



CM Mamata Banerjee chosen as chairperson of TMC in Parliament

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Road ahead is daunting, says Manmohan Singh on post-pandemic revival

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Amazon, Flipkart lose legal battle challenging CCI investigation

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Xi Jinping becomes first Chinese leader in years to visit Tibet

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## NEARBY



### 'Filed preliminary report on Jaipur Golden deaths'

NEW DELHI Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said the report submitted by the Delhi government to the High Court in May, which said that 21 deaths in Jaipur Golden Hospital were not due to oxygen shortage, was a "preliminary report".

CITY PAGE 3

### 'Minister' quits during farmers' parliament

NEW DELHI On the second day of the 'Farmers' Parliament' at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, the 'Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' resignation after he "couldn't meet eyes of the farmers".

NEWS PAGE 8

# 60 killed as rain pounds Maharashtra

## Landslips kill 49 in Raigad; rescue efforts hampered

SHOYOJIT BANERJEE PUNE

At least 60 persons have been killed in landslips triggered by intense rain in western Maharashtra and the coastal Konkan region as monsoon fury continued unabated on Friday.

While the entire State, including the normally arid Marathwada and Vidarbha regions, have been receiving particularly heavy showers over the last 72 hours, the situation remained particularly grim in the Mahad and Poladpur tehsils in Raigad, Chiplun and Khed in Ratnagiri, as well as the 'sugar belt' districts of Kolhapur, Satara and Sangli.

Forty-nine of those killed died in three separate landslips in Raigad itself.



First responders: Locals carrying out rescue operations after several people died in a landslide at Taliye village in Satara district of Maharashtra on Friday. •PTI

Tragedy struck Taliye village in Mahad on Thursday evening when the entire village of around 35 houses was instantly buried in a major landslide in an incident strongly reminiscent of the 2014 Malin landslide in Pune.

While the precise casualty figures were not confirmed, the authorities said so far more than 35 bodies had been recovered from the debris while more than 70 people were missing.

Other sources said 38 bo-

dies had been retrieved from the site till now.

Local people were the first responders as heavy rainfall, waterlogging, and disrupted connectivity delayed the National and State Disaster Response Forces (NDRF and

## Revival sees rise in extreme rainfall events

Amid the monsoon's revival since the second week of July, rainfall has seen significant variation across the country. Several parts of the western Konkan coast and the southern peninsula were seeing instances of extreme rainfall. According to IMD data on the regional distribution, the South Peninsula has seen 29% more rain than normal from June 1 to July 23. •PAGE 9

SDRF teams. The relief teams struggled to clear boulders and damaged roads to reach the village.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8  
TWO LANDSLIPS IN KARNATAKA  
STALL TRAINS PAGE 5

# Parliament stalled for 4th day in a row

## Opposition raises Pegasus, farmers' stir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Parliament failed to function for the fourth day in a row following protests from the Opposition on issues ranging from the Pegasus spyware controversy to the farmers agitation.

In the Rajya Sabha, Trinamool Congress MP Santanu Sen was suspended for the remaining part of the monsoon session for snatching and tearing the statement on Pegasus that was being read by the Minister for Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday. The motion seeking his suspension was moved by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V. Muraleedharan and was passed by a voice vote.

The Opposition parties protested against the move, saying that they were not given any opportunity to respond. Trinamool MPs Derek O'Brien and Sukendu Sekhar Ray said the concerned member should have been given an opportunity to speak. Mr. O'Brien also pointed out that after the house adjourned on Thursday, Mr. Sen was roughed up. "We saw boorish behaviour and hooliganism in this house," he said.

In response, Chairman Venkaiah Naidu said this is-



Santanu Sen

sue was not brought to his notice. Congress Chief Whip Jairam Ramesh asked Mr. Naidu to allow for a clarification on the statement on Pegasus made by Mr. Vaishnaw.

Though Mr. Sen was asked to leave the House by Mr. Naidu, he continued to remain in his seat. Amid the protests, the House was adjourned thrice as despite multiple pleas from the Deputy Chairman, Mr. Sen did not leave. In fact, he remained seated inside the House even after the adjournments. His picture was circulated to all entry gates of the House with directions to the marshals that he should not be allowed inside. Convention dictates that no business can be transacted till the suspended member is removed from the House.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

# Kashmiris among snooping targets

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

News and opinion website *The Wire* on Friday reported that Delhi-based Kashmiri journalists, a prominent civil society activist critical of the official policy towards Jammu and Kashmir and over 25 people from Kashmir were selected as potential targets of surveillance between 2017 and mid-2019 by an as yet

unidentified government agency that was believed to be a client of the NSO Group of Israel.

According to *The Wire* report, the names include separatist leader Bilal Lone and the late S.A.R. Geelani, whose phones were forensically analysed by it. "For the other potential targets in Kashmir, it was not possible, for one reason or another, to

conduct forensic analysis. As *The Wire* and its media partners have noted, the appearance of a number in the leaked database does not necessarily mean that the phone in question had been infected, but it does mean that the phone number was likely selected for potential surveillance," it said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

# Drone with explosives shot down

PEERZADA ASHIQ JAMMU

A drone (unmanned aerial vehicle) with explosives was shot down in Jammu's Akhnoor sector on Friday and the tying material used "resembles the ones found with the payloads dropped" on the technical airport at the Air Force Station, Jammu, on June 27 that left two IAF personnel injured.

"There was a specific input that the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) was planning to drop a payload by a drone near Akhnoor. Around 1 a.m., the police spotted the drone and shot it down. Around 5 kg of improvised explosive device (IED) material was attached to it," Additional Director General of Police, Jammu, Mukesh Singh said.

The IED, the police said, was to be picked up by militants or their supporters on this side of the International Border. The IED, which could be detonated by connecting a few wires, was attached to a wing of the helicopter (having six wings). It was fitted with both a flight controller and a GPS.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Let the Games begin!



Low-key ceremony: Flagbearers Harmanpreet Singh and Mary Kom lead the Indian contingent during the athletes' parade at the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics. •REUTERS (REPORT ON PAGE 15)

# Sidhu opens new innings as chief of Punjab Congress

## CM Amarinder, who had expressed displeasure at the elevation, joins event and congratulates him

VIKAS VASUDEVA CHANDIGARH

Navjot Singh Sidhu, the newly-appointed president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, on Friday formally took charge at a ceremony, with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, who had expressed his displeasure at Mr. Sidhu's elevation, joining the event and congratulating him.

On July 18, Mr. Sidhu was elevated as State party chief along with four working presidents by the All India Congress Committee.

Capt. Amarinder had been maintaining that he will not meet Mr. Sidhu until the latter publicly apologises for his personal derogatory social media attacks against him.



Between the lines: Amarinder Singh and Navjot Singh at the latter's oath-taking ceremony in Chandigarh on Friday. •PTI

However, he met Mr. Sidhu during a 'tea' hosted by him, even though Mr. Sidhu didn't tender any public apology, ahead of the official function where Mr. Sidhu took charge of the party affairs.

At the event, Capt. Amarinder congratulated the new PCC team, including Mr. Sidhu. He said "We will now move together in politics. We have to think and work towards welfare of Punjab... not just Punjab

but the country. Punjab shares a long border with Pakistan... China, Pakistan and now Taliban in Afghanistan, they will all come and sit at Kashmir's border, Punjab's border. We need people together."

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Sidhu said the purpose of his post was to resolve the issues of people. "The Congress is united... today, all workers in Punjab Congress have become party chief, and there's no difference between a leader and workers. My aim is to work towards giving the power of people back to them. I'll work towards the fulfilment of the party's 18-point agenda," he asserted.

"The agitating farmers sitting on the borders of

Delhi, protesting teachers, doctors with problems, securing justice in sacrilege cases, catching the big fish involved in drugs trade etc. are the real issues," he said, adding that he cared only about the welfare of Punjab. "Punjab will win, Punjab will win," he stressed. Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Badal was quick to hit out at the Congress. "Was this a coronation or a vote of no confidence by @INCPunjab against its own govt, proposed by the old president and seconded by the new? With 6 months to poll in Punjab, did anyone hear any Congressman sounding proud of their govt? All one heard was a non-performance song," he tweeted.

# SC upholds NGT ban on firecrackers

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a challenge to a National Green Tribunal (NGT) ban on the sale and use of firecrackers during the COVID-19 pandemic in the National Capital Region (NCR) and all cities and towns where the ambient air quality is in the poor or above categories.

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar said it did not require a report by the Indian Institute of Technology to know that firecrackers were bad for the lungs.

The court reminded the petitioners, mostly firecracker manufacturers who said the ban was an impediment to their livelihoods, that the world was in the middle of a pandemic.

DETAILS ON PAGE 2

# Delhi HC orders police to shift LGBTQ couple to safe house, provide security

## The duo came to the Capital from Punjab to get married

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the police to shift a LGBTQ community couple, wanting to get married but facing threats from their families, to a safe house set up by the Delhi government and provide them adequate security.

Justice Mukta Gupta directed the SHO of Mayur Vihar Phase-I police station to take the duo to Kingsway

Camp where a safe house has been set up for couples "whose relationship is opposed by their families or local community and khaps".

The HC also issued notices to the family members of the couple. It will hear the matter again on August 2.

The couple, through advocate Utkarsh Singh, approached the HC saying they are adults and their relationship is not acceptable to their families as they belong

to the LGBTQ community.

Mr. Singh said the couple were assaulted by their family members after which they came to Delhi from Punjab to solemnise their marriage.

In 2018, the Supreme Court had passed an order to protect couples choosing interfaith or inter-caste marriages after NGO Shakti Vahini filed a petition against "honour killings". It had asked States to set up safe houses for such couples.

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IN BRIEF

**Delhi Metro instals selfie points to support athletes**  
NEW DELHI  
The DMRC has installed several selfie points across the metro network to pledge support to Indian athletes at the Tokyo Olympics. The DMRC tweeted: "Many enthusiastic patrons joined the entire nation in cheering for our athletes. Show your support along with Delhi Metro to the pride of our nation at the Tokyo Olympics..."

**BIMTECH welcomes students of 34th batch**

NEW DELHI  
On the occasion of 34th Commencement Day, Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, rolled out a virtual red carpet to welcome more than 400 students of its 34th Batch of PGDM 2021-23 and their family members on July 23, 2021. MD and CEO of Tech Mahindra, C.P. Gurnani, was chief guest at the event. He shared his journey to boost the morale of the students.

**Wife of TMC MLA robbed**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
The wife of TMC MLA and former Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Vivek Gupta was robbed of her bag by a gang in south-east Delhi's Lajpat Nagar on Friday afternoon, the police said.  
Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) R.P. Meena said the victim, Kanika Gupta, is currently residing at a hotel in Lodhi Colony. A case charge of theft has been registered.  
The incident happened when she was in her car with her driver on Defence Colony flyover. A man intercepted their vehicle following which the driver deboarded the car. Suddenly, another person distracted her following which, she too, deboarded the car.  
Next, when she got inside the car, she found that her bag containing cash, phone, gold coin and documents was missing. Further probe is under way, the police added.

