on Sunday



Ayurveda guru P.K. Warrier passes away at 100



Joe Biden nominates L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti as Ambassador to India



Government is keen to make cooperatives more empowered: Shah **Barty overcomes** Pliskova's challenge, clinches title



page 15

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354 kg heroin worth ₹2,500 crore seized

In the biggest-ever drug recovery by the Delhi police, 354 kg of heroin valued at ₹2 500 crore has been seized and four persons have been arrested. The accused have been identified as Hazrat Ali, an Afghan national; Rizwan Ahmed, a resident of Delhi: Gurjot and Gurdeep Singh, both residents of Punjab.



CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4 MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

As Taliban advance, India pulls out Kandahar consulate staff

Diplomats, ITBP personnel return to Delhi as fighting rages on in Afghanistan

SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI

As the claims by the Taliban about taking control of Afghan territory grow, India has decided to temporarily close its consulate in Kandahar, sending an Indian Air Force flight to evacuate about 50 diplomats and personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) back to Delhi, government sources confirmed to The Hindu.

Officials said the move was purely precautionary, and stemmed from reports that if the Taliban continue to push on to the southern city of Kandahar, which was their headquarters in the 1990s, the fighting with the Afghan Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) could get

Many in the Christian-ma-

jority States of Meghalaya,

Mizoram and Nagaland con-

sume beef. While Mizoram

and Nagaland have chosen

not to react, the Meghalaya

government said it would

seek the Centre's interven-



War zone: Former Mujahideen taking position to support Afghan forces near Herat province on Saturday. • REUTERS

"Our aim is to ensure that Indian personnel are safe, and we felt the risk of fighting within the city could endanger them," an official told *The Hindu*, as a full security

Meghalaya raises concern over Assam cow protection Bill

We will approach Centre if it affects transit of cattle to the State, says Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma

tion if the Assam Cattle Pre-

servation Bill, 2021, affects

The Bill, approved by the

Assam Cabinet on July 7, will

be placed before the State

Assembly in the upcoming

session. It seeks to replace

its people and economy.

review of Indian missions in Afghanistan in the wake of the pull-out of American troops continues.

At present, the Indian Embassy in Kabul and the con-

the existing Assam Cattle

Preservation Act, 1950, that

allows the slaughter of cattle

above 14 years of age after

approval from local veterin-

not only with the Assam go-

"We will raise the issue

ary officers.

sulate in Mazar-e-Sharif in Balkh province remain operational.

Evolving situation

According to the officials, the personnel that returned to Delhi on Saturday would be transported back if the situation improved, while some may alternatively travel to Kabul to continue their consular operations from the Embassy, if required.

In April last year, the government had decided to suspend operations at the other two consulates in Jalalabad and Herat and pull out all personnel from there as

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

vernment but also the

Centre if the law affects tran-

sit of cattle to Meghalaya

from other States," Megha-

laya Chief Minister Conrad K.

Sangma said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

New investments from the Union and State governments fell 41.6% from nearly

Investments dip

₹1.67 lakh crore in Q4 of 2020-21 to ₹97,376 crore during Q1 of 2021-22 FRESH INVESTMENTS BY THE GOVERNMENT

Sectors	Jan Mar. '21 (Q4FY21) in ₹Cr.	Apr Jun. '21 (Q1FY22) in ₹Cr.	Q-o-Q (%)				
Manufacturing	2,093	481	-77.03				
Mining	4,057	15,315	277.51				
Electricity	7,152	11,455	60.17				
Infrastructure	1,33,696	69,343	-48.13				
Irrigation	19,873	783	-96.06				
All sectors	1,66,870	97,376	-41.65				
Source: Projects Today's survey on project investments in India							

Govt. infra spending dropped sharply in Q1

Fresh investments dip by 18% overall

VIKAS DHOOT NEW DELHI

The second wave of CO-VID-19 and a steep decline in new investment projects from government agencies dented fresh investment plans in the economy by 18% in the first quarter of 2021-22, compared with the previous quarter.

Despite the government's stated push for capital spending to revive the economy, public infrastructure investments almost halved compared with the January-March quarter, bringing total outlays on new infrastructure plans down by nearly 39% over April to June this year.

Nearly 2,200 new projects entailing fresh investments of ₹3,34,572.5 crore

were announced during the quarter, compared with 2,716 new projects worth ₹4,08,237 crore in the previous three-month period that had seen both private and public sector investments rebounding strongly for the first time since the pandemic hit India. Overall new investments

from the Union and State governments fell 41.6% from nearly ₹1.67 lakh crore in Q4 of 2020-21 to ₹97,376 crore, as per Projects Today's survey on project investments in India during Q1 of 2021-New public sector irriga-

tion and manufacturing projects also fell off the cliff by 96% and 77% respectively.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

Hizb chief's two sons lose govt. jobs

PEERZADA ASHIQ

Two sons of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin Syed Ahmed Shakeel and Shahid Yusuf - were among 11 J&K government employees whose services were terminated on Saturday for "anti-national activi-

ties", an official source said. While one son was working as a doctor at the Sher-I-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, the other was working at the Skill Development Department.

One policeman, Rasheed Shigan, who was allegedly involved in militant activities, has also been terminated from his service.

The employees were fired under Article 311(2)(c), a law passed earlier this year in J&K under which no inquiry is required to be constituted against the accused. Services of four employees from Anantnag, three from Budgam and

one each from Baramulla,

Srinagar, Pulwama and

Kupwara were terminated, officials said. The J&K government on April 21 constituted a Special Task Force to identify employees, scrutinise their conduct and lodge cases against those involved in cases related to threat to security. The task force was described as "draconian"

by several political parties.

cern among its neighbours.

Head start

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A Bill proposed by the Assam

government to stop the tran-

sportation of cattle or use

the State for transit of the bo-

vine animal has raised con-



Festival hues: Preparations in full swing at Jama Masjid ahead of I'd celebrations, in Old Delhi on Saturday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

U.P. panel readies two-child norm plan ⁺

Bar on government jobs and welfare benefits for those who have more children

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission has prepared a proposed draft Bill for population control, under which a two-child norm will be implemented and promoted.

After the law comes into force, a person with more than two children will be debarred from several benefits such as government-sponsored welfare schemes and from contesting elections to the local authority or any body of the local self-government, the draft says. Ration card units will be limited to four persons.

A person contravening the law will also become ineligible to apply for State government jobs and be barred from promotion in government services and any kind of subsidy.

The provisions will come into force one year after the date of the publication of the



Yogi Adityanath

gazette, the draft says. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will on July 11 launch the Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030 on the

tion Day. Sops for sterilisation The Commission has uploaded the proposed draft Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Wel-

occasion of World Popula-

suggestions till July 19. As per the draft, several incentives have been provid-

fare) Bill, 2021 and invited

ed to people, including puthe norm by undergoing voluntary sterilisation. The incentives include a

3% increase in the employer's contribution fund under national pension; two additional increments during the entire service; subsidy towards purchase of plot or house site or building a house; rebate on charges for utilities such as water, electricity and house tax; and soft loan for construction or purchasing a house at nominal rates of interest.

A public servant or common citizen who adopts a one-child norm will receive additional benefits such as free healthcare facility and insurance coverage to the child till age 20; preference to the single child in admission in all education institutions, including but not limited to the Indian Institutes of Management and the All

India Institute of Medical blic servants, if they adopt Sciences; free education up to the graduation level; scholarship for higher studies in case of a girl child and preference to a single child in government jobs.

Cash incentive

A couple living below the poverty line that has only one child and undergoes voluntary sterilisation shall be eligible for payment of a onetime ₹80.000 if the single child is a boy and ₹1 lakh if it is a girl.

Explaining the reasons for bringing out the draft Bill, the Commission headed by Iustice Aditya Nath Mittal said there were limited ecological and economic resources at hand in Uttar Pradesh and it was necessary to control and stabilise the population for the promotion of sustainable development with more equitable distribution.

Sikkim blossoms: State home to 27% of India's flowering plants

Botanical Survey of India publication lists 4,912 naturally occurring species

SHIV SAHAY SINGH KOLKATA

Sikkim, the smallest State with less than 1% of India's landmass, is home to 27% of all flowering plants found in the country, reveals a recent publication by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI). Flora of Sikkim - A Pictorial Guide, released earlier this week, lists 4,912 naturally occurring flowering plants in the tiny Himalayan State.

"The total number of naturally occurring flowering plants in the country is about 18,004 species, and with 4,912 species, the diversity of flowering plants in Sikkim, spread over an area of 7,096 sq. km, is very unique," Rajib Gogoi, Scientist and Regional Head, BSI, Gangtok, and the lead author of the publication, said.

Dr. Gogoi said the publication provides details of 5,068 taxa (including 152 cultivated taxa) belonging to 1,491 genera and 209 angiosperm families which are naturally occurring flowering plants, along with geography, ecology, vegetation pattern and forest types of Sikkim.

The other authors of the publication include Norbu Sherpa, J.H. Franklin Benjamin, D.K. Agrawala, S.K. Rai and S.S. Dash. In the 582-page publication, the authors have included more than 2,000 photographs of about 1,350

plant species from the State. The State, which is a part of the Kanchenjunga biosphere landscape, has different



Flower power: Rhododendron aeruginosum and Hypericum reptans in Sikkim. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

altitudinal ecosystems, which provide opportunity for herbs and trees to grow and thrive. "From subalpine vegetation to the temperate to the tropical, the State has different kinds of vegetation, and that is the reason for such a diversity of flora. The elevation also varies between 300 metres and 8,598 metres above mean sea level, the apex being the top of Mt. KanAshiho A. Mao, Director of BSI, said. Dr. Mao emphasised the

need to have updated checklist of flora of every State. Sikkim's Minister of Forest

and Environment Karma Loday Bhutia, who was present at the launch of the publication, said that along with unique geographical features, the people of Sikkim have a unique bond with nature and trees. The Minister referred

to the notification titled Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules, 2017 which state that "the State government shall allow any person to associate with trees standing on his or her private land or on any public land by entering into a Mith/Mit or Mitini relationship." The notification encouraged people to adopt a tree "as if it was his or

her own child in which case

adopted tree".

Mr. Bhutia, however, expressed concern that certain activities in the State were being carried out without considering their impact on the biodiversity. "The widening of roads to Nathu La, which is of strategic interest to us (bordering China), and the hydel power plants in north Sikkim, should also take into account the environmental concerns of locals. We are not against such activities, but it should not come at the cost of our biodiversity," he said.

Orchids galore

The publication details 532 species of wild orchids (which is more than 40% of all orchid species found in India), 36 species of rhododendron and 20 species of oak, and more than 30 species of high-value medicinal plants, among other species.

Mr. Gogoi said that the founding fathers of botany were always interested in the flora of Sikkim. Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, one of the pioneers of modern botany, conducted the first survey of Sikkim in 1848 and published Rhododendrons of Sikkim. In 1898, two British botanists, Sir George King and Robert Pantling, published their monumental work, The Orchids of Sikkim-Himalayas.

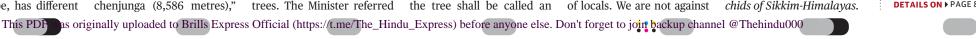
BJP wins big in block-level polls in U.P.

OMAR RASHID

The ruling BJP in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday claimed victory in 635 out of 825 block pramukh posts in the State even as the opposition Samajwadi Party accused the State government of misusing its administrative machinery to "forcefully capture" the posts in the high-intensity elections.

Meanwhile, the voting and nomination for the polls were marred by clashes and firing in some districts, including Etawah where a senior officer was allegedly slapped while trying to prevent a crowd of supporters breaching the barricade.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 8



Timings **DELHI**

SUNDAY, JUL. 11 RISE 05:32 SET 19:22 RISE 06:23 SET 20:39 MONDAY, JUL. 12

RISE 05:32 SET 19:22 RISE 07:22 SET 21:22 TUESDAY, JUL. 13

RISE 05:33 SET 19:22 ► RISE 08:22 SET 21:59

Delhi Weather max min Delhi City 40 29

Delhi Palam Today 36°C One or two spells of rain and thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky and gusty winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 35°C Few spells of Light to moderate rain and thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky and gusty

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IN BRIEF

IIT-D felicitates alumnus for climbing Mt. Everest

NEW DELHI Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, held a flag ceremony on Saturday to mark the achievement of alumnus Neerai Choudhary, who scaled Mt. Everest on May 31.

Up to ₹1 lakh fine for violating new noise pollution norms

Delhi Pollution Control Committee asks authorities to implement revised rules

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Residents will now have to pay anywhere between ₹10,000 and ₹1 lakh for violating noise pollution norms as the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has asked authorities to strictly implement revised rules.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board's revised penalties, violators will have to pay a fine of ₹10,000 for using a loudspeaker or a public address system at a public place without permission or during the night. The equipment will also be confiscated. The DPCC has issued directions to all DMs, SDMs, Delhi Police, and traffic police for strict compliance of these rules.

Permissible levels

A fine of ₹1 lakh will be issued for operating diesel generator sets of over 1,000 KVA capacity without permission, ₹25,000 for DG sets between



If an individual household bursts crackers in a residential zone, the fine will be ₹1,000. • FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

62.5 KVA and 1,000 KVA; and ₹10,000 for diesel generator sets up to 62.5 KVA.

Permissible noise levels in residential areas is 55 decibel during the day time and 45 decibel during the night.

In commercial areas, the permissible sound limit is 65 decibel during the day and 55 decibel during night. In sensitive areas, it is 50

decibel during the day and 40 decibel at night.

Other than this, there are

pay ₹40,000. Thereafter, the fine will be ₹1 lakh and the premises will also be sealed.

If noise pollution is caused by bursting of crackers beyond a limit at a marriage procession or public and religious rally, the organisers will have to pay a fine of ₹10,000. If it is in a 'silence zone', then the fine will be doubled. If an individual household bursts crackers in a residential or commercial zone, then the fine will be ₹1,000. However, it will be ₹3,000 in case of violation in a 'silence zone'. In case construction equipment emits sound beyond the permissible limit, a fine of ₹50,000 will be imposed, the order also stated.

DPCC officials said the penalties were revised by the CPCB in 2020 in which recommendations were made that violators be made to shell out more money for flouting permitted noise pollution limits.

Biggest-ever haul: 354 kg heroin worth ₹2,500 crore recovered

Four persons, including a foreign national, arrested by police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

In the biggest-ever drug recovery by the Delhi police, 354 kg of heroin worth ₹2,500 crore has been seized and four persons, including an Afghanistan national, have been arrested.

Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Neeraj Thakur said the accused have been identified as Hazrat Ali, a resident of Afghanistan; Rizwan Ahmed, resident of Delhi; and Gurjot Singh and Gurdeep Singh, both residents of Jalandhar, Punjab.

Extensive network

The police said the racket extended across several States as well as Afghanistan and Europe. Around 100 kg of chemicals used for preparing the contraband has also been seized.

Police said information was recently received about Rizwan's whereabouts and he was arrested from Ghitorni on July 5. He is allegedly in-



The seized heroin from the accused. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

volved in supplying drugs in Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Harvana

During interrogation, Rizwan allegedly told the police that he works for Isha Khan, who recently left India and is now based in Afghanistan.

Rizwan allegedly told investigators he was asked by Isha to meet Gurpreet and Gurjot, who were operating a drug racket from Faridabad. Acting on the information, the two were arrested from a housing society in Faridabad.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said a huge recovery of heroin was made from the duo. Around 166 kg of heroin was recovered from

a car, another 115 kg from a different vehicle, and another 70 kg was found in a secret cavity in a bed at their accommodation.

On Rizwan's instance, Hazrat Ali was arrested from Gurugram and 2 kg of heroin along with chemicals used to prepare the contraband was recovered.

Talking about the modus operandi, Mr. Kushwah said the opium is grown in Afghanistan and then packaged and transported to Chabahar port in Iran.

The consignment is then shipped to JNPT Jawahar Lal Nehru Post Trust Mumbai. Thereafter, the contraband is separated from legitimate exports and sent to makeshift factories in Madhya Pradesh for further extraction and processing. Locals, with the help of Afghan experts, process the heroin using chemicals. The heroin is then delivered across the country.

Further investigation is under way, said the police.



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4	Shahdara	Office of Executive Engineer (NE)-1 Janta Flats, GTB Enclave, Delhi-110093	96502 90935
5	South	DJB Office, E-Block opposite PVR Cinema, Saket, New Delhi-110017	95999 42466 96502 91239
6	South East	Room No. 002, Andrews Ganj building complex Adjacent to Defence Colony New Delhi-110024	96500 85754
7	South West	Sector-5. DDA Central Nursery, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075	96503 03799
8	Central	Office of EE (Central) Delhi Jal Board, JLN Marg. Opposite Ramlila Ground UGR & BPS New Delhi	88009 95542
9	New Delhi	Sector 7. RK Puram Water Emergency Complex New Delhi 110022	96500 9440
10	West	Office of Supt. Engineer Office G-17, OHT 1st floor, Room No 2. PashchimVihar	96502 9161
11	North West	DJB Office, Room No. 26. First Floor MU Block, Pitampura, Near Hotel City Park. Pitampura	96502 9153
12	North	Shakti Nagar, ZE DJB Office near Shakti Nagar Chowk	96252 0292



MORTH EASTERN RAILWAY E-Tendering Tender

Notice No. 32/2021

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg. N.E. Railways Izatnagar for an pehalf of president of India invited 'OPEN" e-tender through on Line tendering) for the following work S.N.:-1. Description of works Welding of rail joints 674 nos. and supply of welding portion 800 nos. o rails joints of 52 kg/90 UTS rails in the sanctioned work of (1) TTR (CS) 39 sets, Renewal of SEJ 87 sets 8 Renewal of Glued joint 789 sets (2) Renewal of DFW joints 296 Nos Approx. Value (Rs.):- 60,76,997.82 E.M.D. (Rs.):- Nil, Cost of Tende Forms:- Rs. Nil, Completion time period from the date of issue of cceptance letter 12 Months. S.N.: 2. Description of works: Raising of Rail level Platform to High level a work of "Provision of Rail level PF to High level PF at different stations i risdiction of SR.DEN-II". (CBR, UTF ARL. BHK. RAYA & MSN Stn. Approx. Value (Rs.):- 93,56,177.89 E.M.D. (Rs.):- Nil, Cost of Tende Forms:- Rs. Nil, Completion time period from the date of issue o cceptance letter 05 Months. S.N.: Description of works: Provision of Foot Over Bridge at KHH in urisdiction of ADEN/L/IZN (unde sanctioned work Provision of firs Foot Over Bridge (KHH & PBW= 02 nos.) in the section of DEN/HQ/IZN Approx. Value (Rs.):- 58,32,975.83 .M.D. (Rs.):- Nil, Cost of Tender Forms:- Rs. Nil, Completion time/ the date of issue of acceptance letter 09 Months. 1. Or line e-tender can be submitted up to 15:00 hrs of dated 06.08.2021. 2. For lease see the Indian Railway IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg. PRO/W-99 Izatnaga CPRO/W-99 SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955

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e-NIT No -PHE/GWDS 18 of 07/2021 Dated -07-2021

S.	Name of work	Est. Cost	Cost of	Time of	Class of	Programme
No.		Rs. in	Tender	completion	Contract	
		Lacs	Document			
1.	Providing	Rs.	Rs.500/-	30 Days	Regis-	M&E (NP)
	Commissioning	855000/-			tered for	
	of Packaged/				Electrical/	
	Portable				Mechani-	
	Ground Water				cal work	
	Detection unit					
	for the P.H.E					
	(JSD) Ground					
	water Division.					

Critical Dates/Information. Publishing Date 10-07-2021 (11:00 AM Period of Downloading of Bids 10 -07-2021 (11:00 A.M) to 17-07-2021

	It chod of bowling of bids	10 07 2021 (11:0071:11) 10 17 07 2021							
		(02.00 P.M)							
3.	Period of Submission of bids	10 -07-2021 (11:00 A.M) to 17-07-2021							
		(02.00 P.M)							
4.	Date of opening of Tender.								
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Ex	ecutive Engineer , (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground							
	Water SrinagarKashmir-19001	1							
6.	Document Cost: Non-Refundable in the shape of Treasury Challan/receip								
	deposited to Account Head 0215 in favour of Executive Engineer (Ja								
	Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar(at Saddar Treasury Srinagar)								
	(The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)								
7.	Bid Validity Period: 180 Days	• • •							
8.	The bids can be downloaded o	r uploaded on www. Jktenders gov in							
9.	The bids of only those agen	cies shall be accepted who posses valid							
	registration certificate of Fle	ctro-Mechanical Works However due to							

Pandemic the renewal Registration for 2021-22 is waived off for a period of 6 months from 01-04-2021 to 30-09-2021 Instead of EMD the firm has to furnish "Bid Security Declaration", format of the declaration is mentioned in the Bid Document

Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Ground Water Division. DIP/K-4462/21 Srinagar.

THE HINDU

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Reapply for fee refund, DU tells students

STAFF REPORTER

Delhi University has asked students who have not received a fee refund after cancellation of last year's admissions, to apply afresh for the same.

Students who have cancelled their admission after February 15 will not be eligible to seek refund, the university said.

"Students who have not received the UG [undergraduation] or PG [postgraduation] admission cancellation or excess fee refund are requested to mail their bank account details afresh...along with scanned copy of the cheque or passbook and fee receipt to fin5dy@gmail.com for early action," the varsity said.

In the notice issued, DU also directed students to write their form number and send the mails to the specified email address and not to other DU authorities. "You are also advised to check refund status first in the earlier notification and not send repetitive emails," it said.

Earlier, in a notice dated May 23, the university had said that refund of the admission fees following cancellation had failed due to wrong account details provided and had urged students who had withdrawn admissions to update relevant details.

Mother Dairy hikes milk price by ₹2 per litre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Leading milk supplier Mother Dairy has increased milk prices in Delhi-NCR by ₹2 per litre with effect from Sunday on rising input cost.

The milk prices were last revised in December 2019. Justifying the hike, Mother Dairy said procurement cost of milk

operational costs have also risen. On July 1, Amul hiked milk prices by ₹2 per litre across all cities.

from dairy farmers has gone up by 8-10% in the last one year. Other

WESTERN RAILWAY PROVISION OF TCAS & LAYING OF 48 FIBER ARMORED OFC

Principal Chief Signal and Telecor Engineer (Works), Churchgate, Mumbai invites E-Tender against Tender No EPC_WR_SnT_02 1. Name of Work: Provision of Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) & Laying of 48 FIBER armored OFC (In two routes) in connection with work of raising of speed up to 160 kmph on Automatic Section o 336 Km section Virar- Vadodara on Nev Delhi-Mumbai Route of Western Railway. 2. Approx. Cost of Work: ₹2066164826/- 3. Earnest Money Deposit to be deposited: ₹0.0/-Date & Time for submission of e-Tender and opening of e-tender: From 01/11/2021upto 15/11/2021 @ 15.00 hours. 5. Website particulars and notice for location where complete details can be seen etc.: http:// www.ireps.gov.in Principal Chief Signal and Telecom Engineer, 5th Floor, Station Building, Churchgate, Western Railway, Mumbai-400 020. Bidders will be able to submit their original /revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be

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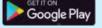




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Kamma girl

Age(27)B.E., M.B.A(IIM B),

5.4 ft, Ayilyam belongs

to a reputed business

family seeks kamma boy

well educated.Business /

commission, with clean

habits from Elite, affluent

94433 35699

WANTED

GROOM

Padmashali 25 yrs,

5'7", MBBS, MS

(OBG), Fellowship in

Reproductive

Medicine -IVF

(Homerton Unversity,

London), Doctor

parents having 150

beds own Hospitals

Reg: Only from well

settled Affluent Family

Caste: BC /OC

profession / service

family. Contact No.

THE MARCHINDU MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadhi

Bengali Bhojpuri

Bihari Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati Harvanvi

Hindi

Kannada Kashmiri

Konkani Malayalam

Manipuri Marathi

Nepali

Oriya Parsi

Puniabi

Saurashtra Sindhi

Tamil Teluau Tulu

Urdu

Doctor

Engineer

IAS/ Allied Services

Information Technology

MBA/ CA/ ICWA

Divorcee

Physically Challenged MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

COSMOPOLITAN

FAIR/ MUDALIYAR Girl 30/162, 10th, No issue, seeks suitable groom, caste no bar, Chennai only. 9840353368

Brahmin Good look Boy & Good Job Good Package. Age Gap 4 Yrs, Direct Contact: 8309610955

CHRISTIAN MBBS reputed college, preparing for PG NEET, 24 yrs fair good looking girl, affluent, God fearing family, Chennai seeks Doctors with clean habits & strong

for higher studies in UK. BE MS/ indian grooms settled in UK. contact 9444054109 / 9442554109

HINDU SC PR 25 yrs / 5.6, Poosam Kadagam, MBBS, Parents Govt, Seeks MBBS with MD/MS/MCH / on-going PG / MBBS Groom preferably

DOCTOR 24 yrs fair, Tamil, Affluent doctor parents ECFMG shortly proceeding to USA for residency. 9677026459

BALIJA NAIDU M.B.B.S Kettai Viruchikam 23/165 fair good looking girl, Kanchipuram seeks Doctor (or) Higher qualified from same

FAIR PRETTY Doctor girl 31/165 completing final MD Anesthesiology August 2021. Chennai based affluent family seeks smart, handsome Doctor groom MD MS MCh DM prfd Ker-ala, TN, Bangalore.Ct: 9840050381/

MALAYALAM EZHAVA MBBS, 29, Atham.

