
Uttarakhand Public Financial Management Strengthening Project
91, Race Course, Near Police Line, Dehradun-248001
Mob: 0135-4079338, +91-9358119541, E-mail- ukpfmswb@gmail.com

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
(Consulting Services-Firm Selection and Open Competitive selection of individual consultant)
The Government of Uttarakhand is being financed from the World Bank toward the cost of Public Financial Management Strengthening Project in Uttarakhand and intends to apply part of the proceeds for following consultancy services:-

S. No.	Consultancy Services	Method of Procurement	Last date of Submission
1.	Consultancy Services for Preparation of Outcome budgets for 20 major Departments of the Government of Uttarakhand (GoUK) (IN-CTRFA-239390-CS-QCBS)	Consulting Services-Firm Selection (QCBS)	1 st July 2021 by 17:00 Hrs IST
2.	Consultancy Services for Rationalization and Prioritization of schemes of the State Government of Uttarakhand (GoUK) (IN-CTRFA-239391-CS-QCBS)	Consulting Services-Firm Selection (QCBS)	1 st July 2021 by 17:00 Hrs IST
3.	Consultants for Project Management Unit (PMU) Urban Development Directorate of the Government of Uttarakhand (GoUK) (IN-CTRFA-239386-CS-INDV)	Open Competitive selection of individual consultant	2 nd July 2021 by 17:00 Hrs IST

The Project Director, UKPFMS, Government of Uttarakhand now invites eligible consulting firms (Consultant) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform these services. The Term of Reference (TOR) for these assignments can be found at Audit Department Website <http://www.uttarakhandaudituk.gov.in>. The Consultant will be selected as per relevant World Bank Regulations. The consultancy firm will be selected in accordance with QCBS method (for Sr No.1 & 2) set out in Consultant guidelines and Individual Consultant through Open Competitive selection of Individual Consultant (for Sr No.3). Further information can be obtained during office hours from 10:00-17:00 hrs IST. EoI's must be delivered in a document form (hard copy or electronic pdf) at the address or e-mail id given above (in person, by post or by e-mail) by 17:00 hours as per the last date mentioned for submission. All documents must be signed, stamped and certified by the authorised person of the firm. In case of Sr. no.3 All documents must be duly signed and certified by the individual person applying for the EOI.
PROJECT DIRECTOR

States hit by unequal supply of vaccines

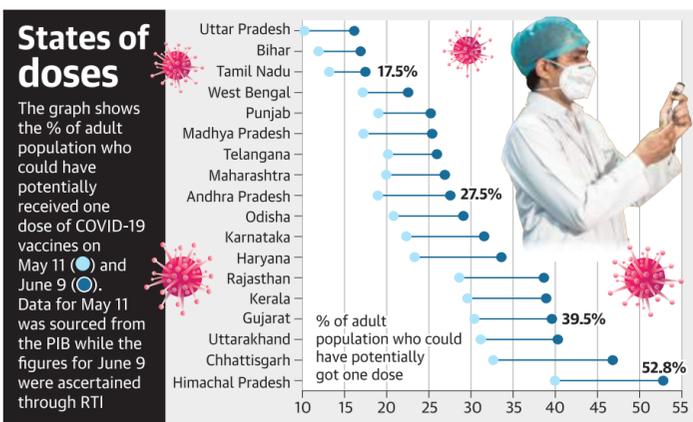
T.N., U.P. and Bihar get fewer doses from Centre despite high utilisation, show data from RTI query

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The States such as Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar continue to experience a crunch in their COVID-19 vaccine supply, while those such as Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat are enjoying a relatively better stock position, data from an RTI query reply reveal.

Till June 9, nearly 25 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been supplied to the States and the Union Territories by the Centre and through the direct State procurement channel, the RTI reply reveals. This was about seven crore doses more than what was supplied about a month back on May 11.

A State-wise analysis of the doses received on both these dates relative to the adult population shows that supply to some States continues



to increase at a higher rate than others. For instance, with the number of doses supplied till May 11, Tamil Nadu could have potentially given one dose of the vaccine

to 13.2% of its adult population. A month later, as on June 9, the share of such adults has barely improved to 17.5%. In West Bengal, the share has slightly improved

from 17.2% to 22.5% in the considered period. On the other hand, in Himachal Pradesh, the share of adults who could have potentially got a dose in the consi-

dered period has improved from 39.9% to 52.8%. In Gujarat, the share has gone up from 29.6% to 39.6%.

The population figures are based on government estimates for the year 2021.

The unequal distribution of doses continues to grow despite a high utilisation rate in most of the States. For instance, Tamil Nadu acquired 1,01,07,190 doses from the Centre and through its own channel till June 9. Of these 97,65,284 doses – 96.5% – have been utilised by the State till 8 p.m. on June 9. The figures do not include procurement and administration by private hospitals.

States such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar too have utilised more than 90% of the doses supplied, according to vaccine administration data published by the Union Health Ministry on June 10.

Govt. confirms first death from reaction to vaccine

Expert panel looked at 31 cases of adverse events after jabs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A government panel studying COVID-19 vaccine side effects on Tuesday confirmed the first death due to anaphylaxis following vaccination.

According to a report submitted by the national Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) Committee, a 68-year-old man died from anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) after being vaccinated with Covishield on March 8. The death is reported as “vaccine product related reaction” in the report.

The causality assessment of 31 reported adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) cases was carried out by the panel.

N.K. Arora, Adviser, National AEFI Committee, told *The Hindu*: “It is the first death linked to COVID-19 vaccination due to anaphylaxis. But compared to the overall numbers, only a small number had a severe reaction. Those getting their vaccination need to wait for 30 minutes at the inoculation centre after vaccination as most of the anaphylactic reactions occur during this period and prompt treatment prevents deaths.”

Minuscule risk

Reacting to the report V.K. Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, said: “This incident should not create fear in the minds of people and there should be no apprehension about the safety of the vaccines approved for Indian population. Whenever decisions about public health are taken, we discuss the benefits and risks involved and in this case the risk involved is



Experts say that the benefits from vaccination far outweigh the risks.

minuscule as opposed to the gains.”

The report meanwhile noted that of the 31 assessed cases, 18 were classified as having inconsistent causal association to vaccination (coincidental – not linked to vaccination), seven were classified as indeterminate, three cases were found to be vaccine product related, one was anxiety-related reaction and two cases were found to be unclassifiable. It added that mere reporting of deaths and hospitalisations as serious adverse events does not automatically imply that the events were caused due to vaccines.

The report said the results of the causality assessment of 31 cases approved by the national AEFI Committee on February 5 (five cases), March 9 (eight cases) and March 31 (18 cases) have been released after thorough review and deliberations.

“Only properly conducted investigations and causality assessments can help in understanding if any causal relationship exists between the event and the vaccine,” the report said, adding that for causality assessments, priority has been given to death cases.

The Health Ministry on Tuesday said the number of deaths reported following COVID-19 vaccination in the country is only 0.0002% of 23.5 crore doses administered which is within the expected death rates in a population. It is also important and pertinent to note that the mortality rates for those testing positive for COVID-19 disease is more than 1% and COVID-19 vaccination can prevent these deaths. Therefore, the risk of dying following vaccination is negligible as compared to the known risk of dying due to COVID-19 disease, it said.

The Health Ministry added that AEFI is defined as ‘any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunisation and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine.’

“It can be any unfavourable or unintended sign, abnormal laboratory finding, symptom or disease. Healthcare workers, doctors and vaccine recipients have been always encouraged to report all deaths, hospitalisations and events resulting in disability as well as any minor and adverse events following immunisation at any point of time after vaccination,” said the release.

Charu Goyal Sachdeva, HOD, Internal Medicine, HCMCT Manipal Hospitals, added that there should be no fear or apprehension about COVID vaccines. “Taking vaccines is advisable even for people who have had the COVID-19 infection. Vaccination should be done after the government prescribed window period following COVID,” she said.

IICT inks pact with pharma firm for 2-DG

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology Hyderabad (IICT) and Anthem Biosciences Pvt. Ltd., a Bengaluru-based integrated biopharmaceutical company, signed an agreement for technology transfer and manufacture of the anti-COVID drug 2-DG or 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose on Tuesday.

Studies have shown that the oral drug 2-DG has demonstrated quick recovery and reduction in oxygen dependence among moderately and severely affected patients. This drug in the form of powder formulation was earlier launched by Dr. Reddy's Laboratories.

Under the agreement, Anthem Biosciences Pvt. Ltd. gets non-exclusive license for the process know-how for synthesis of 2-DG. “The agreement is in-line with CSIR's efforts to help people access various therapeutic options to combat COVID-19. CSIR labs have undertaken clinical trials of various repurposed drugs for the treatment of COVID-19,” said IICT Director S. Chandrasekhar.

Anthem Biosciences Pvt. Ltd. is in the process of filing the application for getting the approval from Drugs Controller General of India, New Delhi, and will manufacture and commercialise 2-DG from their facilities located at Bommasandra and Harohalli in Karnataka.

The firm has also developed domestic vendors for key raw materials for uninterrupted supplies to manufacture 2-DG.

Jabs help against hospitalisation'

2 doses of AstraZeneca or Pfizer vaccines effective against delta variant: study

R. PRASAD
CHENNAI

A real-world study undertaken by Public Health England in 14,019 people infected with the delta variant (B.1.617.2) in England found that vaccination with two doses of AstraZeneca and Pfizer offered high protection against hospitalisation. Of the 14,019 people infected with the delta variant, only 166 required hospitalisation. The study was undertaken between April 12 and June 4.

In the case of the AstraZeneca, effectiveness against hospitalisation after full vaccination was 92%, while it was 96% in the case of Pfizer. The results have been posted



The AstraZeneca vaccine is known as Covishield in India.

as a preprint. Preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed.

Public Health England had earlier found that despite modest reductions, vaccines remain effective against the delta variant. It found that full vaccination offered good protection against symptomatic disease.

Vaccine effectiveness

against symptomatic disease was 67% in the case of AstraZeneca and 88% with Pfizer.