**Two criminals arrested in attempt to murder case**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
A 25-year-old man – out on special parole due to COVID in June – and his accomplice have been arrested after a brief exchange of fire in north-east Delhi's Brahmpuri, the police said on Friday.  
DCP (North-East) Sanjay Kumar Sain said the accused were identified as Arbaj and Shahwaj (25) – both residents of Zafraabad.  
A firing incident took place in Seelampur on July 14 following which a case of attempt to murder was registered.  
"The accused duo was identified. On Friday at 12.35 a.m., a police team raided a house in Nand Ram Mohalla in Brahmpuri in search of Arbaj and Shahwaj. The duo was found on the first floor of the house," the officer said, adding that

**BJP to launch protest if CM fails to fulfil promises made to farmers in a month**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The BIP on Friday announced it was giving Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal a month to fulfil promises made to the Capital's farmers failing which the party's Kisan Morcha would launch an agitation.  
Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri termed it "shameful" that courts had to remind the Chief Minister of the promises made to

**SC dismisses plea challenging NGT ban on sale and use of firecrackers**

Bench said IIT report not required to gauge ill-effects of firecrackers on health

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a challenge to a National Green Tribunal (NGT) ban on the sale and use of firecrackers during the pandemic in the NCR and all cities and towns where the ambient air quality is in the 'poor' or above categories.  
A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar said it does not require a report by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) to know that firecrackers are bad for the lungs. The court reminded the petitioners, mostly firecracker manufacturers who said the ban was an impediment to their livelihoods, that the world is in the middle of a pandemic.  
The NGT had in its December 2020 order that only green crackers would be per-



mitted for Christmas and New Year – between 11.55 p.m. and 12.30 a.m. – in areas where the ambient air quality is in the 'moderate' or below categories. District Magistrates were directed to ensure that firecrackers were not sold and violators are fined.  
**'Right to business'**  
The Tribunal had reasoned that the "right to business is not absolute. There is no right

to violate air quality and noise level norms". The court agreed with the Tribunal order and said no further clarification was required.  
In 2017, the apex court had banned the use and sale of toxic crackers on the basis of a petition filed by two infants – a six-month-old and 14-month-old.  
**'Right to life'**  
They had said the air pollution caused by various factors, especially firecrackers, has made Delhi a gas chamber. They pleaded for their right to life. The court had said the sale of green and improved crackers would be only through licensed traders. The court had dismissed arguments that bursting crackers was a fundamental right and an essential practice dur-

ing religious festivals like Diwali.  
"We feel that Article 25 (right to religion) is subject to Article 21 (right to life). If a particular religious practice is threatening the health and lives of people, such practice is not entitled to protection under Article 25... Our endeavour is to strive at balancing of two rights, namely, right of the petitioners under Article 21 and right of the manufacturers and traders under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution," Justice Sikri had observed.  
"If the situation is covered by general directions of the Supreme Court, it must be followed in letter and spirit. In other words, these appeals are devoid of merit and are dismissed," Justice Khanwilkar's Bench said on Friday.

**Apex court rejects DJB petition for contempt action against Haryana**

DJB claims Yamuna water not being supplied as per 1996 order

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a petition filed by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) seeking contempt action against Haryana Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan and Additional Chief Secretary Irrigation and Water Resources Department, Devender Singh, for wilfully disobeying a February 1996 order of the court to maintain the water level in the Wazirabad reservoir to serve the drinking water needs of the Capital.  
Appearing before a Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, senior advocate Vikas Singh, for DJB, submitted Haryana was not supplying Yamuna water to the Capital as required under the court order.  
Mr. Singh said there was a shortage of 450 cusecs in

**Contempt petition was an absolute abuse of process by the DJB**  
SHYAM DIVAN  
Senior advocate for Haryana

the water supplied by Haryana to Delhi regardless of the court's directions.

**'Water crisis in Delhi'**  
"Due to non-supply of adequate water by Haryana, the water level in the Wazirabad reservoir is only 31% of the capacity. This has the possibility of triggering a severe water crisis in Delhi. The petitioner has already had to curtail water for several areas in Delhi, including President's Estate, Parliament House and other institutional and diplomatic buildings as well as many residential areas," the DJB had

submitted.  
Senior advocate Shyam Divan, for Haryana, countered that the contempt petition was an "absolute abuse of process" by the DJB.  
Haryana is releasing more than 1,000 cusecs of water and sometimes even more, he submitted.  
The court dismissed the contempt petition after a short hearing.  
The DJB had accused Haryana of contempt for acting in clear violation of the apex court order of February 29, 1996, in the Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking versus State of Haryana case.  
The DJB, earlier in 2021, had approached the apex court to "immediately stop" Haryana from discharging pollutants into the Yamuna River.

**People speak on hunger at public hearing held by food rights group**

Several talked about issues in getting ration from govt. centres

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi Rozi Roti Adhikaar Abhiyaan (DRRAA) on Friday held a public hearing on hunger and food insecurity in the Capital.  
Several people from different parts of the city shared their experiences on how during the pandemic and economic distress, they were unable to get ration from the government designated centres.  
Krishna Devi, a domestic help from Gautampuri, said: "My husband is unable to work owing to health issues. Even during the last lockdown, we did not receive any ration. I have visited several government offices and tried to arrange all kinds of documents. Despite that, I have struggled to even get a ration card made. It has become increasingly difficult to sustain ourselves without government aid."

**I had applied for a ration card in 2016 but still haven't got one. I did not even receive any ration through the e-coupon system**  
VEERWATI  
A resident of Pratapgarh

Several people also said despite having applied for ration cards years back, they still haven't received one.  
Amrita Johri of the DRRAA said according to an RTI response, around two lakh ration card applications are pending with the government.  
Veerwati from Pratapgarh said: "I had applied for a ration card in 2016 but still haven't got one. I did not even receive any ration through the e-coupon system, which was launched last year during the lockdown. This time, I visited the designated

schools several times but was told that the ration is out of stock. Not only did I not get ration, but I also ended up spending more on commuting."  
Suman Devi, a resident of the Lal Gumbad camp, described how delayed ration distribution had affected the family of four.  
"My husband used to work in a factory, and he has been out of work since lockdown. I used to work as help but I lost that as well. My eldest child had to discontinue studies and we are trying hard to provide proper nourishment to the younger one as well. It was only in June that we got the ration designated for May and that too after much hassle. Expenses for everything have increased. They ask us to nourish our children well. How are we supposed to do that when we have no work and ration ourselves?," rued Ms. Devi.

**HC issues notice on plea for draft MPD in Punjabi, Urdu**

Matter posted for hearing on August 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court Friday sought DDA's reply on a petition seeking publication of the draft Master Plan of Delhi 2041 in Punjabi and Urdu languages.  
An HC Bench issued notice in the petition filed by National Hawker Federation and six individuals and granted time to Delhi Development Authority to file response.  
The petition, which is filed through advocate Anuprasha Singh and Imsoori Amri, also seeks a direction to DDA publish all the documents, including the preparatory studies and maps, relied upon by it while preparing the draft Master Plan 2041.  
The petition states that while the master plan was critical for envisioning the city's upcoming 20 years, DDA published the published its draft for the general only in Hindi and English and excluded the two other official



languages, Punjabi and Urdu.  
It is thus argued that such publication was discriminatory as it excluded the part of the population which cannot read Hindi or English.  
The petition also asserts that stakeholders would want to share suggestion but most of them are unaware of the draft master plan and are in no position to contribute.  
The petition submits that sharing information with respect to the plan was essential to not only ensure transparency but to also protect the right of citizens to participate. The matter would be heard next on August 31.

**ICSE, ISC board results to be declared today at 3 p.m.**

'Write to school regarding any objection'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) on Friday said it will announce results for Class X and XII board examination on July 24.  
Chief Executive and Secretary of CISCE Gerry Arathoon said the results of ICSE and ISC examinations will be declared at 3 p.m. The results will be published on its website, through SMS and made available to schools through the CAREERS Portal.  
**'Imputed marks'**  
Board examinations for Class X and XII had been cancelled due to COVID and will be announced on basis of an alternate assessment policy decided by the board by calculating "imputed marks". "In the event, a candidate has objections regarding computation of marks in the result, she or he may make a written application to

the school, stating the objection in detail along with reasons thereof," the Board said.  
It added that schools will be required to review all such applications and only upon being satisfied with the contentions made therein, forward the same to the board along with comments and remarks endorsing the contentions made and documents supporting the opinion regarding the computation of marks. "In case the result will need to be altered, the CISCE will notify the Head of the School concerned. This dispute resolution mechanism is only for the correction of calculation errors," Mr. Arathoon said.

**Man nabbed for killing relative over 'loan' issue**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI  
A 36-year-old man allegedly killed his relative and another man in north-west Delhi's Wazirpur, the police said on Friday.  
The accused – Sandeep Jain, owner of a utensil factory in Wazirpur Industrial area, and his accomplices – driver Sanjay Kumar (28) and rickshaw-puller Sunil – have been arrested, they said. The trio killed Suresh Gupta (36), owner of a chemical godown in Bawana, and his friend Amit Goel (35).  
Jain had borrowed ₹20 lakh from Gupta but was unable to repay the loan following which he was threatened with dire consequences. Goel's body was found inside his car in Timarpur on Thursday. Gupta was found dead inside Jain's factory, the police said.

*Jam session*



**Bumper to bumper:** Massive traffic jam at ITO in New Delhi on Friday afternoon. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

**Delhi riots: HC seeks police reply on Tahir Hussain's plea**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court Friday asked the police to respond to a plea by former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain – arrested in connection with the north-east Delhi riots last year – seeking to set aside UAPA provisions relating to terror activities invoked against him in the chargesheet.  
Justice Mukta Gupta issued notice to the Centre, Delhi government and Delhi Police on the petition, which has also challenged grant of sanction to prosecute him in the case lodged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).  
The court said a reply affidavit/status report be filed by the authorities within four weeks and listed the matter for further hearing on September 28.  
Senior advocate Mohit Mathur, representing Hussain, submitted that although the provisions relating to terrorist activities have been invoked against him in the charge sheet, there is nothing to show that his act was that of a terrorist.  
Hussain has sought to set aside UAPA provisions including sections 13 (punishment for unlawful activities), 15 (terrorist act), 16 (punishment for terrorist act) and 18 (punishment for conspiracy) invoked in the charge sheet filed by the Crime Branch of Delhi Police. The chargesheet in the UAPA case relates to an alleged larger conspiracy that led to the riots.