28/165/MBBS govt doctor chennal seeks suitable doctor groom. 8220879684/ 9444713256

YADAVA: 25/V.FAIR, MBBS, MS, SRMC, Elite Family, S Doctor/ Business 9443622400, 8925019776

HINDU SC PR Kongu 1984 MBBS DCH Doctor, working in Govt Hospital seeks suitable groom.CT:94436-80973

HINDU NADAR 26, BE/MS 180cm Sal: 1L PM Working in Chennai seeks suitable Groom KA Raman Nadar

NADAR, DIVORCEE, 35 yrs, MCA MBA, with male child, from affluent family, seeks professional / businessman between 35 to 43 yrs. Contact: 8667805712.

GIRL,33 YRS. Fair, Grammani, Thiru-B.com, MBA working suitable groom. Convathirai, groom. tact:75987 75261

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR (Vellore), Elite Family, 29/165, PG, Working HR in MNC Seeks MS/ M.Tech Groom 9176780777

VANNIYAKULAKSHATRIYA WELL settled business family seeks alliance for their daughter B.Tech, MBA, 26 Sr. Business Analyst from well educat-ed, settled family.Same community from Hindu community. Cf:

TAMIL GIRL 28/172cm BE, LLB(IIT) SSE in Railways seeks PQM Gud fam ly Settled Caste no bar C ly Settled 8838052540

HINDU NADAR 33 BE MS 180cm 6Lac Monthly Working in Canada Seeks Suitable Groom KA.Raman Nadar ELITE NAIDU 26/M.Com, ACS, Own Cof-9380791999 HINDU ADIDRAVIDAR Kongu Parayar 30

Architect- 40 years / 171cms height. Working in Chennai. Hailing from a reputed Thiyya family in North Kerala. Suitable proposals invited. Husband expired in 2016. No kids. 9387222086, BE, M.Tech, Ph.D Seeks Educated Groom. 8760883559/ 8973345370. SC-AD BDS 25 /160 cm medium com- caste plexion seeks BDS/MBBS Chennai based teetotaler groom Ph

9444301934 SC ARUNTHATHIYAR Thiruvathirai / Mithunam 09-09-85 MSc employed seeks suitable groom Ph:9150331377

Star Revathi fair Chennai settled suitable groom. 9381060264

RC NADAR, M.A., 37/155cms, Railways ICF-Chennai. Seeks suitable Match 7305411849/ chella ranis@gmail.com

MUDALIAR /PILLAI 5.1. 33vrs Fair. MCA uper midle class setled Chennai seeks profly qulfd Groom 8925640261

RC MDS 31/165 Asst Professor Colle-HINDU SADHU Chetty, 27/174cm, Kettai, Viruchigam, Fair, MBBS prege Chennai seeks PG Dr/ Civil service Caste No Bar Contact: 9444157888 CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl Fair, Good Looking, 03–04–1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc M.Phil, working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Womburger (1) and the state of th sistant Professor in a Reputed Wom-en's College, Mount Road, Chennai.

MUDALIAR. VERY BEAUTIFUL, 26/163. MBBS, MD Doing, Father Dr, Affluent Family, CNB. 7299576644, Suitable Alliance, Employed / Set-tled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Con-7299576666

ARCOT MUDALIYAR (Thuluva Vellala) RC CHRISTIAN 36yrs/167cms Software
Egr Unmarried Udayar Fair Good looking. Seeks suitable unmarried groom. Ct:joseph154@gmail.com 9943084508

ARCOT MODALIT AN (TIMUVa Verialla) ARCOT MODALIT AN (TIMUVa Verialla) (167/BE (CS), Magam 1st Padam, very fair, upper middle class seeks suitable Chennai/ Bangalore/ Based groom. Subsect welcome 98402–98002

CHRISTIAN NADAR well settled family from Chennal seeks alliance for ness Family, Elite&Affluent Class profile.Ct: Equal Height, MBA Looking for a God fearing Groom, well settled family, with Good job or Business. Ct: ASST. PROF. TULUVA VELLAL MUDALIAR

Good looking Girl 33 (Uthirat-tathy, Meenam, Ph.D(Physics) Fami-ly Seeks Alliance from First & Un-31 year Girl Engineering Graduate, Non IT Working in Chennai, Wanted Engineer Groom from a decent Edumarried Bachelor Bridegroom Aged 33 – 36 Yrs, Employed, Caste No Bar. CT: After 7 PM: 9940840760,

NAIR GIRL, age 46,US citizen, Phd, TAMIL, ROMAN Catholic, Fair,28,M. HINDU NADAR 30, M.E/ 164cm/ 1L Assistant Professor Chicago. Caste, Sc,Vellalar Pillai,Works in Chen-UCTS/ Groom KA Raman Nadar. ramannadar2004@gmail.com /

Muslim Rowther 26 years M.Tech Working Bride Seeks Suitable Tamil Speaking Groom. M.E and N.F. Courselessing Groom. M.E and N.F. Courselessing Groom. M.E. and N.F. Courselessing Groom. M.E. and N.F. Courselessing Groom.

TAMIL VISWAKARMA MBBS 24+, NV, Mri gashiram-Mithunam, Chennai seeks same caste Dr/PG govt employed Horos/Photo: almazgpd@gmail.com

Hindu lyer/lyengar for USA, Brilliant, Multi-talented good looking, Very fair lyer girl just turned 32Yrs/5' 2" Vadamal Bharadwajam Thiruvonan MS PhD (MIT) - Associate Director in a DKV 29YRS 164/58 MBA(IIT) Fair at Boston USA (Green Card Biomeworking in MNC, Seeks for Bright trics done). Parents at Chennai well trics done). Parents at Chennai well trics done in the control of the working in MNC,Seeks for Bright Bridegroom from Educated Family. settled Suitable alliance from well educated & professionally well placed like MS/PhD/MD/ Management preferably from east coast of USA required MUDALIAR: 23/ 165, V.Fair, B. E,Automobile Industry, Elite Family, Chennai – Seeks Groom – Busi-Student visa holders and Matrimon agencies kindly excuse. Horoscope matching is not a prerequisite. If suitable kindly contact email: periavacharanam.shankar@gmail.com CASTE NO Bar: 700 Cr. V.Fair. 33/

> BORNAGAIN BRAHMIN, B.com MBA No 83 Seeks Born Again Brahmin Professionally Qualified, Well Settled Groom Any abroad/India Ph: +9 8939567775 yaasha118@gmail.com

Family & Ct: +91 9381810515

BRIDEGROON

OR A REPUTED FAMIL HINDU NADAR GIRL 27 '2", FAIR, MOOLAM Studied in Premier stitutions. Management Graduate. Two Post Graduate Degrees in Inited Kingdom, Currently Director in Family running company. Also working in a company at Chennai Seeks Similar Educated ind Family background

HOROSCOPES Mob: 9443328393 🗷 umaarvin@gmail.com

Froom CASTE NO BAR.

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GROOM WANTED

Well respected and affluent tamil brahmin business family in Chennai seek suitable alliance for their daughter 24 years of age. Well educated, both in India and abroad. Bridegroom preferred from a tamil brahmin business family based out of Chennai. Please contact in confidence @

80150 08221

GROOM WANTED

US educated Iyer girl Managing Director of a multi-crore chemical industry born may 1986 vadoolam seeks affluent well placed highly qualified Iyer groom born between 1984 to 1986 from similar background. Contact:

94980 58074 vsmk50@gmail.com

fee Estate, Textile Mills, Etc. Rich Family Fair Girl seeks Groom. Ct: 9884510869

BALIJA NAIDU, 27/54, BDS seeks well employed groom from same caste, 9444527903, dvidhyanithya@

NAIDU 26/154. State Govt 'B' grade officer. Works in CBE. Anusham. Suddha jathakkam, Seeks employed om from settled family in :8122347357.

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BRAHMIN, 27, 180 cms, Professional, Masters in Engineering. Lives in Netherlands. Father is a working Professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable and well educated match from the same community. Contact: 6366448343 SOZHIYA VELLALAR, 27, 185 cms, Businessman

Masters in Business Administration. Lives in Chennai. Belongs to an affluent business family with a good net worth. Looking for a suitable well educated match from the same community. Contact: 6366448344 **REDDY**, 25, 170 cms, Businessman, Masters in Management. Lives in Hyderabad. Belongs to an affluent business family with a good net worth. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable well

educated match. Contact: 6366448344 VANNIA KULA KSHATRIYAR/CASTE NO BAR

28, 170 cms, Businessman, Bachelors in Engineering. Lives in Chennai. Belongs to an affluent busineer family with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible and well educated match. Contact: 6366448345

CHETTIAR/CASTE NO BAR, 27, 178 cms, Professional, Masters in Business Administration. Lives in Bangalore. Father is a Professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable well educated match. Contact: 6366448346

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

BRAHMIN, 24, 168 cms, Professional, Masters in Science. Lives in Chennai. Father is a working Professional. Family is affluent. Looking for a compatible match. Contact: 6366448343 MUDALIYAR/CASTE NO BAR, 23, 160 cms

Bachelors in Engineering. Lives in Pondicherry. Father is an affluent Businessman with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible and well educated match from any community. Contact: 6366448343 MUDALIYAR/AGAMUDAYAR, 22, 158 cms

Professional, Masters in Business Administration. Lives in Kaveripattinam. Father is an affluent Businessmar

with a good net worth. Looking for a compatible and well educated match. Contact: 6366448344 SAIVA PILLAI, 25, 170 cms, Professional, Bachelors in Engineering, Lives in Bangalore. Father is an affluent Businessman with a good net worth. Looking

for a suitable well educated match from the same community. Contact: 6366448345 INTER CASTE/CASTE NO BAR, 31, 160 cms, Professional, pursuing Masters in Medicine. Lives in Chennai. Father is an affluent Businessman with a

good net worth. Looking for a well educated match. Contact: 6366448346

Call for Free Consultation 伐 99629 76000

MUDALIYAR 1971/170CM, Pvt, 25k pm, Seeks Bride. Divorce or Widow, Re-

GAVARA NAIDU, 35, BE, MBA, Bank

Manager, Uthirattathi. Seeks Suitable Educated Bride From Naidu Family. 9443172955 / 9894357655

HINDU, 41, F- SC, M- BC, Bank Ma-

nager. Nationalised Bank seeks edu-

cated and suitable Bride with decent

family, caste no bar, Ct: 9566209636.

BRAHMIN, 40, ASSOCIATE Project Manager HCL Technologies Madurai,

NAIDU 33YRS 178cm B.Tech MBA Archi-

tect,only 3 months Mutual Divorce No Children Well Settled Family. Wanted Bride below 32 Divorcee or

without

HINDU NADAR 32, 6,3" software Engineer, Dubai onsite, 45 lakhs P.A. Makaram-Avittam 2, well settled family

seeks suitable Bride in same caste

73970 87032, Email:

9487851429

Ct:9176667276

mducbe18@gmail.com

Contact:

9487132799

Rs.65,000/- p/m, Caste No Bar. Call : 9385827109

any Brahmin Girl,

Bar 9360297552

BRIDES WANTED

DKV 32/173/73 B.E., Hastam, Manager, Govt bank seeks bride from edu- (PM) seeks Bride - 98845 10869 cated family, 9940507235

RC PILLAI, 27/172cms, MDS (OMFS), 8 Lacs per annum doing Ph.D., seeks suitable Bride. Contact: 9443126627

1985/175CM. IT. 25 Lakhs PA. Chennai. Father Doctor. Seeks well educated bride. WhatsApp: 9629012248 SARYUPARIN BRAHMIN. 28/5'8" B.Tech NIT, Soft. Eng. Gorakhpur UP. Contact 7565891919

RELIGION NO Bar. Alliance invited for Christian boy, 31/170cm, Management professional, BTech, MBA, working in Govt. service, residing at Trivandrum. Father Advocate, mother retired Goemployee.

INTERCASTE NAIR Boy 1st Marriage Age35, PVT Bank Legal Manager. Own House No Brokers Ct: 9840699500

DEVENDRA KULA velalar 33, BE/MS working in TESLA USA seeks tamil

CNB Ct: 7904784857/7904822195 US WORKING smart Handsome Boy 30/ 6" Needs Good looking working bride based in USA 9840847736

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED Gavara Naidu 29 Yrs/152 cm B.Tech. (using calipers in both legs with crut-ches for normal walk) 9-10 L, Govt.

Bank, seeks well educated, simple, un

nding Bride. Caste no bar. Ct. 9600661927 SAURASTRA

SOWRASTRA -PAI CAR Hastam Kanni 35 AGE 52, Central Govt. Job. Salary B.Com MBA Pvt Manager Chennai 90K Pm (Ragu Kethu) Deg. Bride 9381725577

31yrs,BE, Muslim, innocent divorcee seeks smart professional unmarried & divorced below 27vrs 9003173041 9444719042, 04142-289042

Hindu Nadar, Anusham - Viruchigan 25vrs/6ft Fair Good Looking ech SWE at ZOHO Chennai, Groot father is Govt Doctor with good reputation, Seeks Hindu Nadar, Fair, Good Looking bride What's app: 9786762596, selvan.thisai@ amail.com.

BRAHMIN VADAKALAI Srivathsa Pooradam 49/178 Fair Wkg as HR Head Govt Organisation 2.20L PM Looking Bride Remarriage Wout Looking Bride Re child Ct:9321145659

WE ARE looking for a BRAHMIN GIRI or Any Veg. Caste Girl for our SON whose Qual: M. Com, 5ft 8" and fair. Mob: 8527903874 / 9539244401.

TAMIL IYER Ashtasahasram Haridha Gothram Ayilyam 31/180 Fair Hand some B.Tech MS (USA) S/W Develope IBM Cloud Austin Texas invites equally qualified USA employed Alliance sub sect no bar. Whatsapp 9176943590

MUDALIYAR, 29YRS 175cms, Father in to Business, Chennai. Family is af-fluent. Looking for a compatible and well educated Affluent bride from any community. Ct: 99406 44309

SENGUNTHA MUDALIAR BE(EEE Age:31,Suddha Jhatakam Natchatram: Anusham, Rasi:Virutchigam, Project HINDU, DIVORCEE, 55 years, young Look, Govt.Officer, Seeks, Independent, Broad minded Lady, 42-50, CNB. Engineer, Work:Rivadh. Saudi Arabia Salary:Two Lakhs. CT:94423-52011.

> SCAD / 38 / 175 cm / BE / Fair / Chennai settled / Sr. SW Engineer in Australia / innocent divorcee / mutual seeks suitable unmarried / equal bride around 30 yrs caste no bar CT: 7550059856 ISRO'S SCIENTIST, Hindu: SC-AD, 36

years, M.tech, salary 1.2 LPM, Sud-hajathakam: Simmam–Magam, We ex-pect the bride from the appropri-ate horoscope, Trichy. CASTE NO HINDU, AGE:29, Kongu velalar Gounder Chadayam, Ragu Kethu dosam, Lead Engineer, HCL, Chennai Well Coimbatore.Ct: 94875 BAR - 7418084180 / 9443158169

GROUP A officer 55 needs bride ISAI VELLALAR 26,170cm, well settled MNC 12L PA Seeks suitable Edu.Fair working Girl (s/w) CNB TAMIL, PILLAI, 33,176,fair hand

some B.Tech, MBA from premier in stitute working in Mumbai, 15L per annum seeking a good–looking working girl from a well-to-do family 9894352794 HINDU, SC (AD), 29, Handsome, M.E.

HINDU,SC (AD), CNB. DOB: Dec 89. Graduate, working in MNC, 9 LPA, B.E., M.S (France). Working in Franseeks employed bride from decent ce. Seeks French nationality girl/ family. Groom's parents both are ce. Seeks French nationality girl/ family. Groom's parents both are Working in France or abroad/Doctor or Class–I officers in State Govern-M.Arch in India. Interested Contact: ment service well settled in Chen-This PDF as originally uploaded to Brills Express Official (https://t.me/The_Hindu_Express) before anyone else. Don't forget to join backup channel @Thehindu000

38 Years, KONGU VELLALAR, M. Sc IT, UK 8 Years, Phone Contact: 9384900519 Sride Telugu speaking 8754580155/ Girl. No Demands. Ct: 9790703195

9443191812-BALIJA NAIDU 24/155/MA not working seeks well educated well settled groom. Caste No Bar Contact

KAMMA NAIDU Telugu Girl 24/160 B.Tech Fair and Good Looking em-ployed in Chennai Seeks Alliance Same Community Boy Preferably Ca-reer Oriented in India. Send Bioda-

NAIDU 29 / 170 cm, Fair Good Looking,MDS in SRMC,Seeks Suitable Groom from Well Settled Family 9840391031

ta to ravi gkfam@gmail.com

TELUGU

SUITABLE GROOM required for Balija Naidu, fair girl,5'4, 24, B.Tech, M.B.A, Adv Dip. German language, employed, CNB, 9611970123,

9880936466.

groom . C 9445503907

GROOMS WANTED ELITE (NAIDU) 22/M.E (own 4 Petrol Bunk Chennai) Bich family Seeks Groom Ph –98845 10761

URDU

SMU DAUGHTER, fair, 28 years, 155cm, M.Phil., working. Parents seek suitable, professionally qualified and settled groom under years with clean hal aghouse022@gmail.com, 9884587114

SMU . Divorce Girl M. E. 33/174.Namazi seeks pious divorce Groom min graduate decent job, within without 8939447800, khader090837@gmail.com

URDU MUSLIM, 38yrs Divorcee, Govt. Asst Prof, Fair, Issueless. Seeking Chennai Based Groom. 9025067019

URDU SPEAKING Bride, Pious, Family Oriented, Graduate, Very Fair, 24, 5'3", seeks Like-minded groom, Chennai settled. WhatsApp 94444

9500145075 PILLAI AGE 34, Qul:BE,MS, Bank Employee Divorce Any BC, Unmarried Bride Wanted Thanjavur Dist

BALIJA NAIDU 36yrs, Aswini, B.E., MUDALIAR, HANDSOME, 28/170, MBBS, MS, Reputed Hospital, 12Lac.PA, Affluent, CNB. 7299576644, 7299576666

HANDSOME BOY, 29Yrs 185cm.M.S in U.S.& Employed in U.S.A for 4Yrs, Now working in Dubai last 9months & well settled family.Star Hastham & BC.Seeks Educated Hindu Bride (Cast No Bar) for their only Son.9840041041

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MUDALIAR 38yrs High Status Innocent divorcee govt 12LPA. Simple educated bride FC,BC,MBC. 8778934848

IYER VADULAM Uthiram Nov 77 BSc (MCA) MNC 22 LPA .Seek any unmar-ried Brahmin Girl Ct 9841071359

VADAKALAI, 48, Sadayam employed. Seek any Brahmin Girl. Contact: 9444740544 / 9444958511 IYER, VADAMA, 40YEAR. Self Employed

Chartered Accountant. Right leg slightly short. He can walk and drive vehicle normally. Need suit-able Bride. Call 9994934568 IYER VADAMA Native Trichy 42, Fair Fmloved in Chennai, Clean Fair, Emloyed in Chennai, Clear Habits, Only Son. 9791453205

57YS TAMIL Iyer Bachelor Chennai Healthy Elec. 40K Sks blw 51ys Pure Veg. Only. Widow Slight Defect Ok. Divorce pl. Excuse – 9840846524

IYER ATHREYA Swathi 29/176 B. E.,MBA., working in Chennai asAsst Manager Manipal Group of Tech., Salary 95k p.m. seeking suit-able girl. Pref. working in Bank/ Reputed Firms/ Co. Ct: 9487006058

Mudaliar 33/176 PhD(US). Lecturer in UK(Citizen). May relocate to US. Ct: 9840590028.

Alliance invited from family oriented South Indian Brahmin girls (employed or not) for Telugu Brahmin Boy, B.Com, M.B.A., Age 33, 165cm em ployed as Manager with bank preser ly at Bangalore. Contact:8148281195

NAIDU (OWN Colleges) 29/BE, Own Exports & Chitfunds, Etc., Very well settled Groom seeks Rich Bride. Ct: 9884510761

KAMMAVAR NAIDU 27, 174 cm, MS (Engg) working in USA H1B Visa seeks bride studying/working in USA from Naidu CT.9442026567 or with control of the control of kvr1956@gmail.com

NAIDU. DIVORCEE, 46/BE/IT. MNC

Chennai seeks suitable ct:ddnaidu0202@gmail.com, 9087296964

PGDM from IIM working in Central govt P.S.U in Hyderabad. Ct: 9445412753

VISWAKARMA, 33 Yrs, B.Tech., MS, Mirugashirisham, Rishabam, 18L per annum seeks suitable bride. Contact: +91 8825530897

Well Settled 46 Yrs Telugu Brahmin, 6000 Niyogi, Bharadhwajasa Widower with 7 Yrs Son for Remarriage required from Decent Family. Contact: +91 8825530897

Well Settled 46 Yrs Telugu Brahmin, 6000 Niyogi, Bharadhwajasa Widower with 7 Yrs Son for Remarriage required from Decent Family. Contact: -94402577760

9849252220/ 9866252220

SMU INVITES alliance for their son 27/183 B Tech (NIT/CSE) employed in USA Bride should be an excellent character–based/Religious– minded/Educated, family–oriented pretty girl. Send details to liadqil@yahoo.com.

SUNNI MUSLIM Urdu, New York employed, 35, 5'11", engineer Columbia University alumnus, only son of professional family, seeks bride. Contact

SMU 31Y 6ft khula no issue B.E own Busines 2L PM Chennai seeks Gud Looking Bride CT 9043572940

8056265940

SMU PARENTS seek suitable alliance for son 30/ BE(CS) working in Ban-glore. 8754583349/ nayeem48@

vahoo.com

MARRIAGE BUREAU MUSLIM ALLIANCE only. Married/ Unmarried. Best Rib 7200176211

8050010888

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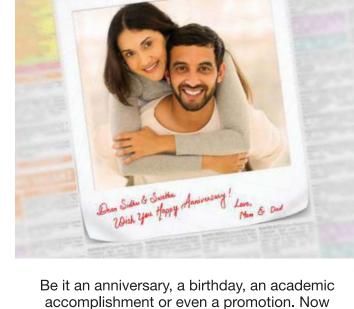
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ualified, well settled groom from decent family, Vellalar community & has never been married before, contact :8072553100,

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AUSTRALIA SETTLED and Australian citizens doctor parents (inter caste Muslim hindu) seeks alliance from sui-

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table doctors / dentists for their only

anandtr1972@gmail.com NAIR GIRL Revathi 27/153. BE Chennai settled, employed, seeks Chennai settled Nair family. 9500012855 Nair girl from TVM, 27/157, BTech/ MBA (IIMB), MNC in Chennai, Seeking compatible alliance Ph:9947718521

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HINDU NADAR, 30/154. BE. Software

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HINDU TAMIL Pallan / 44 / BE Comp / Works in Public Sector Bank seeks from the same caste equal

age, Computer Engg. foreign deputa-tion employment delayed marriage proposal Ct. 9444752894, Chennai

bar. 9283433069/

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Beautiful, B.Arch, Chennai,

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tact: 9841182514

Advocate Business Defence

Finance/ Banking Government/ Quasi-Govt.

Cosmopolitan

Language no bar. Alliance invited from nai. US settled boys. Contact 9895824803 Ct:9940283379

Engg Bangalore, 80k/pm, Pooram, Seeks suitable groom. Ct: AP, WG Dist well Settled, Brahmin 34Yrs N. Pushyame / Slim Good look fair M.Sc.,- AU (Divorcee) Rq any 9442126376 HINDU PARAIAR, 28, B.Tech, Govt. Bank Officer seeks Boy from same caste, Govt / Bank, Madurai Base.

Christian faith. Whatsapp profile: SMU GIRL 24 vrs/160 cm MBBS prepar-169, Master in UK, Running Own Educational Institution, Elite Family

Contact: 9443380196, 9442202555

SOZHIA VELLALA 40/167 Uthratadi BE MBA empld SW Chennai Divorcee no Chennai Settled. Seek Groom from U.S, Canada, UK, Chennai, Banga-lore, Delhi, Mumbai. Ph: 9962959559 encumbrance seeks educated groom Subsect no 9840329160 BRIDEGROOM WANTED hindu vannivar 26, FAIR, M.S. in U.S. Working, Affluent, seeks well settled groom. CNB. 9489935653



Delhi reports 76 new cases, one death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Capital reported 76 fresh infections and one death in the last 24 hours, according to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

There was a reduction of six active cases with 81 recoveries and 81,451 tests having been conducted bringing the total tally of COVID-19 cases in Delhi to 14,35,030 with 14,09,226 recoveries and 25,012 deaths since the pandemic began.