Single dose

Effectiveness against hospitalisation was high even with one dose of AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccine. In the case of delta variant, one dose of AstraZeneca vaccine offered 71% protection, while two doses offered 92% protection. In the case of Pfizer vaccine, the protection was 94% after one dose and 96% after two doses.

“This is reassuring data for India. In order to choose our way forward, I think we should use modelling approaches that lay out dif-

ferent implementation strategies and compare their impact at different stages of the pandemic,” says Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at CMC Vellore.

Another study posted as a preprint on May 24 found that protection against all symptomatic infections after a single dose of AstraZeneca was only 33.5% against the delta variant and 51.1% against the beta (B.1.1.7) variant. After the second dose, the protection against all symptomatic infections increased to 59.8% in the case of the delta variant and 87.9% against the beta variant.

Odisha records sharp decline in daily COVID-19 cases

State govt. is contemplating easing lockdown restrictions

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha on Tuesday reported 3,405 COVID-19 positive cases, registering a sharp drop in daily cases. Compared to 4,339 cases reported on Monday, the State found 3,405 persons testing positive afresh – a decline of 21.52% on a single day.

With 3,405 samples of the 56,807 tests that were conducted during the past 24 hours turning out to be positive, the test positivity rate is estimated at 5.99%.

The Health and Family Welfare Department said 8,735 persons had tested positive while the TPR was 14.2% on June 1. A remarka-

ble improvement has been noticed in the past fortnight.

As per State government's audited death report, 42 persons were reported to have succumbed to COVID-19 taking the toll to 3,388 on Tuesday.

Active cases

Only five of the 30 districts have active cases higher than 2,500 while 12 other districts have active cases between 1,000 and 2,500. Active cases have fallen below 1,000 in 13 districts.

Western Odisha districts such as Nuapada, Balangir, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh where cases were

rising rapidly initially in the second wave are returning to normality.

The situation continued to be grim in the coastal region where Balasore, Bhandrak, Jajpur, Cuttack and Khordha have been reporting a high number of daily cases.

Khordha on Monday reported 500 cases followed Jajpur with 391.

In view of the steady improvement, the government is contemplating to ease lockdown restrictions. As the lockdown ends on Wednesday, there would be gradual relaxation which would differ from district to district, according to sources

Maharashtra adds big backlog of deaths

12,909 fatalities updated in June's fatality figures

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

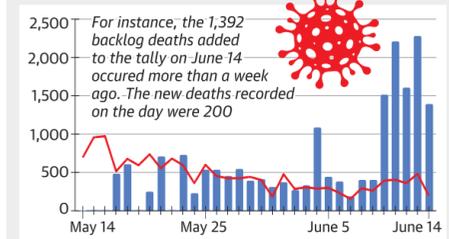
India recorded 62,265 new COVID-19 cases and 2,520 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,96,32,350 cases and 3,76,849 deaths.

Kerala reported 12,246 new infections, followed by Tamil Nadu (11,805) and Maharashtra (9,350). Maharashtra recorded 1,458 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (267) and Kerala (166). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Aru-

Adding to the count

The chart shows the number of new fatalities (red bars) and the number of backlog COVID-19 deaths (blue bars) added to the tally in Maharashtra between May 14 and June 14. Backlog deaths are those that occurred more than a week ago but were not counted in earlier bulletins



nachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins.

Between June 1 and June 14, Maharashtra has added 12,909 backlog deaths to its

total death toll. Backlog deaths are those that occurred more than a week before the day they were recorded but were not counted in the earlier bulletins.

The State had recorded a total of 1,12,696 fatalities due to the virus until June 14. Around 17.51 lakh samples were tested in the country on Monday (the results for which were made available on Tuesday).

Vaccine doses

As many as 39.27 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Tuesday. The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 31.11 lakh on June 14, which is more than the 27.8 lakh recorded a week before (June 7). About 22.4% of adults in India, 42.8% of those aged above 45, and 46.4% of people aged above 60, have been administered with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8 p.m. on Tuesday. Only 3.5% of India's total population is fully vaccinated.

THE CROSSWORD + 13275
(set by Vulcan)
Never go off the grid. We are digital now. Come solve online. @ <https://qr.go.page.link/jjpTn>

16 Day passed, I basically did nothing (5)
17 Man owning power plant (5)
19 Abrupt measure to stop commencement of operations in open space (9)
22 To retreat with difficulty (8)
24 One who sells revolutionary communist paintings (6)
26 Adventurer/mountaineer runs off road (7)
27 Evil guy popular round America (7)
28 With governor replaced, bringing downfall (12)

ACROSS
1 A certain old head of state making announcements (12)
10 Got even with one very English editor (7)
11 Well-organised attendant (7)
12 Highlight anxiety (6)
13 Old boy, one who works in restaurant as supervisor (8)
15 Warned UP political leader – got exposed (9)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13274
NEARMISS AMOUNT
OSTENTAGUE
RESTRAIN ENGAGE
MISPERHDIN
AISLE PERCAPITA
LSELETTLE
MINUTE ENTITLED
SNIP ENER
INSPIRE IGNOR
NERMA
INTERLOCK SCION
SOPSPENN
TARMAC CODENAME
EUNMATEX
RESIDE RETRIEVE

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku
7 8 2 4 5 1 9 6 3
5 4 3 9 6 8 7 2 1
6 9 1 7 2 3 8 4 5
1 5 9 6 8 7 4 3 2
2 7 6 1 3 4 5 8 9
4 3 8 5 9 2 1 7 6
8 6 5 2 4 9 3 1 7
9 1 4 3 7 6 2 5 8
3 2 7 8 1 5 6 9 4

FAITH

Doing Karma without pride

Lord Krishna was not only charioteer and Acharya on the battlefield, but also showed His divinity, said Kidambi Narayanan in a discourse. At the end of each day, the warriors would retire to their camps to rest, and to tend to their wounds. But Krishna, who took hits from many arrows to save Arjuna, did not think of rest or sleep. As a charioteer, His duties did not end with merely driving Arjuna around the battlefield. He had to care for the horses. In the evening, He would bathe the horses, and would attend to their wounds. Krishna knew asva sastra. He knew how to treat horses of different kinds – war horses; horses used in chariots other than war chariots; and race horses. Not only did the Supreme One take orders from Arjuna when the fighting was on, but spent the remaining hours of the day also serving Arjuna by looking after his horses. He showed us that we must do our duties without fail.

In the Gita, He says that He had already taught karma yoga to Vivasvan. Vivasvan, in turn, taught karma yoga to Manu, who taught Ikshvaku. Krishna says we must do our Karma without pride. And He demonstrates how this is to be done, when He takes care of Arjuna's horses. At the same time, He is also an Acharya to Arjuna, and His discourse to Arjuna is the invaluable Gita. He shows His Supremacy to Bhishma on the battlefield. Krishna had vowed that He would merely drive Arjuna around, but would not Himself pick up a weapon. Bhishma vowed that He would ensure that Krishna picked up a weapon. To make sure that Bhishma's vow was fulfilled, Krishna picked up the discus during the war. Thus He showed that He was the loving God, who cared so much for His devotees that He would make sure their words came true.

U.S. moves to tackle domestic terrorism

It announces a national strategy that focuses on 'prevention, interruption and dissuasion'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. government on Tuesday unveiled its "national strategy" to fight domestic terrorism, an issue that is a priority for President Joe Biden after the assault on Congress in January and the rise of white nationalist extremists.

"Domestic violent extremists motivated by a range of ideologies pose an elevated threat to our country in 2021," a senior administration official told mediapersons, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, and specifically those who espouse the superiority of the white race and anti-government militia violent extremists, [pose] the most



Big steps: The U.S. on January 6 saw a deadly attack on Congress by Trump supporters. ■ FILE PHOTO

lethal threat," the official said.

The government's plan is, however, "ideologically neutral" and consists of four pillars that focus on "prevention, interruption and dissuasion", while preserving individual freedoms.

The Biden administration

wants first to improve information sharing on extremist groups or individuals at the federal and local level. For this, the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have set up a nationwide system for reporting terrorism-related cases.

The government also

wants to thwart the recruitment of violent extremists and calls for violence in collaboration with large technology platforms and social media networks. Washington announced in May that it was joining the Christchurch Call, an international movement against the online dissemination of extremist content, which former president Donald Trump had refused to join.

The government will also improve the system for prosecuting extremists by recruiting analysts, investigators and prosecutors.

The fourth pillar is based on countering "long-term drivers and enablers of domestic terrorism, including economic inequality, those who feel left behind by the 21st-century economy, struc-

tural racism and the proliferation of guns," the official said.

Mr. Biden promised in his January 20 inauguration speech that the country would confront and defeat "the rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism" after a string of deadly racist attacks in recent years. In March, FBI chief Christopher Wray told Congress that the number of federal investigations working on "domestic terrorism" had doubled from 1,000 to 2,000 since he took office in 2017.

The U.S. was shocked by the deadly January 6 assault on Congress by Trump supporters. Nearly 500 people have been arrested for their roles in the attack, according to the FBI.

'Trump pressed Justice Dept. to probe poll fraud claims'

Emails show he sought DoJ support for his legal efforts

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

During the last weeks of his presidency, Donald Trump and his allies pressured the Department of Justice (DoJ) to investigate unsubstantiated claims of widespread 2020 election fraud, despite his former Attorney-General declaring there was no evidence of it, newly released emails show.

The emails, released Tuesday by the House Oversight Committee, reveal in new detail how Mr. Trump, his White House chief of staff and other allies pressured members of the U.S. government to challenge the 2020 election over false claims, even though officials at Ho-



Donald Trump

meland Security and Justice, as well as Republican election leaders across the country, said there had been no pervasive fraud. Former Attorney General William Barr, a long-time Trump loyalist, was among those who said there was no evidence of such fraud.

The emails also show the extent to which Trump worked to enlist then-acting

Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen in his campaign's failing legal efforts to challenge the election result, including suggesting filing a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court.

The ones sent to Mr. Rosen include debunked conspiracy theories and false information about voter fraud.