**IYC objects to Lekhi's comment on protesters**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) on Sunday protested against "indecent" remarks made by Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi against farmers.  
The National president of IYC, Srinivas B.V., said remarks made by Ms. Lekhi towards the food givers of the country are highly condemnable.  
"For the last 8 months, the country's food producers have been fighting day and night on the border of Delhi against the three black agricultural laws, leaving everything behind, but the BJP government of the capitalists is trying to crush the protest. The country's youth will not let Modi government succeed in their conspiracy," Mr. Srinivas said.

**Ishrat seeks bail, claims police have no evidence in riots case**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI  
Former Congress councillor Ishrat Jahan, arrested under the stringent law UAPA, sought bail on Friday in the north-east Delhi riots conspiracy case saying that Delhi Police does not have "an iota of evidence" against her.  
Ms. Jahan and several others have been booked under the anti-terror law in the case and are accused of being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots,

which had left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.  
"The intent was to falsely implicate her. The investigating agency [police] does not have an iota of evidence to show that Ms. Jahan was connected to the conspiracy," said advocate Pradeep Teotia, appearing for Jahan, while arguing for her bail before Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat.  
This is the first time the accused has sought regular bail in the matter.

**Timings DELHI**

**SATURDAY, JUL. 24**  
RISE 05:39 SET 19:17  
RISE 19:52 SET 05:29

**SUNDAY, JUL. 25**  
RISE 05:39 SET 19:17  
RISE 20:38 SET 06:36

**MONDAY, JUL. 26**  
RISE 05:40 SET 19:16  
RISE 21:17 SET 07:41

<b>Delhi Weather</b>	max	min
Delhi City	35	26
Safdarjang	35	26
Palam	34	26

**Delhi Palam Today**  
37°C Uneasy warm and humid weather likely. A spells of rain or thunderstorm may occur with partly cloudy to cloudy sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
37°C Very warm and humid day. Light rain and thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky.

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## Advance of ₹293 cr. given to North body for salary: Jain

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Urban Development Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said that ₹293 crore has been released to the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) to give salaries.

"On Thursday, the Delhi government gave an advance of ₹293 crore to the North body to help them pay the salaries of employees. They were facing a problem in paying the salaries. Now, we hope that they release the salaries as soon as possible. We have given them an advance for the next instalment, which is not due yet," Mr. Jain said.

However, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor has said that Delhi government has not released any specific advance amount for salary payment to North body employees and Mr. Jain's statement in this context is "misleading".

## 32 ex-engineers and technocrats sign up for BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Over 32 retired engineers and technocrats from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), municipal corporations and the New Delhi Municipal Council joined the BJP on Friday.

State BJP president Adesh Gupta, while welcoming them into the party fold, said he hoped they would work for the welfare of the society and country as per party policies. "It is for the first time that such a large number of technocrats have joined the party to work for the people," Mr. Gupta said on the occasion.

Param Yadav, one of the joiners, thanked the party and said this would be the first time that a political party would have an engineers cell. "We are always eager to work for the party and the country. We are hopeful that the vast experience of so many engineers would give a distinct direction to the party and would take it to a new height," he said.

## Delhi govt. to give ₹1 crore each to kin of six bravehearts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will give a 'Samman Rashi' of ₹1 crore each to the families of six "bravehearts of Delhi" who lost their lives in the line of duty.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the Delhi Cabinet. The Revenue Department proposed to provide ex-gratia, which was approved by the Cabinet.

# Jaipur Golden Hospital deaths report 'preliminary': Minister

The Delhi government-appointed panel had not stated that it is an initial report

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said that a report submitted by the Delhi government to the High Court in May, which said that 21 deaths in Jaipur Golden Hospital was not due to oxygen shortage, was a "preliminary report".

"In that particular case, they [committee members] had to submit the report in one day. It can be called a preliminary report," Mr. Jain said during a media briefing. "We had formed a committee to look into all such cases, but the Central government through the L-G ended that committee," he added.

The four-member committee, which prepared the report, was formed by the Delhi government on the directions of the High Court and nowhere in the report it was mentioned that it is a preliminary report. "Report of the Committee on Death in Hospital due to insufficiency of oxygen supply" is the



A COVID-19 patient being brought to Jaipur Golden Hospital in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

name given in the document submitted to the High Court.

On Wednesday, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had said the Delhi government does not have any data on oxygen shortage-related deaths as the Central government did not allow them to form another committee to look into all claims of deaths due to lack of oxygen and give compensation to the families.

Mr. Sisodia made the comment in response to the Centre's statement in Parliament that "no deaths due to lack of oxygen have been

specifically reported by States/UTs" during the second wave.

### Hospital's contention

But Jaipur Golden Hospital had said that the deaths were linked to oxygen shortage. "Twenty critically-ill COVID patients died last night over oxygen crisis. The oxygen stock was never completely dry, but the pressure was low as we were running out of stock," Dr. D.K. Baluja, Medical Director of Jaipur Golden Hospital in Delhi had said on April 24, adding that the deaths were "linked" to the

oxygen shortage.

The report submitted to the High Court also said that Jaipur Golden Hospital has "claimed" that the reported deaths were "due to the deficiency of oxygen".

### Panel report

"In view of the above observations, the committee was of the opinion that all 21 recorded patients were sick or critical and suffering from COVID-19 infection. As per the case records made available to the committee, all the reported patients were getting oxygen therapy or ventilation throughout the hospital stay including the time of resuscitation and there was no mention of any oxygen shortage in any of the case records. In view of the natural virulent course of the disease and lack of any evidence suggestive of oxygen shortage in the case records, the committee was of the opinion that shortage of oxygen as the cause of death could not be ascertained," the report by the committee read.

## Apex court says Aravali forest land encroachments will be cleared

It had refused to halt demolition of illegal constructions in June

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court orally said on Friday that structures encroaching into the ecologically fragile Aravali forest land at Lakarpur Khori in Haryana will be cleared.

The court had on June 17 refused to halt the demolition of about 10,000 unauthorised residential constructions encroaching into the forest land.

On June 7, it had directed the Faridabad Municipal Corporation to "take all essential measures to remove encroachments on the forest land without any exception". The court had categorically said that "land-grabbers cannot take the refuge of the rule of law".

A Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari on Friday gave the



The court had categorically said that "land-grabbers cannot take the refuge of law". ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

corporation four more weeks to complete the demolition. Additional Advocate General of Haryana, Arjun Bhardwaj, informed the court that 74 acres of land had been cleared.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, for some of the residents, said there was no effective rehabilitation policy for them. "The situation is very tragic. Everyone is on the streets. All houses are emp-

ty," Mr. Gonsalves submitted. He highlighted the COVID-19 situation. He said the current policy suffered from defects.

The court pointed out that Mr. Gonsalves was referring to a draft policy. The Bench directed the corporation to consider a representation to be made by Mr. Gonsalves for the residents before finalising the policy.

The court listed the case for hearing next on August 3.

## L-G grants powers of detaining authority to Delhi Police chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal has granted the powers of detaining authority to Delhi Police chief till October 18 under the National Security Act, according to a notification.

It comes ahead of Independence Day and at a time farmers protesting against the agriculture laws have been holding 'Kisan Sansad' at Jantar Mantar. Delhi Police said it is a routine order and is issued regularly.

The NSA allows preventive detention of an individual for months if the authorities feel that the individual is a threat to the national security, and law and order, police said.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (3)



Lt. Governor Anil Bajjal ■ PTI

of Section 3, read with clause (e) of Section 2 of the National Security Act, 1980, the Lt. Governor is pleased to direct that during the period July 19 to October 18, the Delhi Police Commissioner may also exercise the powers of detaining authority under sub-section (2) of the Section 3 of the aforesaid Act," the notification stated.

## Confer highest civilian award on Siddiqui: Cong.

Party demands ₹1 crore aid to his kin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Friday wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asking him to confer the highest civilian award of the Delhi government on photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who was killed while on assignment in Afghanistan. He also demanded that an honorarium of ₹1 crore be paid to his family.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that Mr. Siddiqui as a photographer with Reuters had captured mass cremation of bodies of COVID victims in Delhi that had attracted international attention and had called the bluff of both the Central and State governments about the number of actual COVID fatalities during the second wave of



Danish Siddiqui. ■ PTI

the pandemic.

"Siddiqui leaves behind his parents, two siblings, his wife and two children. A financial reward to his family will be a befitting tribute to this brave man, who had earned name and fame not only for himself and Delhi but also for the country," Mr. Kumar said.

## Unlocking can lead to rise in COVID-19 cases, warns V.K. Paul

'Centre's advice must be taken before imposing travel norms'

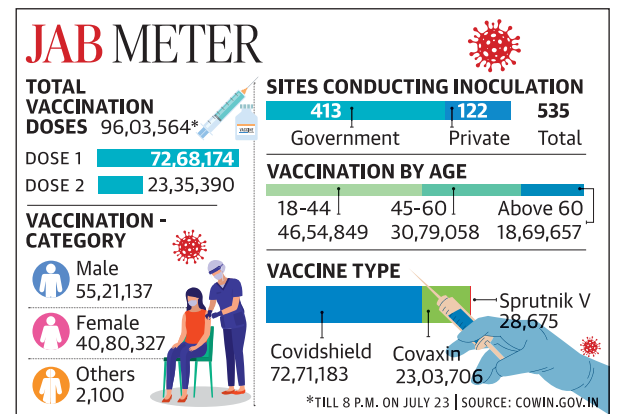
STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

NITI Aayog member Dr. V.K. Paul has asked the Delhi government during a meeting to be "watchful" and warned that unlocking can lead to an increase in COVID-19 cases.

"The next three months are important. We need to be watchful," Dr. Paul said at a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on July 9, as per minutes of the meeting released later.

He said "unlock activity could lead to an increase in cases, though at present the positivity rate of cases is at its lowest point". Dr. Paul also said that Delhi should take the advice of Centre before imposing any restrictions on inter-State travel.

Also, Dr. Samrath Panda of the Indian Council of Medical Research said that the "third wave is unlikely to be as severe as the second wave". But he warned that a substantial third wave would be plausible if any new variant emerges, which is more infectious and escapes prior immunity in the absence of



adequate lockdown measures.

"In the absence of these two factors, the projected third wave is unlikely to be as severe as the second wave. The timing of the third wave remains uncertain and it would be driven by factors outside the scope of modelling," he said.

### 62 new cases

Meanwhile, the city reported 58 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,35,778, according to a Delhi government bulletin. There was only one

death and the total number of deaths stood at 25,041.

A total of 67,817 tests were done in a day and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.09%. Of the total cases, 14,10,164 people have recovered and there are only 573 active cases.

Also, the COVID-19 vaccine stock of the city will last for only less than a day, as per a vaccination bulletin. The city has been facing a similar situation for more than 10 days and the Health Minister had said last week that 500 vaccination centres were shut due to shortage.

## Will take cue from others on school reopening: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said that the Delhi government would review the experience of other State that have opened school and would take a decision regarding opening schools based on the information received. He added that the ideal situation for reopening schools would be after vaccination is complete.