There were currently 792 active cases in the city even as the total number of vaccine doses been administered reached 88,10,952 with 1,31,143 doses having been administered on July 9, as per the Delhi government's vaccination bulletin.

Vaccine stock low

According to the government, 95,341 doses administered were first doses while 35,802 econd doses were administered on Wednesday. The bulletin also stated that the Capital currently had less than a days' stock of vaccine doses re-

AAP and BJP trade barbs over inquiry report on 'DTC scam'

Sisodia says probe exonerates govt., BJP claims 'great wrong has been caught'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and the Delhi BJP locked horns on Saturday over a report by a committee constituted by Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal to investigate alleged irregularities in the procurement of 1,000 low-floor buses by the Delhi Transport Corporation

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the BJP had lost face yet again after levelling allegations of corruption to the tune of ₹5,000 crore against the Delhi government "continuously for the last three months".

Former Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly and BJP Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta, who filed the complaint that led to the formation of the committee, shared portions of the findings on social media. He added that the panel's recommendation of cancelling the maintenance tender worth ₹3,500 crore and issuing a fresh one in its place proved



The BJP has alleged irregularities in maintenance tender worth ₹3,500 crore. •FILE PHOTO

that a scam had taken place. "The investigation committee of the BJP-led Central government has not been able to find any flaws or irregularities in the purchase of buses. The report of the inquiry committee has made it clear that the government led by Arvind Keiriwal in Delhi is honest and the Delhi BJP leaders in the opposition are trying to malign the image of the government," Mr.

"The Delhi government is working day and night for the people but instead of learning from it, BJP leaders are spreading hatred and lies. They are stopping the good work in public interest.

BJP demands resignation The BIP, however, demanded a probe by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) in the alleged ₹5,000-crore 'DTC bus scam' and also sought the resignation of Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot and the removal of the responsible Transport Department

BJP leaders should be ash-

amed and they should come

in front of the public to apol-

ogise," he added.

Mr. Gupta said there were only two companies which came forward with regard to bus purchase. The Delhi government also decided that the companies can bid for bus maintenance as well.

"It is now evident the same two companies supplying buses will also get the maintenance job which would be worth ₹3,500 crore. In this way, the government in the name of buses purchase and their maintenance has committed fraud worth ₹5000 crore. The ACB must be allowed to probe the case," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the opposition had "caught the government in the middle of doing a great wrong". "As DTC has its own depots, workshops and employees, why keep an outside agency for maintenance? Now, even the committee report is saying the tender of ₹3,500 crore for maintenance should be issued afresh," Mr. Bidhuri said.

Pink Line metro curbs from July 12-15

Delhi Metro will be undertaking OHE interlinking work

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Saturday said that services on the Pink Line will be restricted between July 12 and 15 to interlinking undertake work of overhead equipment (OHE) on the yet to be operational corridor between Mayur Vihar Pocket 1 and Trilokpuri Sanjay Lake metro stations.

In a statement issued, the

DMRC said, "Metro services will not be available between IP Extension and Trilokpuri and between Mayur Vihar Phase I and Mayur Vihar Pocket-1 stations. Also, Mandawali West Vinod Nagar, East Vinod Nagar Mayur Vihar Phase-II, Trilokpuri and Mayur Vihar Pocket-1 stations will remain closed in the above said period."

Officials added that the first and last train timings from the modified terminal

stations - Mayur Vihar Phase-I and IP Extension will remain unchanged during this period.

Long waiting time

Meanwhile, the DMRC said that with social distancing and other safety norms in place, the average waiting time at the busy Rajiv Chowk metro station went up to over 50 minutes for over three-and-a-half hours on Saturday.

One held after police bust factory manufacturing duplicate bike tyres

The accused used to sell them under fake brand name

STAFF REPORTER

Delhi Police on Saturday said that a factory manufacturing duplicate tyres of a brand has been busted in Outer North Delhi's Siraspur village. The accused has been arrested, they said.

DCP (Outer North) Rajiv Ranjan Singh said that the accused has been identified as Mohammed Akram (41), a resident of Azad Market.

The police said that one

Neerai Kumar approached the police and complained that a factory in Siraspur was manufacturing duplicate two-wheeler tubes of a brand. A team raided the factory where a huge quantity of duplicate tyres were found along with packaging material and dyes. Akram was then arrested.

Mr. Ranjan said that during interrogation, Akram told the police that he had been in the business of trading of two-wheeler and fourwheeler tubes and his brother Sultan had a shop in tyre market in the Capital. After demolition of the market, Akram started his own manufacturing unit in a rented godown in Khera village but finally switched to the present location.

Akram revealed that he used to sell the duplicate products under a fake brand name in Delhi-NCR," Mr. Ranjan said.

Fake call centre busted in Rohini, 24 arrested

They promised cheap phones to victims

STAFF REPORTER

A fake call centre has been busted and 24 people, including 15 women, have been arrested from Rohini, the police said on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said the owners of the call centre, Ramkumar (34), Shyam Kumar (35) and Govind (22), all residents of Sultanpuri, are in custody.

The police received information on Friday regarding a fake call centre operating in Sector 7, Rohini. The accused allegedly duped people on the pretext of offering them mobiles at cheap rates

through a lottery scheme. "Police raided the call centre and nabbed the accused. During inquiry, it was tims belonged to northeastern States," Mr. Tayal said.

Talking about the modus operandi, Mr. Tayal said the accused used to collect mobile numbers from the Internet and randomly made calls They used to tell people that their number had been selected for a lottery scheme in which they could get a mobile phone worth ₹17,000 on payment of just ₹4,500.

In order to gain the customers' trust, they used the post office as the logistics service provider.

"However, instead of sending mobiles, they would send cheap wallets, belt and soaps," the officer said.

Police have also raided the warehouse where the accused allegedly kept the articles and found packets that

'Haryana solely responsible for water crisis hovering over Delhi'

Supply to Delhi BJP chief's house will be cut if rightful portion of water is not released in 24 hours: AAP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) Vice Chairman Raghav Chadha on Saturday alleged that the Haryana government was "solely responsible" for the water crisis hovering over Delhi. Haryana's "careless and

apathetic" behavior may lead to water scarcity in New Delhi Municipal Council and VIP areas including the PM's residence, the Supreme Court, Delhi High Court and major ministries. Water supply in parts of central, west, and south Delhi will also be affected, he warned.

Mr. Chadha said the Haryana government had stopped water that is released into the Yamuna for Delhi's needs and was providing 120 MGD less, which had decreased production of

water in Delhi by 100 MGD.



DJB chief Raghav Chadha said many areas across Delhi may face water shortage soon. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

Chandrawal WTP has come down from 90 MGD to 55, at Wazirabad WTP from 135 to 80 MGD and at Okhla WTP from 20 to 15 MGD, he said.

The daily water production in Delhi had come down from 245 MGD to 150-145 MGD, despite the Upper Yamuna River Board having directed Haryana to provide an additional 150 cusecs of wa-

"It is the legal responsibility of the Haryana government to provide water to Delhi as per Supreme Court orders and the Memorandum of Understanding," Mr.

Chadha said. Delhi BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana, citing data regarding water supply received from Haryana, accused Mr. Chadha of lying rana government had not stopped the supply of water to the Capital.

Earlier in the day, North East Delhi BJP MP Manoj Tiwari held a 'water panchayat' in north Delhi's Malkaganj where, the BJP claimed, residents were facing grave water shortage for the last three months. "The Haiderpur plant re-

ceived 235.16 MGD daily in 2021 compared to 233 MGD in 2020 from Haryana. Bawana in 2021 received 20.99 MGD, up from 19.61 MGD in 2020. Nangloi 43.26, up from 43.10 MGD. Dwarka 51.33 MGD, up from 50.51 MGD," Mr. Khurana added.

AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj said if the BJP-led Haryana government does not release Delhi's rightful portion of water in 24 hours, the connection of

chief Adesh Gupta's residence would be stopped. "The people of Delhi have

decided that they can give 24 hours to BJP to restart and supply water which is their staunch right. If this does not happen, we shall stop the connection of water supply in Delhi BJP's Chief Adesh Gupta's house," he said.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said Mr. Bhardwaj's statements were a "melodramatic reaction" to cover the Delhi government's "failure to provide proper water supply".

"In fact the threat to cut Mr. Gupta's water connection seems to have been copied by AAP from BJP's recent statement that if the Delhi Jal Board fails to restore proper water supply we will cut the supply to the house of the Jal Board Chair-

NGT directs panel to look into tanneries

STAFF REPORTER

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed a newly constituted committee to submit a report on pollution caused by slaughter houses and tanneries in Ghaziabad.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson **Tustice** Adarsh Kumar Goel noted several shortcomings in the operation of the units, including illegal extraction of groundwater in over-exploited zones.

The committee will have four members and they will visit the sites within a month and prepare a report thereafter.

The State Pollution Control Board will be the nodal agency for coordination and compliance, said

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DIVISION (PHE) KULGAM ازدفةرايك رئيكېلوانجينرسپيشل يي ا يج اي اويژن كلگام E- NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS m@gmail.com Telephone/Fax:01931-295109)
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he cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) shall be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasu Challan/Receipt in favour Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Kulga

S.	Name of work	Estimated	Class of	Earnest	Cost of	Time for	Head of
No.		cost	contract	money	Tender	completion	account
				-	document	,	
1	Retrofitting of water supply scheme Kachohalan Bumbrath for providing 100% FHTC by way of providing, fixing and laying of pipes and renovation of intake chamber, spring protection, construction of 0.05 lacs gallons capacity RCC dome type SR and construction of chain link fencing around structures and successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance period of three years		AAY	Bid secu- rity form to be sworn on affidavit duly nota- rized be attached with the Bid	2000/=	60days	JJM
2	with DLP period of one year under JJM Retrofitting of WSS TP Ist old and providing 100% FHTC by way of providing, laying and fitting of pipes, revamping of SSFP at Heind and successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance period of	88.73	AAY		2000/=	60days	JJM

Position of AA: Accorded Position of Funds:- Available
The bidders shall have to upload the following documents with their bids:

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with the bid

2. Scanned copies of regd card duly renwed
3. Scanned copies of GST registration with latest GSTR-3B & PAN/ITR/TDS 4. Experience/undertaking

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any Bill of quantities (BOQ), set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website: <u>WWW.jktenders.gov.in</u> s per the Schedule of dates given belov

I Publishing date of NIT Download start date
Bid submission start date

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: The tenderer should in his own interest inspect and examine the site, its surroundings/topography, nature of ground, climatic conditions, accessibility or other relevant information at his own expenses and responsibility to satisfy himself before tendering for the advertised work. The bidder will have to execute each part of the work i.e. Civil / Electro-Mechanical part under the close supervision of the respective Engineer- incharges of Civil & Mechanical wings In-charge of the Scheme. If L1 fails to start the work within 15 days of the issuance of letter

of intent or allotment, whichever is earlier, the department shall allot the work to the other willing Lowest bidder like L2, L3, L4 debarring the Contractor for a period of two years for participating in the e- Nit's issued by the Executive Engineer PHE Division Kulgam/kmr. PHE Department Srinagar.

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If L1 falls to start the work within 15 days of the issuance of letter of intent or allotment, whichever is earlier, th department shall allot the work to the other willing Lowest bidder like L2, L3, L4 and EMD of the lowest bidder including the additional Security Performance shall be forfeited, besides debarring the Contractor for a period of the contractor for a peri two years for participating in the e- Nit's issued by the kmr. PHE Department Srinagar. or and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir

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DIPK-4394/21



extended for third time

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM M. Sivasankar, former Principal Secretary to Kerala Chief Minister Pinaray Vijayan, will remain suspended from service for a further period of six months. The embattled bureaucrat had come under a cloud after being embroiled in the politically stormy UAE diplomatic channel gold smuggling case last year.

Video of DKS 'slapping' party worker goes viral

Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar found himself at the centre of a controversy after a video purportedly showing him slapping a fellow party worker walking next to him went viral. Mr. walking surrounded by party workers, suddenly hits one of them jostling next to him for keeping his hand on his

CPI(M) panel to probe Ambalappuzha fiasco

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has formed a two-member party commission to investigate the "organisational limitations' that hobbled the Left Democratic Front (LDF) Assembly election campaign in the Ambalappuzha constituency in Alappuzha.

Sabarimala temple to open on July 16

PATHANAMTHITTA

The Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala will be opened on July 16 for the five-day monthly puja during the Malavalam month of Karkkidakam. Pilgrims will be allowed to enter the temple from July 17 morning. In view of the COVID-19 situation, only 5,000 devotees will be allowed darshan on a day.

Weapons seized in Bengaluru jail raid

Parallel searches at homes of habitual offenders yield knives, machetes, drugs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Early morning raids on Saturday by the Bengaluru City Police, including the Central Crime Branch (CCB), in various parts of the city including at Central Jail, Parappana Agrahara, led to the recovery of weapons such as knives and daggers, marijuana and mobile phones and SIM cards from inmates.

'The raids were carried out after we received credible information that several gangsters and rowdies were carrying out activities from inside the prison," said a source. Several teams along with dog squads carried out the search and made the sei-

'No harassment

political leaders'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The incentives offered by

the Telangana government

exceeded the promises

made by the governments of

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Guj-

arat and Maharashtra, the

Kitex Group said in a com-

munication, explaining its

decision to invest ₹1,000

crore in the Kakatiya Mega

Textiles Park in Telangana.

K.T. Rama Rao, the Indus-

tries Minister of Telangana,

had promised that the indus-

trial unit would not be ha-

rassed by local bodies, polit-

ical leadership or State

government agencies, said

the communication. The Te-

langana government had

from local bodies,

The police were also probing the possible involvement of prison officials who failed to check the trade of narcotics

Another cause for concern is the number of mobile phones seized despite jammers in place. "We are analysing the mobile phones and SIM cards to ascertain illegal activities," said Sandeep Patil, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime).

Simultaenously, the city police also carried out massive search operations and raided residences of rowdies and habitual offenders in the city. "We have recovered a huge number of lethal weapons and rounded up several habitual offenders. Enqui-

Telangana's offer exceeded

that of other States, says Kitex

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Pinarayi Vijayan has said

'planned move' to 'shame

destination. Mr. Vijayan was

backdrop of Kitex MD Sabu

promised all help, it said.

The Kitex team, compris-

ing Sabu M. Jacob, managing

director of Kitex Garments,

was flown to Telangana by a

private jet on Friday by the

Telangana government. The

team is slated to return to

Kerala on Sunday, the com-

pany press release added.

that there seems to be a

and brand' Kerala as an

investment unfriendly

speaking against the

M. Jacob's national

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister

'Bid to tarnish Kerala's image'



Big haul: Police recovering weapons, marijuana and mobile phones from inmates of Parappana Agrahara jail.

ries are being conducted," said a senior police officer.

Residences searched In Whitefield, the police conducted operations on the re-

attention-grabbing move to

shift his investment from

Kerala to Telengana, citing

political harassment by the

Mr. Vijayan said any

attempt to put a stain on

image tantamount to

trespass against the

of the people.

Kerala's investment-friendly

developmental aspirations

P.T. Thomas, Congress

MLA, said here on Saturday

that he stood by his allega-

tions against the Kitex

The MLA had alleged that

the dyeing, bleaching and

printing units of the compa-

ny were polluting the Ka-

LDF government.

sidences of 116 rowdies in their jurisdiction and recovered 2.5 kg of marijuana and lethal weapons such as daggers

"Three rowdies have been booked under NDPS Act while 15 have been booked under Section 110 (security for good behaviour from habitual offenders) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)," D. Devraj, DCP, Whitefield said.

Two murders

These raids were conducted in the backdrop of two brazen murders in the city in broad daylight at public places over the last two weeks financier Madan and former civic councillor Rekha Kadi-

The police have also been cracking down on the sale of drugs in the city, increasing border checks and inspecting premises of private courier firms that are often used to ship consignments of nar-

Doyen of Ayurveda P.K. Warrier passes away

He took Arya Vaidya Sala to great fame

STAFF REPORTER MALAPPURAM

Doven of Ayurveda and managing trustee of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala P.K. Warrier died at Kottakkal on Saturday.

The Arya Vaidya Sala had celebrated his 100th birthday in the first week of June. Dr. Warrier had reco-

vered from COVID-19 two months ago. His health had weakened in the last few

Dr. Warrier took Arya Vaidya Sala to heights of global fame by carefully synthesising the traditional Ayurveda with modernity. By introducing modern practices and methods to Ayurveda, Dr. Warrier earned respect

In 68 years of service as managing trustee of Arya



Vaidya Sala, he was instrumental in branching out the 119-year-old across the world. Arya Vaidya Sala has 26 branches and more than 1,000 authorised dealers across the world.

The country honoured Dr. Warrier with Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan



Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Saurashtra & Kutch, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Punjab, Delhi, Bihar, Telangana, Rayalaseema, Yanam and Karaikal

CITY	KAIN	IVIAX	IVITIN	CITY	KAIN	IVI
Agartala	3	33.2	27.4	Kozhikode	66	26
Ahmedabad		38.3	28.7	Kurnool	2	32
Aizawl	45	28.0	22.4	Lucknow		37
Allahabad		37.2	28.2	Madurai		32
Bengaluru	0.2	26.8	21.3	Mangaluru	68.2	28
Bhopal		32.0	25.8	Mumbai		28
Bhubaneswar.		34.4	25.5	Mysuru		27
Chandigarh		38.1	30.4	New Delhi		39
Chennai	4	33.5	24.4	Patna	0.5	35
Coimbatore	0.2	28.9	21.7	Port Blair	27	25
Dehradun	0.6	33.3	26.2	Puducherry	0.8	29
Gangtok	12	22.2	18.7	Pune		29
Goa	10	29.4	24.0	Raipur		33
Guwahati	20	32.0	26.6	Ranchi	14	30
Hubballi		25.0	21.0	Shillong	0.2	23
Hyderabad	0.4	29.8	24.0	Shimla		
Imphal				Srinagar		
Jaipur		38.4	30.6	Thiruvananthapura	m 109	26
Kochi				Tiruchi		30
Kohima				Vijayawada		
Kolkata	0.2	33.2	28.2	Visakhapatnam		35
(Rainfall data	in mm;	temper	ature in	Celsius)		

.90 .109 .116 .25 ...32 ...37

4.00 p.m., Fatehabad, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 162 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Davanagere, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 19

502: 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 NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by

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

reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to 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

NORTH & EAST

Doctors in Punjab to go on 3-day strike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Perturbed over the Punjab government's "indifferent attitude" towards their demands, doctors in government hospitals have announced three-day strike from July 12.

The doctors have been protesting against the State's Sixth Pay Commission recommendations on delinking of Non-Practising Allowance (NPA) from the basic pay and reduction in the NPA from 25% to 20% among other demands.

The call for strike has been given by the Joint Government Doctors Coordination Committee. JGDCC convener Dr. Inderveer Gill said the agitation is to the save the public healthcare system. "We will oppose any move of the government that is directed to destroy it. The government is pursuing a policy of evasion instead of resolving the issue of NPA."

There is breakdown of governance in U.P.

Retired civil servants raise concern over 'violation of rule of law'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A group of retired civil servants have written an open letter to raise concerns over what they termed was the "breakdown of governance" and "blatant violation of the rule of law" in Uttar Pradesh.

The letter, signed by 87 members of the Constitutional Conduct Group and endorsed by 236 others, including Justice (retired) A.P. Shah, activists and academics, stated: "We note with mounting alarm that the present ruling regime in U.P. has ushered in a model of governance which swerves further and further away from the values of the Constitution and the rule of law with each passing day."

The letter stated that detentions, criminal charges,

and recoveries were commonly used against those who exercised their right to protest. It added that the case of Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan, who was arrested while on his way to report on the case of gang rape of a 19-year-old Dalit girl in Hathras, was particularly egregious. The letter highlighted the number of encounter killings from 2017 to 2020 and termed "encounter injuries and killings as official hate targeting".

"From 2017 to 2020, 124 alleged criminals were shot dead in 6,476 "encounters", according to data compiled and released by the U.P. police to the media. The word "encounters" has been used to also include the infliction of serious injuries caused, for example, by shooting a person in both knees and

leaving him disabled for life," the letter said, adding that Muslims, Dalits and other backward castes were killed predominantly.

The letter also flagged the State's handling of COVID-19 during the second wave, in which sights of "dead bodies floating in the Ganga" were

"The world bore witness to the catastrophe that the people of U.P. had to endure owing to the failure of the government to act in time. Reports from crematoria show that across districts, deaths are being massively undercounted in Uttar Pradesh," it said.

The group called for an end to arbitrary detentions and torture as well as the policies of institutionalisation and legitimisation of vigilantism.

Police encounters continue in Assam

Opposition alleges State police has turned 'trigger-happy' under the new CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amid the Opposition parties decrying the rising number of police encounters under the Himanta Biswa Sarma government, one more murder accused was killed and two alleged ganja smugglers were injured as they "attempted to escape from custody" in separate incidents in Assam on Saturday.

With the fresh casualties, at least 13 suspected insurgents and criminals have been killed and dozens, including rape accused and cattle smugglers, injured in police encounters in the State since the second BJPled government assumed power two months ago.

The latest incidents took place in Chirang and Kokrajhar districts, both part of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). A person accused of the murder of a homeguard



CM Himanta Biswa Sarma •

was killed while attempting to escape from police custody in Chirang district.

"Within 24 hrs Chirang Police cracked the case of brutal murder of Homeguard Eyad Ali. 3 persons arrested & the murder weapons were recovered. In an attempt to flee from Police custody, escaping accused Abdul Khalek sustained bullet injuries and later succumbed to his injuries," Chirang district police tweeted.

In another incident, Kokrajhar district police intersmuggling 840 kg of ganja worth over ₹2 crore, at Srirampur near the Assam-West Bengal inter-State border. "While recovering anoth-

cepted a truck allegedly

er 10 kg of ganja, which the accused had hidden along the highway, the duo attacked the police personnel & tried to escape from the custody. In order to prevent it, Police team resorted to control firing, in which both the accused were grievously injured," the Kokrajhar district police said in a Twitter

On July 6, a suspected drug peddler from Manipur was critically injured when he had allegedly tried to escape from police custody near Rani in Kamrup

The rising number of encounters in the last two months has whipped up a political furore in Assam with the Opposition alleging that the police has turned

"trigger-happy" under the Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-led regime.

Justifying the series of encounters since he assumed power, Mr. Sarma had on July 5 said that shooting at criminals "should be the pattern" if they attempt to escape from custody or try to snatch guns from the police to fire at them.

State Congress chief Ripun Bora has said that Mr. Sarma's statement has dangerous ramifications of turning Assam into a 'police state' by making law enforcers trigger-happy and disregard human rights.

Raijor Dal chief and Sibsagar MLA Akhil Gogoi has also alleged that "open killing" by the police is going on in the name of encounters. Assam Jatiya Parishad general secretary Jagadish Bhuyan has alleged that the surge in encounters was a ploy to "silence" the lower-rung criminals to protect their bosses.

People will pull down BJP govts., says Vivek Bansal

The government, which has harassed farmers, is not a protector but predator: Haryana Cong. in-charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Haryana Congress in-charge Vivek Bansal on Saturday said the people suffering from inflation, poverty and unemployment would pull the Central and State government down, adding that the government, which had harassed and exploited the peasants, was not a "protector" but "predator".

Protest against inflation Mr. Bansal was addressing a gathering of the party workers and the public in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri along with State party president



Kumari Selja and senior leadest against the rise in prices

er Kiran Chaudhary as part of Congress' State-wide prot-

of petrol and diesel and cooking gas.

ken as part of the demonstration through the city, which included bullock carts and mule carts along with a large number of cycles. Attacking the Modi government for price rise, Mr. Bansal alleged that the country was suffering due to inflation, but Prime Minister Modi didn't have ears to listen to grievances. Referring to the second wave of Covid. Mr. Bansal said there was no oxygen for patients, there were no beds in hospitals and helpless people were dying on the streets, but Mr. Modi's focus was only on the

A procession was also ta-

tactics to grab power in West Bengal.

Ms. Selja said the Congress would become the voice of the people suffering from inflation, poverty, corruption and unemployment. "Will fight the battle of the masses. The public is looking at us. The next government will be of the people," said Ms. Selja.

Ms. Choudhary said the large gathering was a clear indication that the government had lost the trust of the people. "The government has ruined the poor, the farmers and the work-

BJP expels Punjab ex-Minister for 6 years for 'anti-party' acts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHANDIGARH

The Punjab BJP on Saturday expelled former State Minister Anil Joshi from the party for six years. The action against Mr. Joshi came after he gave his reply to a showcause notice issued by the BJP's State unit for his "antiparty" activities. According to the notice,

Mr. Joshi had been making statements against the Centre, the party's central leadership and policies. Mr. Joshi was expelled on the directions of State unit chief Ashwani Sharma, according to a party statement. Mr. Joshi did not give up his stubborn attitude of going

pon State BJP chief Ashwani Sharma, on the recommendations of a disciplinary committee, expelled him from the party for six years, the statement said. Earlier, in a two-page rep-

against the party, whereu-

ly to the show-cause notice, Mr. Joshi said he never spoke against the Centre's farm laws and asked the State party chief if it was indiscipline to talk about farmers. The former Amritsar North MLA asserted that he always spoke about the party's interests. "I neither spoke against the Centre's farm laws nor against the Central leaders," Mr. Joshi replied.