Mr. Trump's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, asked about investigating allegations of voter fraud caused by satellites from Italy. Mr. Meadows tried to have Mr. Rosen investigate the conspiracy theories and pushed the acting Attorney General to meet with an ally of Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani who was pushing unfounded election conspiracies.

U.S.-Russia ties are at an impasse: Kremlin official

Biden and Putin will meet today

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

A top aide to Vladimir Putin said U.S.-Russia relations are at an "impasse" but this week's summit with Joe Biden in Switzerland could help ease tensions.

Mr. Putin and Mr. Biden are to meet at a villa in Geneva on Wednesday with tensions high over a long list of disputes, from cyberattacks and election meddling to human rights violations.

"Russian-U.S. relations are now at an impasse, the situation is close to critical. Something needs to be done," Yuri Ushakov, Mr. Putin's foreign affairs adviser, told mediapersons ahead

of the summit. "I view this meeting with practical optimism, but not much. It is a first meeting under difficult circumstances," he said.

Ambassadors' return

Mr. Ushakov said the Russian and U.S. ambassadors, who returned home this year amid tensions over sanctions, could go back to their posts immediately if the summit goes well. "It will be a tremendous achievement if the ambassadors return to work."

Mr. Ushakov said the two leaders would discuss cybersecurity, climate change, the Arctic and regional conflicts, among other issues.

Statement by NATO is slander: China

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

The Chinese mission to the European Union denounced a NATO statement that declared Beijing a "security challenge", saying China is a force for peace but will defend itself if threatened.

The Chinese news release said the NATO statement was a "slander on China's peaceful development, a misjudgment of the international situation and [NATO's] own role, and a continuation of the Cold War mentality". NATO allies joined the U.S. on Monday in formally criticising Beijing as a "constant security challenge".

Taiwan reports 'largest' incursion by Chinese forces

'28 aircraft entered the air defence identification zone'

REUTERS
TAIPEI

As many as 28 Chinese air force aircraft, including fighters and nuclear-capable bombers, entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on Tuesday, the island's government said. It is the largest reported incursion to date.

While there was no immediate comment from Beijing, the news comes after the Group of Seven leaders issued a joint statement on Sunday scolding China and underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.



The incursion involved J-16 and J-11 fighters, as well as H-6 bombers.

Taiwan has complained over the last few months of repeated missions by China's air force near the self-ruled island, concentrated in the southwestern part of its air defence zone near the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands.

The latest Chinese mission involved 14 J-16 and six J-11 fighters, as well as four H-6 bombers, which can carry nuclear weapons, and anti-submarine, electronic warfare and early warning aircraft, said Taiwan's Defence Ministry. It was the largest daily incursion since the Ministry began regularly reporting Chinese Air Force activities in Taiwan's ADIZ last year.

The Ministry said Taiwanese combat aircraft were dispatched to intercept the Chinese aircraft and missile systems were also deployed to monitor them.

Far-right Israeli groups to march in East Jerusalem

Palestinian factions slam the decision

REUTERS
JERUSALEM

Far-right Israeli groups will march in and around East Jerusalem's Old City on Tuesday in a flag-waving procession that risks igniting tensions with Palestinians in the contested city and rekindling violence between Israel and Gaza militants.

Assailing the march as a "provocation", Palestinian factions have called for a 'Day of Rage' in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas have warned of renewed hostilities if it goes ahead.



Israeli border police blocking a main road ahead of the march.

"We warn of the dangerous repercussions that may result from the occupying power's intention to allow extremist Israeli settlers to carry out the Flag March in occupied Jerusalem tomorrow," Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said on Twitter.

An original march

was re-routed to avoid the Old City's Muslim Quarter on May 10 when tensions in Jerusalem led Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas to fire rockets towards the holy city, helping set off 11 days of deadly fighting. Israeli rightists accused their government of caving in to Hamas by changing its route. They rescheduled the procession after a Gaza truce took hold.

Tuesday's march, due to begin at 6:30 p.m. (1530 GMT), poses an immediate challenge for new Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who took office on Sunday.

China scientist denies Wuhan lab leak theory

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The Chinese scientist at the centre of theories that COVID-19 originated with a leak from her specialised lab in the city of Wuhan has denied that her institution was to blame for the pandemic.

"How on earth can I offer up evidence for something where there is no evidence?" Dr. Shi Zhengli told *The New York Times*.

"I don't know how the world has come to this, constantly pouring filth on an innocent scientist."

Dr. Shi is an expert in bat coronaviruses, and some scientists have said she could have been leading so-called gain-of-function experiments, in which scientists increase the strength of a virus to better study its effects on hosts.

'COVID-19 feeding extremism in Germany'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

Germany's far-right has grown more radical during the COVID-19 pandemic, Interior Minister

Horst Seehofer said on Tuesday while presenting a report. The 2020 report from the Office for the Protection of the Constitu-

tion found a 3.8% rise in the number of people considered right-wing extremists last year, to around 33,300 people.

UAE-backed troops at Yemen base

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI

A militia leader has acknowledged that his Emirati-backed troops are stationed on an island in a crucial maritime chokepoint where a mysterious air base is now under construction.

The comments by Tariq Saleh come as ship-tracking data show that at least two Emirati-owned vessels have travelled to Mayun Island in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait since May.

The UAE has not responded to repeated requests for comment about the base.

Yemen's internationally recognized government has demanded a formal investigation into the base.

Speaking in an interview, Saleh acknowledged the presence of troops from his National Resistance Forces militia on Mayun Island.

UTTAR PRADESH NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, (UPNEDA)
(Dept. of Additional Sources of Energy, Govt. of U.P.)
VIBHUTI KHAND, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW, U.P.
Mobile: 9415609078, Tele Fax: 0522-2720779, 2720829
Website: <http://www.upneda.org.in> E-Mail: compneda@rediffmail.com

GEM BID NOTICE
UPNEDA invites Online Bids from Prospective Bidder through Gem Portal for the design, procurement, manufacturing, supply, installation, commissioning and 5 years comprehensive warranty maintenance of following items at various sites in Uttar Pradesh as per the details given in Bid document uploaded on Gem Portal.

Sr. No	Item	Bid No. at Gem Portal	Aprox. Quantity Required and Estimated Cost	End date of Bid Submission	Technical Bid Opening Date
1	6 MT Solar Photovoltaic powered cold storage unit. (Re-tender)	GEM/2021/B/1282639	9 Nos (Rs. 180 Lakhs)	28.6.2021 up to 6:00 PM	29.6.2021 at 12:30 PM
2	1.1 KW Solar PV powered RO water plant along with fan and submersible water pump.	GEM/2021/B/1282960	200 Nos (Rs. 520 Lakhs)	5.7.2021 up to 6:00 PM	6.7.2021 at 12:30 PM

The tender document is available at Gem Portal and UPNEDA website <http://www.upneda.org.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the Bid document, seek clarification and submit their Bid online on Gem Portal only up to the date and time mentioned in the table above. Numbers of the system mentioned as above, may increase or decrease. Director, Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency, (UPNEDA) reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SDW-II)
STP YAMUNA VIHAR, WAZIRABAD ROAD DELHI-110053
Tele-22814128, Email:eesdw3.djb@nic.in

"STOP CORONA: WEAR MASK, FOLLOW PHYSICAL DISTANCING, MAINTAINING HAND HYGIENE"

S. No.	Description of work	Date of uploading on E-procurement solution / Tender ID	Estimated Cost / Earnest Money / Tender Fee	Last date of submission of tender
1	Rehabilitation & up gradation of existing 10 MGD (45.5 MLD) Sewage Treatment Plant Phase II at Yamuna Vihar Delhi based on Conventional Activated Sludge process to achieve treated effluent parameters BOD / TSS $\le 10\text{ ppm}$ along with Operation & maintenance for Construction period & 7 years thereafter under AMRUT programme.	15-06-2021 / 2021_DJB_204393_1	90.00 Cr. / EMD waived off 1500.00	12-07-2021 at 03.00 PM

For further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
ISSUED BY P.R.O.(WATER) (Bhushan Verma) Exe, Engineer (SDW-II) Advt. No. J.S.V. 111(2021-22)

TAMIL NADU SLUM CLEARANCE BOARD MADURAI CIRCLE
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
FORM OF CONTRACT : "LUMP SUM" (TWO COVER SYSTEM)
Tender Notice No.SCB/071/DB/2021 Dated: 15.06.2021
For and on behalf of Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, sealed tenders consisting of two separate sealed covers one for Pre-qualification with EMD to be enclosed in 'A' cover and another for price schedule with name of work duly subscribed to be enclosed in 'B' cover, are invited from the registered contractors under Class-I and above in TNSCB / Government Departments / Government undertakings by the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, 169.K.K.Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 up to 3.00 PM on 20.07.2021 and the same will be opened at 3.15 PM on the same day in the presence of the tender Scrutiny Committee.