"Ideally, we will not open the schools until everyone is vaccinated. However, seeing that other States are also reopening schools we will review how it goes for them and accordingly plan out. We have been receiving a lot of messages from the parents regarding the safety of children and want to assure them that safety will be our priority," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that there are not enough vaccines being supplied to Delhi and that the



CM says ideal situation for reopening schools would be after vaccination. ■ FILE PHOTO

Centre needs to rethink its system of supplying vaccines so it can provide the States with more stock.

Mr. Kejriwal was speaking on the sidelines of an event where he inaugurated the country's first ISO 9001 certified AAP MLA office in the Timarpur constituency.

He informed the public that the office will follow a system that will solve the grievances of the public while making sure they are at convenience.

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## Vaccinate students before opening institutions: NSUI

Students detained while staging stir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The National Students Union of India (NSUI) on Friday demanded a vaccination policy for all the students across the country before opening educational institutions and conducting any examinations.

The students organised a demonstration and attempted to march from the NSUI office on Raisina Road to Parliament House. But they were stopped by the police

and detained.

The students demanded that entrance examinations and other examinations being held across the country be conducted keeping in mind the safety of students. It also demanded compensation to students for the lost academic year. The NSUI said that the Central government has not declared any relief package for the students' fraternity even after 1.5 years of the pandemic has passed.

**DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**(MASTER PLAN SECTION)**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Delhi Development Authority published the public notice for inviting objections/ suggestions with respect to the **Draft Master Plan for Delhi-2041 (MPD-2041) on 09.06.2021 for a period of Forty-five (45) days.** The Central Government has extended the period for filing objections/ suggestions by **Thirty (30) days.** Objections/ suggestions with respect to the Draft Master Plan for Delhi-2041 can be filed **up to 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2021.**

Any person having any objections/ suggestions with respect to the Draft MPD-2041 may send the objections/suggestions via web portal: <http://online.dda.org.in/MPD2041> or in writing to the **Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Delhi Development Authority, 'B' Block, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023 within a period of 30 days** from the date of publication of this notice. The person making the objections or suggestions should give his/her name, address and telephone/contact number(s)/ E-mail ID which should be readable.

Sd/-  
**(D. SARKAR)**  
**Commissioner-cum-Secretary,**  
**Delhi Development Authority**

Please give your feedback on DDA Apps at Google play

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• NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP  
• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Mosque panel gives land for Kashi temple corridor in exchange deal

It was done as a goodwill gesture, says Gyanvapi Masjid Committee in Varanasi

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW The Gyanvapi Masjid committee in Varanasi said it had handed over a 1,700 sq feet separate plot of land in the periphery of the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi Masjid complex for the under-construction Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor project on the request of the administration in exchange of another plot. Sayid Yasin, joint secretary of the Anjuma Intejamia Masjid, the caretaker of the masjid, told The Hindu on Friday that it was done as a "goodwill gesture" but a senior official of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust described it as simply an exchange of plots. In lieu of the plot, which is separate from the land on which the mosque is situated, the mosque committee received a smaller 1,000 sq feet plot at a distance of 100mts at Bansphatak, Mr. Yasin said. The registry for the land was done on July 8 and the land was handed over subsequently, he added. Chief Executive Officer of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust Sunil Verma said the "exchange" deal was carried out with the Uttar Sunni Central Waqf Board. "It has nothing to do with the mosque. It [the plot] was outside the periphery of the mosque," Mr. Verma said. Explaining the difference in sizes of the two plots exchanged, Mr. Verma said the exchange was done as per the value of the land, and not the size. The exchange of land rule was based on land to value, he said. In monetary value, both lands were equal, he stressed. Mr. Yasin said the mosque committee had three plots in the complex. One housed the mosque; the second had a common passage for both Hindu and Muslim devotees and the third (plot no. 8276) had a police control room built on it for the security of the two sites. "Bigger security setup" However, since the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor was coming up near the complex, it was felt that a bigger security setup would be required at the location, he said. "The passage that leads to the temple was not big enough," he said. Mr. Verma, however, argued that the plot was surrounded by the temple property on all four sides. It would remain open, he said, when asked about the plans of construction on the plot. Mr. Yasin said though the property belonged to the Sunni Waqf Board, the mosque committee had entered into the exchange deed after the approval of the Board. It must be noted that a local court in Varanasi on April 8 had directed the Archaeological Survey of India to conduct a survey of the Gyanvapi Mosque compound adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple to find out whether it was a "superimposition, alteration or addition or there is structural overlapping of any kind, with or over, any other religious structure."

Released Manipur journalist to move Supreme Court against NSA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI Manipur journalist Kishor-chandra Wangkhem, released after more than two months in jail, said he was considering petitioning the Supreme Court for scrapping the National Security Act (NSA). His petition against the sedition law is pending in the apex court. "I will talk to my lawyers and see if I can move the Supreme Court against the NSA just as I had done against the

No complacency in fight against COVID: Naveen

'Being vigilant will keep us safe' SATYASUNDR BARIK BHUBANESWAR Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday warned against complacency in the COVID-19 preparedness for the possible third wave as positive cases in the State steadily decreased in the last few weeks. "Although the situation is under control, we should not remain self-satisfied, but become more vigilant which will keep us safe," said Mr. Patnaik reviewing COVID-19 situation here. He directed officials to strictly enforce the COVID-19 protocols. "First priority" "If the third wave of COVID-19 hits us by end of August, we will have to tackle with full-preparedness. Healthcare is a first priority of the State government. We are giving emphasis on strengthening of health infrastructure as well as human resource development," said Mr. Patnaik. He said the State government had provided COVID-19 assistance to the tune of ₹2,004 crore in 10 different categories of beneficiaries including particularly vulnerable tribal groups, migrant labourers, street vendors and woman self-help groups. Meanwhile, 1.5 lakh vaccines have been administered which is almost 50% of targeted population of above 18 years in Odisha. "1.14 crore first jobs" According to State Health and Family Welfare department, 1.14 crore people have received the first dose while 36 lakh have been administered the second dose. As many as 64,29,405 persons aged above 45 have taken the first dose while 42,89,450 in the age-group of 18 to 44 have received the first dose. Besides, around 7 lakh health and frontline workers have been given the first dose.

Haryana pvt. hospitals to refund excess amount to COVID patients

Monitoring panel formed after complaints of overcharging

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH Private hospitals in Haryana's Panchkula district will refund an amount of ₹21.46 lakh 'overcharged' from COVID-19 patients for their treatment, even as they are in the process of refunding a similarly charged amount of ₹35.43 lakh. The latest amount of ₹21.46 lakh has been calculated after self-audit of bills by the hospitals from March 1 to April 30. A district-level committee was constituted by Haryana Speaker and local MLA Gian Chand Gupta to look into complaints of 'overcharging' by private hospitals during the second wave of COVID-19. Mr. Gupta said that on the recommendations of the committee an amount of ₹35.43 lakh in different cases that was 'overcharged' was already being returned by private hospitals. "Apart from this, an additional amount of ₹21.46 lakh calculated after self-audit of bills by private hospitals will be paid to the patients and their families," he said. "Self-audit continuing" Mr. Singhal said the self-audit by hospitals was still continuing and they had been directed to submit a report before the committee by July 31. The committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Imran Raza. During the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, several patients and their families had met Mr. Gupta and complained that private hospitals were overcharging for treatment. Taking cognisance of the complaints, the Speaker had recommended the formation of the panel. Three persons were killed and forty others injured, nine of them seriously, in a collision between two buses on the Moga-Amritsar road in this district of Punjab on Friday, police said. Those killed and injured were travelling in a minibus which was on its way from Zira town to Chandigarh carrying supporters of the Congress party who were to attend the installation ceremony of Navjot Singh Sidhu as State party chief. The minibus collided with a State-owned PEPSU roadways bus near Lohara village, police said. Moga Deputy Commissioner Sandeep Hans said the deceased have been identified as Virsa Singh, Vicky and Gurtej Singh. The nine seriously injured were referred to a hospital in Ludhiana.

Back to business



Drum-sellers on a Bhubaneswar street during lockdown relaxation time. • BISWARANJAN ROUT

Rajasthan free rental scheme for farm tools a success

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

A scheme launched by the Congress government in Rajasthan for providing agricultural equipment, including tractors and seed sowing machines rent free to small and marginal farmers has turned out to be successful. Over 25,000 farmers have benefited from the scheme during the ongoing kharif crop season. Since June this year, 65,915 hours of operation were recorded on the agricultural fields measuring 40,578 acres, giving relief to the needy farmers with small land holdings. Agriculture Minister Lalchand Kataria said here on Friday that the programme would continue till this month-end. Over 27,300 farmers across the State had benefited from the scheme with 1.03 lakh hours of operation during the COVID-19 pandemic between April and July last year. The free rental scheme has been launched for the farmers who own up to 2.5 acres of land.

Now, Guwahati sees home delivery of liquor

It's to avoid overcrowding, says govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Online sale and home delivery of liquor has come into effect in areas within the Guwahati Municipal Corporation following a notification by Excise Principal Secretary Rajesh Prasad. The facility, which may be extended to other areas of the State, has been provided to avoid overcrowding and to facilitate social distancing norms in terms of COVID-19 guidelines, the order said. The online sale is also envisaged to curb consumption of illicit liquor. An official statement on Friday said eligible retailers have been asked to register on an app developed solely for online sale by furnishing a copy of the valid licence, location of the premises, list of delivery agents with name, address, phone number, photograph, and other details. The delivery agent shall not be less than 21 years of age and each retailer can engage a maximum of 10 delivery agents, the order said. The home delivery period has been fixed from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. subject to compliance of the lockdown restrictions issued from time to time. "The online sale of liquor shall not be available for hostels of educational institutions, government, non-government, semi-government offices and other public and religious places," the order said, adding that retailers would have to abide by the MRP fixed by the Assam Excise Department.

Three litre limit

The eligible customer could order online up to three litres (bulk litre) of liquor while the delivery agent could carry a maximum of nine litres at a time, it stated. Retailers of Indian made foreign liquor, beer and country spirit have been asked to charge ₹50 an order for a distance of less than 1 km and ₹75 an order for a distance between 1 km and 2 km. Service charges and Internet payment gateway charges, as may be applicable, will be borne by the customer. Assam is the second State in the Northeast after Meghalaya to allow home delivery of liquor.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE DEATH D.RAMASWAMY (93), Retired Junior Officer, Advt. Accounts Dept. of the Hindu, Chennai passed away on 23-07-2021.

For enquiries on announcements in this section, please contact our office at the following number between 10a.m. and 8p.m.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE Senior Divisional Engineer (CO), South East Central Railway, Nagpur acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the execution of below mentioned work:

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SEARCH FOR MISSING DEEPAI General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), Namely : Deepali D/o Anil Kumar R/o H. No. 10/190, Triok Puri, Delhi has been missing since 30.05.2021 from the area of P.S. Shakarpur, Delhi.