Virbhadra Singh cremated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh was cremated with full State honours at a royal crematorium in Jogni Bagh near Shimla's Rampur on Saturday afternoon.

His son Vikramaditya Singh performed the last rites around 4.30 p.m. A police contingent gave

the guard of honour and gun salute to the former Chief Minister. Thousands of his well-

wishers gathered at the crematorium to bid adieu to the leader.

India pulls out staff from Kandahar consulate

While the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said the decision to withdraw the staff was due to the CO-VID-19 pandemic, security concerns were believed to be the reason they have not been sent back yet.

Officials say they have been particularly worried about Kandahar, with exit routes limited to the airport, as the Taliban forces have taken control of other key districts close to the city. Last Sunday, the district of Panjwai, less than an hour's drive from Kandahar city, fell to the Taliban fighters.

'There's an increased level of violence in Kandahar and we may possibly see temporary suspension of services by a number of consulates including the Indian consulate," Afghanistan Ambassador to India Farid Mamundzay told *The Hindu* on

'Overstated claims'

However, both Indian and Afghan officials warned against overstating the Taliban claims of territorial gains across Afghanistan at present, pointing out that the ANDSF have been successful in pushing back the Taliban onslaught at many places, and the Taliban has lost many of its fighters in the past few weeks of violence as well. On Friday, Kandahar Governor said Taliban militants had been repelled by security forces when they tried to attack the city's 'District 7'

"Taliban is exaggerating

its claims on territory. They aim to frighten the Afghan people, and through such claims they open a gap of realities, into which they pour fear, terror and uncertainties," Mr. Mamundzay

The MEA declined to comment on the developments, and while it had denied that India had shut down operations at its consulates in Mazar and Kandahar on Thursday, it said the situation was "evolving and

"We are carefully monitoring the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, and its implications on the security and safety of Indian nationals in Afghanistan. Our responses will be calibrated accordingly, depending on how the situation evolves," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said on July 8.

On Saturday, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani lashed out at the Taliban, holding them responsible for the growing violence, and between 200-600 casualties every day, despite the fact that the group's main demand, that the U.S. and NATO troops leave the country, has largely been met.

"Taliban should be asked whom they are fighting for? Who will benefit if Afghanistan is ruined and if Afghans are killed? Are they fighting for Afghanistan, or they want the country to be controlled by others," Mr. Ghani asked during a speech in

Govt. infra spending dropped sharply in Q1

In contrast, private investments sequentially declined by a mere 1.7% in the first quarter of this year, thanks to a significant 45% uptick in manufacturing projects from ₹1.17 lakh crore betprojects ween January and March 2021 to over ₹1.70 lakh crore in the quarter just conclud-

However, about ₹1.1 lakh crore of these private manufacturing investments are related to just four massive including projects, ₹60,000 crore green energy complex announced by Reliance Industries, two PVC units in Gujarat by Adani Enterprises worth ₹29,200 crore and a ₹10,000 crore copper smelter by Vedanta.

Foreign investment projects slipped 95.4% from the previous quarter, with just 17 projects worth ₹3,450.5 crore in Q1 of this year, from 34 projects worth over ₹75,000 crore in the preceding quarter.

"While the flaring up of COVID 2.0 affected economic activities as well as fresh project announcements, the severity was not as much as observed in the first quarter of last year immediately after the national lockdown," said Shashikant Hegde, director and CEO of Projects

"The fall in fresh investments was also because of a sharp fall in announcement of new projects by government agencies – both Central and State. Recognising this, the Finance Ministry

has rightly prodded government agencies to front load their capital expenditure plans," Mr. Hegde added, adding that the timely execution of over 8,000 projects worth ₹153.37 lakh crore listed in the National Infrastructure Pipeline must also be pushed. "That will not only revive the economy but also instil confidence in private companies to expedite their own capex plans, he pointed out.

Public investments in new hospitals rose by 25% between April and June, but the number of projects declined from 85 to just 38, while investments in other community services, including water and sewage projects fell significantly.

With Reliance Industries' and Adani group's mega projects planned in Gujarat, the western State garnered nearly a third of all new investments, over ₹1.08 lakh crore, in the quarter. Maharashtra retained its second position for the second quarter in a row, with ₹43,559 crore of new projects.

The April to June quarter also saw electricity investments falling to nearly a third of the preceding quarter's levels, while investment plans in transport services dropped 55.1%. The National Highways Authority announced only 24 highways worth ₹17,285.74 crore and just eight new railway projects worth ₹55.6 crore were kicked off.

Meghalaya raises concern over Assam Bill

He said the Meghalaya government had already discussed the Assam Bill with cattle-supplying States such as Bihar, Telangana and West Bengal.

"Transportation of cattle from these States to Meghalaya should not be a problem. All steps will be taken from our side to ensure that supply is not hampered because of the law to be passed by the Assam government," Mr. Sangma said, adding that his government would first examine the Assam legislation before any move.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said the proposed legislation would ban the movement of cattle to and from the State primarily to check cattle smuggling to Bangladesh.

Dr. Sarma also said beef should not be consumed in areas where Hindus live and where the animal is worshipped. Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have legislations for the protection of cows.

Chirag taunts Paras on Cabinet berth; says will reclaim party

LJP leader hints at disillusionment with BJP, refuses to comment on HC order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lok Janshakti Party leader Chirag Paswan on Saturday paid a backhanded compliment to estranged uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras by congratulating him on joining the Union Cabinet, which, he said, was a goal the latter achieved by breaking up his own family.

The beleaguered LJP leader, who has suffered a setback with the Delhi High Court rejecting his petition challenging the election of Mr. Paras as the party leader in the Lok Sabha, said: "I am not going to give up my fight to reclaim the party nurtured by my late father Ram Vilas Paswan's blood and

In an oblique reference to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who he suspects of engineering the putsch in the LJP, Mr. Paswan said, "I cannot allow the party to be



Family support: LJP MP Chirag Paswan taking blessings from elder sister before 'Ashirwad Yatra' in Patna on Saturday. • PTI

taken over by those who, because of personal ambitions, are sitting in the lap of people who did not deign to come out with even a tweet on my father's birth anniversary recently."

The Jamui MP also hinted at his disillusionment with the BJP, which has kept silent over the crisis in the LJP despite his unreserved adulation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. When asked by reporters whether he still

considered himself a Hanuman to Mr. Modi, akin to the relationship between the Lord Hanuman and Lord Ram, Mr. Paswan cryptically replied: "This is a question you need to ask when elections are round the corner."

Charm offensive

The 38-year-old, who has been reaching out to the family of his late father from the first marriage, also said, "I feel overwhelmed by emotions. After the death of my father and the betrayal of my family members, many other dear relatives have come out in my support."

In Bihar since Monday as part of his 'Ashirwad Yatra', Mr. Paswan has paid visits to his step-sisters and stepmother in his native district of Khagaria, in a charm offensive to win over his close relations. The former Bollywood actor has in the past been accused of condescension towards them. "I am not a legal expert. So I will not comment much upon the Delhi High Court's order until a meeting with my legal team in the national capital. But I am not going to give up," he asserted.

Mr. Paswan opened a front against the Bihar Chief Minister ahead of the Assembly polls last year, claiming that the people of the State wanted a change in lea-

Don't reveal identity in sexual offence cases: SC

'Privacy of victim should be respected'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has asked trial judges to take care to not reveal the identity of victims in sexual offence cases.

The court said their privacy should be respected.

The observation came in an order dismissing an appeal made against a Chhattisgarh High Court judgment in a case. The apex court noted that the Sessions Judge had mentioned the name of the victim.

"We take exception to the judgment of the Sessions Judge where the name of victim is mentioned. It is well-established that in cases like the present one, the name of the victim is not to be mentioned in any proceeding. We are of the view that all subordinate courts should be careful in future while dealing with such cases," a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan said in the recent order.

Section 228A of the In-

dian Penal Code (IPC) prohibits the publication of the identity of rape victims or any other details which may reveal the identity. The bar, however, does not ostensibly extend to court judgments. However, the apex court, in the State of Karnataka versus Puttaraja case, had said it would be "appropriate" if courts do not name the victim in its records. "True it is, the restriction does not relate to printing or publication of judgment by High Court or Supreme Court. But keeping in view the social object of preventing social victimisation or ostracism of the victim of a sexual offence for which Section 228-A has been enacted, it would be appropriate that in the judgments, be it of this court, High Court or lower court, the name of the victim should not be indicated. We have chosen to describe her as 'victim' in the judgment," the apex court said in Putta-

BJP leader's remarks on Sis Ram Ola create a row

Gehlot demands apology from party

MOHAMMED IQBAL

The purported remarks of BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia on late former Union Minister Sis Ram Ola triggered a row in Rajasthan on Saturday, prompting several political leaders, including Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, to demand an apology from the ruling party at the Centre. Ola, a prominent Jat leader from the Shekhawati region, died in 2013.

In a television debate over the recent reshuffle in the Union Cabinet, Mr. Bhatia made some offensive remarks about Ola's induction into the Manmohan Singh government in 2013 despite his old age. Mr. Bhatia himself shared a video clip of the TV debate on his twitter account but deleted it later following the ruckus.

Mr. Gehlot reacted sharply to the remarks and demanded that BJP national an apology immediately to the people of Rajasthan. "I condemn these remarks...

They have created a lot of anger. Mr. Ola protected the interests of farmers in the social and political fields for more than 60 years. He received Padma Shri in 1968 for his social service," Mr. Gehlot tweeted in Hindi.

A large number of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) activists staged a demonstration outside the BJP State headquarters here. When the BJP workers confronted them. policemen deployed at the venue controlled the situation and dispersed the protesters. BKU spokesperson Aiit Kaswan said the farmers would not tolerate humiliation of their departed leader. Pradesh Congress presi-

dent Govind Singh Dotasra, Revenue Minister Harish Chaudhary and Tonk MLA Sachin Pilot said the BJP leader's remarks had shown the party's mentality of disregarding the contributions of tall leaders. Rashtriya president J.P. Nadda tender Loktantrik Party chief and Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal also condemned Mr. Bhatia's remarks.

Vietnam appoints first Honorary Consul in India

Srinivasa Murthy to hold position in Karnataka for 3 years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

As part of Vietnam's efforts to deepen cooperation with various States, industrialist N.S. Srinivasa Murthy, based in Bengaluru, has been appointed Honorary Consul-General of Vietnam for Karnataka.

"He is the first Honorary Consul-General of Vietnam from India and the 19th across the world. He is the third Consul-General to be appointed globally this year," said Vietnamese Ambassador in India Pham Sanh Chau, addressing a small gathering amid CO-VID=19 protocols. The appointment is for a period of three years.

Mr. Murthy is the owner and managing partner of N. K. Subbiah Setty & Sons, which has been manufacturagarbattis (incense sticks) since 1932.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Murthy said his endeavour



Boosting ties: N.S. Srinivasa Murthy being appointed Honorary Consul-General by Vietnamese Ambassador Pham Sanh Chau in New Delhi on Saturday. • SPECIAL CORRESPONDE

will be to promote trade between Vietnam and South India and in particular Karnataka.

Rilateral ties

In a telephonic conversation on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Pham Minh Chinh on his appointment as Prime Minister of Vietnam and expressed confidence that the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

(CSP) will continue to become stronger under his able guidance.

'PM Modi welcomed the fact that both countries share a similar vision of an open, inclusive, peaceful and rules-based Indian Ocean Region, and hence the India-Vietnam CSP can contribute to promote regional stability, prosperity and development," statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Assam to get department of indigenous faith, says CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Assam Cabinet has decided to create an independent department for the preservation and promotion of indigenous faith and culture, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

Marking the completion of 60 days of his BJP-led government, Mr. Sarma said the new department would not be tagged with other departments such as Culture, or Welfare of Plains Tribes, and Backward Classes.

"Assam has many tribes with their unique customs and religious beliefs. We have decided to preserve their culture and faith with institutional through this new department," he told presspersons. He said the Cabinet has requested Finance Mi nister Ajanta Neog to allocate a substantial budget to the Department of Indigenous Faith and Culture.

India hands over relics to Georgia

It will create bridge of faith, says Jaishankar after returning relics of St. Ketevan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday attended the formal handingover ceremony of the holy relics of 17th century queen St. Ketevan to Georgia, nearly 16 years after they were found in Goa, describing such historical objects as a "bridge of faith" between the two countries.

Mr. Jaishankar is on a twoday visit to Georgia, a strategically important country situated at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

"Today is a special day, not only for Georgia but also for India. I have the honour to hand over the holy relics of St. Queen Ketevan to the people of Georgia," Mr. Jaishankar said at the ceremony at the Sameba Holy Trinity



Revisiting history: S. Jaishankar at the handing over of the relics of St. Ketevan to Georgia. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Cathedral. "I consider myself blessed that the purpose of my first visit to Georgia is such an auspicious one," he

Mr. Jaishankar handed over the relics of St. Queen Ketevan to the government and the people of Georgia at a ceremony in Tbilisi in the presence of Beatitude Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, and Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili.

St. Queen Ketevan was a century Georgian Queen. Her relics were found in 2005 at the St. Augustine Convent in Old Goa. on the basis of medieval Portuguese records, people aware of the matter said.

the relics in India and Georgia is a bridge of faith between our two countries. I hope that in the coming years, the people of both of our nations will traverse that bridge, of spirituality as much as of friendship," Mr. Jaishanakar said.

"The presence of some of

The relics are believed to have been brought to Goa in 1627 and interred in St. Augustine Complex.

At the instance of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, carried out DNA analysis that confirmed its authenticity, the people cited above said.

In 2017, at the request of the Georgian government, India sent the relics to Georgia for an exhibition for six

Interpol seeks joint fight against ransomware

DEVESH K. PANDEY NEW DELHI

Senior police officers of the

Interpol's member countries have endorsed measures to boost the role of its National Central Bureaus (NCBs), in view of the evolving threats, technology and the pandemic shifting the foundations of police work. In India, the CBI is the NCB for Interpol.

Nearly 300 officers from 167 countries attended the

Interpol's 16th annual conference, held virtually from July 6 to 8. They reviewed major in-

itiatives, ranging from operational and investigative support to expanding the I-24/7 secure communications network to national police and border control agencies, said the Interpol in a statement. These measures are aimed at optimising the performance and operational

capacity of the NCBs, and to enhance international police cooperation against transnational crime and corruption.

The meeting heard that ransomware activities generated \$350 million in 2020, according to Chainalysis, a 311% increase over the previous year. "A global strategy in response to the threat of ransomware is critical – one where we successfully build trust, see effective exchange

of data, and maximise rapid operational assistance to law enforcement agencies," Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock said. On terrorism, he said the

global threat was at the crossroads, with the territorial defeat of the IS opening up a new insurgency phase in West Asia, while in other critical theatres such as Africa, new groups had joined the terrorist movement. This PDF as originally uploaded to Brills Express Official (https://t.me/The_Hindu_Express) before anyone else. Don't forget to joint backup channel @Thehindu000

Freedom of speech is under siege: Bhushan

The state is targeting dissent, he says

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

country.

Senior lawyer Prashant Bhushan said on Saturday that freedom of speech is under "total siege" in the

Referring to the death of the 84-year-old Jesuit priest and rights activist Father Stan Swamy, who was jailed in connection with the Bhima Koregaon case, Mr. Bhushan said "anybody perceived to be a serious threat to the government or who speaks out against the government is charged and

put in iail". Mr. Bhushan was delivering the Chinta Ravi Memorial Lecture 2021 on the 'Threats to Constitution and Rule of Law'. He was speaking to a cross-section of prominent persons like senior journalist Sashi Kumar, writers N.S. Madhavan and Paul Zacharia, senior advocate R. Vaigai, advocate Kaleeswaram Raj, students and members of the civil society.

The state incarcerates citizens who exercise their right to freely express their dissent against the government under draconian statutes like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act which loosely defines an "unlawful activity", Mr. Bhushan said. "Once charged under this law, it is very difficult to get bail because the trial court has to be convinced that



Prashant Bhushan

there is not even a prima facie case," he explained. Mr. Bhushan referred to

the judiciary's performance in the past five years in protecting the rights of ordinary people. He referred to the role of the top court in politically sensitive cases such as the Ayodhya dispute, Judge Loya death case, Rafale deal, Birla-Sahara case, the bifurcation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the Citizenship Amendment Act. He said that "people had begun to lose faith". "It is only in the last six months, with the significant shift in public opinion, that they (judiciary) have been able to retrieve and display judicial independence," Mr. Bhushan said.

The media is going through the "worse kind of censorship" and the government has taken a carrotand-stick approach, he said. "Inducements by dangling a carrot, and if the carrot does not work, the stick is used through harassment by agencies like CBI, ED and the Income Tax," he said.



Dalit youth beaten up in U.P. village

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A 19-year-old Dalit youth was tied to a tree and thrashed at a village in Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh, for befriending a woman from another community.

A video of the incident was widely shared on somedia, following which the police arrested Sarman person. Shankhwar, who sets up tents for a living, was spotted in the past by the main accused, Sanjay Kumar Pal, while he was talking to his

Mr. Pal, who belongs to an Other Backward Class (OBC) community, objected to this, the police said.

On July 6, Mr. Shankhwar again went to the Pal family house. Following this, Mr. Pal, along with two others, thrashed Mr. Shankhwar with a stick.

Keen to empower co-ops: Shah

begun to meet people.

In the meeting, the Minis-

ter asked cooperatives such

as IFFCO and KRIBHCO to

work in the field of seed pro-

duction using vacant land of

38,000 hectares as well as in

organic farming, the NCUI

said in a separate statement.

He also promised that the

Union government was com-

mitted to strengthening the

Adityanath govern-

ment's politics and schemes

for public welfare have been

reflected in the party's mas-

Mr. Adityanath, in turn,

said the victory was a result

dents of clashes, sloganeer-

ing and scuffles were report-

sive victory," Mr. Modi said.

'Strengthening co-ops'

Delegation apprises Minister of challenges facing cooperative movement

NEW DELHI

The Union government is determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered, said Union Minister Amit Shah, who met some leading figures of the country's sector cooperative Saturday.

The meeting came three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi reallocated the portfolios of his Ministers. Mr. Shah was given charge of the newly created Ministry of Cooperation.

Those who met the Union Home Minister included National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) chairman Dileep Sanghani; chairman and managing director of Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) B.S. Nakai and U.S. Awasthi, respectively; and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing

Under the leadership of Modiji, we are determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered UNION HOME MINISTER

Federation of India (NAFED) chairman Bijender Singh.

"Today met @ncuicoop Chairman Shri Dileep Sanghaniji, @IFFCO_PR Chairman Shri B.S. Nakaiji, Managing Director Shri U.S. Awasthiji and @nafedindia Chairman Dr. Bijendra Singhji... Under the leadership of Modiji, we are determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered," Mr.

Shah tweeted in Hindi. cooperative movement in Officials added that even the country, the benefits of though Mr. Shah had not yet which would go to the grassassumed charge of the Minisroots-level cooperatives, it try of Cooperation, he had

delegation that the same benefits and concessions given to Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) would be provided to primary agriculture cooperatives in the country for strengthening them, it added.

Mr. Shah also assured the

In the meeting, the Minister desired that a conference with representatives of Statelevel cooperatives should be organised by NCUI, IFFCO and other cooperatives for discussing pertinent issues confronting the cooperative movement.

The delegation apprised the Minister of the problems and challenges confronting the cooperative movement.

The Union government had carved out the new Mifor Cooperation, which earlier was a small department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers

Three LeT militants killed in J&K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAE

Three local Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants were killed in an anti-militancy operation of the security forces in Anantnag, south Kashmir, on Saturday.

"All the three slain were affiliated to the LeT. One militant, identified as Arif Hajam from Anantnag, was involved in the killing of a Territorial Army soldier on June 6, 2019," Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar said. The three militants were trapped at Kavillage warigam Saturday.

The two others were identified as Basit Ahmad and Suhail Ahmad.



Biden nominates Garcetti

as Ambassador to India

Eric Garcetti

d'affaires Atul Keshap, a South Asia hand and senior career diplomat.

Mr. Garcetti's closeness to Mr. Biden is seen as a key factor in his nomination. Having someone in New Delhi who "can call Joe" is important to both New Delhi and Washington.

"We are excited that President Biden has nominated a reputed leader who has proven himself on several fronts," said M.R. Rangaswami, a Silicon Valley-based investor, who runs a diaspora organisation called Indiaspora. "It speaks volumes to the importance of the U.S.-India relationship that a close and trusted ally of President Biden may be America's point person in Delhi."

The India-U.S. relation-

ship has strong support on both sides of the aisle in Washington, though it is not without its critics, particularly with regard to the Modi government's record on democratic processes and minority rights. As India experienced its second wave of COVID-19 earlier this summer, the U.S. government, the private sector and individuals contributed over \$500 million in assistance, according to U.S. government estimates.

The defence and security dimensions have also been growing. While bilateral trade has been growing, the trading relationship has had challenges, around data flows, agricultural commodities and preferential trade status for India.

The two countries have sought to develop their relationship via multilateral forums (such as the U.N. Security Council) and smaller "plurilateral" groupings such as the Quad – India, the U.S., Japan and Australia. Plans are in the works for a summit level in-person meeting of the Quad likely to be held in Washington this

Vlogger's wife challenges govt.'s move

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

House as part of a set of am-

Mr. Garcetti, 50, who has

been the Mayor of Los An-

geles since 2013, is a former

intelligence officer from the

Navy and is a Rhodes Scho-

lar. He also served on the Ca-

lifornia Board of the Human

Rights Watch, a rights advo-

cacy organisation that has

frequently criticised the In-

dian government's rights

ment, said he was honoured

to accept the nomination

and would "forge partner-

ships and connections that

will help strengthen Los An-

geles' place on the world

stage". If confirmed by the

Senate, Mr. Garcetti would

replace Kenneth Juster, a

Trump appointee who was

the Ambassador till January.

The Embassy in New Delhi is

being run by interim Chargé

Mr. Garcetti, in a state-

record.

bassadorial nominations.

YouTube vlogger Karl Edward Rice's wife has approached the Delhi High Court challenging the Central government's alleged "arbitrary and unreasonable" decision to blacklist him and deny him visa to enter India.

The petitioner said by virtue of denying a visa to her husband, who had been "arbitrarily blacklisted" by the

respondents (Centre), she was deprived from living with him, thereby violating her fundamental right to life and dignity as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The plea, which is likely to come up for hearing next week, said petitioner Manisha Malik and her husband, popularly known as Karl Rock, were YouTube vloggers and had visited most of India to capture its beauty

and contribute to the promotion of tourism here. Union Home Ministry offi-

cials had on Friday said the New Zealand national has been restricted from entering India till the next year for violating terms and conditions of his visa. He was found to be doing business activities on a tourist visa and also violating other visa conditions, they had said without specifying the violations.

BJP wins big in U.P. block-level polls

State machinery used to capture posts, says SP; clashes reported in 17 districts

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

The ruling BJP in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday claimed victory in 635 out of 825 block pramukh posts in the State even as the opposition Samajwadi Party (SP) accused the State government of misusing its administrative machinery to "forcefully capture" the posts in the high-intensity elections. Meanwhile, the voting

and nomination for the polls were marred by scuffles, clashes and firing in some districts, including Etawah where an officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police, City, was allegedly slapped while trying to prevent a crowd of BJP supporters



Celebratory mode: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and BJP leader Swatantra Dev Singh celebrating in Lucknow. • PTI

from breaching the barricade near a polling booth.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the BJP and its ally, the Apna Dal, were set to win 635 seats. Out of the 825 seats that went to the polls in 74 districts, the BJP had candidates backed by it

on 735 seats and the Apna Dal in 14, while on 76 seats the BJP had friendly fights, Mr. Adityanath said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated his party workers and Mr. Adityanath for the victory. "The benefits that the public got from the

of the faith of the people in Mr. Modi's "mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas". The State police said inci-

> ed in 17 districts. SP president Akhilesh Yaday alleged that the BJP used its power to get votes in its favour, and that block pramukh candidates and kshetra panchayat members were openly kidnapped in the State.

+ Will hold stir against price rise: Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

With the spiralling fuel orices coupled with the food inflation hitting household budgets, the Congress is planning an extensive nationwide campaign on the issue.

Sources said a series of press meets would be kicked off from next week with a press conference by former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram in Delhi.

Assigned cities

Senior leaders have been assigned a metropolitan city each to amplify the party's message.

As per the schedule, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge would speak in Mumbai, Gaurav Gogoi in Kolkata, Shashi Tharoor in Chennai, Anand Sharma in Jaipur, Manish Tewari in Ahmedabad, Deepender Hooda in Hyderabad, Sachin Pilot in Dehradun and Kamal Nath in Lucknow.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath on Saturday

evoked the ideals of socialist

leader Ram Manohar Lohia,

considered an icon by the

Opposition Samajwadi Par-

ty, to state the efforts made

by the BJP government for

the Other Backward Class

Mr. Adityanath said

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi had granted constitu-

tional status to the OBC

Commission and provided

big representation to OBC

He said Lohia believed a

mature democracy was only

leadership in his Cabinet.