S. No	Name of Work	Tender Value (Rs. Lakhs)	EMD (In Rs.)
1	Construction of 252 nos of Slum tenements adopting T.D.37/2018 including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Pottalkalam Phase-II, Allinagar Municipality in Theni District under HFA, Vertical-III (AHP) of PMAY. CER-Madurai No.12/HFA/2020-21	2424.35	12,23,000/-
2	Construction of 284 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+2) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Thathanaiakanpatti in Palani Taluk of Dindigul District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.14/HFA/2020-21	2387.24	12,04,000/-
3	Construction of 280 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.23/2020 (G+4) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Subramaniapuram, Scavengers Colony of Madurai District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.15/HFA/2020-21	3747.31	18,84,000/-
4	Construction of 240 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+2) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Pappankulam in Ambasamuthiram Taluk of Tirunelveli District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.16/HFA/2020-21	1985.10	10,03,000/-
5	Construction of 528 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.31/2017 (G+2) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at VOC Nagar in Thoothukudi District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.17/HFA/2020-21	4748.25	23,85,000/-

The cost of tender schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or Banker's Cheque from Nationalised / Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer, Madurai Division, TNSCB, payable at Madurai for S.No.1 to 3 and in favour of the Executive Engineer, Tirunelveli Division, TNSCB, payable at Tirunelveli for S.No.4 & 5. The tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, TNSCB, 169.K.K.Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of the tender document to a value of Rs.17,700/- (Non refundable) up to 3.00 PM on 19.07.2021. Conditions for participating in the tenders may be seen from the website www.tenders.tn.gov.in. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle. 169.K.K.Nagar Main Road, Opp. Jawagar Hospital, Madurai 625 020. DIPR/1773/Tender/2021

PURABI DAIRY The West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd. (WAMUL), Jorhat, Panjabari, Guwahati-781037
World Bank Financed Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART)
Ref No: MD/PC/APART/E-Tender/2021-22/02 Dated: 16th June, 2021
E-procurement Tender Notice
The West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited (WAMUL) is an implementing agency of World Bank Financed (APART) Project and now intends to purchase the following item from the eligible bidder as mentioned below:

Sl No	Category	Date of publishing tender	Last date of submission of Quotations
1	Frozen Semen Dose	17.06.2021	17.07.2021

The details of the E-tender will be published and available at www.assamtenders.gov.in as mentioned above. Managing Director, WAMUL.

Tamilnadu Newsprint and Papers Limited
Unit-1: Kagitthapuram - 639 136, KARUR Dist. Tamil Nadu Ph. : 04324 - 277001 (10 Lines)
Unit-2: Mondipatti - 621 306, TRICHY Dist. Tamil Nadu Ph. : 04332 - 261600
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No	Description	Due Date
212213 001348	Transportation of Paper Reels / Bundles / Boxes from TNPL Unit-I at Kagitthapuram to various branches / destinations throughout India.	30.06.2021
212223 000494	Transportation of Paper Board in Reels / Bundles / Pallets from TNPL Unit-I at Mondipatti to the Outside Godowns (situated in and around 60 KM radius / 61-120 KM radius from TNPL Unit-I Mondipatti) to various Branches / Destinations throughout India for the period of One Year.	01.07.2021
212223 000527	Maintenance of Drip Irrigation System at Plantation Area in TNPL Unit-II, Trichy.	30.06.2021

Email: 212213001348 - purchase.trans@tnpl.co.in
212223000494 - purchase.smp.u2@tnpl.co.in
212223000527 - tos.u2@tnpl.co.in
Detailed terms and conditions, Tender Fee, EMD, etc., are available in tender Document at our websites: www.tnpl.com / www.tenders.tn.gov.in. DIPR/1774/Tender/2021 TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper

भारत सरकार - अंतरिक्ष विभाग / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA-DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
निर्माण तथा अनुरक्षण समूह, एसडीएससी शार, श्रीहरिकोटा-524124, नेल्दूर (ज़ि), आंध्र.
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC-SHAR, SRIHARIKOTA-524124, NELLORE (Dt.), A.P.
संक्षिप्त ई-निविदा सूचना / BRIEF E-TENDER NOTICE तिथि / Date: 14.06.2021
सं. शार: सौपमजी सिविल:अनुई-जन निविदा / No. SHAR: CMG CIVIL: MINT: E-PublicTender-09 / 20-21
भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, समान प्रकृति एवं परिमाण के कार्य का अनुभव रखने वाले पात्र निविदाकर्ता/एजेंसियों से निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग के माध्यम से मुहूर्त-मद मद दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित हैं। / On behalf of President of India, online item rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following works from eligible contractors/ agencies having experience in works of similar nature and magnitude.

कार्य का नाम / Title of the work	सही ढंग से अंतरिक्ष केंद्र शार के कीपाकम में स्थित फेज-II क्वार्टरों की आंतरिक साविकी रंग-पुनर्माई का काम / Periodical Painting for internal surfaces of PHC-II quarters, stage-II at Keepakam area, SDSC SHAR.	सही ढंग से अंतरिक्ष केंद्र शार के संचयन स्थित उप केंद्र डी में जल रिसाव को रोकने के लिए छत पर गॉलवाल्यूम चादरों का आवरण प्रदान करना तथा साविकी रंग-पुनर्माई का काम / Providing Galvalume sheet roof covering for arresting the water leakage at Sub-station D, SPROB & Providing Galvalume sheet roof covering for arresting the water leakage at SPROB MRS, SDSC SHAR.	सही ढंग से अंतरिक्ष केंद्र शार में सौपम कॉलोनी के लिए गेट से एसपीपी सड़क से सटी हुई प्रस्तावित दीवार को स्ट्रिड के ढांचे एवं जंजीर की कड़ियाँ केवाई सहित 1 मीटर अतिरिक्त ऊंचा करना / Proposed compound wall raising for additional height of 1m with Structural steel & chain link fencing for CL colony portion from Gate-I along SPP road at SDSC SHAR.	जेओपी चौकी सही ढंग से अंतरिक्ष केंद्र शार पर सुरक्षा चौकरी टॉवर का निर्माण / Construction of security watch tower at JOP outpost SDSC SHAR.
निविदा सं. / Tender No	टी/सी / TIC-20-038	टी/सी / TIC-20-039	टी/सी / TIC-20-040	टी/सी / TIC-20-041
निविदा का अनुमानित मूल्य / Est. Cost Put to tender	₹ 24.12 लाख / Lakhs	₹ 12.00 लाख / Lakhs	₹ 10.36 लाख / Lakhs	₹ 14.96 लाख / Lakhs
पूर्ण करने की अवधि / Period of completion	12 माह / Months	05 माह / Months	03 माह / Months	06 माह / Months
निविदा दस्तावेज हेतु अनुरोध व डाउनलोड करने की अवधि / Period during which tender documents can be requested	16.06.2021, 10:00 बजे hrs से / to 28.06.2021, 14:30 बजे hrs			
निविदा अपलोड करने हेतु अंतिम तिथि एवं समय / Last date & time for uploading of tenders	30.06.2021 के / & 14:30 बजे / hrs			
बयाना राशि जमा (ईएमडी): विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना में संलग्न-1 के रूप में अनुसूचित निधित्त प्रदान में बयाना राशि जमा घोषणा पत्र प्रस्तुत करेंगे। / Earnest Money Deposit (EMD): Earnest Money Deposit Declaration shall be submitted in prescribed format enclosed as Annexure-1 in detailed NIT				
कृपया इच्छुक निविदाकर्ता कार्यालय में उपलब्ध विस्तृत निविदा सूचना या हमारी वेबसाइट www.isro.gov.in या www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO से संदर्भ लें। अन्य विवरण एवं निविदा दस्तावेजों के क्रय हेतु www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO देखें या दूरभाष सं. 08623-226083/6085 पर संपर्क करें। / Interested tenders may please refer detailed tender notice available in our office or our website www.isro.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO further details and purchase of tender documents. Contact Phone 08623-226083/6085				
ह/ - समूह प्रभार, सौपमजी / एसडीएससी शार / Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG/ SDSC SHAR				

MARKET WATCH		
	15-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,773	0.42
US Dollar	73.31	0.00
Gold	47,853	0.31
Brent oil	73.67	0.38

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	761.85	-6.60
Asian Paints	3042.20	92.30
Axis Bank	750.90	-14.65
Bajaj Auto	4138.10	-8.40
Bajaj Finserv	11798.70	-127.45
Bajaj Finance	6161.15	-33.00
Bharti Airtel	542.50	3.15
BPL	481.90	-1.80
Britannia Ind	3631.85	40.60
Cipla	969.70	-6.45
Coal India	157.15	-2.20
Divis Lab	4313.05	-75.00
Dr Reddys Lab	5410.85	-50.50
Eicher Motors	2763.50	18.55
Grasim Ind	1495.25	2.25
HCL Tech	985.45	1.25
HDFC	2545.10	5.90
HDFC Bank	1490.25	10.80
HDFC Life	692.55	10.85
Hero MotoCorp	3007.05	21.40
Hindalco	390.85	-3.95
Hind Unilever	2391.95	27.35
ICICI Bank	645.30	10.15
IndusInd Bank	1034.45	10.15
Infosys	1473.90	12.10
IndianOilCorp	115.75	1.00
ITC	207.05	-0.25
JSW Steel	725.10	-4.05
Kotak Bank	1770.90	2.85
L&T	1510.80	-4.95
M&M	808.60	1.15
Maruti Suzuki	7166.25	-11.60
Nestle India Ltd.	17684.80	107.30
NTPC	117.80	-0.40
ONGC	125.35	0.55
PowerGrid Corp	247.60	-1.10
Reliance Ind	2250.00	5.10
SBI Life	995.85	9.70
State Bank	429.50	-0.85
Shree Cement	28485.90	151.85
Sun Pharma	673.20	-3.90
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	719.50	4.75
Tata Motors	352.70	-3.25
Tata Steel	1174.30	9.50
TCS	3262.75	-13.60
Tech Mahindra	1066.85	-2.40
Titan	1723.40	-11.40
UltraTech Cement	6668.30	-10.20
UPL	841.80	7.20
Wipro	557.90	-3.70

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 15		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.11	73.43
Euro	88.66	89.05
British Pound	102.95	103.41
Japanese Yen (100)	66.45	66.74
Chinese Yuan	11.42	11.47
Swiss Franc	81.39	81.75
Singapore Dollar	55.10	55.35
Canadian Dollar	60.01	60.28
Malaysian Ringgit	17.74	17.83



TVS cuts price of iQube e-scooter by ₹11,250

CHENNAI TVS Motor Company has reduced the prices of its electric scooter TVS iQube Electric by ₹11,250. The new pricing is in line with the revision in subsidy under FAME II scheme. The incentive would increase the reach of electric two-wheelers in the country, the company said. The revised price of iQube Electric in New Delhi will be ₹1,00,777 and Bengaluru ₹1,10,506.

Ashok Leyland arm buys out EV-maker SMAL

CHENNAI Ashok Leyland's subsidiary Switch Mobility Ltd. of U.K. has acquired the entire shareholding in EV maker Switch Mobility Automotive Ltd. India (SMAL) on Monday, resulting in the latter becoming a step-down subsidiary of the company. SMAL was incorporated in December last year with a paid up capital of ₹1 crore to manufacture and sell electric vehicles (EVs).