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PUBLIC NOTICE The general public is hereby informed that our client has been approached by Smt. Shalu Gambhir wife of Sh. Naveen Gambhir, for selling the property i.e. residential plot bearing No. 24 on Road No. K-10, Measur. No. 250,56 Sq. Mtrs situated in the residential colony known as DLF City, Phase-II, in and around Village Sarhal, Teh. & Distt. Gurgaon, Haryana.

Divisional Engineer (North), South East Central Railway, Nagpur. स्वरुण भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is here by informed that this girl Namely: Nisha, D/o: Navil Alam, R/o: H. No 153, Khichripur, East Delhi-110091, Age: 20 Years, Height: 5'2", Built: Medium, Face: Oval, Complexion: Fair, Eyes: Black, Hair: Black, Wearing: Grey Colour Suit and Salwar, has been missing since 16.05.2021 from her house in the area of P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 39A dated 17.05.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following. SHO E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in Website: http://cbi.nic.in P.S. Kalyan Puri, Delhi Ph. 011-22772251, 8750871830 DP/525/ED/2021

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: about 30-35 years, Height: 5'4", Complexion: Shallow and Beard & moustache, Built: Thin, Wearing: White coloured baniyan, black coloured pant, slipper in feet, has been found dead on 19.07.2021 at 11:00 AM at KM Pole No.1009, Okhala Railway Station, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for 72 hours at the Mortuary of Subzi Mandi, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 9-A dated 19.07.2021 U/S 174 Cr.P.C. has been lodged at P.S. Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, Delhi. If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers. SHO P.S. Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, Delhi Ph. : 011-24356743 DP/186/RLY/2021

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD. (A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking), Corporate Identity No. UA40109UP2001SGC025867/2358. Victoria Cross Vijeta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwall Road, Dehradun-248001, Telephone. -(0135)-2763672-76, Fax-(0135)-2760289, Website: www.uktenders.gov.in. E-TENDER NOTICE Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd. Dehradun invites e-tender for following work as detailed below:



Bird flu suspected in Kozhikode

IN BRIEF Kozhikode is on high alert after a suspected bird flu outbreak has been reported from a private poultry farm at Koorachundu panchayat. The results of samples, sent after 300 birds in the farm were found dead, have come out positive for bird flu.

Kerala steps up vigil due to heavy rain

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM The Kerala government has stepped up vigil with heavy rainfall continuing in several districts. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said district authorities had been directed to evacuate people from vulnerable locations, if needed. The continuing rain in the eastern high ranges could trigger landslips.

Rain triggers landslips, trains cancelled

Rivers in spate in several districts of Karnataka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HUBBALLI Heavy rainfall in Karnataka left rivers in spate and led to cancellation of many trains in key routes across the State. Rain that continued to lash many parts of Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, and Hassan districts resulted in loss of lives and damage to property on Friday.



Bellary Nala river inundating agricultural fields in Yallur village of Belagavi district on Friday. P.K. BADIGER

A farmer died in Chikkamagaluru, while many houses and fields were flooded across the three districts. Emergency response teams were busy rescuing stranded people. Tunga and Bhadra rivers are in spate.

In Belagavi district, heavy rain and water release from Maharashtra caused floods in Krishna river and its tribu-

aries on Friday. In Belagavi city, water entered houses in low-lying areas, including Goods Shed Road, Shivaji Nagar, Maratha Colony, Mandoli Road and the Old PB Road.

Parts of the Belagavi-Kolhapur National Highway were closed due to heavy rain.

Level in Godavari rising

STAFF REPORTER VIJAYAWADA Water level in Godavari river is rising at Bhadrachalam and the level may touch 43 feet, the first warning level, by Saturday. Owing to heavy downpour in the catchment areas, many tributaries and streams are in spate, Central Water Commission officials said. The water level at

Bhadrachalam was 26.5 feet at 6 p.m. on Friday. Officials discharged 3.43 lakh cusecs from Bhadrachalam. Due to incessant rain for the last three days, many streams and rivulets are overflowing in Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Officials cautioned villagers staying on river banks on the rising level.

Stolen money was BJP's election fund, says SIT

Chargesheet filed in Kodakara case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THRISSUR The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Kodakara black money heist case submitted a chargesheet at the judicial first class magistrate court, Irinjalakuda, on Friday.

A 22-member gang that allegedly made off with the money is on the list of accused, while Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, including State chief K. Surendran, are on the witness list. There are 216 witnesses in the case. According to the chargesheet, the stolen money, which came to ₹3.5 crore, was the election fund of the BJP.

A gang had waylaid a car and decamped with the mo-

ney kept in it at Kodakara on April 3. The car driver lodged a police complaint that ₹25 lakh and the vehicle were stolen. The police found that the stolen amount was in fact around ₹3.5 crore. The police arrested 22 people in connection with the case and recovered the car and ₹45 lakh of the stolen money.

The SIT questioned many BJP leaders, including Mr. Surendran, for hours. Their statements too have been submitted along with the chargesheet.

The police said the probe to recover the stolen money would continue. It should be investigated whether the BJP violated the model code of conduct, they said.

What material do you have against Fasal, asks SC

The Kerala youth has been booked under the UAPA for links with Maoists

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Union of India what "material" it had against Thwaha Fasal, a Kerala youth booked under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for Maoist links.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit, Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju said that a "lot of literature concerning revolution, violence and secessionist struggle in Jammu and Kashmir" were seized from him.

Fasal had appealed to the apex court after the Kerala High Court reversed the National Investigation Agency Court's decision to grant him bail. The High Court, however, had not interfered in the bail granted to Fasal's co-ac-

cused, Alan Shuaib, citing mitigating circumstances, medical condition and his young age. Mr. Raju said the NIA was filing an appeal in the apex court against Shuaib's bail. The Bench has decided to take up both cases together on July 30.

Senior advocate V. Giri, for Fasal, submitted that his client was a young man of 23 years and a journalism student with no financial backing. "He has no antecedents and has already undergone 530 days of custody," Mr. Giri said.

He read out the titles of some of the books arraigned as evidence against Fasal, including one on the caste system, Rosa Luxemburg's critique of Lenin, and 'Hello Bastard: The Untold Story of Indian Maoist Movement' by

Meanwhile, train no 01134 Mangaluru Jn.-Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Express Special (running on the diverted route via Madgaon-Londa-Miraj due to an overflowing Vashisht river between Chiplun and Karmathe), suffered a derailment on the Dudhsagar-So-

naulim section. The first coach and the engine partially derailed. However, no casualty was reported.

The passengers of the affected coach were shifted to other coaches, a press release said. (With inputs from Belagavi and Hassan bureaus)



Thwaha Fasal

journalist Rahul Pandita. Mr. Giri informed the court that pamphlets calling for conservation of the Western Ghats was already available in the public domain.

"Apart from these, was there anything else said by the witnesses?" Justice Lalit asked Mr. Raju. The law officer replied that pamphlets and notices of Maoist fronts were found with Fasal. Notes

in Fasal's own handwriting and circulars of the internal communications of the Maoists were found. "They showed an acceptance of the path of violence," he submitted. Mr. Raju said the third accused in the case, known in the media as the "Pantheerankavu Maoist case", had fled to the "jungles".

"Accused number three ran away and has gone into the jungles... The moment they are released, these people will go to the jungles... He [Fasal] was meeting with an absconding Maoist leader," the Additional Solicitor General submitted.

The High Court had dismissed the defence lawyer's arguments that the youngsters were interested in understanding and assimilating new ideologies.

Maharashtra records 6,753 new cases

State records 167 deaths; recoveries dip to 5,979; spike of 373 infections in Mumbai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PUNE

Fresh COVID-19 recoveries in Maharashtra dipped again to 5,979, while the State reported 6,753 new cases on Friday, pushing the active case tally to 94,769. As many as 167 deaths took the total toll to 1,31,205, with the case fatality rate rising to 2.09%.

The total case tally has reached 62,51,810, while cumulative recoveries have risen to 60,22,485, with the recovery rate at 96.33%.

"Of a total of 4,64,46,360 laboratory samples tested thus far, 62,51,810 (with the average case positivity falling incrementally to 13.46%) have returned positive, with over 1.82 lakh samples being tested in the last 24 hours," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate.

1,144 cases in Pune

Pune recorded 1,144 new cases taking its tally to 10,81,200. Twelve deaths pushed the total death toll to 18,218. As per district authorities, the active case tally has again risen to 9,900.



Taking all precautions: A health worker collects the swab sample of an elderly passenger for COVID-19 testing at Dadar station in Mumbai on Friday. PPT

Mumbai reported 373 new cases to take its total case tally to 7,33,344, while the active cases dipped to 10,068. Eight fatalities took the city's death count to 15,818.

Kolhapur reported 900 new cases, taking its case tall-

ly to 1,89,616. The active cases rose to 11,492. As many as four deaths saw the cumulative death toll rise to 5,375.

Satara reported 817 cases and 15 deaths as its total cases rose to 2,11,999, of whom 7,281 are active, while the

death toll climbed to 5,098. Neighbouring Sangli district reported 944 new cases and 15 deaths. The total case tally stands at 1,78,023, with the active cases rising to 10,689, while its total death toll reached 4,910.

MVA govt. to join Climate Group's EV100 drive

State to urge firms to make transition to EVs by 2030

STAFF REPORTER MUMBAI

Weeks after unveiling its electronic vehicle (EV) policy, the Maharashtra government on Friday announced its decision to become the first State in the country to join hands with Climate Group's EV100 campaign. The drive aims to make electric transport the new normal by 2030 by encouraging companies to switch

from vehicles running on fossil fuels to EVs and install charging infrastructure. Maharashtra's EV policy aims to achieve 25% electrification of last-mile delivery vehicles by 2025. Within six months from the day of notification of the policy, e-commerce companies, delivery and logistics players, and mobility aggregators will submit EV transition plans to the Transport Department.

Climate Group, an international non-profit, will act as a bridge between private companies and the State government to ease the pro-

cess of shifting their fleets to EVs. As per Climate Group and SYSTEMIQ research's Fleets First study, the majority of EVs today are privately-owned passenger vehicles, while only 11% are part of fleets. Focussing on fleets can spur electrification and boost infrastructure, it said.

State Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray, who had unveiled the policy, said, "Investing in a clean transport system is an essential part of our State Climate Action Plan. With the revised EV policy, we want to engage early on with the most im-

portant stakeholder - businesses. The EV100 partnership aims to build a robust demand for EVs that can enable key linkages for the vibrant business community in Maharashtra, and support faster uptake of the policy." Divya Sharma, India executive director, Climate Group, said, "We urge businesses in Maharashtra to utilise the incentives offered by the State and join EV100 to drive 100% fleet transition by 2030. Companies should set interim targets aligned with the State's EV policy to accelerate electric mobility."