(OBC) communities.

Big OBC representation

in Cabinet: Adityanath

It represents India, says U.P. CM

Repeal Defence Services Ordinance, Raja tells PM

'Legal rights of workers being denied'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Defence Services Ordinance, 2021 (EDSO) snatches the constitutional, democratic and legal rights available to civilian workers in the defence establishments and needs to be withdrawn, Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary D. Raja said in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

The EDSO provides for the dismissal of employees without even an inquiry, which is against the constitutional protection given to a Central government employee. The Ordinance also provides for imprisonment of any union leader calling for a strike and any employee participating in a

"You will appreciate that employees and their trade unions resort to strike action as a last weapon when all other means of protest/ representation on genuine

possible by giving power to the backwards. "If Lohia*ji*

were here today, he would

have been full of joy to see

his thoughts bearing fruit,"

said Mr. Adityanath in a se-

The U.P. CM, whose party

banks on the consolidation of the sizeable non-Yadav

OBC votes, said the repre-

sentation and participation

of people envisioned by Lo-

hia and B.R Ambedkar were

being realised from "sar-

kaar to samaaj" or govern-

ment to society under the

represents entire India, he

Mr. Modi's Cabinet really

leadership of Mr. Modi.

ries of tweets in Hindi.



grievances are ignored by the employer," Mr. Raja

Protesting employees The employees of 41 ord-

nance factories are protesting against the government decision to reorganise the factories into seven corporations.

In his letter, Mr. Raja asked: "The government has already assured the federations in writing that none of the ordnance factories would be closed. Does the government still stands by this assurance?

Unions to hold stir against Ordinance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A joint platform of 10 Central trade unions (CTUs) on

sourced to private sector, both indigenous and foreign, permitting 100% FDI... The Ordinance bans the right to strike," it said.

2021-2022.

The application form, with instructions website, **www.efluniversity.ac.in**



KVPY Fellowship-2021

Stream SA: Students enrolled in/planning to join XI Standard (Science Subjects) during the academic year 2021-22 and aspiring to join an undergraduate program in basic sciences (B.Sc/B.S./B.Stat./ B.Math./Int. M.Sc./Int. M.S.) during the academic year 2023-24.

Stream SX: Students enrolled in/planning to join XII standard (Science Subjects) during the academic year 2021-22 and aspiring to join an undergraduate program in basic sciences (B.Sc./B.S./B.Stat./ B.Math./Int. M.Sc./Int. M.S.) during the academic year 2022-23.

Stream SB: Students enrolled in/planning to join First Year B.Sc./B.S./B.Stat./B.Math./Int. M.Sc./Int. M.S. in basic sciences during the academic year 2021-22.

Rank certificates will also be available to an extended list of candidates.

3 KVPY Aptitude Test

Convener, KVPY, IISc, Bengaluru-560 012

WORLD HAS OF MAGICIA

THE WESTERN

too busy collecting medals

to pay heed to the gossip.

For more such stories and a comprehensive coverage of the Tokyo Olympics 2020, get your 5 Collector's Edition issues dedicated to the games from Sportstar.



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Saturday called for nation-For close to 4 decades, wide protests on July 23 the men's hockey teams against the Essential Derepresenting India were fence Services Ordinance, the undisputed kings 2021, and the larger goof the event at the Olympics. vernment effort to priva-The technique and tise defence production. the skills of our sportsmen "The CTUs note with were so superior, some of concern that, simultanethe competitors even believed ously, a substantial part of that the Indians used black the defence related promagic to win matches. duction is being out-Good that the players were

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION to the PGCTE (DISTANCE MODE)

is available on the University's The last date for receipt of filled applications is July 26, 2021.





1 Start of online submission of Application 12th July 2021@ 1700 Hrs Last date for closing of online Application 25th August 2021

7th November 2021

For more details please visit: http://www.kvpy.iisc.ac.in

CoWIN crucial to service delivery: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said India would share the CoWIN platform with other nations for free, saying that humanitarian needs outweigh commercial benefits.

On the second day of the ongoing G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting, Ms. Sitharaman shared India's successful experience in technology integrating with inclusive service delivery during the pandemic, the Finance Ministry said in a series of tweets. The CoWIN application was key to vaccination efforts.

"In policies for recovery session, FM discussed 3 catalysts of economic recovery: #Digitalization #ClimateAction

#SustainableInfrastructure; shared India's successful experience in integrating technology with inclusive service delivery during the pandemic," a tweet from the Ministry



States advised to closely monitor situation and take prompt action to contain COVID, govt. tells HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Union government has informed the Delhi High Court that it has asked all States and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure strict compliance with the national directives for COVID-19 management and take necessary measures under the Disaster Management Act.

An order was also issued to them to consider the implementation of targeted and prompt actions for CO-VID-19 management until July 31, the Union government has said.

The government also stated that while the opening of activities after a decline in COVID-19 cases was essential, States and UTs must ensure that "the whole process was carefully calibrated".

The statement was made in a status report filed by the Union government through its standing counsel, Anil Soni, in connection with the High Court's suo motu proceedings on violation of CO-VID-19 protocols in various markets in the national capital.



Fighting the virus: The Centre's framework has a five-fold strategy for COVID-19 management — test, track, treat, vaccinate and comply with COVID-appropriate behaviour. • A.M. FARUQUI

authorities should ensure

that there was "continuous focus on containment ef-

forts" and "uniformity in im-

The High Court was also

informed that the "frame-

restrictions/relaxations".

graded

plementing

The Union government submitted that national directives for COVID-19 management included face masks, social distancing, not spitting in public places, working from home, staggering of work/business hours, screenings and frequent

Clarifying that the decision to impose or ease restrictions had to be based on work for implementation of an assessment of the ground prompt and target action" situation, the Union governwas also shared by the Union ment added that State/UT government with the States.

The framework, the government said, had a "fivefold strategy for effective management of COVID-19", – test, track, treat, vaccinate and adherence to COVID-appropriate behaviour.

The framework also em-

phasised that "COVID-19 management can succeed only through a whole of government and whole of society approach".

The States were nonetheless at liberty to plan additional public health measures based on their local situation, it said.

The Union government also submitted that a letter was addressed to the Chief Secretaries of all States and Administrators of UTs, stressing effective management of CO-VID-19 by following advisories issued by the Home and Health Ministries.

A Vacation Bench of the High Court had initiated a public interest litigation (PIL) petition last month after it took note of certain photographs sent to one of the High Court judges on WhatsApp by an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) doctor showing scant regard for COVID-19 protocols by street vendors in markets.

The court had observed that such breaches would only hasten the third wave of COVID-19.

'Caregivers of disabled need priority for jabs'

Social Justice Ministry supports appeal

DAMINI NATH

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry earlier this week asked the Health and Family Welfare Ministry to ensure that caregivers of persons with disabilities (PwD) are vaccinated against COVID-19 at the same centre as the PwD on priority basis.

The Department of Empowerment (DEPwD) under the Ministry wrote in an office memorandum on July 7 that it had received an email from Anjlee Agarwal, a PwD, requesting the facility.

"Caregivers are required to come in close proximity with persons with disabilities for providing support services to PwDs to enable them to perform activities of daily living. As such, it is important to ensure vaccination of such caregivers alongside persons with dis-

abilities," the DEPwD wrote. The Health Ministry was asked to issue instructions to all Central and State healthcare authorities and vaccina-

tion centres to this effect. Ms. Agarwal, an activist and wheelchair user, said she had to go to a West Delhi

school for the first dose with

her two caregivers. "To my utter shock, upon reaching the Tilak Nagar school, the people at the vaccination centre refused to vaccinate my caregivers with the excuse that they were not disabled and the vaccination drive was organised for PwD," she said.

She said her caregivers were finally able to get the vaccine after the intervention of senior officials.

"I'm a person with high support needs. There are other PwD who cannot raise their voice like I did or write to the authorities. We remain at risk if the people assisting us are not vaccinated. And many PwD are at greater risk of severe disease if they get infected," she said, adding that an order or instructions to vaccination centres was the need of the hour.



tourism sector opens up. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Home Secretary Bhalla sounds note of caution

Second wave not yet over, he says

DEVESH K. PANDEY

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday reviewed the steps taken by State governments for checking the spread of COVID-19 in hill stations and other tourist destinations.

The overall management of the situation and the vaccination status in Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and West Bengal was discussed.

"The Union Home Secretary sounded a note of caution in view of media reports showing blatant disregard of COVID-appropriate behaviour," said a government release.

Mr. Bhalla said the second wave was not yet over; and the States should ensure strict adherence to the

protocols. The case positivity rate in

certain districts of Rajasthan, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh was over 10%, which was a cause for

The States were asked to follow the five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccinate and COVID appropriate behaviour.

"Adequate health infrastructure preparedness [especially in rural, peri-urban and tribal areas] was also advised, to tackle any poten-

tial future surge," it said. Among those who attended the meeting were NITI Aayog Member (Health) V.K. Paul, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, Indian Council for Medical Research Di-General Balram rector Bhargava, the Chief Secretaries, DGPs and Principal Secretaries (Health) of the

Colleges to reopen in Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

With COVID-19 cases declining, the Gujarat government on Friday announced that schools for Standard XII and colleges for undergraduate programmes will be allowed to reopen with 50% class strength from July 15. However, the presence of students will be on a voluntary basis and those not attending the classes will not face any adverse action for their absence.

"We have decided to reopen the education institutions from July 15 in a phased manner with 50% strength initially. All CO-VID-19 norms will be enforced by the school and colleges who reopen their classes," a State government release said.

Also, coaching centres for Standard IX onwards will be allowed to reopen with COVID-19 norms, including maintaining distances and reduced participation of students.

Meanwhile, the State government has also decided to lift the night curfew in 10 out of 18 urban areas amid a sharp drop in daily new COVID-19 cases. Currently, a curfew between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. is in force in 18 cities and towns. From July 10, the night curfew will be in force in only eight major cities - Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Junagadh and Gandhinagar.

Packed crowd



In good faith: Devotees waiting to offer prayers at the Lord Jagannath temple ahead of the annual Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad. While many wore masks, social distancing was not followed. • AP

HC orders inquiry into 'medical negligence'

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAF

The Orissa High Court has ordered an inquiry into alleged medical negligence in the treatment of patients during COVID-19 pandemic in the Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla, a premier State-run medical institute in western

The Orissa HC had received a complaint through

e-mail from a person identified as Gyanadutta Chouhan about lack of proper medical facilities at VIMSAR and insensitivity shown by doctors and paramedics.

On the direction of the court, the Sambalpur District Collector had constituted a three-member committee to investigate the veracity of the allegations. The committee in its report said there was no shortage of medicine and no instances of lack of

treatment. Subsequently, petitioner Mr. Chouhan had filed nine affidavits of persons whose close relatives purportedly suffered on account of lack of proper or timely treatment at VIMSAR during the pandemic.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice S. Muralidhar and Justice Savitri Ratho observed that each of the nine affidavits revealed prima facie that the victims did not receive the requisite

medical treatment at VIM-SAR and that needless deaths had occurred as a result. Stating that these were only prima facie conclusions and the proof of the averments would require to be established by a proper inquiry, the HC appointed A.B.S. Naidu, a former District Judge, as inquiry officer to examine the instances set out in the nine affidavits and whether there was medical

Six held for alleged human trafficking

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The South Bengal Frontier of the BSF arrested 30 women from Bangladesh who were illegally crossing the international border between January to July 10. Six Indian nationals, whom they described as touts for allegedly trafficking these women into the country, were also arrested.

According to BSF officials, most of the women were lured by these traffickers on the pretext of jobs or marriage.

Subhasree Raptan of the -Goranbose Bram Bikash Kendra and Tafteesh, a collective working against trafficking, said, "There are scores of cases where survivors of trafficking are rescued from States like Maharashtra and Delhi but such cases are not taken up for investigation."

She said the draft of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) Act, 2021 Bill has not defined the role of the Anti Human Trafficking Units.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has invited suggestions for the draft.

Ms. Raptan suggested that there be fast-track courts for trafficking cases and emphasis on streamlining the implementation of the compensation process for victims.

member, most employees in

Visva-Bharati got less salary

for the month of May without

explanation and when a pro-

fessor sought to know the

reason during an online fa-

culty meeting, he was asked

by the V-C to take charge of

salary disbursement. A verbal showdown between the

two followed and the delay in

the salary was a result of that

spat, the union member said,

adding that the V-C, during

another meeting of faculty

members held during the

pandemic, had openly ridi-

culed teachers "for earning

fat salaries while sitting at

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆								

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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Dhami seeks PM's guidance on yatras

Uttarakhand Chief Minister calls on Narendra Modi in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday and sought his directions on the possible third wave of coronavirus, the proposed kanwad yatra and the Char Dham Yatra against the backdrop of the pandemic.

He also sought the establishment of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Kumaon region on the lines of AIIMS, Rishikesh.

In a tweet, Mr. Dhami said he sought the blessings of the Prime Minister. "Sought his directions on the State's development, the possible third wave of COVID-19, Char Dham Yatra and kanwad yatra. The Prime Minister assured all possible help for the State's development," he tweeted.

The PMO also tweeted pictures of the meeting.

On Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's comments asking why the people of the



Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday. • PTI

hill State, which generates electricity, cannot get free power like the consumers in the national capital, Mr. Dhami said AAP leader may have his agenda but the only agenda for the BJP is the State's development and offering the best to people.

According to an official release in Dehradun, Mr. Dhami said an AIIMS in Kumaon will give access to the people of the region to world class medical facilities, adding the State government will give land for

Mr. Dhami also sought speedy implementation of the 300 mW Lakhwar multipurpose project from which six States - U.P., Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh – will benefit. The project has all the clearances and work on it can begin after a Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs by the Centre gives its go-ahead, he said.

Meets Ministers The meeting lasted one hour and 15 minutes.

Mr. Dhami also met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

Visva-Bharati yet to pay June salaries

Delay is being seen as a fallout of feud between V-C and faculty

BISHWANATH GHOSH

Santiniketan, whose economy largely depends on the Visva-Bharati, is witnessing according to teachers - a "human crisis" with the university yet to pay its staff for the month of June. Salaries in Visva-Bharati

are always paid on the last day of every month, but the salaries for June were yet to be released until the evening of July 10. What is surprising is that the university has not put out any circular explaining the delay. Its PRO, the only official there authorised to speak to the media, did not respond to calls for comment.

"This is an unprecedented situation. A human crisis is building up in Santiniketan, considering its economy depends on Visva-Bharati. People have EMIs and rents to pay. Think of the elderly pensioners – how will they survive, that too in these difficult times," said a professor who has spent 25 years at the un-

iversity. So unpleasant is the situation now that an organisation called the Association for Protection of Democratic Rights on Saturday filed an FIR at the Santiniketan police station against the non-payment of salaries. Local media is pointing out how retired lower-rung employees are left with no money and are unable to buy medicines.

'Informed the PM'

Many in the campus see the delay as a fallout of the running feud between Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty and the Visva-Bharati University Faculty Association (VBUFA), which has been openly critical of the V-C. The Union has, from time to time, written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Chancellor of the university, bringing to his attention the alleged high-handed functioning of the V-C and earlier this week had also raised the issue of non-payment of salaries.

This is not the first time that salaries have been delayed. Last year too, the disbursement was delayed during February, June and July. The reason given was lack of funds but the Education Ministry insisted that there was no such paucity and had pulled up the authorities. But this is the longest the employees have remained unpaid.

According to a union A ND-NDE

Afghanistan to rush troops to border

Taliban say they have taken over an arc of territory from the Iranian border to the frontier with China

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Afghan authorities prepared on Saturday to try to retake a key border crossing seized by the Taliban in a sweeping offensive that the insurgents claim has helped capture a vast swath of the violencewracked nation.

As U.S. troops continued their withdrawal, the Taliban said its fighters had seized two crossings in western Afghanistan - completing an arc of territory from the Iranian border to the frontier with China.

It now held 85% of the country, a Taliban official said on Friday, controlling about 250 of Afghanistan's nearly 400 districts – a claim impossible to independently verify, and disputed by the government.

On Friday Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP their fighters had captured the border town of Islam Qala on the Iranian frontier and the Torghundi crossing with Turkmenistan.

Herat Governor spokesman Jilani Farhad said on Sa-



In the ruins: A journalist films the site of a bomb explosion in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Saturday. Police say they are investigating the explosion that killed multiple people. • AF

turday the authorities were deploying fresh troops to retake Islam Oala post, the biggest trade crossing between Iran and Afghanistan. "They will be sent there soon," he

The Afghan government has repeatedly dismissed the Taliban's gains as having little strategic value, but the seizure of multiple border crossings and the taxes they generate will likely fill the group' coffers with new revenue.

In a clear sign fighting was getting closer to major urban centres, an official at one hospital in Kandahar – the country's second-largest city and the birthplace of the Taliban - said on Saturday dozens of wounded had been admitted in the past 24 hours, including at least 15 service members

With the Taliban having routed much of northern Afghanistan in recent weeks, the government holds little more than a constellation of provincial capitals that must largely be reinforced and resupplied by air.

Severe strain

The air force was under severe strain even before the Taliban's lightning offensive overwhelmed the government's northern and western positions, putting further pressure on the country's limited aircraft and pilots.

On Thursday, President Joe Biden said the U.S. military mission would end on August 31. Afghan commandos clashed with the insurgents this week in a provincial capital for the first time, with thousands of people fleeing Qala-i-Naw in northwest Badghis province.

On Friday, the Afghan Defence Ministry said government forces had "full control" of the city, but a local official said on Saturday the insurgents had attacked again during the night.

Haiti asks U.S., UN for troops as fears of instability grow

U.S. is sending FBI and other agents to Port-au-Prince

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Haiti has asked Washington and the UN for troops to secure its ports, airport and other strategic sites after the assassination of President Iovenel Moise opened a power vacuum in the crisis-hit Caribbean nation, an official said Friday.

The U.S. has already said it will send FBI and other agents to Port-au-Prince, two days after Moise was shot dead in his home.

In the wake of the slaying "we thought that mercenaries could destroy some infrastructure to create chaos ... During a conversation with the U.S. secretary of state and the UN we made this request," Elections Minister Mathias Pierre told

The U.S. State Department and Pentagon both confirmed receiving a request for "security and investigative assistance" and said officials remain in con-



did not specify whether military troops would be deployed. The UN did not immediately respond to a request

for comment. A UN diplomatic source had earlier indicated that a Security Council resolution was needed to do as the Haitians had asked.

Washington had already signaled its willingness to help the Haitian investigation, and White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki added

other officials would be heading to the Caribbean as soon as possible.

The development came as questions swirled about who could have masterminded the audacious assassination. with most members of a hit squad of Colombians and Americans either dead or in custody, and no clear motive made public.

Amid the uncertainty, three men are being touted as potential leaders.

China evacuates citizens from Afghanistan

Foreign Minister set to discuss Afghan situation with counterparts from Russia, India, Pakistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BEIJING

China evacuated 210 nationals from Afghanistan as U.S. troops stepped up their withdrawal from the war-torn nation, the airline that carried out the emergency chartered flight said.

A Xiamen Airlines flight departed the capital Kabul for the city of Wuhan, Hubei province, on July 2 carrying Chinese citizens who had been stranded in Afghanistan, it said in a Thursday social media post.

Among them were 22 peo-

ple who were later confirmed to be infected with coronavirus, despite the airline taking "top-notch epidemic prevention measures" during the flight and upon landing, it added.

COVID patients

The Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed that recent returnees included coronavirus patients and called on all nationals to leave Afghanistan, without revealing further specifics of the evacuation

"In order to ensure the sa-

fety of Chinese citizens in Afghanistan, the Chinese government has reminded citizens in Afghanistan to leave the country as soon as possible and provided necessary assistance," its Consular Affairs Department said in a Wednesday social media

Chinese health authorities reported 25 new imported coronavirus cases in Hubei province on Wednesday, 22 of which were from the Ka-

The flight was organised by the Chinese government, reported the state media tabloid Global Times.

In recent weeks, Beijing has harshly criticised what it sees as a hasty and chaotic withdrawal by Washington.

"The U.S. disregards its responsibilities and duties and withdraws troops from Afghanistan hastily, dumping the mess and war on the Afghan people and countries in the region," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a routine briefing

"The U.S., as the original culprit of the Afghan issue, bears unavoidable responsibility for the current situation in Afghanistan."

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is set to discuss the deteriorating Afghan security situation with counterparts from Russia, India, Pakistan and numerous Central Asian countries at a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation next week.

The evacuation flight was hailed as a patriotic victory by Chinese social media users, with related trending hashtags gaining more than 300 million views on Weibo.

9 killed in extremist attack in Somalia's capital, 8 injured

Police claim Mogadishu Police Commissioner was target

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A large explosion in Somalia's capital killed at least nine people and injured eight others, a health official said Saturday.

Dr. Mohamed Nur at the Medina Hospital told reporters that the toll reflected only the dead and wounded who were taken to the facility in Mogadishu where he works. "I am sure the number is bigger as some of the victims were rushed to other hospitals, such as the privately owned ones," he said.

The al-Shabab extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

A Somali police spokesman said Mogadishu's Police Commissioner, Col. Farhan Mohamud Qaroleh, was the target of the attack but he was safe. "A suicide car bomber with heavy explosives plotted by the terrorist group al-Shabab has targeted the Mogadishu police commissioner," police spokesman Sadiq Adam Ali said.

It was the second such large explosion in the city this month. A blast targeting a teashop killed at least 10 people last week.

Last month, a suicide bomb attack at a military base in Mogadishu killed at least 15 people.

⁺ Bangladesh factory owner held after fire kills 52

It had employed children as young as 11

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The owner of a factory where 52 people died in a fire was arrested for murder Saturday as it emerged that children as young as 11 had been working there.

Police said Abul Hashem and four of his sons were among eight people detained over the inferno, which broke out Thursday and raged for more than a day. A separate inquiry has been launched into the use of child labour at the food factory.

Jayedul Alam, police chief for Narayangani district where the factory is located, said the entrance had been padlocked along with multiple other breaches of safety regulations. "It was a delib-



A view of the burnt factory in Rupganj industrial town, on Saturday. • AFP

erate murder," the police chief told AFP.

Before his arrest, Mr. Hashem had told The Daily Star newspaper the fire "may have been a result of workers' carelessness" and a discarded cigarette could have sparked the carnage.

U.S. city removes two Confederate statues

They had become the focus of protests

The southern U.S. city of Charlottesville on Saturday took down two statues honoring Civil War generals for the pro-slavery Confederacy which had become the focus of protests, including a deadly 2017 rally of white supremacists.

The statues of generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson are among hundreds of Confederate monuments in the United States now widely considered symbols of racism, even if their supporters argue they are a historical legacy.

Workers in the Virginia citv used a crane to remove the statues – which depicted the men in uniform

mounted on horses - as a watched cheered. No clashes were immediately reported.

Mayor's statement

"Taking down this statue is one small step closer to the goal of helping Charlottesville, Virginia, and America, ple for economic gain," Charlottesville Mayor Nikuyah Walker, who is African-American, told reporters before the monuments' removal.

lence in August 2017, when a white nationalist drove his car into a crowd of demonstrators in Charlottesville, killing a woman.

Iran: 'cyber

disruption'

hits transport

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Iran's transportation Minis-

try said Saturday a "cyber

disruption" had affected its

computer systems and

website, while its the coun-

try's national railway com-

pany denied reports of be-

The disruption started

before noon (0730 GMT),

taking down the body's

website and links associat-

ed with it, the Ministry said

in a statement reported by

It said "technical ex-

perts" were investigating

the issue and will an-

state news agency IRNA.

ing hit by a cyber attack.

grapple with the sin of being willing to destroy Black peo-Tensions over the fate of the Lee statue led to vio-

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IN BRIEF

Black Sea drills showcase NATO-Ukraine relations

ABOARD USS ROSS Ukraine and NATO have conducted Black Sea drills involving dozens of warships in a two-week show of their strong defense ties and capability following a confrontation between Russia's military forces and a British destroyer off Crimea last month. AP

Bandits kill 35 villagers in northwest Nigeria

Armed raiders killed at least 35 people in five villages in northwest Nigeria's Zamfara State, police said on Saturday, in the latest deadly attack to hit the violence-torn region. "Thirty-five people were killed by the bandits in the five villages," State police spokesman Mohammed Shehu told AFP. AFP



She will be part of Virgin Galactic flight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA HOUSTON

Sirisha Bandla, a 34-year-old aeronautical engineer, is set to become the third Indianorigin woman to head to space when she flies as part of Virgin Galactic's first fully crewed flight test on Sunday.

Ms. Bandla, who was born in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, and brought up in Houston, Texas, will join Sir Richard Branson, the company's billionaire founder, and five others on board Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo Unity to make a journey to the edge of space from

New Mexico. "I am so incredibly honoured to be a part of the amazing crew of #Unity22, and to be a part of a company whose mission is to make space available to all," she tweeted.