AIRA to aid development of debt market

MUMBAI Two credit rating agencies (CRAs) have established 'Association of Indian Rating Agencies' (AIRA). AIRA is expected to work closely with the regulator and government for debt-market development, the agencies said. While Care Ratings Ltd. and Acuité Ratings & Research Ltd. are the founding members, two more CRAs may join soon, Care and Acuité officials said.

NBFC Authum set to buy Reliance Home Finance

NEW DELHI Authum Investment and Infrastructure Ltd. has emerged as the highest bidder for Reliance Home Finance, a group company of the debt-ridden Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Group, with ₹2,887 crore offer. Sources said lenders led by Bank of Baroda would receive ₹2,887 crore of which ₹2,587 crore, or 90%, would be paid upfront and ₹300 crore within a year. PTI

Inflation spurs spike in bond yield; rupee hits 1-month low

Latest data would make RBI wary of continuing to boost liquidity, says economist

REUTERS
MUMBAI

India's benchmark 10-year bond yield closed at its highest level in more than six weeks while the rupee ended at a one-month low on the back of a larger-than-expected surge in retail inflation.

The benchmark 10-year bond yield ended at 6.04%, after touching 6.05%, its highest since April 30 and up 4 basis points on the day.

Retail inflation rate rose 6.3% year-on-year in May, from 4.29% in April and sharply above analysts' estimate of 5.3%. The wholesale price inflation rate rose 12.9%, its highest in at least two decades.

Traders are worried the



Tight spot: Traders are worried the spike in inflation beyond RBI's target band could force it to act sooner. * G. RAMAKRISHNA

spike in inflation beyond the RBI's mandated target band of 2%-6% could force it to act sooner on inflation, but two senior sources said the growth focus will continue for the time being.

"The latest data would make RBI wary of continuing to boost liquidity in a big way, and whether RBI stops unwinding its forwards book, or limits bond market intervention to announced

G-SAP will be closely eyed," Abhishek Upadhyay, economist at ICICI Securities Primary Dealership said in a note.

The G-SAP or government securities acquisition programme of the RBI has been crucial in ensuring the government's massive ₹12.06 trillion borrowing programme goes smoothly, and more measures may be needed to support markets.

The rupee closed at 73.3125 per dollar after touching 73.32, its weakest since May 14.

Traders said inflation and demand for dollars by importers weighed on the local unit and they would keenly watch out for the outcome of the upcoming Fed meeting.

Exports surge 69%, trade deficit widens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India's exports rose by 69% to \$32.3 billion in May, driven by healthy growth in sectors such as engineering, petroleum products and gems and jewellery, even as the trade deficit widened to \$6.3 billion, according to government data released on Tuesday.

Imports grew by almost 74% to \$38.6 billion – leaving a trade deficit for the month at \$6.3 billion.

Exports during April-May this year jumped to \$62.9 billion, from \$29.4 billion in the year-earlier period. Imports were recorded at \$84.3 billion, an increase from \$39.3 billion in the same two months of 2020. The trade deficit came in at \$21.4 billion, as against \$9.9 billion.

Retail sales decline 79% from two years earlier

Need government support, says RAI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Retail sales in India slipped 79% in May compared with pre-COVID sales in the same month in 2019, as businesses across States were closed due to the second wave of the pandemic, a survey by Retailers Association of India (RAI) showed.

The decline in sales was the steepest in West and North India, which witnessed an 83% dip last month as compared with May 2019, RAI said in a statement.

Eastern region saw a decline of 75%, while South was relatively better with a contraction of 73% as compared to the same month in 2019. On a sequential basis, the decline in May was much steeper compared to



the previous month, when overall sales across India were down 49% as compared with April 2019, the survey showed.

"Retailers are looking forward to some improvement in June with gradual unlocking. However, the industry needs the collective support of various government bodies to tide over the present situation," RAI CEO Kumar Rajagopalan said.

Canara Bank to buy 12% stake in bad bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Canara Bank said it will be the lead sponsor of National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL), or bad bank, with a 12% stake in the entity.

Bad bank refers to a financial institution that takes over bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution.

"The board of Canara Bank has given in-principle approval for taking stake in NARCL," Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Following the board nod, the bank has sought the approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for participating in NARCL as a sponsor contributing 12% stake.

RBI restrains DHFL from taking deposits

Move precedes nod for Piramal buyout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revoked the deposit-taking status of Dewan Housing Finance (DHFL), the first financial services firm to go for bankruptcy proceedings.

The central bank had reclassified DHFL as a non-deposit taking housing finance company, before approving the Piramal Group's bid to take over it towards the end of the resolution process.

This was revealed in the June 7 order of the NCLT Mumbai approving the ₹35,250-crore bid by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance, forcing a more than 65% haircut on creditors and just ₹1 to NCD holders to



whom the firm owes more than ₹45,000 crore.

The changes were made in February 2021, after the banking regulator gave a no-objection to the January 25, 2021 application by R. Subramaniakumar, the DHFL administrator, citing Rule 5 of its FSP (financial services providers) Rules.

Max Life settles 33% more death claims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Max Life Insurance on Tuesday reported a 33% jump in death claim settlements to more than ₹885 crore for FY21.

The private sector insurer said its claim settlement ratio also touched an all-time high at 99.35% during the year. It represents the ratio of the number of claims paid against the number of claims filed during a particular time-frame.

Max Life Insurance has paid 19,922 death claims worth ₹885.57 crore during the financial year 2020-21. With this, the company said it had achieved an all-time high individual death claims paid ratio of 99.35.

Adani Group shares close on a mixed note

Flagship Adani Enterprises gains 2.45%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A day after seeing a sharp plunge, shares of Adani Group companies closed on a mixed note on Tuesday.

On Monday, the group said that accounts of three Mauritius-based funds that own the conglomerate's stocks were not frozen amid reports to the contrary.

Six Adani Group companies, including the flagship Adani Enterprises, are listed on the bourses.

On Tuesday, Adani Enterprises gained 2.45% to ₹1,538.05 and Adani Green Energy jumped 2.79% to ₹1,208.75 on the BSE. Amid bullish sentiments, the 30-share Sensex on Tuesday touched fresh lifetime clos-

ing and intraday highs.

In contrast, Adani Transmission tumbled 5% to ₹1,441.40 while Adani Total Gas tanked 5% to ₹1,467.35. Shares of Adani Power slumped 4.97% to ₹133.90 and that of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone declined 0.94% to ₹761.45.

Shares of Adani Group firms plunged on Monday after reports that the National Securities Depository Ltd. froze the accounts of the three foreign funds that were among the top stakeholders in the firms.

While the group said all the accounts of its top shareholder funds were active, NSDL, in an email to the group, had also confirmed their 'active' status.

'Govt. to speed up CCI probe of Amazon'

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

India's antitrust watchdog plans to expedite a restarted probe into allegations of anti-competitive behaviour at Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart unit, as it intensifies scrutiny of big-tech firms, two people close to the matter said.

The comments come as major U.S. technology firms including Twitter and Facebook are at loggerheads with the government over issues such as data privacy bills and policies some industry executives have called protectionist.

The CCI initiated a probe last year on a complaint alleging Amazon and Flipkart promoted select sellers on their platforms.

U.S. arbitrator tells DRL unit to pay \$46.25 mn

Ruling backs Australia's Hatchtech Pty

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) on Tuesday said one of its subsidiaries had been asked to pay \$46.25 million, under an arbitration award, to Hatchtech Pty Ltd., the Australian firm with whom it had entered into an asset purchase pact in 2015.

Stating that the award was issued by the International Centre for Dispute Resolution, U.S., the pharmaceuticals company said it was exploring all legal options to challenge the award.

The subsidiary had been asked to make the payment towards milestones, interest and fees to Hatchtech in connection with the asset purchase agreement, DRL said in a regulatory filing.

Citing a July 2020 filing on the USFDA approving its New Drug Application per-



taining to Xeglyze (abametapir) lotion, 0.74%, the drug-maker said that the approval triggered the contractual pre-commercialisation milestone of \$20 million payable to Hatchtech, which had been included in the arbitration award.

Also, the sum had been already accounted for and charged off in the company's financial statements for 2020-21, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said in the filing to the stock exchanges.

Govt., Infosys to discuss I-T portal glitches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Top Finance Ministry officials, while acknowledging that the new income tax filing portal has been 'fraught with several technical glitches/issues leading to taxpayer inconvenience,' said they will hold an interaction on June 22 with the service provider Infosys, along with chartered accountants, auditors and taxpayers.

"Written representations on the problems, difficulties faced in the portal have also been invited from the stakeholders," the Revenue Department said in a statement. "Representatives from Infosys team will be present to answer queries, clarify issues and receive inputs on the working of the portal, to remove glitches and sort out issues faced by the taxpayers."

Covaxin at ₹150 to Centre not sustainable: Bharat Biotech

Higher price in private markets needed to offset costs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Covaxin maker Bharat Biotech has said the price of ₹150 per dose at which the vaccine is being supplied to the Centre is a non-competitive price and 'clearly not sustainable in the long run'.

A higher price in private markets is thus required to offset part of the costs, the Hyderabad-based vaccine maker said on Tuesday amid questions on the differential pricing followed for supplies to various sectors.

Vaccine pricing depends on several factors, from cost of goods and raw materials, product failures, at risk product development outlays, product overages, capital ex-



penditure for setting up manufacturing facilities, sales and distribution expenses, procurement volumes and commitments, the firm said. It added that it had so far invested over ₹500 crore 'at risk' for product development, clinical trials and setting up of manufacturing facilities for Covaxin.

Observing that less than 10% of the Covaxin output had been supplied to private hospitals, the company said the weighted average price of Covaxin for all supplies realised by it was less than ₹250 per dose.

Unlike most medicines, vaccines were provided free of cost by the Centre to all eligible citizens. Hence, procurement of vaccines by private hospitals was optional and not mandatory, the company contended.