No milk supply to Mumbai today due to rains: Gokul

Flooding hits collection, transportation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PUNE

Gokul, the largest milk brand in the State's milk cooperative sector, on Friday said there would be no supply of milk to Mumbai on Saturday due to rains in Kolhapur and Sangli districts.

Vishawas Patil, chairman, Kolhapur Zilla Sahakari Duddh Utpadak Sangh Limited, which owns the brand, said: "The collection was largely affected on Thursday

and Friday due to downpour in western Maharashtra and Konkan. Against the daily collection of 13 lakh litres, we could collect 2.5 lakh litres on Friday. It had dropped by 76,000 litres on Thursday. Flooding has not only affected collection of the milk, but also transportation due to closure of State and national highways. We will not be able to supply milk pouches to our Mumbai consumers on Saturday."

Court extends Raj Kundra's police custody till July 27

ing pornographic videos through social media.

A Mumbai court on Friday extended the police custody of actor Shilpa Shetty's husband and businessman Raj Kundra along with his business associate, Ryan Thorpe, till July 27, for allegedly producing and alleg-

ing pornographic videos through social media. The police suspect that money earned was used for online betting and he had financial transactions with Yes Bank and United Bank of Africa. The police have sought custody to find out their revenue channels.

GOVERNMENT OF KERALA OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS HOUSING BOARD BUILDINGS, SANTHINAGAR, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 001 NOTIFICATION ENTRANCE EXAMINATION TO THREE YEAR LLB COURSE - 2021-22 No. CEE/1122/3LLB-2021/TA3 Applications are invited for the entrance examination for admission to Three year LLB course 2021-22 in the four Government Law Colleges in Kerala and in the Private Self-financing Law Colleges in Kerala which enter into seat sharing agreement with the State Government. Detailed Prospectus & Fee details are available in the website www.cee.kerala.gov.in Last date & time for submitting online application along with all necessary documents is 28-07-2021, 4 pm. Helpline No. 0471-2525300 Thiruvananthapuram Commissioner for Entrance Examinations 23-07-2021 1200/F4/2021/I&PR

WESTERN RAILWAY E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE NO. S/28/2021 DATE : 21.07.2021 S.N. Short Description of item Quantity T.O.D 771 Wood Based Resin 1000 Nos. 09.08.2021 772 Gear Case Complete 4 Nos. 09.08.2021 773 Washer for Dia 41 mm Pin 10000 Nos. 09.08.2021 774 Gangway Bridge Mounting Assy. 640 Nos. 09.08.2021 775 Set of Connection Strap Assy. for WAP4. 306 Set 09.08.2021 776 Roller Bearing 314 Nos. 10.08.2021 777 Filter Assy. 18 Nos. 11.08.2021 778 Plug Assy 1315 Set 11.08.2021 779 Track Feed Battery Charger 819 Nos. 12.08.2021 780 Tar Plastic Compound 6734 Kg 13.08.2021 781 VRLA Valve Regulated (Sealed) Lead Acid Battery 2V300AH 3028 Nos. 13.08.2021 782 Set of 35 mm NABO Brake Pads 2000 Nos. 13.08.2021 783 LMLA,Low Maintenance Lead Acid Secondary cells, 2V, 300AH. 3028 Nos. 16.08.2021 784 Set of Switches 6 A-250 V 16 Set 16.08.2021 785 R/M Paint Gentian Blue. 38620 Ltr. 18.08.2021 786 Single Bottle Vacuum Circuit Breaker. 150 Nos. 18.08.2021 787 VRLA Batteries of 48V-200AH 110 Set 19.08.2021 788 AOH Kit for Tapchanger 98 Set 19.08.2021 789 Gear Oil Optiger RMO 5063 Ltr. 19.08.2021 790 LMLA Secondary Cells 2V/200AH 1647 Nos. 25.08.2021 791 Main LED Signal Lighting Unit Red, Yellow, Green 5323 Nos. 26.08.2021 792 Wire 7 Strand Steel, Galvanised for Signaling Purpose 4594 Kg 30.08.2021 Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.i.reps.gov.in. and www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in. For Principal Chief Materials Manager 0285 Like us on : facebook.com/WesternRly Follow us on : twitter.com/WesternRly A ND-NDE

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) The Executive Engineer Division HPPWD Tanda at Nagrota Bagwan Distt Kangra H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HP PWD for the works as detailed in Sr. No. Name of work Estimated Cost (Rs.) Starting date of downloading Bid Earnest Money Deadline for submission of Bid 1. Construction of Dr R.P. Govt. Medical College at Tanda in Distt Kangra (HP) (SH-Providing and fixing Bed Panel in Trauma Centre, Burn unit and pulmonary unit) Rs. 1540000/- 24.07.2021 Rs. 306000/- 05.08.2021 The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in. Executive Engineer, H.P.P.W.D. Division, Tanda at Nagrota Bagwan (On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh) HP / 2632/21-22

General Manager, Himachal Bhawan, 27, Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001 011- 23716124-25-26, Fax: 23321072 SHORT NOTICE FOR INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) Renting out of Convention Hall and Art Galleries-1 & II in the premises of the Himachal Bhawan, 27 Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001 Sealed Tenders are invited for renting out of Convention Hall and Art Galleries- I & II in the premises of the Himachal Bhawan, 27 Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001 on Annual Rent Basis for a period of 2 years (from the date of allotment). The Tenders is required to be submitted through electronic tendering system at online tendering website www.hptenders.gov.in. The details and Terms and Conditions of the tender will also be available on the website www.hptenders.gov.in. The bid should be submitted in online mode on or before 06.08.2021 till 11:00 AM. Contacts: 011- 23716124-25-26, General Manager Himachal Bhawan 27, Sikandra Road, New Delhi-110001



## The Ganga's message

India must take its laws on waste seriously to stop microplastics pollution

The Ganga might have stood witness to many stages of India's civilisation, as Mahatma Gandhi once noted, but in recent decades it has become a conduit for sewage, solid waste, industrial effluents and other pollutants. It is depressing, though not surprising, therefore, that a new study by an NGO has found evidence of a modern-day scourge, microplastics, in the river, with the highest concentrations in Varanasi and Kanpur, followed by Haridwar. What the data show is the alarming presence of plastic filaments, fibres, fragments, and in two places, microbeads, with their composition pointing to both industrial and secondary broken-down plastics from articles of everyday use. These range from tyres, clothing, food packaging, bags, cosmetics with microbeads, garland covers and other municipal waste. The finding of significant levels of microscopic particles invisible to the naked eye at below 300 micrometres to 5 millimetres in the country's holiest river calls into question the progress of two high-priority, well-funded missions of the NDA government, Swachh Bharat, to deal with solid waste, and Namami Gange, to rid the river of its pollution. Surprisingly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's support for the river clean-up, originally scheduled to be implemented by December 2020, has not saved it from serious deficits; official data indicate that 97 Ganga towns may be discharging about 750 million litres of untreated sewage a day into the river. An environmental activist, Guru Das Agrawal, died in 2018 after fasting in protest, and his letter to Mr. Modi did not change the situation.

Microplastics, recorded in recent times in the remotest of places – Mount Everest, Arctic snow, Icelandic glaciers, the French Pyrenees, and the depths of the Mariana Trench, among others – pose a hazard as plastics production outpaces the ability of governments to collect and manage waste. Successive governments issued waste management rules, but dropped the ball on implementation. Although the Centre recently issued a draft to tighten the Plastic Waste Management Rules, cities have failed to implement existing rules as well as the Solid Waste Management rules, on ending single-use plastics, waste segregation, recycling labels on packaging, extended producer responsibility for manufacturers and recovery of materials. Moreover, growing plastic waste will far exceed the capacity of governments to manage it, given that recycling has its limits. Swachh Bharat, therefore, must mean not merely keeping waste out of sight, achieved through costly dumping contracts, but sharply reduced generation, full segregation and recycling. Plastic waste around the world is threatening the food web and the crisis demands a new global treaty modelled on the Montreal Protocol and the Paris Agreement. India needs to demonstrate that it is serious about a clean-up at home.

## Return to troubles

Brexit was never going to be easy, and should not compromise the Good Friday agreement

The British government's demand to renegotiate parts of the Northern Ireland Protocol of the Brexit agreement with the EU has set the stage for another round of clashes between London and Brussels. Just seven months after the agreement came into force, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government now says the Protocol, which was accepted by both sides to avoid physical and economic barriers between Northern Ireland, a part of the U.K., and the Republic of Ireland, an EU member, hampers trade inside the U.K. When the Brexit agreement was signed in 2020, Mr. Johnson agreed to set up checks at the British side for goods entering Northern Ireland. This meant, in order to avoid an economic barrier between the two Irelands, Britain effectively set up one between the British mainland and the Island of Ireland. The decision had economic and political repercussions, affecting British traders every time they move goods across the Irish Sea. Within Northern Ireland, the Irish nationalists who support unification are in favour of the Protocol, while the unionists, including the Democratic Unionist Party that was once an ally of Mr. Johnson, do not want it. In a difficult economic and political situation now, Mr. Johnson's conservative government is seeking a way out.

The government wants all customs checks on goods entering Northern Ireland to be removed. It has also sought to end the role of EU institutions in enforcing the Protocol and introduce a dual regulatory system that would allow products to freely circulate in the province if they comply with either British or EU standards. But the problem is that this is part of an agreement which Mr. Johnson signed in 2020, and welcomed. The EU has said it remained open to "practical, flexible solutions" to the controversial clauses. Many had warned even before the 2016 Brexit vote that Northern Ireland would be a thorny issue if the U.K. chose to leave the EU, given Ireland's violent history. The economic integration and soft borders between the two Irelands were one of the key aspects of the 1998 Good Friday agreement that brought peace to the island after 30 years of Troubles. Now Mr. Johnson, a Brexit supporter, is caught in a difficult situation, thanks to Brexit. For London, continuing with the protocol will have economic and political consequences. If the U.K. moves the customs checks to the border between the two Irelands, it can upset the peace agreement. In the event of the absence of an agreement, either party can suspend the Protocol using Article 16, which means the crisis would be back to square one. Both sides should realise the seriousness of the situation and be ready for talks. Any amends to the Protocol should not compromise on the conditions that guarantee peace in the island of Ireland.

# A serosurvey template for the whole of India

The Ahmedabad case study is ideal to help track the threshold for herd immunity and aid evidence-based policymaking



DILEEP MAVALANKAR & GIRIDHARA R. BABU

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) needs to be complimented for conducting seroprevalence studies on its own. The latest seroprevalence done in June 2021, for which the data was released a few days ago, has shown that the city population has COVID-19 antibodies in 81% of the population sampled. This is one of the highest rates seen anywhere. The study only measured antibodies, as there are no easy methods to check cell-mediated immunity or neutralising antibodies. Some studies in other countries have shown that besides the antibodies, there is a substantial proportion of infected people who will not show antibodies but will have cell-mediated immunity.