Ms. Bandla will be astronaut no 004 and her flight role will be Researcher Experience, according to her profile on Virgin Galactic.

She will become the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams.

Ms. Bandla started in her role as the Vice President of Government Affairs and Research Operations at Virgin Galactic in January 2021.

nounce when they are back up, without elaborating further. The website still inaccessible around 5 p.m. (1230 GMT). The announcement

came a day after Fars news agency reported "unprecedented chaos" at stations.



Life on Enceladus?

A study published in the journal Nature Astronomy analysed data collected by Cassini spacecraft from the giant water plumes erupting from Enceladus, one of Saturn's moons. The study has concluded that these data imply either microbial activity or processes not involving life forms but which are very different from those known to occur on Earth. The study thus holds the tantalising possibility of evidence of microbial life on Enceladus



Tipping point

The current rates of plastic emissions across the globe may trigger effects that it may not be possible to reverse according to a study published in the journal Science. As of 2016, total emission of plastics into water bodies was between 9 and 23 million metric tonnes per year. If things continue as they are, this is expected to double by 2025. Plastic pollution, together with environmental triggers can lead to exacerbation of climate change, ocean biodiversity loss, the study speculates.

Can schools be reopened during the pandemic?

It is more than a year since the first nationwide lockdown to contain COVID-19 in India started in March 2020, when schools were closed

TARUN BHATNAGAR

By the end of June 2021 over 150 million children in 19 countries were either attending virtual classes or had no schooling at all. It has been more than a year since the first nationwide lockdown to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in India in March 2020 when schools were closed and online classes came in vogue. Parents, teachers, administrators, governments and children themselves have raised major concerns over this potentially life-altering decision for the school-going children.

The recent second wave of the pandemic has made everyone all the more anxious and apprehensive about the safety and wellbeing of children. This situation has not only led to the loss of education but also their social and mental wellbeing with hitherto unknown long-term

Lessons learnt

Moving beyond the emotional conundrum, let us look at what we have learnt over this past year about COVID-19 and its impact on children so as to make a scientific rationale towards the return of young pupils to the classrooms and hallways of school buildings.

Children get infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus but the overall risk of infection remains much lower than that of the adults. Studies suggest that children are half as susceptible to infection as adults difference of having fewer ACE2 receptors and that too mostly in the upper respiratory tract. These are the receptors in human cells through which the spike protein of the virus binds to the cells. Although mutations in spike proteins have been identified among the virus variants such as beta and delta, it is expected that children will continue to be less

susceptible as long as ACE2

receptors remain the major

mainly due to the biological

binding sites for the virus. It is known that 90% of infections among children remain asymptomatic or mild, and although the few children with severe disease will need hospital care, only 1-2% require intensive care unit management. Children with underlying health conditions could be at higher risk for severe disease. With a low incidence of 12 per 100,000 children, according to the Indian Academy of Pediatrics, the most life-threatening complication that can occur is called multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) but most children have recovered well with few deaths mostly attributable to management is-

The last nationwide serosurvey (December 2020-January 2021) reported that the proportion of children 10-17 years old with prior infection was similar to the adults at around 25%. This indicates that children were not at a higher risk of infection than the adults. It has been sug-

Getting back to school Some measures to ensure safe return of young pupils to school



and students, matched by hand hygiene, physical distancing, adequate ventilation

• The level of community transmission in a district should be the key parameter to guide school reopening

The recent second wave of the pandemic has made everyone all the more anxious and apprehensive about the safety and wellbeing of children.

gested that children had a relatively higher infection rate during the second wave of the pandemic. However, we did not see any rise in the overall proportion of COVID-19 positive children in the coun-

Global studies

Globally and in India schools have never been reported as the focal point of any superspreader event. Data over the past year from several countries where schools were functional at various levels clearly show that the rate of COVID-19 transmission among students in schools was much lower than in the community.

These include studies from the U.S. of more than 90,000 students and teachers in North Carolina, and over 20,000 students and staff from 17 schools in rural Wisconsin. Researchers in Norway, Salt Lake City and New York City, U.S. found attack rates ranging from 0.5% to 1.7% in schools suggesting that infected students do not tend to spread the virus at school. Very low secondary attack rates - the risk of spread from one infected person to others in a closed

setting - have been reported from school-based investigations in Australia, France, Germany, Ireland, Singapore and the U.S. However, attack rates of around 15% were reported from Israel when schools reopened in mid-May 2020 and were attributed to poor implementation of mitigation measures. We also need to watch out for the emergence of variants and the influence on transmission and detection of the

Classroom

limit student

High levels

Vaccination

interaction

virus in children. The level of community transmission in a district should be the key parameter to guide a graded approach to reopening of schools. For this purpose, a matrix of two indicators - the reported number of cases

100,000 population and the test positivity rate - could be helpful to categorise districts. Pragmatic thresholds for each will need to be deliberated upon by public health experts. Districts with the lowest case burden as well as positivity rate would be the ideal places for resuming in-person classes.

Safe return plan

We need to have a safe return plan. This would entail stringent adherence to universal masking for staff and students, hand hygiene, physical distancing (more so between students and staff than between the students themselves) and adequate ventilation (keeping doors and windows open, use of fans and no air conditioning). Outdoor areas may be used as classrooms, when possible. Classroom routines will have to be redesigned to limit student interaction inside and outside classrooms, such as staggered timetables for different classes, fewer classes per day, shorter duration of classes etc. High levels of testing and contact tracing within schools would be critical after reopening of schools.

Children are likely to remain asymptomatic even when infected, and hence facility for routine testing of students once or twice every week is a must. Although PCR testing is the current norm, antigen tests with high sensitivity and specificity and authorised for children and asymptomatic individuals are in the pipeline and could greatly increase access to testing in school settings. Protocols for contact tracing of infected students or staff, quarantine, isolation, temperature checks and symptom screening should be in place.

Younger children seem to be less likely to get sick or transmit the virus than teenagers and adults. Modelling studies indicate that reopening secondary schools will impact community transmission more than reopening primary schools. These findings suggest that reopening of primary schools should take precedence over secondary schools until the community prevalence becomes relatively low to allow secondary schools to reopen. Vaccination of teachers and other school staff should be prioritised.

It would not only influence transmission inside school premises but overall high vaccination coverage will reduce the COVID-19 burden paving the way towards safer schools.

As parents, educators, health officials and public administrators now is the time to ask not if our schools should reopen but how and when we can make it happen. The intellectual, social, emotional and mental development of our children is at

(Dr. Tarun Bhatnagar is a senior scientist at Chennai's National Institute of Epidemiology, an ICMR institu-

Cuba develops the world's first conjugate vaccine for COVID-19

The design and manufacturing of the conjugate vaccines allows them to be stored in regular refrigeration settings of 2–8 degree Celsius

Cuba's State-run corporation, BioFarma, said on Friday that its indigenously produced Soberana 2 vaccine was 91.2% efficacious in phase-3 trials. This follows closely on an announcement that another of its vaccines, Abdala, had reported an efficacy of 92.8% in late stage

The greater-than-90% effiacv puts them in a select league; however, unlike the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines that had reported an efficacy of over 90%, both the Soberana and Abdala are three-shot vaccines.

Both are subunit vaccines, meaning that a part of the virus fiorms the antigen and s hitched on to another construct. In Abdala the spike protein of the coronavirus is combined with a chemically

manufactured whereas in Soberana 2, the spike protein is chemically linked to the tetanus toxoid, making it a conjugate vaccine. The design and manufacturing allows the vaccine to be stored in regular refrigeration settings of 2-8 degree

Conjugate vaccines

The most common coniugate vaccines are those used for Haemophilus influenza type b and the pneumococcal bacteria. However, a unique aspect of the Soberana vaccine is that it is by far the only one among coronavirus vaccine candidates that relies on the conjugate vaccine technology.

Marlene Ramirez Gonzales, one of the scientists involved in the Cuban vaccine development project, in a March letter to the *British*

The island's four vaccine candidates are subunit vaccines - the type for which Cuba has the greatest know-how.

MARLENE RAMIREZ GONZALES CUBAN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

Medical Journal explained the rationale:

"The [Carribean] island's four vaccine candidates against COVID-19 are developed as subunit vaccines. one of the most economical approaches and the type for which Cuba has the greatest know-how and infrastructure. From protein S - the antigen or part of the SARS-CoV2 virus that all COVID vaccines target because it induces the strongest immune response in humans - Cuban [vaccine] candidates are based only on the part that is

cell's receptor: the RBD (receptor-binding domain) which is also the one that induces the greatest number of neutralising antibodies-...Cuba had already developed another vaccine with this principle. It is Cheimi-Hib, 'the first of its kind to be approved in Latin America and the second in the world', against haemophilus influenzae type b, coccobacilli responsible for diseases such as meningitis, pneumo-

nia and epiglottitis." Experts say that while there are no inherent disadvantages to taking a conjugate-vaccine approach for coronavirus vaccines, they have generally been used against bacteria and not viruses.

The two parts of a conjugate vaccine are typically connected by chains of polysaccharides, according to

Subunit vaccines of Cuba



In a subunit vaccine, a part of the virus forms the antigen, and it is hitched on to another construct

epidemiologist and public health expert, Chandrakant Lahariya, and they generally induce a weaker immune response in young children. "Cuba has a long history of vaccine development and has developed certain platforms that work to their ad-

vantage. So it makes sense

for them to adopt this route.

There is nothing inherently

disadvantageous, though, to

this approach," he said.

spike protein of the

nanufactured adjuvant

In Soberana 2, the

chemically linked to

making it a conjugate

the tetanus toxoid.

combined with a

Effective response For an effective vaccine res-

ponse, not only antibodies but even killer T-cells, or those produced by the immune system and capable of destroying infected cells, must be produced. In a protein sub-unit vaccine, the spike protein may be able to elicit a strong antibody reswith the tetanus toxoid, a very widely used childhood vaccine and therefore one which the immune system recognises, such a T-cell response could also be generated and conferring more effective protection, said Shahid Jameel, virologist and Director, Trivedi School of Biosciences, Ashoka

ponse but when combined

could be "logistic" concerns with a three-dose vaccine, it wasn't right to compare efficacies of various vaccines as those numbers had different contexts. "Every vaccine's efficacy results are in comparison to placebo, and not against another vaccine.... each trial was done differently."

While the efficacy results of the Cuban vaccines haven't been published in peer-reviewed journals, that the vaccines have been developed entirely by the public health system and amidst a U.S. trade embargo, are among the reasons why they have evoked interest in several other Caribbean countries as well as beyond.

Global response

Iran's Pasteur Institute has said it will participate in He added that while there phase-3 clinical trials for Soberana 02, with another 60,000 to be enrolled in Venezuela. Other countries including Mexico, Jamaica, Vietnam, Pakistan and India have expressed an interest in the Cuban vaccines, as has the African Union (on behalf of all 55 of the African nations). Cuba, which exports medical services, has said it will apply different rates for vaccines depending on the importer's ability to pay.

The 2020 Millennium Technology Prize goes to...

involved in contact with the

Balasubramanian and Klenerman for DNA sequencing techniques



D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

The 2020 Millennium Technology Prize, announced in May, has been awarded to Shankar Balasubramanian and David Klenerman, "for their development of revolutionary DNA sequencing techniques." Their work is a perfect blend of science and innovation, and very apt as we have all heard a great deal about genome sequencing in the context of the ongoing pandemic.

Emphasis on innovation Awarded by the Republic of Finland, along with top Finnish academic institutions and industries, The Millennium Prize has a 21st century outlook, with a strong emphasis on innovation. Past winners include Tim Berners-Lee (for implementing the world-wide web) and Frances Arnold (for her work on directed evolution in a the eleven awardees so far have subsequently won Nobel prizes. We wait, with bated breath, for Balasubramanian and Klenerman! Shankar Balasubramanian

laboratory setting). Three of

was born in Chennai, and has lived in England for most of his life. After his PhD, he joined the Chemistry Department, Cambridge University. He teamed up with David Klenerman, recruited by the Department around the same time. The initial aim was to build a microscope that could follow single molecules. Of special interest to him was the molecular machinery that DNA uses to make copies of itself. Somewhere in their discussions arose the germ of the idea for a new way to read the alphabet that make up DNA, and to thereby access the information stored in them.



Perfect blend: The work of Shankar Balasubramanian (right) and David Klenerman brings together science and innovation.

DNA (or RNA, in some viruses), the genetic material of life forms, is made of four bases (A, T, G and C; with U replacing T in the case of RNA). A chromosome is the duplex of a long linear chain of these - and in the DNA sequence is information - the blueprint of life. Life famously can replicate, and DNA replicates when an enzyme, DNA polymerase, synthesises a complementary strand using an existing DNA strand as the template.

Breakthrough idea

The breakthrough idea of Balasubramanian and Klenerman was to sequence DNA (or RNA) using this process of strand synthesis. They cle-

verly modified their ATGC bases so that each shone with a different colour. When copied, the "coloured" copy of DNA could be deciphered from the colours alone, using miniature optical and electronic devices. A very significant advance

in their "Next Generation Sequencing" (NGS) method lies in the size of DNA that could be sequenced at one go more than a million base pairs can be sequenced, which translates to hundreds of genes or even the whole genome of an organism. This is made possible by simultaneously sequencing hundreds of pieces of DNA at the same time. Many copies of this long DNA "sentence" are

randomly broken up into small pieces, each no more than a few hundred bases long, which are all sequenced together. The "reads" are then fitted together, in the manner of a puzzle, to give the final sequence.

This technology was spun off as a commercial entity, Solexa, with the initiative of Balasubramanian and Klenerman. This phenomenally successful startup was later acquired by the biotech company Illumina.

Falling cost What about the cost of all

this sequencing? When the Human Genome Project delivered the first, near-complete sequence of our gethe cost was nome, estimated to have been 3 billion dollars. As all our chromosomes together have 3 billion base pairs, it becomes an easy calculation - One dollar per sequenced base. By the year 2020, Next Generation Sequencing technologies had pushed the price for sequencing your genome down to a thousand dollars - when this technology becomes prevalent in India, this sum should become a few thousands of rupees!

To think that a coronavirus genome has not 3 billion but 30,000 RNA bases - not surprisingly, this has resulted in an explosion of data on the genomes of the novel coronavirus and its variants. Health authorities in the United Kingdom have sequenced the viral genome of one out of sixteen people who have tested Covid-positive. The popular genomic data sharing site GSAID has over two million submissions of Cov-2 genomic sequences, from 172 countries. NGS has been at the heart of monitoring the spread of viral variants across the globe, and tracing the source of outbreaks.

Shankar Balasubramanian continues to run a fine laboratory, focused on the design of therapeutic molecules that would tune down the uncontrolled expression of certain genes, and so control the damage they cause in conditions such as cancer.

(This article has been written by D. Balasubramanian in collaboration with Sushil Chandani who is a professional computational biologist, sushilchandani@gmail.com)

dbala@lvpei.org

Question Corner

Scream signals

Do humans perceive joyful or fearful screams more strongly?

Most often, a human scream signals fear of imminent danger. But screaming can also express joy or excitement. For the first time, researchers University of Zurich have demonstrated that non-alarming screams are more efficiently perceived and processed by the brain than their alarming counterparts. The researchers

investigated the meaning behind the full spectrum of human scream calls. The results revealed six emotionally distinct types of scream calls indicating pain, anger, fear, pleasure, sadness and joy. They found humans respond to positive screams more quickly and accurately

and with higher neural sensitivity than to alarming screams.

participants were asked

In the trials, 12

to vocalise positive and negative screams that might be elicited by various situations. A different group of individuals rated the emotional nature of the screams, classifying them into categories. The brain activity of participants listening to the screams was monitored using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to know how they perceived, recognised, processed and categorised the sounds. They found different brain regions showed much more activity and neural connectivity when hearing non-alarm screams. "It's highly possible that only humans scream to signal positive emotions like great joy or pleasure. Unlike with alarm calls, positive screams have become increasingly important over time," Sascha Frühholz says in a press release.

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

A ND-NDE





Recently installed solar lights mark the burial sites at

Unmarked graves and 'cultural genocide'

What's the history behind the remains of children found at former residential school sites in Canada?

STANLY JOHNY

The story so far: In late June, Cowessess First Nation, an indigenous organisation, found the remains of 751 $\,$ people, mainly indigenous children, at the site of a former residential school in Saskatchewan province in Canada. This, as per Cowessess, was "the most significantly substantial" discovery of graves of indigenous children to date in the country. Indigenous groups have uncovered two more sites at former residential schools in recent months, both in British Columbia, taking the number of unregistered graves found since May 29 to 1,148. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, "Canadians today are horrified and ashamed of how our country behaved." Indigenous organisations have urged his government to probe the schools and expedite measures for reconciliation. This week, Cowessess First Nation signed an agreement with Saskatchewan and the federal government reclaiming its right to look after its own children.

What's the residential school system?

The residential school system was a federal government initiative aimed at forcefully assimilating indigenous children into the European way of life. Started in the 19th century, there were at least 130 residential schools across the country. The schools were funded by the federal government's Department of Indian Affairs and run by churches, mostly the Catholic Church.

In 1883, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald defended the system in Parliament. "When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with its parents, who are savages ... It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men," he said. An amendment to the Indian Act in 1894, under Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell, made attendance at these schools compulsory for indigenous children. They were forcefully taken away from their families. Between 1883 and 1996, an estimated 150,000 indigenous children were sent to these schools. Many of them never reunited with their families.

Murray Sinclair, who headed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said the number of deaths in the residential school system could be 'well beyond 10,000'

What happened to the children?

In the residential schools, the children were not allowed to speak their language or practise their culture. Many of them were emotionally, physically and sexually abused. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, set up in

2008, estimated that some 4,100 children attending these schools either died or went missing. The Commission said it was impossible to reach a conclusion on the exact number of deaths because of the schools' burial policy and poor record-keeping. In most cases, the authorities did not even hand over the bodies of the children to their families. The Canadian government's Indian Affairs policy was to "hold the schools responsible for burial expenses when a student died at school". The Commission wrote, "Parental requests to have children's bodies returned home for burial were generally refused as being too costly." The children died mainly due to tuberculosis, malnutrition and other illnesses caused by the inhuman conditions inside the schools. Murray Sinclair, a former judge and Senator who headed the Commission, said recently that the actual number of deaths could be "well beyond 10,000". Indigenous organisations have also claimed that the actual number is more than the official estimates.

How has the Canadian government responded?

In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the first formal government-level apology to the indigenous community for the residential schools. The government-appointed Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathered some 7,000 statements from survivors of the schools to prepare a detailed report uncovering the truth behind the system. It also made 94 recommendations for reparation and reconciliation. The Commission report, published in 2015, concluded that the school system amounted to a "cultural genocide". The recommendations included independent investigations into the crimes of the past and measures to protect Aboriginal rights and culture.

Mr. Trudeau had promised during the campaign that addressing the indigenous question would be central to his agenda. But indigenous groups say the federal government has been slow in its response to the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. Several First Nations, which are using ground-penetrating radar technology to mark human remains buried underground, have asked for government help in quickly uncovering graves. The Trudeau government had set aside 27 million Canadian dollars to search for graves, but did not release the funds until after the findings of the remains in British Columbia were announced earlier this year.

Has the Catholic Church apologised?

The Commission also asked the Catholic Church to issue an apology and take steps for reconciliation. After the latest discovery of graves, Pope Francis said "the sad discovery further raises awareness of the pains and sufferings of the past", but stopped short of issuing an apology. In 2018, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops said the Pope could not personally apologise for the residential school system.

What makes the UAPA so stringent?

How is Section 43D(5) of the law interpreted by courts and why does it make obtaining bail difficult?

K. VENKATARAMANAN

The story so far: The death of Father Stan Swamy, a Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist, while in judicial custody, has brought to focus the law under which he was imprisoned. The stringent nature of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), which renders it difficult for one held under it to obtain bail, is being seen as one of the principal reasons for Fr. Swamy's death as a prisoner in a hospital. This has raised questions about the liberty of many others, including 15 others arrested in the Elgar Parishad case and incarcerated under the same law, which is also India's main anti-terrorism legislation.

What is the origin of the UAPA?

The Union government was considering a stringent law against calls for secession in the mid-1960s. In March 1967, a peasant uprising in Naxalbari imparted a sense of urgency. On June 17, 1966, the President had promulgated the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Ordinance "to provide for the more effective prevention of unlawful activities of individuals and associations".

Its stringency created a furore in Parliament when it was tabled, leading to the government dropping it. Instead, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, which was not identical to the ordinance, was passed.

What is its scope and how has it been expanded over the years?

The Act provided for declaring an association or a body of individuals "unlawful" if they indulged in any activity that included acts and words, spoken or written, or any sign or representation, that supported any claim to bring about "the cession of a part of the territory of India", or its "secession", or which questions or disclaims the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Prior to the UAPA's enactment, associations were being declared unlawful under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1952. However, the Supreme Court held that the provision on bans was unlawful because there was no judicial mechanism to scrutinise the validity of any ban. Therefore, the UAPA included provisions for a Tribunal which has to confirm within six months the notification declaring an outfit unlawful.

In its present form, the Act, after the amendments in 2004 and 2013, covers the declaration of associations as unlawful, punishment for terrorist acts and activities, acts threatening the country's security, including its economic security (a term that covers fiscal and monetary security, food, livelihood, energy ecological



People walking past a church in Mumbai where a memorial mass is being held for Father Stan Swamy on July 6. • AP

Under Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), bail cannot be granted to a suspect if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the charges are prima facie true

and environmental security), and provisions to prevent the use of funds for terrorist purposes, including money laundering.

The ban on organisations was initially for two years, but from 2013, the period of proscription has been extended to five years.

After the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), 2002, was repealed, the UAPA was expanded to include what would have been terrorist acts in

earlier laws. The 2004 amendments were also aimed at giving effect to various anti-terrorism resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

In 2012, there was a set of amendments, which was notified from early 2013, seeking to bring the UAPA in line with various requirements of the Financial Action Task Force, an inter-governmental body, to combat money laundering and terrorism financing. In 2019, the Act was amended to empower the government to designate individuals as terrorists.

How do UAPA provisions differ from regular criminal law?

Just like other special laws dealing with narcotic drugs and the now-defunct laws on terrorism, the UAPA also modifies the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to give it more teeth. A remand order can be for 30 days instead of the usual 15, and the maximum period of judicial custody before the filing of a chargesheet is extendable from the usual 90 days to 180 days. This extension, however, depends on the Public Prosecutor filing a report on the progress in the investigation and giving reasons for seeking another 90 days to complete it. The law also makes it more difficult to obtain bail.

What is the controversy about its bail provisions? Under Section 43D(5) of the Act, bail cannot be granted to a suspect if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the charges are prima facie true. A Supreme Court judgment on this has clarified that this meant that the court considering bail should not examine the evidence too deeply, but must go by the prosecution version based on broad probabilities. This means that the onus is on the accused to show that the case is false but without inviting the court to evaluate the available evidence. This is why human rights defenders feel that the provision is draconian, virtually rendering it impossible for anyone to obtain bail until the

Cauvery and the row over Mekedatu project

Why are Karnataka and Tamil Nadu sparring over a proposed dam in the river basin and what lies ahead?

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

The story so far: On July 6, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa said in Bengaluru that his government would go ahead with the long-pending Mekedatu dam project in the Cauvery Basin to cater to the drinking water needs of the Bengaluru Metropolitan City and surrounding areas. On the same day, in New Delhi, Tamil Nadu's Water Resources Minister Durai Murugan met Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and impressed upon him not to grant Centre's clearance for the project. This was preceded by a July 3 letter Mr. Yediyurappa wrote to his Tamil Nadu counterpart M.K. Stalin, calling for talks on the subject. However, the latter did not explicitly react to Mr. Yediyurappa's offer of negotiations, even as he explained why Tamil Nadu continued to oppose the project. Mr. Stalin has called an all-party meeting in Chennai on July 12.

What do the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal and the Supreme Court say?

The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, in its final order on February 2007, made allocations to all the riparian States - Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, apart from the Union Territory of Puducherry. It also stipulated "tentative monthly deliveries during a normal year" to be made available by Karnataka to Tamil Nadu.

Aggrieved over the final order for different reasons, the States had appealed to the Supreme Court. In February 2018, the court, in its judgment, revised the water allocation and increased the share of Karnataka by 14.75



thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) at the cost of Tamil Nadu. The enhanced quantum comprised 4.75 tmc ft for meeting drinking water and domestic requirements of Bengaluru and surrounding areas.

What is Karnataka planning?

Encouraged by the Supreme Court verdict, Karnataka, which sees the order as an endorsement of its stand, has set out to pursue the Mekedatu project. Originally proposed as a hydropower project, the revised Mekedatu dam project has more than one purpose to serve. Estimated to cost ₹9,000 crore, the project envisages the construction of a reservoir of 67.16-tmc ft capacity, which will come up about 4 km away from the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border. A hydropower plant of nearly 400 MW has also been proposed.

The Karnataka government has argued that the proposed reservoir will regulate the flow to Tamil Nadu on a monthly basis, as stipulated by the Tribunal and the Supreme Court. This is why Mr. Yediyurappa has

contended that the project will not affect the interests of Tamil Nadu farmers.