"In our view, the question of product pricing is only of extraneous interest to all concerned, especially when the same vaccine is made available free of cost," Bharat Biotech said.

THE HINDU GROUP

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Indian women return to the Test arena today

Mithali & Co. short on practice but high on confidence as they meet England

INDIA IN ENG

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BRISTOL**
A favourable record in England and a "positive mindset" despite inadequate time for preparation will spur the Indian women's team when it takes on England in its first Test engagement in nearly seven years here from Wednesday.

After multiple quarantines in India and the UK, the Mithali Raj-led squad got little over a week, that too only in the nets, to prepare for its first red-ball game since November 2014.

Mithali is among the seven players who were part of that victorious XI against South Africa in Mysuru.

Seventeen-year-old Shafali Verma is expected to make her debut and open the innings with Smriti Mandhana. The experienced trio of Mithali, Harmanpreet and Punam Raut follow.



What a finish! The Indian players are on cloud nine after the Test victory against England at Wormsley in 2014. • FILE PHOTO

On the bowling front, veteran pacers Jhulan Goswami and Shikha Pandey will have to shake off the rust of the long hiatus.

The spinners, who had a forgettable time at home in the limited-overs series

against South Africa, will be itching to make amends. In England, India has not lost in eight Tests and won two.

The squads: India: Mithali Raj (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur (Vice-Capt.), Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Deep-

ti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Sneha Rana, Tanaya Bhatia (wk), Indrani Roy, Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht and Radha Yadav.
England: Heather Knight (Capt.), Nat Sciver (Vice-Capt.),

- India has played 36 Tests, won five, lost six, drawn 25
- India's last Test was against South Africa in 2014 at Mysuru. The host won by an innings and 34 runs
- The victory helped India equal Australia's record of most successive Test wins (three)
- India's final Test against England was played at Wormsley in 2014, where it won by six wickets
- In bilateral Tests between India and England, Mithali tops the charts with 505 runs (avg. 63.12). Jhulan is the leading bowler with 29 wickets (avg. 14.93).

Emily Arlott, Tammy Beaumont, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Freya Davies, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elwiss, Tash Farrant, Sarah Glenn, Amy Jones, Anya Shrubsole, Mady Villiers, Fran Wilson and Lauren Winfield-Hill.
Match starts at 3.30 p.m.

'Players want to figure in longer format'

Mithali says priority is to take the field in right frame of mind

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

When Mithali Raj made her international debut, the third millennium hadn't dawned yet. She was only 16 when she made an unbeaten 114 against England in an ODI at Milton Keynes to announce her arrival, in 1999.

More than two decades later, she is still the mainstay of the Indian women's team, that takes on England in the one-off Test at Bristol from Wednesday. The captain sounded confident on the eve of the match.

She, however, isn't thinking of the record that beckons India – most successive Test wins. India has won its last three Tests and no country has won four in a row.

"I am not looking at the record," Mithali, who became the second woman to score 10,000 international runs three months ago, said at a virtual conference on Tuesday.



Mithali. • FILE PHOTO

"For us, the first thing is to get out there in a confident frame of mind. Let us see how it goes from there," she said.

Debutants

Since India's last Test was played seven years ago, a few youngsters are bound to make their debut at Bristol. With hardly any red-ball cricket on India's women's domestic circuit, they could find the long format particu-

larly challenging.

"You don't want to burden them with expectations and responsibilities," said Mithali. "As a team we would support them on the field and they should just enjoy playing this format."

She hopes the current tour could be a new beginning as far as women's Test cricket is concerned. "This – and the pink-ball Test in Australia later on – opens the channel to have a three-format bilateral series," the skipper said.

"Cricketers still want to play the longer format. Because... that is the format that tests the skills of the players. Maybe in the coming years, it might also lead to a World Test championship."

After making her Test debut in 2002, she has played only nine more. None of those Tests had attracted as much attention as the one that is about to get underway as it will be telecast live.

Lack of match practice a disadvantage, but we are ready: Pujara

Maybe a few extra days of preparation would have helped, but we can't complain, says India's batting mainstay

WTC FINAL

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Cheteshwar Pujara, the senior batsman, has admitted that lack of a warm-up fixture ahead of India's inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) final versus New Zealand is a bit of a disadvantage.

"It is (a disadvantage), but this is something we can't control. These are challenging times in the world because of the pandemic, and you can't have the luxury of extra preparation time. But the most important part is the game is still going on and that we're playing a final," Pujara said from Southampton in a virtual media interaction on Tuesday.

"Yes, preparation time is a bit of a disadvantage maybe, but if you are ready for the

challenge, even if circumstances aren't favourable, you would do well. We are confident as a team. Maybe a few extra days of preparation would have helped, but we can't complain. We are ready."

India will face New Zealand at The Ageas Bowl from Friday. While New Zealand will enter the game having defeated England in a two-Test series, India has had to make do with intra-squad match besides net sessions after serving mandatory quarantine in Southampton.

Pujara insisted that India had made the most of the "centre-wicket simulation", with batsmen trying to "spend time in the middle" and bowlers "getting used to workload".

The veteran batsman, who is one of the leading Test-match specialists for India, stressed the WTC final is as



Historic moment: Pujara says the WTC final is like a World Cup final for him.

• INSTAGRAM/CHETESHWAR_PUJARA

big as a World Cup final for him.

"Personally, it means a lot to me. This is the first time we are in a WTC final. We have worked hard over a pe-

riod of time. It's just like playing in a 50-over or T20 World Cup final," he said.

"Test cricket needs to survive, and a WTC series where every Test, every se-

ries is important. If we win, then many youngsters would want to play the Test format and be part of the final when the next cycle comes around."

It was an ideal preparation to play two Test matches with guys getting match preparation. I couldn't think of anything better.

ROSS TAYLOR

Meanwhile, India has omitted Shardul Thakur from the 15-member squad for the WTC final. The pruned squad was announced on Tuesday as per the ICC regulations.

The team management has preferred the experience of Umesh Yadav ahead of the Mumbai pacer.

The squad:

Virat Kohli (Capt.), Ajinkya Rahane (Vice-capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Hanuma Vihari, Umesh Yadav, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Wriddhiman Saha (wk).

Williamson cleared to play, will lead the Kiwis

REUTERS
SOUTHAMPTON

New Zealand has cleared captain Kane Williamson and wicketkeeper B-J Watling to play in the inaugural World Test Championship final against India, while retaining Ajaz Patel as a specialist spinner in the 15-man squad.

Doug Bracewell, Jacob Duffy, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra and Mitchell Santner will miss out after being part of the original 20-player touring squad.

"Kane and BJ have certainly benefited from their week of rest and rehabilitation and we expect them to be fit and available for the final," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said on Tuesday.

"We've gone with Ajaz as our specialist spinner after an impressive outing at Edgbaston (against England) and we believe he could be a



Williamson. • REUTERS

factor at the Ageas Bowl," added Stead.

The squad: Kane Williamson (Capt.), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Colin de Grandhomme, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner, B-J. Watling (wk), and Will Young.

Dravid confirmed as coach



Rahul Dravid. • FILE PHOTO

INDIA IN SL

ANI
NEW DELHI

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah has confirmed that former India skipper Rahul Dravid will coach the team for the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka.

The Shikhar Dhawan-led team will play three ODIs and three T20Is at the R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo.

"Rahul will be coaching the team for the Sri Lanka series," Shah said.

The team assembled on Monday and is undergoing seven days of hard quarantine.

Medvedev ousted

HALLE OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, the top seed here, was a first-round casualty at the ATP grass court tournament in Halle on Tuesday as he suffered a shock 7-6 (6), 6-3 defeat to Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff.

Fourth seed Andrey Rublev beat his doubles partner Karen Khachanov 6-3, 7-6(5) in the first round.

Consistent India starts favourite, says Laxman

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

V.V.S. Laxman backed India to overcome a lack of match practice and win the ICC World Test Championship final against New Zealand.

Former India batsman Laxman, Ian Bishop and Shane Bond spoke in a virtual press conference organised by official broadcaster Star Sports.

"India starts as favourite. India has been the most consistent team, both home and away, in this two-year Test cycle. There is so much depth and experience in this Indian line-up. New Zealand may have an advantage having just played a Test series in England, but this Indian team is capable of overcoming any challenge," Laxman said.

The Hyderabad stylist stated that the Indian openers, Rohit Sharma in particular, should avoid fishing outside off. "It is very important for every opener to know where his off-stump is. Leaving balls outside off, in the channel of uncertainty, is something which Rohit should focus on. Rohit has another challenge in the form of Trent Boult, who brings the ball in. He also knows that against Boult, he cannot take his left leg across. Rohit has to play with the full face of the bat. These are two things that Rohit needs to address at the start of his innings," Laxman said.

Banter in the nets

Former New Zealand speedster Bond recalled witnessing a preview of the Rohit-Boult battle in the Mumbai Indians nets.

"Boult was swinging the ball, hitting Rohit on the pads, and telling him,



Shubman Gill. • FILE PHOTO

"That's what is going to happen in this WTC final". So Boult was talking about it four months in advance. There was banter going on, which was just brilliant. Those two were very aware that they were going to come up against each other," Bond, MI's bowling coach, said.

Given New Zealand's recent 1-0 Test series win over England, Bond picked his home nation to win the WTC final.

"I think New Zealand is going to win. New Zealand's match practice and confidence gives them the edge. The toss will be crucial. If New Zealand wins the toss and bowl as well as they have in recent matches, they can dismiss India cheaply. They can then aim to put up a big score," Bond said.

Former West Indies pacer Bishop stated that India's ideal bowling attack should consist of three pacers – Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Ishant Sharma – and two spinners, R. Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja. Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Siraj are the two other bowling options available for India.

'It would've been nice to represent the country in WTC'

However, for the spectators it would be difficult to follow multiple series in between: Tendulkar

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Sachin Tendulkar, former India captain, is excited ahead of the inaugural WTC final. He shared his views ahead of the contest in a brief conversation. *Excerpts:*

What would your preferred bowling combination be for India?