Studies in Ahmedabad in earlier rounds of sero-surveillance showed that up to 30% of the population with past infection, which is not recent, do not show antibodies in such surveys. It is possible that the waning of antibodies and cell-mediated immunity together can indicate that an additional 10-15% of persons might be protected. Therefore, the proportion of people with some immunity protection at the population level in Ahmedabad may be close to 90-95%.

### On herd immunity

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation is one of the most progressive municipal corporations to use serosurveys evidence to plan and decide the course of action. As part of the COVID-19 control work, besides the routine testing, tracing and isolation work – that most cities or districts have done – the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation also invested in conducting periodic sero-surveillance of its own. It is time to use the efforts of

Ahmedabad city as a case study to revisit the discussion on the threshold for herd immunity.

At the national level, the National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has conducted four rounds of serosurvey; the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) too conducted a nationwide serosurvey. The States, including Karnataka, Kerala, Haryana, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Punjab, have done citywide population-based serosurveys. The sero-surveillance from cities show the percent of the population infected with the virus and has antibodies in a specific time period. The threshold for herd or population-level immunity is a local geographical phenomenon, wherein the population or herd is intermixing with each other and spreading the disease within itself. Hence, it is reliable only to estimate the level of immunity at the city or town level, given that there are no sizeable amounts of migration occurring, changing the population dynamics of transmission.

For example, in Gujarat, two nearby cities, Ahmedabad and Baroda, behave as two separate communities or herds as there is not much travel and intermixing between the people of the two cities compared to mixing within the same city. So, both cities may have very different immunity levels – say 80% in one and 20% in another. So, the disease might infect many people, as a greater proportion of the susceptible are present in the city with 20% immunity but not spread greatly in the city with higher levels of protection, say 80% immunity.

Some serosurveys which combine smaller numbers from multiple studies might be misleading. For example, suppose we do a common study between two cities. In that case, we may estimate 55% of persons having immunity – inferring that both cities have a high degree of vulnerability. While a limited inference will mean that the disease will spread equally in



both cities, it is not completely true as one city will have a lower burden in the future, with 80% of people having some form of immune response. Each of the major cities or towns must conduct its own sero-surveillance to estimate the level of protection and estimate the proportion of the susceptible population in that city.

### Other surveys

A nationally representative sample of serosurveys is useful to provide a bird's-eye view of the situation. The NIE should be complimented for its efforts and for conducting four rounds of serosurveys over the last 15 months. The efforts led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and the World Health Organization's tuberculosis programme in the field and technical partnership led by the NIE are praiseworthy for any public health agency; comparable to the best in class in a rigorous process, and peer-reviewed publications in high impact journals.

The results from these surveys showed that antibody levels increased from 0.7% in April 2020 to 67% in June 2021. There is also not much of a difference between urban-rural, and male-female groups. A higher prevalence is seen in people above the age of 45, in vaccinated people and healthcare workers. But one must understand that all these are average numbers from a study of a total sample of about 29,000 people. As the sample is taken scientifically, we have to assume that it represents the true situation in the country. While the aggregated data at the national level inspires the good work done by the NIE-ICMR scientists and other researchers in

the collaboration, it is not a reason to celebrate in enthralling unreasonable optimism. We should be careful and not jump the gun in declaring that we are nearing the threshold of population immunity at the national level.

We can still have major outbreaks in specific geographical regions in the future, as seen in the United Kingdom, Israel, and others. There will also be regional and State-wise differences. Urban areas, as sampled by the ICMR study, showed a prevalence of 69% – slightly higher than in the rural areas, which had a figure of 65%. The rural areas have a greater spread of the virus similar to urban areas, despite rural areas being less congested with lower social interactions. There is not much crowding in the rural areas as seen in urban areas. Compared to the Indian urban sample of the ICMR, the Ahmedabad city seropositivity is higher at 81%. The time ahead will be a marker to know how many cases will be detected in Ahmedabad and how transmission dynamics and seroprevalence will change in the future. Hence, the surveys in this city provide a good case study for the country to review and plan city-specific actions.

Ahmedabad experienced a very bad second wave. A similar second wave was also seen in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and other big cities. If sero-surveillance is done in these cities, we may see very high levels of antibodies. Urban local bodies and State governments should launch rapid and successive rounds of serosurveys.

### Aiding policy making

A more efficient way is to set up sentinel surveillance sites in all public hospitals and estimate the trend in overall seroprevalence. One such effort was done by Karnataka in utilising the strengths of the National Aids Control Organization's field team along with technical supervision by multiple academic institutions in Bengaluru, including the Public Health Foundation of India, the Indian Institute of Science, the Indian Statistical

Institute, etc. These efforts can guide and inform decisions on the extent to which the city's business, educational institutions, and markets can be opened up. Wider and faster vaccination coverage is an additional and absolute necessity.

The distribution of vaccines, stepping up the hospital response, and severity in future waves can be understood and addressed by the periodic antibody prevalence from serosurveys. Based on sero-surveillance studies, such an evidence-based approach will be very useful in the process of decision making while unlocking cities and increasing economic activities. Till supply constraints are completely resolved, it will also help deploy scarce vaccine resources to the places in most need of them. Also, sero-surveillance does not cost much – at a price of ₹500 per test, it will cost ₹25 lakh to test 5,000 people. This is not a major cost for any major city. We constantly face one problem: cities do not have mechanisms to use evidence generation and analysis expertise from public health professionals including epidemiologists.

In summary, every major city with a population of more than 10 lakh should do a rapid sero-surveillance survey and set up sentinel surveillance to confirm the protection levels in the existing population and plan. It is time to use the information on existing levels of antibodies in the population to guide evidence-based policymaking. These efforts will help understand and mitigate the risk of opening up the economy and society, and deciding the priority for vaccination. Over 40 cities have a million population, and another 300 cities have a population between one lakh to 10 lakh. There is an urgent need to take up sero-surveillance studies to help guide the COVID-19 control strategy throughout rural and urban India.

Dr. Dileep Mavalankar is Director, Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar. Dr. Giridhara R. Babu is a Professor, Head-Lifecourse Epidemiology at the Public Health Foundation of India

# Empowering nature with biocentric jurisprudence

In a recent ruling, the Supreme Court of India has sought to move away from an anthropocentric basis of law



N.L. RAJAH

The Great Indian Bustard, a gravely endangered species, with hardly about 200 alive in India today, came under the protective wings of the Supreme Court of India in a recent judgment. The Court said, in *M.K. Ranjitsinh & Others vs Union of India & Others* (<https://bit.ly/372sm5v>), that in all cases where the overhead lines in power projects exist, the governments of Rajasthan and Gujarat shall take steps forthwith to install bird diverters pending consideration of the conversion of overhead cables into underground power lines.

The overhead power lines have become a threat to the life of these species as these birds frequently tend to collide with these power lines and get killed. The Ministry of Power, in an affidavit dated March 15, 2021, has said: "The Great Indian Bustard ("GIB") lacks frontal vision. Due to this, they cannot detect powerlines ahead of them, from far. As they are heavy birds, they are unable to manoeuvre across power lines within close distances. Thus, they are vulnerable to collision with power

lines." In protecting the birds, the Court has affirmed and emphasised the biocentric values of ecosystem preservation. The philosophy of biocentrism holds that the natural environment has its own set of rights which is independent of its ability to be exploited by or to be useful to humans.

Biocentrism often comes into conflict with its contrarian philosophy, namely anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism argues that of all the species on earth humans are the most significant and that all other resources on earth may be justifiably exploited for the benefit of human beings. Expressions of such line of thought date back many centuries and find mention in *Politics*, a well-known work of Aristotle, as also the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant amongst many others.

### The 'Snail darter' case

A noteworthy instance of the application of anthropocentrism in the legal world is in that of the "Snail darter" case in the United States. In 1973, a University of Tennessee biologist David Etnier, discovered a species of fish called the "Snail darter" in the Little Tennessee river. Etnier contended that the snail darter was an endangered species and that its existence would be gravely threatened by the continuation of development works relating to the Tellico



Reservoir project. Following this revelation, a lawsuit came to be filed challenging the continuation of the Tellico Reservoir project. The challenge travelled all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court of the United States of America in *Tennessee Valley Authority vs Hill*, held that since the "Snail darter" was a specifically protected species under the National Environmental Policy Act, the executive could not proceed with the reservoir project. However, after the Supreme Court delivered its verdict, Congress enacted a law excluding retrospectively the snail darter from statutory protection. The project progressed and the fish suffered.

### Species in danger

Humans share the world with countless other species, many of which are nearing extinction on account of man's imprudent insensitivity. About 50 years ago, there were 4,50,000 lions in Africa. Today, they are hardly 20,000. Indiscriminate monocul-

ture farming in the forests of Borneo and Sumatra is leading to the extinction of orangutans. Rhinos are hunted for the so-called medicinal value of their horns and are slowly becoming extinct. From the time humans populated Madagascar about 2,000 years ago, about 15 to 20 species of Lemurs, which are primates, have become extinct. The compilation prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature lists about 37,400 species that are gravely endangered; and the list is ever growing.

### Some green shoots

Some aspects of constitutional law on ecoconservations are significant. The Constitution of India declares that it is applicable to the territory of India. While making such a declaration, it very obviously refers to humans within that territory and its predominant aim was to give them rights, impose obligations and to regulate human affairs. The Constitution is significantly silent on any explicitly stated, binding legal obligations we owe to our fellow species and to the environment that sustains us. It is to the credit of the judiciary that out of these still and placid waters, it has fished out enduring principles of sustainable development and read them, *inter alia*, into the precepts of Article 21 of the Constitution.

Amid such a gloomy landscape,

one is heartened to observe some green shoots emerging.

Pieces of legislations are slowly evolving that fall in the category of the "Right of Nature laws". These seek to travel away from an anthropocentric basis of law to a biocentric one. In September 2008, Ecuador became the first country in the world to recognise "Rights of Nature" in its Constitution. Bolivia has also joined the movement by establishing Rights of Nature laws too. In November 2010, the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania became the first major municipality in the United States to recognise the Rights of Nature (<https://bit.ly/3iHkKuK>). As a first step, these laws empower people in a community to "step into the shoes" of a mountain, stream or forest ecosystem and advocate for the right of those local communities". These laws, like the Constitution of the countries that they are part of, are still works in progress.

In times like this the Supreme Court's judgment in *M.K. Ranjitsinh* upholding the biocentric principles of coexistence is a shot in the arm for nature conservation. One does hope that the respective governments implement the judgment of the Court and that the fate of the Great Indian Bustard does not go the way of the Snail Darter.