Why is Tamil Nadu opposed to it?

completion of the trial.

Tamil Nadu feels that Karnataka, through the project, will impound and divert flows from "uncontrolled catchments" to it, a component which was taken into account by the Tribunal in the 2007 order while arriving at the water allocation plan for the State. As per an estimate, around 80 tmc ft of water flows annually to Tamil Nadu, thanks to the catchments including the area between Kabini dam in Karnataka and Billigundulu gauging site on the inter-State border, and the area between Krishnaraja Sagar dam in Karnataka and the gauging site. As the upper riparian State has adequate infrastructure even now to address the water needs of Bengaluru, there is no need for the Mekedatu project, according to Tamil Nadu. The Mekedatu project also does not find mention in the Tribunal's final order or the Supreme Court judgment. Besides, given the unpleasant experiences that it has had with Karnataka in securing its share of the Cauvery water over the years, Tamil Nadu is wary of the assurances of the other side.

What happens next?

Tamil Nadu's petitions against the project are pending with the Supreme Court. The project is yet to get environmental clearance from the Centre. A way out can be found if the two parties agree to the idea of a joint execution, operation and maintenance of the project or a third party's participation.

Are COVID-19 curbs telling on immune systems?

Amid a gradual easing of lockdowns, why are some countries reporting a higher number of respiratory infections?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: As countries start lifting curbs imposed on societies due to the COVID-19 pandemic, news reports have indicated higher rates of respiratory infections, even unseasonal diseases such as influenza and the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Doctors have called this the "immunity debt" brought on by non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) put in place to reduce the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

What is 'immunity debt'?

The NPIs, including social distancing, use of masks, and hand hygiene, were seen as being effective in breaking the chain of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2. During the pandemic, they have been employed to do exactly that, and have succeeded at varying levels in countries, depending on the level of compliance.

However, they have had unintended consequences for other respiratory infections as well. Rachel E. Baker et al have highlighted the issue in a Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS) paper titled 'The impact of COVID-19 nonpharmaceutical interventions on the future dynamics of endemic infections'. America is among the nations seeing an increase in the number of RSV cases in the infant population. "Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) have been employed to reduce the transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), yet these measures are already having similar effects on other directly transmitted, endemic diseases. Disruptions to the seasonal transmission

patterns of these diseases may have consequences for the timing and severity of future outbreaks," it states

Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology, Christian Medical College, Vellore, explains: "Basically, when you are constantly exposed to infectious agents, what you are doing is boosting the immune response in the human body. If you don't see the bugs you normally see, there is a possibility that there are unseasonal outbreaks, and with greater severity than usual."

Q. Sue Huang, Tim Wood and others record in Nature Communications that New

Zealand, which has seen a number of RSV cases, has a well-established influenza circulation pattern with peak incidences in the winter months. "Remarkably, influenza virus circulation was almost non-existent during the 2020 winter, a 99.9%

reduction compared with previous years," the report said. They postulated that the country's use of stringent lockdowns and border controls had resulted in substantial reduction in contact between individuals, leading to the fall in the number of cases in 2020.

Is the impact only on respiratory viruses or on other viruses as well?

RSV can be severe in very young infants, but it is commonly a winter infection. Babies gain some protection from mothers, but the mother must have had

some exposure to the virus. If mothers are not exposed, it leaves the baby unprotected, and if it is not very severe, children can be supported through the infection, explains Dr. Kang. A monoclonal antibody is used to treat RSV. In adults, an outbreak of seasonal influenza is expected.

While lockdowns, as they reduce the chances of transmission, might affect other respiratory infections, is it possible that there might be a rash of other infections as well, for instance, gastrointestinal (GI) infections? Ashish Bavdekar, a Pune-based paediatric gastroenterologist, says this may be possible, although data to support it is not available in India. "We do not have very good data on this. In fact, we don't have data on the number of cases of RSV too, but we will know about GI-related infections in a few months," he says. "This is such an unusual phenomenon that has occurred. But I don't think the change of season will have long-term epidemiological effects, they will go back to the regular seasonal impact in

Should there be a rethink on lockdowns?

Despite the huge social and economic costs, lockdowns and social distancing have shown demonstrable success in containing the pandemic. But how stringent should lockdown measures be in future?

The Nature Communications article calls for a reassessment of the role of NPIs and an analysis to identify the most effective components to prevent respiratory virus transmission and infection. This might yield "new and sustainable interventions that can minimise and prevent seasonal and epidemic respiratory viral illnesses in the future".

THE RAJAPAKSAS

Four brothers in one government

With Basil joining the govt. as Finance Minister. the Sri Lankan Cabinet has five Rajapaksas, four brothers and one from the next generation

In Focus

centre of Sri

At the

Lanka's Rajapaksa brand of

politics is

and former

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President Mahinda

Rajapaksa

Gotabaya

Rajapaksa,

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Prime Minister

MEERA SRINIVASAN

¬o track the Rajapaksa family tree is to track the most important positions in the Sri Lankan government. With the recent appointment of Basil Rajapaksa, the youngest of the Rajapaksa brothers, as the country's new Minister of Finance, Sri Lanka's first family has further fastened its clasp on power. The Cabinet has five Raja-

paksas – President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (who is also Defence Minister), Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Irrigation Minister Chamal Rajapaksa, Basil Rajapaksa, and PM's son and Sports Minister Namal Rajapaksa. The government has a few more, holding junior ministerial posts and key positions in state-run institutions. They remind sceptics of "family bandyism", a term commonly used in Sri Lanka in the past, to refer to the Bandaranaike ruling clan. Together, the Rajapaksas in government control a substantial chunk of the budget and policy. For the near 22-million people of the country, this means being steered by one powerful family. One that derives political legitimacy from its core support base of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalists, with a known suspicion of Tamil and Muslim minorities and an unmistakable

aversion to their rights. For the family, this means a seat at the country's helm, even if it must navigate mounting challenges facing the administration – at a time when the country is still emerging out of its long civil war and into a fast-aggravating economic crisis - and preparing the ground for



er in future. At the centre of Sri Lanka's

ty south.



Rajapaksa brand of politics is Prime Minister and former two-time President Mahinda Rajapaksa. Though his father D.A. Rajapaksa was a prominent politician in the island's southern region, it was Mr. Mahinda who elevated the family's profile to the national and international arena. As the "war victor" under whose leadership the LTTE was decimated, he became the camp's reliable political mascot with wide appeal in the country's Sinhala majori-

Following a decade in office, he was defeated by his former colleague Maithripala Sirisena, who defected to form an unlikely coalition with the Opposition and became President in 2015. At that time, Mr. Mahinda may have taken a step back, just briefly, only to bounce back at the earliest opportunity. He saw one in October 2018, during Sri Lanka's infamous "constitutional crisis", when President Sirisena sacked then PM Ranil Wickremesinghe and appointed Mr. Ma-

with the Supreme Court ruling that the move was illegal, Mr. Mahinda was forced to resign, in less than eight weeks after his sudden appointment.

A year later, the Rajapaksas did capture power with a resounding victory in the presidential polls. Except, it greater influence as a was a new Rajapaksa at the chief strategist forefront. A two-term cap on Presidency, introduced by the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe administration, barred Mr. Mahinda from contesting for the country's highest office.

The doer'

With a class of professionals and elite businessmen propping him up as a fresh face and "doer", Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, 72, hit the campaign trail promising "vistas of prosperity and splendour" that found wide resonance among Sinhala Buddhist voters. Monks supporting him likened the former military man to Adolf Hitler, and his brother Mr. Basil called him a "Terminator" who would end corruption. The remarks, obviously, meant as compliments.

While Mahinda is still their repository of political capital, Gotabaya has displaced him from being the sole leader even as Basil enjoys

.........

But minorities feared him. Mr. Gotabaya is not only credited with helping defeat the LTTE but is also linked to several allegations of rights violations during and after the war. He is accused of having run "death squads" targeting dissidents, including journalists. He has denied the allegations, but is yet to inspire confidence among minorities as their emphatic vote against him showed. There is little indication that President Gotabaya worries about how minorities perceive

While Mr. Mahinda and Mr. Gotabaya were prominent faces in public, Mr. Basil, relatively less visible, was

working behind the scenes, building their new party, the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Front), enticing willing defectors from the Opposition, crafting its poll campaign and skilfully ensuring their return to and consolidation of power. in both the 2019 presidential and 2020 parliamentary elections.

If Mr. Mahinda's former terms in power, from 2005 to 2015, were marked by his powerful leadership, with Mr. Basil [then a Presidential Adviser and Economic Development Minister] and Mr. Gotabaya [then Secretary to the Ministry of Defence] reporting to him, 2019 brought out a different dynamic among the brothers. While Mr. Mahinda is still their repository of political capital, Mr. Gotabaya displaced him from the position of sole leader, and Mr. Basil commanded greater influence as a chief strategist.

Appointed as Prime Minister after the August 2020 general elections, the 75year-old Mr. Mahinda was relegated to the second spot, with younger brother Mr. Gotabaya wielding greater power as Executive President, only enhanced by the 20th Amendment passed by his government in October 2020. And last week, Mr. Basil, 70, took over the finance portfolio from Mr. Mahinda, who has, in turn, been given a newly created, but apparently less powerful Economic Policies and Planning

Economic challenges

Ministry.

At one level, it may seem like a game of musical chairs played by members of the Rajapaksa clan, each with their own, distinct strength and baggage. But read within the larger context of the country's economic crisis, the challenge of the pandemic's third wave, and a growing disenchantment among people, including Rajapaksa voters, in the face of acute economic distress is bound to test the brothers' collective political mettle.

Ensuring smooth governance at such a time is only one of their problems, as political pressures surface periodically, even if not from the Opposition that is neither

coherent nor formidable yet. The pressure often emerges from within the administration, manifesting in frequent clashes between different interest groups, their loyalties, and in their clamour for influence.

President Gotabaya is under considerable pressure. He must prove to his supporters that he is the "doer" they backed. Whether the military men – over two dozen – he appointed to key administrative posts, or the bureaucracy, with sections reportedly feeling sidelined, will help him accomplish the urgent tasks ahead of him remain to be seen. He has not ruled out a second term.

As for Mr. Basil, his supporters see him as the country's leader in waiting. They are not perturbed by the fact that he is also an American citizen, or that he faced corruption allegations in the past.

A 2007 U.S. Embassy cable published by WikiLeaks called him "Mr. Ten percent", citing commissions he allegedly took from government contracts. In his backers' view, he is the "saviour" the country needs.

Meanwhile, the youngest Rajapaksa in the Cabinet, Mr. Namal, 35, and projected as Mr. Mahinda's political heir, is seen to be working hard, both within the scope of his Ministries – he holds a state ministry too - and outside. Tapping the social media audience that he steadily built over the last few years, he communicates regularly and clearly, drawing many young supporters. Sporting the trademark maroon shawl worn by his father and two uncles, Mr. Namal too is said to have set his eyes on the country's top office.

Amid this apparent contest within the family, President Gotabaya, speaking at a public event in March, said the Raiapaksa siblings stand "firmly united", and vowed they would take Sri Lanka forward. Despite differences and fissures, the brothers have indeed stood together

DIDI

A bump in the road

Chinese authorities are investigating the company over its use of data

ANANTH KRISHNAN

That was meant to be a moment of pride for one of Internet giants turned, in a matter of days, into an epic car-crash. On June 30, the ride-hailing app Didi, which dominates the China market, raised \$4.4 billion in its much anticipated listing on the New York Stock Exchange, the biggest Chinese listing since Alibaba raised a record \$25 billion in 2014. Didi's IPO valued the company at \$73 billion.

Within a week, Didi would have not only lost more than one-fifth of its market value, but found itself facing the threat of lawsuits from angry U.S. investors as Chinese authorities, days after the IPO, said they were investigating the company over its use of data, citing privacy and national security concerns. On July 9, Chinese regulators then took an extraordinary step of banning the country's biggest ride-hailing app from registering new users, as well as removing 25 of its apps from app stores.

An uncertain fate now awaits Didi, which has pledged to cooperate with the authorities. The rise and sudden fall of Didi is the latest episode of a tug-of-war between the Communist Party and big tech companies, which burst into global attention in November when the IPO of Alipay, the financial payments arm of Alibaba, was suspended in



Shanghai at the last minute. A number of investigations into tech companies then followed, with regulators taking aim at both monopolistic practices and the wealth of data that companies have accumulated.

Didi's story began in 2012, when founder Cheng Wei launched an app in Beijing for hailing taxis, called Didi Dache. In 2015, the company merged with another hailing app, Kuaidi Dache. Thus was born Didi Kuaidi, later renamed Didi Chuxing (or Didi, for short).

Didi expanded beyond taxis to a range of services, from carpools to even luxury limos. Today, Didi corners a dominant share of the market in China – estimates range from 80 to 90% along with an expanding global footprint in 16 countries, with a presence across Latin America, as well as in Australia, Japan and Russia. It has close to 500 million active users and around 15 million drivers, three times as many drivers as on Uber (although Uber is valued higher). After a bruising battle for the China market with Uber, Didi emerged on top, acquiring its rival Uber China in 2016. Uber is among its major investors today, along with SoftBank, Alibaba and Tencent.

Roadblocks

In 2018, Didi's safety protocols became a matter of wide debate in China. A woman using its hitch-a-ride service was murdered by a driver in Shenzhen, and three months later that year another woman was raped and murdered by a driver in Zhejiang. Both drivers were sentenced to death, and the company suspended the hitch service.

The company promised to tighten its safety protocols. It also rolled out a service the following year seen as aimed at pleasing the Communist Party, that allowed passengers to choose to be driven by "verified party members" as it identified which drivers were members of the Communist

Following the Didi IPO, authorities have said they will tighten oversight on how companies can list overseas. The Cyberspace Administration of China, which is leading the battle to tame tech companies citing their use of personal data, is now considering "a new regulation requiring companies with more than 1 million users' data to apply for a cybersecurity review before seeking listing overseas", the Party-run Global Times reported. "The government will not allow internet giants to become rules-makers of data collection and usage," the newspaper said.

China's tech giants have seen "a combined \$823 billion wiped from their market value since a February peak", according to Bloomberg, coinciding with the raft of measures aimed at tightening control including anti-trust investigations.

In the last 10 years, as tech companies grew rapidly, data regulation in particular has become a priority issue for President Xi Jinping and the Party, notes Santosh Pai, an honorary fellow at the Institute of Chinese Studies in New Delhi who studies Chinese regulatory issues. "This is a pattern we have seen, from Alipay to Didi. Data, for the party, is becoming a national treasure.

KITEX GROUP

Business and politics

Alleging harassment, the Kerala-based group is shifting investments out of State

K. A. MARTIN

itex Group, a Keralabased business group with a market capitalisation of around ₹930 crore that makes a range of products from garments to curry powder, has run into a stand-off with the State government in recent weeks over raids at one of its facto-

Kitex, which also founded a political organisation that won several seats in the 2015 and 2020 local body elections, has alleged harassment by government agencies.

On Friday, Telangana Industries Minister K.T. Rama Rao, after meeting a delegation from the company headed by managing director Sabu M. Jacob, announced that Kitex Group will invest ₹1,000 crore in Warangal.

On June 29, Mr. Jacob said the group was withdrawing from a proposal to invest ₹3,500 crore to build an apparels park and three industrial parks (Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Palakkad) with a total job potential of 35,000. The proposal was submitted by the group at Ascent Kerala (investors' conference) in January 2020. The group, based in Kizhakkambalam, about 25 km east of Kochi, has a string of enterprises with a total sales of around ₹1,700 crore. Kitex Group employs around 15,000 people, drawn from across India.

Mr. Jacob said Kitex had invi-



tations from other States as well as Bangladesh.

Raids at factory

He said he was "disappointed" with Kerala where it is hard to run businesses. In June, State agencies raided Kitex Garments factory premises 11 times. Most of the raids lasted three to four hours. The 26-year-old company was "being treated like a band of thieves and scoundrels", he said, and pointed out that Kerala was almost at the bottom in the "ease of doing business" rankings in the country.

Kitex Group was founded 53 years ago by M.C. Jacob, who passed away in June 2011, aged 78. His son Bobby M. Jacob heads the Anna Kitex group with domestic operations as well as exports to West Asia and Europe. The group manufactures aluminium products, including pressure cookers, curry powders and school bags. Kitex Garments, headed by

Mr. Sabu, looks after exports to the U.S.

The garments company is about a quarter century old. The company had complained of harassment from the government in the past as well. One notable incident in 2012 involved the Kizhakkambalam chayat, which served a stop memo notice on the garments unit following complaints from residents in the neighbourhood about effluent from the dyeing and bleaching units flowing into waterbodies. The then State government under the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) negotiated a truce to allow operations to continue. Then in 2013, Kitex Group formed Kizhakkambalam Twenty20, a voluntary body using CSR

India" by 2020. In the 2015 local bodies elections, Twenty20 fielded

funds with the declared aim

of turning Kizhakkambalam

panchayat into "the best in

candidates in all the 19 wards of the panchayat. It won 17 of the 19 council seats, stunning both the Left Democratic Front, led by the CPI(M), and the UDF. Since then, the group has increased its political presence in the State.

In the 2020 local bodies elections, Twenty20 won 18 of the 19 seats in the Kizhakkambalam panchayat. It also spread its influence to neighbouring panchayats -Mazhuvannoor, Aikaranad and Kunnathunad, where it won a comfortable majority. Twenty20 also tested its popularity in the May 2021 Assembly election, though none of its candidates made it to the Assembly.

While Twenty20 peared to be gaining political mileage, P.T. Thomas, of the Congress party, accused the company of being mainly responsible for polluting the Kadambrayar, a river that is a drinking water source for thousands of people in Kizhakkambalam and neighbouring areas. A resolution was also passed in the District Development Committee, backed by two other MLAs, to have a special session on pollution caused by the company.

With Twenty20 securing political space, many have described the present developments as a political rivalry between Kitex and mainstream parties. Others have said corporations taking up political space would be detrimental to the democratic values of society.

A ND-NDE

Fuel demand rebounded in India in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Fuel demand rebounded in June after slumping to a nine-month low in the previous month as curbs to stop the spread of the pandemic were eased, helping economic activity and mobility to pick up.

Fuel consumption rose 1.5% to 16.33 million tonnes in June from a year earlier and by 8% over May 2021, data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas showed.

Petrol sales rose 5.6% year-on-year to 2.4 million tonnes. It was up 21% from May's 1.99 million tonnes.

Diesel – the most used fuel in India – rose 12% from May, but was down 1.5% from June 2020 and 18.8% from June 2019.

Indian farmers have planted

49.9 million hectares with

summer (kharif) crops,

down 10.4% from a year ear-

lier, according to the Minis-

try of Agriculture & Farm-

ers' Welfare, as monsoon

rains taper off after a strong

crops on June 1, when mon-

soon rains usually reach In-

dia. Planting then continues

Planting of rice, the key

summer crop, was at 11.5

million hectares as of July 9

versus 12.6 million hectares

in the previous year, the mi-

The area planted with

cotton was at 8.6 million

Farmers typically start

summer-sown

start last month.

until early August.

Kharif planting lags as

monsoon rains taper off

Farmers have sown 10.4% less this year

Services panel charts roadmap to double exports in five years

Export promotion council seeks incentives for sector, parity with merchandise

K. BHARAT KUMAR

The Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) is preparing a roadmap to achieve doubling of services exports in the next five years, said Chairman Maneck E. Davar. Separately, the SEPC has

urged the government to ensure that the new foreign trade policy, being formulated, also includes incentives for services exports by according parity to the sector with merchandise exports, he said. The current trade policy, whose validity was to have ended in March 2020, has been extended till September this year.

The council has tagged areas such as tourism and

hectares versus 10.5 million

Planting of overall oil-

seeds, including soybean

was at 11.2 million hectares,

down from 12.6 million

India has received 5% be-

low average rainfall since

June 1, when the four-month

rainy season began. Mon-

soon rains were 46% below

average in the week to July 7.

hectares.

hectares.



In focus: The council has tagged tourism and hospitality, and medical value travel as 'champion' sectors. • FILE РНОТО

hospitality, logistics and medical value travel as 'champion' sectors meriting additional focus.

"Take the example of Netflix, which recently announced plans for a studio with post-production facili-

Supermarts Q1

PAT rises 130%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Avenue

ties in India; if we wish to attract other companies to set up such facilities for entertainment technology across the country over the next five years, we have to understand what they need - in terms of infrastructure and human skills," said Mr. Davar. "In education services, we had some 45,000-odd foreign students in FY19-20. We could aim to double that within 3-5 years."

'Vital part of economy' Stressing the need for policy backing, Mr. Davar said, "The perception is that services don't require any support or incentives from the government, which is not

correct. Services form a very

vital part of our economy."

Acknowledging that manufacturing faced a very competitive environment globally and therefore required support, he said the SEPC was only seeking a 'level playing field' for services.

Digital cards helped our clients in crises: Sodexo

'Going fully digital ensured operations'

Avenue Supermarts Ltd., which operates under the D Mart brand, reported standalone profit after tax (PAT) for the quarter ended Iune 30 more than doubled to ₹115 crore, from ₹50 crore a year earlier.

First-quarter PAT margin was 2.3%, compared with 1.3% in Q1 FY21, the company said in a filing. Total standalone revenue for the quarter stood at ₹5,032 crore, compared with ₹3,833 crore in the same period last year.

On a consolidated basis, first-quarter PAT was ₹95 crore, as against ₹40 crore in the year-earlier period. The consolidated PAT

margin was 1.8%, as against

"Our solutions are trust-

Full digitisation has helped employee benefit solutions firm Sodexo BRS India to increase its market share, a top company executive said. "Digitisation has helped

reimagine benefits with new clients and new consumers increasing our market share successfully," said CEO Anish Sarkar. Since the time it went fully digital in 2016, Sodexo had introduced an array of digital solutions for employee benefits such as meals, fuel, telecom, learning and development, health and wellness through its multi-benefits pass.

Digital cards and digitisation have helped clients navigate crises in the last one year," Mr. Sarkar said.

ed by over 11,000 clients across public and private companies and that reinforces our vision to design solutions that improve everyday quality of life of our clients, consumers and merchants," the CEO asserted.

In calendar 2020, the company had ensured complete continuity of operations. "This can be attributed to the fully-digital business model and delivery of digital cards during the pandemic," he said.

"The business continued to stay resilient due to all four stakeholders, namely employees, clients, consumers, and merchants, going fully digital and adapting rapidly to the changing times," Mr. Sarkar added.

'Water market gaining traction in India, abroad'

Our order book gives us 3x revenue visibility: Wabag MD

N. ANAND

Chennai-based Va Tech Wabag Ltd., a pure-play water technology multinational firm that offers a portfolio of solutions across water and wastewater treatment, braved the COVID-19 pandemic and posted double-digit growth last fiscal. MD Rajiv Mittal discusses how the firm secured an order book *of* ₹9,500 *crore*. *Excerpts*.

How did you manage to stay afloat during the second wave of the pandemic?

■ As you would have seen last year, in spite of a very strict lockdown, we closed the year on a positive note with a double-digit growth on top line and bottom line. During this time, our engineering and procurement functions were working at full capacity, even while operating from home, ensuring business continuity.

In recent times, there have been lockdowns in India in various States. However, we transitioned to the new normal to ensure minimum disruption, carrying forward the lessons we learnt from the first wave.

At our construction sites. we ensured provision of all basic essentials, regularly sanitised accommodation and ensured adherence to COVID safety norms for our workforce for continuity of construction with minimal disruption. Being an essential service provider, our operations and maintenance (O&M) sites were operating at full capacity to ensure safe and clean drinking water and sanitation to help people stay at home safely during the pandemic.

Tell us about your performance in Q1 of FY22?

■ By and large, we are ensuring operational continuitv at our O&M sites, as water and sanitation falls under essential service. As far as engineering, procurement and construction sites are concerned, we are ensuring operations in our construction sites with minimal disruption. However, we are hopeful that our Q1 performance would be better compared with the corresponding period last year.

How do you foresee the rest of the fiscal year 2021-22?

■ Right now, we are having a strong order book and a good cash position will help us in speeding up execution. Going forward, we foresee the water market gaining traction, both in India and overseas. We will be focussing on further strengthening our order book, especially targeting the high technology jobs, which is an area of expertise for Wabag.

What is your order book value and how did you manage to get it?

■ Currently, we have an order book of ₹9,500 crore. Our excellent order book gives us a revenue visibility of 3x. Some large-scale or-

implemented in Tamil Nadu?

ders contributing to this order book are O&M contracts of Agra and Ghaziabad under One City, One Operator model, our hybrid annuity model (HAM) projects in Kolkata and Patna, our Jeddah Airport 2 sewage treatment plant in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Ipswich Biel water treatment plant in Switzerland.

What is the capex for the current year and revenue outlook for FY22?

We have always been an asset light organisation and the same will be our focus going forward.

Even for our HAM projects, we have partnered with financial partners who will be investing in debt and equity, and we will only be investing a small portion of the total project cost.

As the situation over the last two years has been uncertain owing to the pandemic, we have refrained from giving a guidance. We are confident that Wabag will continue to grow, as in the past.