It depends on the surface and I am sure the groundsmen will be watering it till the 17th. I haven't had a look at the wicket but I know there are three options. One

is to play with seven batters, three seamers and one spinner. The second option is to play with four seamers and one spinner. And the last is to play three seamers and two spinners. It's too early to figure out the combination. The advantage with India is both the spinners can bat. **What do you make of the contrasting preparation for both the sides?**

It is actually a coincidence that New Zealand and England have played a series just before the WTC final.

But they obviously have that advantage of having played two practice matches in the form of Tests. We haven't had that advantage but I would much rather focus on having done whatever best we could, given the circumstances. It is important to think of the next step rather than the last one. The next step matters and that's where the focus should be.

Would you have liked to be a part of a concept like WTC? It would have obviously been nice to be representing the

country in the Test Championship final. As a player, yes. But am not too sure as a spectator. It's too spaced out, I feel.

There were multiple series happening in between, so it was difficult to follow. But as a player, it would have been exciting. The gaps in series make it difficult to follow.

For instance, we played New Zealand early in 2020 and now after 16 months, we'll be playing them in the final. It's a long time.



Sachin Tendulkar. • FILE PHOTO

Ronaldo's brace powers Portugal past Hungary

Defending champion begins with 3-0 win; misfiring Spain held 0-0 by Sweden

EURO 2020

REUTERS
BUDAPEST

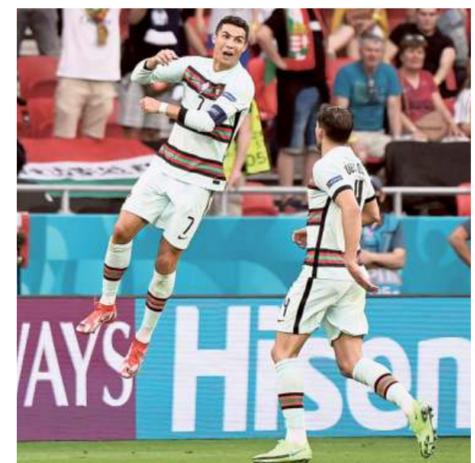
Portugal began the defence of its title at Euro 2020 with a 3-0 victory over Hungary on Tuesday as Cristiano Ronaldo struck twice to become the all-time leading scorer in European Championship history.

Raphael Guerreiro's deflected shot broke Hungary's resistance on 84 minutes and Ronaldo smashed home a penalty before he added a third in stoppage time.

Ronaldo, the first player to appear at five different Euros, has now scored 11 goals in the tournament, surpassing the record of nine set by France's Michel Platini.

Poor finishing

Spain tried to pass Sweden into oblivion in its 2020 opener on Monday but had to settle for a 0-0 draw as it was let down by poor finishing and might have even lost had it not been for a glaring miss by opposing striker



On a high: Ronaldo overtook Platini to become the highest scorer in Euro history. • POOL VIA REUTERS

Marcus Berg. Alvaro Morata spurned Spain's best opportunity in a dominant first half display from Luis Enrique's side on a scorching evening at Seville's La Cartuja stadium in Group E when he missed the target from inside the area after a defensive slip.

But Sweden's Berg was equally wasteful when he somehow missed the target after a sensational piece of skill and cross from fellow forward Alexander Isak, who had manoeuvred his way past four Spain defenders to put the chance on a plate.

TODAY'S MATCHES

GROUP B	
Finland vs Russia	6.30 p.m.
GROUP A	
Turkey vs Wales	9.30 p.m.
Italy vs Switzerland	12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Live on Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD)

Spain ran out of steam in the second half before rallying again late on but still failed to beat Sweden keeper Robin Olsen, who thwarted substitute Gerard Moreno in stoppage time.

The lively Dani Olmo created three promising chances in the first half but the best chance fell to Morata, who failed to cash in on a lapse of concentration by Sweden's Marcus Danielson but slotted wide of goal with only Olsen to beat.

The results: Group E: Spain 0 drew with Sweden 0. Group F: Hungary 0 lost to Portugal 3 (Guerreiro 84, Ronaldo 87-pen, 90+2).

India advances to next round

FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DOHA

India benefitted from an own goal by the Afghanistan goalkeeper as it ended its World Cup qualifying campaign with a 1-1 draw to book a berth in the next qualifying round of the Asian Cup on Tuesday.

A howler by Afghanistan custodian Ovays Azizi handed India a 1-0 lead in the 75th minute but Hossein Zamani equalised in the 81st minute in a match marred by poor refereeing.

The two sides had also played out a 1-1 draw in the first leg match in Dushanbe in 2019.

It was an open and fast-paced game with the Afghans playing a more physical game in a contest which witnessed several fouls.

With seven points from eight matches, India finished third in Group E behind toppers Qatar and Oman, and ahead of Afghanistan (fourth with six points from eight matches).

TV PICKS

England Women vs India Women: Only Test, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

Euro 2020: Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

IN BRIEF



CONMEBOL's tribute to Maradona

RIO DE JANEIRO
Diego Maradona's life was honoured in a tribute featuring lights and projections onto the pitch before Argentina's Copa America opener against Chile. It was organised by South American soccer body CONMEBOL. Maradona died at age 60 last November. **AP**

Anand wants closure to controversy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOZHIKODE

"It's time to move on and get closure on this." That is the quote from five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand, referring to the controversy following his online simultaneous chess games against celebrities on Sunday. It had become obvious that some players had used the aid of the computer during their matches.

The organiser of the COVID-19 fund-raiser event, *chess.com*, had closed the account of three players for unfair practices. On Tuesday, however, it reopened those accounts because of — according to *chess.com* — "...the forthcoming cooperation of the players and the clarification that not all the rules were properly understood...Anand...has expressed no interest in further pursuing the matter."

"While he wants clearly expressed that he does not endorse the use of the non-approved assistance in chess, he agrees fully that the games were played in good faith..."

Ankeet Chavan cleared to play

AMOL KARHADKAR MUMBAI

Ankeet Chavan, the left-arm spinner from Mumbai who was involved in the 2013 IPL corruption scandal, has been formally cleared by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to resume competitive cricket. The life ban, imposed in September 2013, had been converted into a seven-year suspension by the BCCI ethics officer last month.

"It's a huge sigh of relief for me and everyone in the family to have finally got the formal communication," the former Rajasthan Royals bowler told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"I am thankful to the BCCI and my parent body, Mumbai Cricket Association."

BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

When do you play your best team in a series? It's a question modern captains and coaches have to answer. This, just after they have answered a more important one: Which is your best team?

Two recent series victories, India's in Australia, and New Zealand's in England have shown that the World Test Championship (WTC) final this week will be played between the two best teams in the world. And that's as it should be.

Test cricket is a funny beast, howev-

Messi is brilliant, Argentina is not

Romeros on song as Paraguay romps past Bolivia

COPA AMERICA

ASSOCIATED PRESS RIO DE JANEIRO

Lionel Messi scored a stunning free kick, repeatedly dribbled through the Chilean defence and created opportunities regularly for his Argentina teammates.

Despite Messi's intense performance, Argentina was held 1-1 by Chile in its Copa America opener.

Coach Lionel Scaloni's line-up wasted three clear opportunities between the 16th and 18th minutes, one from Lautaro Martinez and two for Nicolas Gonzalez.

And then Messi opened the scoring in the 33rd after a free kick that Chilean goalkeeper Claudio Bravo couldn't stop despite getting a touch on the ball to his left.

Transformation

But Chile transformed into a more attacking team in the second half and earned a penalty after video review. Arturo Vidal's shot from the



Up and over: Lionel Messi, No. 10, sees his effort beat the Chilean wall for Argentina's opener. **AP**

spot was stopped, but Eduardo Vargas nodded into the empty goal to level the scores in the 57th.

Messi continued to create opportunities until the end of the match, but his team-

mates showed the same difficulty to deliver goals as they did in the 2-2 draw at Colombia in a World Cup qualifier in Barranquilla last week.

Meanwhile, Paraguay leads group A after a 3-1 win

over Bolivia at the Olimpico stadium in Goiania.

Bolivia scored first via Erwin Saavedra's first-half penalty, but Paraguay changed its fortunes after the break with goals by Alejandro

NRAI achieves its primary objective

Shooters preparing as a team in a professional and safe environment

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has achieved its primary objective of preparing 15 shooters as a team in a professional and safe environment as they get ready to compete in the Tokyo Olympics.

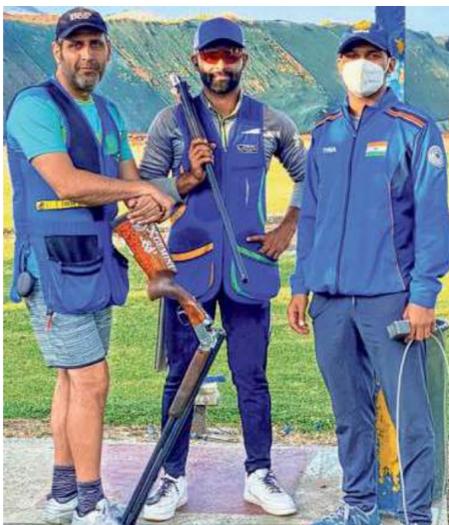
It has already been well documented the way 13 rifle and pistol shooters, along with coaches and support staff were sent in a chartered aircraft to be based in Zagreb in the run-up to the Games.

Angad Vir Singh Bajwa had set the tone by reaching Italy immediately after the World Cup here in March.

Much later, Mairaj Ahmad Khan moved to Italy for a sanctioned training stint with coach Ennio Falco.

The NRAI was able to draft Angad into the camp, even though he had different plans of preparation with coach Tore Brovold.

While Angad had planned



Working hard: Mairaj, Angad and coach Falco during training in Italy. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

to shoot at the World Cup in Osijek, Croatia, from June 24, Mairaj had left it to the coach to take a call.

Falco decided that the two Indian shooters would skip the World Cup so as to prepare better and reach their

peak in Tokyo.

"I have been training in the camp at Ennio's range with Mairaj for about a month now. The coach decided that we would not shoot in the World Cup as it will be close to the Olympics," said Angad.

There were other factors that led to the decision.

"Safety is also an issue. Owing to COVID-19, we had to keep in mind a secure environment and not take a chance. Also, competing in Croatia would have meant two days of travel. That apart, many days of training would be disrupted if we compete in the World Cup," reasoned Angad, who keeps in touch with coach Brovold as well.

Flexible

Despite being firm with its plans of preparation and stressing on the sense of solidarity as a team, NRAI has been flexible in allowing the coaches, to a great extent, to decide the best way forward.

Hawks rally past Sixers to level series

NBA PLAYOFFS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LOS ANGELES

Trae Young poured in 25 points and added 18 assists as Atlanta Hawks rallied to beat Philadelphia 76ers in game four of their second-round Eastern Conference playoff series on Monday.

Young shot eight of 26 from the floor and drained three threes and had plenty of help from his supporting cast as all five Hawks starters finished in double figures to level the best-of-seven series at 2-2.

His 18 assists equalled a career high, but he also busted out from under the

watchful eye of Sixers' defensive specialist Ben Simmons. Simmons finished second this year in NBA defensive Player-of-the-Year voting to Utah's Rudy Gobert. Bogdan Bogdanovic scored 22 points for Atlanta.

Meanwhile, Kawhi Leonard and Paul George combined for 62 points as Los Angeles Clippers breezed to a 118-104 win over the top-seeded Utah Jazz in game four of their Western Conference series.

The results (semifinals): EC: Atlanta Hawks 103 bt Philadelphia 76ers 100 (*Series tied 2-2*); **WC:** Los Angeles Clippers 118 bt Utah Jazz 104 (*Series tied 2-2*).

Little clarity on doubles qualification for the Games

National federations will be required to submit doubles nominations on June 22

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

The ranking cut-off for entry to the Tokyo Olympics was reached on June 14, but there was no hint about a doubles slot for the Asian Games champions Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan.

Despite reaching the quarterfinals at Roland-Garros, Bopanna could only improve his ranking from 40 to 38. There was no remarkable slip for Divij, who moved from 73 to 75.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) will first work on the list of 56 direct entrants in singles for men

and women. It will also award the final eight ITF qualification places to the eligible continental performers.

The ITF is scheduled to inform the respective national federations about their eligible singles players by Wednesday.

Thereafter, the process will continue for the doubles teams. For a draw of 32, there will be 31 direct acceptances, on the basis of combined world rank of singles or doubles, of the two players in each team.

Doubles players ranked in the top-10 will have automatic entry into the Olympics, as long as their partners have a

By The Numbers

■ **1** - Messi scored off a direct free kick for Argentina after 1672 days after the one against Colombia, on 15 November 2016, in the WC Qualifiers

■ **2** - Angel Romero is the first Paraguayan to score a brace in the Copa America since the 2007 edition

■ **10** - The goal chances created by Romero Gamarra, a record in a Copa America match since 2007

Romero and a brace by Ángel Romero.

Argentina's next match is against Uruguay on Friday. Chile will face Bolivia on the same day. Paraguay returns to action next Monday against Argentina.

The results:

Group A: Argentina 1 (Messi 33) drew with Chile 1 (Vargas 57); Paraguay 3 (Romero Gamarra 62, Angel Romero 65, 80) bt Bolivia 1 (Saavedra 10-pen).

Nagal loses in first round

SPORTS BUREAU AIX EN PROVENCE (FRANCE)

Eighth seed Sumit Nagal was beaten 4-6, 7-6(5), 6-1 by Tristan Lamasine in the first round of the €132,280 Challenger tennis tournament on clay on Tuesday.

In the ATP-500 event in Halle, Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan defeated Radu Albot and Nikoloz Basilashvili 7-6(6), 6-4 in the doubles first round.

Other results: **€132,280 Challenger, Nottingham: Qualifying (second and final round):** Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Kacper Zuk (Pol) 6-3, 6-7(1), 6-1.

\$100,000 ITF women, Nottingham: Qualifying (first round): Nuria Parrizas-Diaz (Esp) bt Anika Raina 6-4, 6-0.

€88,520 Challenger, Prostějov, Czech Republic: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Hugo Dellien & Federico Zeballos (Bol) bt Luca Margaroli (Sui) & Sriram Balaji 7-5, 6-4.

\$25,000 ITF women, Figueira Da Foz, Portugal: First round: Riya Bhatia bt Sara Lanca (Por) 6-2, 6-0.

Violators of safety rules could be disqualified

TOKYO OLYMPICS

ASSOCIATED PRESS TOKYO

Athletes will face harsh punishments, including disqualification, for violations of COVID safety rules as per the guidelines in the third and final edition of the 'Playbooks', the COVID-19 rule books for those entering Japan to participate in the Olympics, unveiled by the organisers and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Tuesday.

The organisers said in the case of flagrant infractions, serious sanctions will be imposed including permanent

exclusion from the Games, deportation and fines.

In the media briefing, the IOC also mentioned that an additional 20,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses will be available for people who are involved in the Games.

The organisers said that 70%-80% of the media covering the Games to be vaccinated.

The organisers also said every sports delegation arriving in Japan will have a COVID liaison officer coordinating with the organisers on the implementation of the measures to stop the spread of the virus at the event due to start on July 23.

Bhagyashree and Pranesh claim titles



Bhagyashree Patil.



M. Pranesh.

CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

In a thrilling finale, Tamil Nadu's M. Pranesh and Maharashtra's Bhagyashree Patil won the National (under-16) online rapid chess titles on Tuesday.

Leader after the 10th and penultimate round, Pranesh drew with Manish Kumar to reach an unsurpassable tally of 9.5 points from 11 rounds. A little later, Delhi's Aaryan Varshney defeated TN's Suresh Harsh to catch up with Pranesh. Later, the tie-break favoured Pranesh and Varshney finished runner-up.

In the girls section, Bhagyashree finished first among equals following a three-way tie at 9 points.

After 10th-round leaders Delhi's Khuana Kapoor and Gujarat's Riddhi Patel drew quickly on the top board, Bhagyashree, playing black, defeated State-mate Aahana Pachchigar to reach nine points. As it turned out, Bhagyashree's tie-break was superior to those of Khuana and Riddhi.

The three-day National under-14 championship begins on Wednesday.

Final standings (after 11 rounds):

Open: 1-2. M. Pranesh (TN), Aaryan Varshney (Del) (9.5 each); 3-5. Manish Kumar (Od), Jimmy Jubin (Ker) and Akshay Posina (Tel) (9 each).

Girls: 1-3. Bhagyashree Patil (Mah), Khuana Kapoor (Del), Riddhi Patel (Guj) (9 each); 4-5. Dhyana Patel (Guj) and K. Ratnapriya (TN) (8.5 each).

The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong

er. How do you decide which is the best team in the world when it is difficult to tell which is the best team a country possesses? New Zealand won the final Test and the series after making six changes. Some owing to injury, and some for a reason we shall come to shortly.

Captain and best batsman Kane Williamson decided to rest his elbow and not aggravate the injury ahead of the WTC final. So New Zealand won comfortably with their next-best team.

In Australia earlier, only two Indians, Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara, played all four Tests. India's bowling attack in the final Test was possibly their weakest of the series. It wasn't even their next-best team. Yet India won that Test and with it the series. Their best batsman and captain Virat Kohli had flown back home after the first Test.

Predicting victories in cricket —

fraught at the best of times — has just got more difficult. The race is not always to the swift, nor battle to the strong.

New Zealand might think they are strengthening their team for the WTC final with the return of Williamson, B.J. Watling, Tim Southee, and others, but are they really? England might believe that once Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, and Sam Curran make the eleven against India, they have a superior team. But will they?

The pandemic, and possibly the bubble associated with it, is causing us to reassess the apparently obvious. An X-factor has entered the calculations, making it all very exciting. Bench strength is vital.

Teams travel now with 24 or more players. They carry their own 'net' bowlers (one of them, T. Natarajan made his debut in all three formats in Australia). The competition is tougher,

and no player on tour can afford to take his place for granted.

Whatever it is, the manner in which teams have made huge changes from match to match, and still succeeded, is an interesting development. Not yet a trend, but it might graduate into one.

Changes are made for a second reason too, and there might be issues with that. Again, owing to the pandemic, teams have had to rotate their players, ensuring they get sufficient rest and are fresh for each match.

England have made a fetish of this, resting Moeen, Bairstow, Buttler, Curran, and Woakes for the New Zealand series. Woakes had bowled just 21 overs in competition in nine months previously, so 'rest' was hardly what he needed.

The rotation policy is lauded as a masterstroke when the team wins, but seen as foolish and counter-productive when it loses. England's problem was

their inflexibility, the refusal to change plans when the IPL was shortened and players flew home, giving themselves more rest than they originally expected to have.

Team priorities

Teams have different priorities too, and the selections are made accordingly. For England, it is the Ashes series at the top followed by International Cricket Council tournaments like the World Cups. The suspicion that they used the New Zealand series as 'nets' before the Ashes cannot be shaken away. That is hardly fair to the No. 1 Test team in the world. New Zealand have the right to expect the best team to take them on, for beating a second XI is deeply unsatisfying. But you can only beat the team that turns up.

When Roger Federer pulled out in the middle of the French Open, it seemed as if he was merely testing the

waters ahead of Wimbledon to see if his knees could take the strain after surgeries. Federer's largely unblemished record meant he was given the benefit of the doubt; in any case, the stakes are different in individual sport.

Both New Zealand and India should, and probably will, play their best teams in the WTC final commencing on Friday. A final cannot be a stepping stone to something else.

Lessons from history
History has shown that after India won the 1983 World Cup (50-over), that format got a huge shot in the arm, and drew more people to the game. Similarly post-2007 when India won the World T20, the IPL was born, and the format threatened to take over the game.

If India win the inaugural WTC, perhaps something similar will happen with Test cricket. No pressure at all, Virat Kohli!