What are some of the key projects the company has

■ Kodungaiyur Power-Neutral WWTP, Chennai, the first waste water treatment plant in India to complete 1,10,000 hours on a single gas engine; Nemmeli desalination plant, the largest municipal desalination plant in India; and Koyambedu water reuse plant - recycling secondary treated water up to potable standards for industrial use in SIPCOT in-

dustrial

Pankaj Singh

calls it a day

dam, Sriperumbudur and Irun-

Tour de France: Eurosport **Wimbledon 2021**: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.; SS Select 1 & Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.

England Women vs India Women: 2nd T201, Sony Six (SD & HD), 7 p.m. **Euro 2020**: Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 12.30

a.m. (Monday) NBA: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF

Former England striker Mariner passes away

Paul Mariner, the former England striker who played at the World Cup in 1982 and later coached in MLS, has died. He was 68. Mariner scored 13 goals in 35 games for England. AP

Batra flags fresh concerns

Indian athletes may face issues during immigration process

TOKYO OLYMPICS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra on Saturday highlighted fresh concerns that India's Olympics-bound athletes may face on arrival in Tokyo, including spending long hours in immigration without food and water.

Batra was informed of the inconveniences athletes from other countries faced on landing in Tokyo by the Indian Chef de Mission on Friday.

(three for 23) turned the

match on its head as the tou-

rists, chasing 146, lost their

last six wickets for 19 runs to

be dismissed for 127 in 16

The scores: West Indies

145/6 in 20 overs (Lendl Sim-

mons 27, Andre Russell 51;

Josh Hazlewood 3/12) bt Aus-

tralia 127 in 16 overs (Matthew

Wade 33, Mitchell Marsh 51;

Obed McCoy 4/26, Hayden

Walsh 3/23). Toss: Australia;

MoM: McCoy; West Indies won

by 18 runs to take a 1-0 lead in

the five-match series.

He has raised the issue



Narinder Batra. • FILE PHOTO

with the Games' organisers. In a statement, Batra said it had been brought to his notice that athletes arriving at the Narita airport had to

wait nearly four hours for the immigration process to

No food or water This was followed by anoth-

er three hours of waiting for transport. No food or water was provided during this time. Also, according to the German contingent, volunteer services were almost non-existent, he said.

The first batch of Indian athletes is set to depart for Tokyo on July 17.

Meanwhile, the organising committee has assured delegates that all issues are being addressed.

Anti-Olympic protesters demonstrate

ASSOCIATED PRESS

About 40 protestors gathered in Tokyo on Saturday calling for the Tokyo 2020 Games to be cancelled, as the Olympics open in just two weeks.

Participants in the demonstration gathered in front of a five-star hotel in the capital, where the International Olympics Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach stays, chanting 'no more Olympics'.

Awake Yoshida, 38 year-old resident of Tokyo, who lost her job during the COVID-19, said holding the Olympics under the



Go back: Locals make their views known as they confront police officers in Tokyo on Saturday. • AF

pandemic and state of emergency has made her angry.

Decision reversed Meanwhile, the Fukushima prefecture will bar

spectators from the Olympic events it hosts due to rising COVID-19 infections, its governor said on Saturday, reversing a position announced two days earlier by organisers.

Pankaj Singh. • FILE PHOT PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pacer Pankaj Singh, who contributed in Rajasthan's two Ranji Trophy triumphs and briefly played for India, announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Saturday.

The 36-year-old Pankaj made the announcement through a letter to the Rajasthan Cricket Association

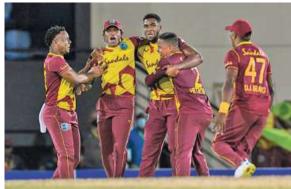
Pankaj's maiden ODI appearance came against Sri Lanka in a tri-series in Zimbabwe in 2010, while his two Test outings came against England in 2014 when he took two wickets.

■ Pankaj played two Tests for India claiming as many wickets, while he was wicketless in his only ODI

Mahmudullah

Bangladesh all-rounder Mahmudullah has decided to stop playing Test cricket, a day after recording a career-best score in the oneoff Test against Zimbabwe

Windies stun Australia



The real thing! Obed McCoy, centre, is congratulated by teammates after he claimed the last Australian wicket. • AFP

AUSTRALIA IN WI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Obed McCoy and Hayden Walsh combined for seven wickets to trigger a stunning Australian collapse as the West Indies pulled off an 18run victory in the opening fixture of the five-match T20 International series at the Darren Sammy Stadium here on Friday.

Seamer McCoy (four for 26) and leg-spinner Walsh

Bangladesh in command

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Chasing a victory target of 477, Zimbabwe was 140/3 its second innings against Bangladesh at close on the fourth day of their one-off Test here on Saturday.

Unbeaten hundreds

Earlier, Najmul Hossain Shanto and Shadman Islam scored unbeaten centuries as Bangladesh declared its second innings at 284/1.

Batting at No. 3, Najmul averaged run a ball for a total which included five fours and six sixes. Shadman was more cautious, facing 196 deliveries

to compile his finest Test

innings that was laced with nine fours. The scores: Bangladesh 468 & 284/1 decl. (Shadman Islam 115 n.o., Saif Hassan 43. Naimul Hossain Shanto 117 n.o.) vs Zimbabwe 276 & 140/3 (Brendon Taylor 92).

DIAMOND LEAGUE

Cheruiyot aces 1500m

REUTERS

Reigning world champion Timothy Cheruiyot got sweet redemption after coming up short at Kenya's Olympic team trials last month, winning the men's 1,500m in a world-leading 3 minutes and 28.28 seconds at Friday's Diamond League meet in Monaco. Nijel Amos won the men's

800m in 1:42.91, Ethiopia's Lamecha Girma clinched

the men's 3,000m steeplechase in 8:07.75 and Olympic champion Faith Kipyegon took the women's 1,500m in 3:51.07.

In the men's 100m, American Ronnie Baker upset a stacked field to clinch his second back-to-back Diamond League win in 9.91 seconds. Karsten Warholm fol-

lowed up his world-record performance eight days ago with another Diamond League win, clinching the men's 400m hurdles in a meet record 47.08 seconds.



Strong comeback: Timothy Cheruiyot leads the pack on way to his 1500m triumph. • AFP

Mollema wins stage 14

Pogacar retains yellow jersey

TOUR DE FRANCE REUTERS

Dutchman Bauke Mollema won the 14th stage of the Tour de France on Saturday, a 183.7km ride from Carcassonne to Quillan, for his second career victory in 11 appearances at cycling's most popular race. Austrian Patrick Konrad

took second place, with Colombia's Sergio Higuita coming home third, both one minute four seconds off the pace. Slovenian Tadej Pogacar

retained the overall leader's

was done," said Mollema.

yellow jersey at the end of a day's breakaway. Pogacar leads Martin by hot day, on roads peppered with short but brutal climbs. 4:04, with Colombian Rigo-"I knew I had a good berto Uran in third place. chance to make it to the end, Sunday's 15th stage is a I paced myself and when I

lung-busting 191.3km mounsaw I had a minute at the top tain trek to Andorra as the of the last climb I knew it race reaches its highest point at the Port d'Envalira, There was one major 2,408m above sea level.

Bauke Mollema. • AFF

change in the general classi-

fication, however, as Franc-

jumped from ninth to se-

cond after taking part in the

Guillaume Martin

retires from **Tests** PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

in Harare. In 49 Tests, Mahmudullah has made 2,764 runs with four centuries.

Barty lives a dream, scripts history

Beats Pliskova and emulates mentor Goolagong, ending a 40-year wait

WIMBLEDON

AGENCIES LONDON

Ashleigh Barty became the first Australian woman to win the singles trophy at Wimbledon since Evonne Goolagong in 1980, beating Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7(4), 6-3 on Saturday. This was her second Slam overall, after French Open 2019.

Inspired by Goolagong, she wore an outfit at Wimbledon that was a tribute to the dress her mentor wore when she won the tournament for the first time in 1971. Fittingly, in her victory speech, a teary eyed Barty said, "I hope I made Evonne proud."

She was off to a perfect start on Saturday, collecting the first 14 points and racing to a 3-0 lead, before holding off a comeback from Pliskova to take the set.

She returned Pliskova's speedy serves – the ones that produced a tournamenthigh 54 aces entering Saturday - without any trouble, hit winners with her heavy topspin forehand and set up others with her sliced backhands.

She threw in an ace or two of her own, and actually finished with more than Pliskova, 7-6. The key stat by the finish probably was this: Barty won 22 of 31 points that lasted nine strokes or more.

She was at her best in the second set too even as Plisko-



The Holy Grail: Ash Barty stayed true to her top billing and won her first Wimbledon. • AP

her strokes. But Barty wobbled while serving for the championship at 6-5, sending consecutive forehands long to get broken. The ensuing tie-breaker was shaky, which she ceded to the Czech with a double fault.

In the third, though, Barty went up an early break, and stayed the course. After a shaky second set, she had managed to get back to the steadier version of herself and didn't flinch even when she had to stare down a break point while serving at 5-3. A missed backhand by Pliskova removed that threat, and Barty then delivered a 108mph ace. One last

- 1 Barty is the first women's top seed to win Wimbledon since Serena Williams in 2016 and the first to win any Major since Halep at 2018 French Open
- 4 The Aussie is the fourth junior Wimbledon champion to lift the senior title (2011 & 2021), joining Ann Jones (1956 & 1969), Hingis (1994 & 1997) and Mauresmo (1996 & 2006)
- 6 Barty is the sixth woman in the Open Era to win her first two Major titles at the French Open and Wimbledon, after Goolagong, Evert, Graf, Muguruza and Halep
- 6 Pliskova, who lost her second Major final, was broken six times by Barty, including thrice in the first set. In the six matches before this, she had been broken only four times
- 35 The final was Barty's 35th Tour win this year, the most for any women's player

THE RESULTS

PENALTY SHOOTOUT AT EUROS

England

Final begins at 12.30 a.m. IST (Monday)

Women: Final: 1-Ashleigh Barty (Aus) bt 8-Karolina Pliskova (Cze) 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-3,

Djokovic eyes Slam No. 20, Berrettini his first

A triumph will help the Serb pull level with Federer and Nadal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The man standing between Novak Djokovic and a record-tying 20th Grand Slam title, Matteo Berrettini, remembers being wowed by Wimbledon when he played in the junior event as a teenager.

"For me, it was just absurd. I asked myself, 'Who knows if one day I'll return and play in the main tournament, even just in qualifying? I have no idea.' And now

I'm in the final," he said, then laughed at the thought of it

"So it's all a bit strange," continued the barrel-chested, big-hitting Berrettini, now 25. "But what's beautiful is that I'm much more aware of what I can do now. I know I can do this, because I'm here." That he is.

Multiple firsts

On Sunday at the All England Club, the No. 1-seeded Diokovic's 30th Major final will be No. 7 seed Berrettini's first - and the first for any man from Italy since Adriano Panatta won the 1976

French Open. It will also be the first men's final at Wimbledon with a woman chair umpire

- Marija Cicak. Djokovic recalled what it felt like to play in a Slam final for the first time. He was 20 and lost to Roger Federer in three tight sets, including two tiebreakers, at the 2007 US Open. "I was just so

thrilled to be in the final," Djokovic said.

"I was close. I had a good match against Roger, but I just probably did not, maybe, believe enough, I guess, in the victory at certain moments when the sco-

reline was close." Self-confidence is not an issue for Djokovic these days, however. He's won his past 18 sets and his last 20 matches at Wimbledon. Can the Italian end the Serb's streak? Sunday will tell.



backhand miss from Pliskova Doubles: 3-Su-wei Hsieh (Tpe) & Elise Mertens (Bel) bt Elena Vesva finally got the measure of gave Barty the title. nina & Veronika Kudermetova (Rus) 3-6, 7-5, 9-7.

Who will sing the redemption song at Wembley: Italy or England?

Azzurri look for first major title since the 2006 WC while the Three Lions are desperate to end decades of disappointment

Relentless Italy vs Solid England

When Mancini's men take on Southgate's side in an eagerly awaited Euro summit clash, there's nothing to choose between the sides. The Azzurri are on a record 33-match unbeaten run while the Three Lions have had a roaring time in the tournament

In Euro, the two last

met in 2012. Italy

emerged winner in a penalty shootout

after the quarterfinal



Portugal (2004) and France (2016), the last two home finalists, went on to lose Kane, who has netted four goals in six games, can claim the Golden Boot with a brace

in the final. The England striker was the 2018 World Cup Golden Boot winner (6 goals) ■ Italy's previous

Euro final appear ance ended in a 0-4 defeat to Spain in 2012. Bonucci and Chiellini played in that final

Reaching a final is not easy... you have to play with concentration, but with joy because it is



■ This is Italy's 10th major final (six World Cups, four Euros). Only Germany (14) has figured in more

Buffon's record of

for Italy when he

plays in the final

17 Euro appearances

■ Italy's 33-game run (27 wins, six draws) is its longest. It scored 86 goals and conceded 10 during this period

The two best teams in the tournament have made the final, and now it's down to who performs well on the day OUTHGATE





Bulwark: Chiellini will look to ward off the threat posed by target man Kane. • GETTY IMAGES

EURO 2020

England and Italy are counting down to Sunday's Euro 2020 final, with Gareth Southgate's men seeking to end a 55-year trophy drought and Mancini's side aiming to spoil the Wembley party.

England began as one of several contenders to lift the trophy and has taken advantage of playing all but one of its matches at home.

Southgate's men will be willed on by the vast majority of a crowd that created a crackling atmosphere for England's second-round match against Germany and the semifinal against Denmark.

Standing in England's way is a battle-hardened Italy side which has restored the nation's pride after failing even to qualify for the 2018

World Cup. England has never beaten Italy at a major tournament, although meetbetween the nations have been few and far

The Azzurri have lit up Euro 2020 ever since beating Turkey 3-0 in the opening game a month ago. They are on a national record 33match unbeaten run under coach Roberto Mancini.

The Azzurri are looking to end a long wait to win the Euro title. The four-time World Cup winners have been continental champions only once, when it was just a fourteam event in 1968.

For all the differences in style and approach, there is a remarkable symmetry to the journeys taken by England and Italy towards the final. Both nations found them-

selves at historic low points with fans despairing at their

decline and then discovered men who could bring change and quickly lead them on a path to success.

Southgate was able to draw on an exciting young generation of talent but his most significant decision was to change the culture around the England team.

Like Southgate, Mancini turned to youth, but his biggest impact has been on the style of football produced by the Azzurri.

Italy uses a 4-3-3 formation, with two playmakers in midfield, usually Jorginho and Marco Verratti, supporting two wingers who like to cut inside and full backs pushing forward to offer width. There has been a greater emphasis on aggressive pressing and the result has been one of the most eniovable Italian teams to watch in years.

From the 'hated one' to the star of Euro

Sterling has inspired England's run

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

Raheem Sterling will complete a remarkable journey from vilified scapegoat to England legend if the forward inspires his side to victory in Sunday's Euro 2020 final against Italy.

Sterling has been England's most influential player during its memorable run. If England is to make history at Wembley this weekend, it needs Sterling to unleash his pace and trickery on the Italians.

When Sterling started England's first group game against Croatia, there were some who claimed it was a mistake to pick him instead of Jack Grealish.

But Southgate is a firm believer in Sterling's "incredible resilience and hunger'

occasion with England's winner against Croatia. It was his first goal in a major tournament after some wretched experiences in the international arena.

and the forward rose to the

His lowest ebb came at Euro 2016 when England fans turned on him after a series of lacklustre performances, culminating in the humiliating exit against Iceland. On social media, Sterling

branded himself the "hated one" during that tournament and he had to deal with negative stories in the press about his perceived lavish lifestyle. The backlash could have ruined someone with a more fragile personality, but Sterling's tough upbringing prepared him for football's slings and arrows.



Pulling his weight: Sterling has repaid Southgate's faith with match-winning performances. • GETTY IMAGES

Anand beats Kasparov

CHESS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

In the battle between the legends who have 11 World titles between them, Viswanathan Anand defeated Garry Kasparov in the Croatia Grand Chess Tour at Zagreb on Saturday.

Their fourth round game in the the blitz section ended with Kasparov, who no longer is active as a player, losing on time. Anand was in a winning a position,

The day, though, had be-



Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) and Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus) 16 points; 3. Anish Giri (Ned) 15; 4. Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol) 14; 5. Viswanathan Anand 14; 6-7. Alexander Grischuk (Rus) and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Aze) 12.5; 8. Anton Korobov (Ukr) 11; 9. Garry Kasparov (Rus)/ Ivan Saric (Cro) 10.5; 10. Jorden Van Foreest (Ned) 8.



When the legends met: Anand and Kasparov tried to outwit each other before the Indian prevailed. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sciver sizzles, sets up England's victory

India falls short under the DLS method in rain-affected match

INDIA IN ENGLAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

England defeated India by 18 runs via the DLS method in the rain-curtailed first T20I here on Friday.

All-rounder Nat Sciver's 27-ball 55, that included eight fours and a six, and wicketkeeper Amy Jones' 43 off 27 balls took England to 177 for seven in 20 overs. Sciver's fifty was England's joint fastest in the format.

In reply, India failed to keep up with the required run-rate despite vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's quickfire 29 off 17 balls.

Rain came down with the visitors at 54 for three in 8.4 overs, 18 runs behind England under the DLS method. Chasing 178, India was off to the worst possible start as pacer Katherine Brunt bam-This PDF as originally uploaded to Brills Express Official (https://t.me/The_Hindu_Express) before anyone else. Don't forget to joint backup channel @Thehindu000

boozled the big-hitting Shafali Verma for a duck.

Smriti and Harleen Deol (17 not out) then got the tourists back on track. With rain on the cards, the duo quickly stitched a 44-run partnership with Smriti hitting six boundaries, including successive fours off Brunt.

But Sciver struck, getting rid of Smriti in the sixth over. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's (1) prolonged lean patch continued, falling to Sarah Glenn in the very next over.

The quick loss of the skipper cost the Indians dear as they were behind in DLS. The scores: England 177/7 in 20 overs (Danni Wyatt 31, Nat Sciver 55, Amy Jones 43, Shikha Pandey 3/22) bt India 54/3 in

8.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana

29). England won by 18 runs via DLS method. Second T20I: July 11, Hove, 7 p.m. IST.



Airborne! Harleen Deol's sensational catch to send back Amy Jones has caught the cricketing world's attention. ■REUTERS

India-Lanka rescheduled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI/COLOMBO

India's limited-overs series in Sri Lanka will now start on July 18, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday, after a COVID-19 outbreak in the home team camp forced the postponement.

The series, scheduled to start with the three ODIs on July 13, had to be

Lanka's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst G.T. Niroshan tested positive on their return from the UK tour, which meant extended quarantine for squad members. The schedule: ODIs: July 18,

rescheduled after Sri

20 and 23; **T20Is:** July 25, 27

The Gregory show gives England the series

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Lewis Gregory (40 & three for 44) helped England beat Pakistan by 52 runs in the second ODI at Lord's on Saturday and take a 2-0 lead in

the three-match series. Chasing the hosts' 247, in a match reduced to 47 overs

dismissed for 195. Hasan Ali's five-for went in vain for the visitors.

due to rain, Pakistan was

The scores: England 247 in 45.2 overs (Phil Salt 60, James in 41 overs (Saud Shakeel 56,

Vince 56, Lewis Gregory 40, Hasan Ali 5-51) bt Pakistan 195 Gregory 3-44).

Olympic team to leave for Tokyo on July 16

The entire squad will meet in Amsterdam before boarding the flight

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Indian shooters, training in Croatia and Italy, are scheduled to leave for Tokyo on July 16, for the Olympic Games.

The 13 rifle and pistol shooters, training in Zagreb, will leave with the coaches and a physio.

The two skeet shooters -Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa, along with coach Mansher Singh training in Italy, will leave from Rome on the same day.

The entire shooting team will meet in Amsterdam to board the flight which will take the team to Tokyo on Ju-

The rifle and pistol shooters will have coaches Suma Shirur, Deepali Deshpande, Oleg Mikhailov, Samaresh Jung, Ronak Pandit travelling with them. It is understood that accreditation procedures are being worked out for coaches Pavel Smirnov and Jaspal Rana.



Ready to roll: Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa, who are training in Italy will link up with the rest in Amsterdam before proceeding to Tokyo. • FILE РНОТО

Both Jaspal and Mansher joined the teams recently, and had spent time in isolation, according to the pre-

Even though the entire team has been vaccinated for the coronavirus, the organisers do not insist on the

They have an uniform testing procedure for all the athletes and officials arriving for the Games in Tokyo.

In fact, the testing protocol and the health study starts a week or two before they board the flight to Tokyo.

The IOC president Thomas Bach who reached Tokyo recently is scheduled to be on three days isolation, which goes to show that the Olympic family is being treated on par with everyone, as far as the sensitive COVID-19 situation concerned.

The athletes and officials have a 70-page instruction playbook to follow.

Every team will have a CO-VID-19 liaison officer to specifically take care of testing and medical procedures related to it.

The athletes will be tested every day.

The organisers have clearly said to anyone with CO-VID-19 symptoms in the 14 days prior to the departure for the Games, "Don't travel to Tokyo".

Women shooters outnumber men

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The number of women participants will, for the first time ever, exceed the total strength of their male counterparts in the individual shooting events of the Olympic Games.

Because of double starters, the number of registered entries in individual women's events exceeds for the first time the number of expected participants in individual men's events - 239 and 208 respectively.

"356 athletes representing 100 NOC (National Olympic Committee) from five continents are entered to take part in the shooting sport competitions at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics," the ISSF said in a statement.

The largest number of participants is expected in 10m air pistol women and 10m air rifle women events - 53 and 49 respectively. In the men's events, the largest number of participants will be in the 10m air rifle and 50m rifle 3 positions - 47 and 39 respec-

Bandovic to coach Chennaiyin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bozidar Bandovic has been appointed as the new coach of Chennaiyin FC on a one-year contract ahead of the 2021-22 ISL season.

The 51-year-old from Montenegro will replace Csaba Laszlo after a disappointing season which saw it finish eighth. "I am delighted to join the Chennaiyin family," said the new head coach.

We don't fear stronger opponents anymore, says Navneet Kaur

HOCKEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo Olympics-bound forward Navneet Kaur feels the Indian women's hockey team's mindset has changed in the past few years and added that the side does not panic while playing against top teams now.

> "A lot has changed in the mindset of our team in the past few years, we don't fear stronger opponents anymore," Navneet was quoted in a Hockey India release.

"Earlier, when we used to play against the Netherlands or Great Britain, we used to panic. That's not the case

now. We fight until the final whistle. It's not over until it's

Childhood dream

Navneet, who has played 79 matches for the national team, is all set to take part in her first Olympics. "Playing the Olympics is my childhood dream and I will leave no stone unturned to make it wonderful."

She feels heading into the matches with a clear mindset will be the key.

"This team is like a family. Rani and Savita keep exchanging their ideas with us on how we can improve. The coaches and the entire team are working towards that



Navneet Kaur. ■ FILE PHOTO

We want to honour Bryant: Durant

US team aiming to claim 16th gold at the Olympics

BASKETBALL

REUTERS

Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant has said the United States basketball team has Kobe Bryant's DNA embedded in it and will look to honour the Los Angeles Lakers great with their play during this year's Tokyo Olympic Games.

Bryant, a five-time NBA champion and twice Olympic gold medal winner, died last year aged 41 in a helicopter crash with his daughter and seven others, shocking the world of sport and sending legions of fans into

Durant, who was the team's leading scorer at both the 2016 Rio Games and 2012 London Games, leads a 12-member U.S. squad looking to claim their 16th gold medal at the Olympics which begin on July 23.

"Kobe Bryant is the guy all



Gunning for glory: Kevin Durant dunks during training for the national basketball team in Las Vegas. • AP

of us looked up to and watched as kids. Even when he was alive and playing, his DNA was embedded in us as players.

"From afar he taught us what the game is about, what work ethic is about," Durant told reporters.

"And we all kind of pulled from him when he was playing and when he was alive. And now that he's not with us, we all want to honour his teachings by going out there and playing with that passion, with that energy every

Ellyse Perry pulls out of The Hundred

Cites personal reasons; Joins Healy, Lanning and Haynes

disappointed that Ellyse Per-

ry has had to withdraw from

the Hundred due to personal

CRICKET

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Star Australian all-rounder Ellyse Perry has pulled out of the inaugural season of the Hundred citing personal

The 30-year old was set to turn up for Birmingham Phoenix in the 100-ball tournament scheduled to get underway on July 21.

"We are obviously very

circumstances, but we completely understand her decision and wish her all the best," Beth Barrett-Wild, head of the women's competition, was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

A blow Her withdrawal came as a blow for Phoenix who are already without the services of New Zealand's Sophie Devine, who had pulled out of the tournament last month. Perry's compatriots Alys-

sa Healy, Meg Lanning and Rachael Haynes have also pulled out from the Hundred ahead of their home series against India, which begins on September 19.

As many as five Indian women's cricketers, including teen sensation Shafali Verma and T20 skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, have signed up with different teams for the



Ellyse Perry. ■AFP

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