N.L. Rajah is Senior Advocate, Madras High Court

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Parallel system

The observations of the Supreme Court while cancelling the bail granted to a BSP MLA's husband that there cannot be two parallel systems of justice is a significant statement. In 1959, when E.M.S. Namboodiripad made a similar observation, stating that the courts are instinctively with the rich, he was surprisingly convicted for contempt even though he was only making a class evaluation of the judicial system. Later, P. Shiv Shankar, then Union Law Minister, said the Supreme Court, composed of the elements

of the elite class, had its unconcealed sympathy for the haves, and that the Constitution had to be amended to remove this oligarchic approach. He also said that anti-social elements had benefited from the Court's judgments. This resulted in the initiation of contempt proceedings against him. Later, he was said to have only examined the class composition of the Court and exonerated. A reading of Justice Chinnappa Reddy's judgment in the equal pay for equal work case involving the Delhi police drivers' case gives the

impression that courts should be a little more concerned about the rights of the millions than to discriminatory laws against tax evaders, smuggler kings and robber barons. Over a period of years, this has been the approach of the Supreme Court and Justice Chandrachud has rightly described it as a parallel justice system. There cannot be two opinions that our Constitution is a people's Constitution and, therefore, the Supreme Court collegium should appoint judges not merely on terms of their constitutional qualifications but on their

constitutional values also. The time has certainly come for a supersession of ideas on the question of appointment of judges.

C.G. KURIKOSE, Malappuram, Kothamangalam, Kerala

### I-T raids

The income-tax raids on the premises of the *Dainik Bhaskar* media group are clear attempts to throttle democracy (Page 1, July 23). Even the die-hard supporters of the government of the day must have felt that such selective raids are eroding the credibility of the law enforcing agencies. It is an undeniable fact that those

who are supporting the Government have never been subjected to such raids and harassment.

C.G. KURIKOSE, Malappuram, Kothamangalam, Kerala

### House in disorder

Are our Members of Parliament bent on wasting precious time and energy instead of holding useful discussion and debate during parliamentary sessions? The citadel of democracy is paralysed as soon as the MPs assemble and the Speaker suspends the House. What a pity! There should be a provision to punish such activities. The

taxpayer's money should not be wasted.

A. BALAGANGADHARAN, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu

The all-party meeting was fixed to set sane rules for meaningful discussions. If, from day one, there is going to be mud slinging and walkouts, why have a session? Our parliamentary sessions are beginning to look more like a battlefield. If parliamentarians have only this aggressive behaviour to showcase, where is the country heading?

R. GOPAL, Chennai

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# The city of dreams' unending nightmare

The densely populated slums on the hilly slopes of the Mumbai suburbs are sitting on deathtraps as the recent disaster in Chembur demonstrated. **Alok Deshpande** reports on the tragedy that took lives and swept away houses, once again highlighting the need for a comprehensive and sustainable plan for the ever-expanding city

Subhash Ghoshing, 21, took out his mobile phone and logged on to play an online warfare game at around 12.15 a.m. on July 18. While heavy rainfall lashed the city, Subhash continued his virtual adventure in a makeshift balcony-cum-storage space, unaware of the real-life misadventure that was lying in store. His approximately 150 square feet house in New Bharat Nagar stood at the topmost residential lane on a hillock in Chembur, Mumbai, part of around 4,000 such houses packed like matchboxes and spread on the hill slope.

The night before, his cousin sister's *haldi* ceremony (a pre-wedding ritual) had gone on for a long time, with close relatives visiting from different towns. Inside the small room, his brother-in-law and four-year-old niece were asleep on a bed, while others, including his sister and parents, were on the floor. Gifts and other items bought for the wedding took up the remaining space.

"It was pouring. I have never seen anything like that. Muddied water was flowing from the top of the hills. Suddenly, I heard a loud noise. It felt like something had come crashing from the top. It was soil, lots of it, with rocks," Subhash recalled.

Unable to take the impact, the walls of his house broke down and he was thrown out on the road. "There were three other houses in line behind us. All of it went under the slush and rocks. That must have saved us. My family members were injured, but I took them out and thankfully, no one died. But look at our house," he said, pointing to the destroyed room where he had lived for 21 years.

At around 12.30 a.m., a two-decade-old retaining wall, a structure designed to resist the lateral pressure of soil, constructed by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), almost 15 to 20 feet away from Subhash's house, crumbled under the pressure from the muddied water flowing from the top of the hill. In certain areas, weep holes on the wall were clogged, leading to the accumulation of water and soil. The wall heaved and buckled under the pressure and collapsed in a matter of seconds. With it, it took around seven lives.

The road to New Bharat Nagar is no less than a short hike for a newcomer. As one enters through the Hindustan Petroleum gate on Mahul road in Chembur, no two-wheeler can go beyond a point, let alone a fire brigade truck or an ambulance. A walk through the ascending, narrow lanes, dotted with small houses on both sides and countless pipelines snaking across the ground, takes one to New Bharat Nagar, where the recent landslide killed 19 people. All were sleeping peacefully when tragedy struck at midnight.

Vijay Gupta, a local political worker with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), used to live in the area till a few years ago. He was one of the first individuals from outside who rushed to the spot after receiving a call from a resident. "I rushed here immediately and called the authorities. But it took a few hours before they reached," said Vijay.

The District Disaster Management Plan, 2019, for the Mumbai suburbs charted out by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) states, "Several areas around hill slopes in Greater Mumbai are prone to landslides. The risk is more during the monsoon and heavy rains. Areas around hill slopes in Ghatkopar, Bhandup and Kurla in the Eastern Suburbs are prone to landslides, resulting in increased exposure of slopes to erosion and water infiltration. Slum populations residing on these hill slopes are at high risk."

The plan had identified 252 spots spread across the Mumbai suburbs, including Malad, Dindoshi and Jogeshwari in the western suburbs, that are prone to landslides. It repeatedly pointed out that slums were vulnerable primarily because of their location, density and lack of access to infrastructure.

Civic officials estimate that around 70,000 to one lakh families in Mumbai live in these 252 spots. A ward official, from one of the vulnerable spots, said people lived in such dangerous areas despite knowing the risk. "Land prices are out of reach for common people, especially the working class labourers who stay here. Hence, they choose these spots that are cheap and affordable," he said. As families grow, the official said, they tend to add more floors to the existing structure.

Adjacent to Subhash's house lives the Sakhare family. The Sakhares, the Gorses, the Ghavares, the Pardhes and the Dupargades are relatives and have been living in New Bharat Nagar for over two decades. Their families have grown as more and more flock to the city in search of a livelihood.

Rupesh Sakhare, 24, was asleep when he heard the loud noise. As he opened the door to check the situation, he saw Priyanka Agrahari, 15, another resident of the area, soaked in water and mud, crying and climbing up to her home. "I asked her what she was doing outside so late in the night and why she



Tragic affair: Rescue personnel carrying out operations in Chembur on July 18 (top and below). At least 19 people were killed in the area after they were trapped due to landslides. - EMMANUOL YOGINI



was covered in mud," Rupesh said. She pointed to her house, which was at a higher elevation than that of his. "She had been washed away from her house with the force of the water. She could have died. But some young men pulled her out in time," he said.

Rupesh and his brother, Bhimrao, rushed to see what had happened. Their uncle, Pandit Gorse, and his family lived adjacent to another retaining wall built by local MLA and Maharashtra Minister Nawab Malik. The Gorses had given a room on rent to Priyanka's family, who had built an extra floor on the existing house using the retaining wall as support. The room that was built had completely blocked the drainage pipes meant for water seepage in case of heavy rainfall.

"When we rushed there, we saw all five houses under the mud. The layer was over 8 feet thick. A feeling of fear and helplessness took over me," Bhimrao said. "I saw my family - my sister, brother, uncle and aunt - buried under the thick layer of mud," he added.

Memories of a similar tragedy at Malin village in Pune district, where an entire village was crushed under a landslide after heavy rainfall, flashed through his mind.

**Living dangerously** Lives are at risk in these comparatively cheaper localities. The slums on the hill slopes at Vikhroli, in the eastern suburb of Mumbai, is another such location that the civic body had identified as vulnerable. Ten others had lost their lives due to a landslide at Surya Nagar on the same day when the tragedy at Chembur occurred.

Authorities from the BMC's S Ward, of which Vikhroli is a part, had written to the office of the District Collector, Mumbai Suburban, and also to the Disaster Management Cell in May and June this year, about the possibility of landslides in Vikhroli, Powai and Bhandup due to heavy rainfall. The letter had also sought an arrangement for alternative accommodation to those in danger. Another letter to the Disaster Management Cell had even mentioned the inaccessibility to the interiors of the slum

areas in case of an emergency. In reply, the Collector's office said it was the responsibility of the civic body to prevent and remove encroachments irrespective of land titles.

According to data collected by Anil Galgali, an activist and social worker, a total of 290 people have died and 300 others injured in Mumbai due to landslides between 1992 and 2021. A decade ago, former Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan had ordered an action plan for the resettlement of those living in the slums on hill slopes and especially those in highly vulnerable places. The Urban Development Department (UDD) had been asked to design the plan, which is still in the preparation stage. Officials within the UDD stated that such a plan would require changes in the existing guidelines for granting additional Floor Space Index (FSI), and involve huge finances, etc.

After the tragedy July 18, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray held a meeting with senior government officials from all departments, including those with the Disaster Management Cell. "Mumbai has a number of places that faces threats from landslides. At many places, retaining walls have been built. All these walls need to be examined with experts from the Indian Institute of Technology [IIT] and other institutes. Other options, if any, need to be analysed and implemented. The existing walls need to be strengthened," he said.

The Chief Minister also directed the civic administration to shift those in danger zones to houses built for Project Affected Persons (PAPs) in the city. Around 38 residents from Chembur have already been shifted to a nearby area called Vishnunagar. The BMC said it had also moved four families from

GTB Nagar's Mukundrao Ambedkar road after a landslide was reported in a nearby hill area.

Slums on hill slopes is not the only problem in Mumbai. According to news reports, close to 50 people have already lost their lives due to buildings collapsing in 2021. The civic administration annually sends notices to dangerous and dilapidated buildings, asking citizens to vacate homes. "But the question is, where will they go? There has to be rehabilitation on a case-to-case basis," said Bilal Khan, an activist with Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan (GBGBA).

Bilal pointed out the need to set up infrastructure, for which, experts would have to be roped in. The activist also pointed out the need for accurate data. "We work and react whenever a disaster strikes. This has to be changed. A long-term strategy is needed," he added.

Urban planners and designers see this as a problem that can only be solved if adequate housing is made available. Instead of completing the target of building over 15 lakh houses in 20 years under slum redevelopment schemes in Mumbai, the State government has managed to build only 1.5 lakh. "Why would anyone build on a hill slope or a riverbed or on rocky terrain unless they are left with no options? Slums come up on land that are naturally unlivable. These were all non-buildable lands. Slum-dwellers know that the location is unsafe, but they have invested in that," said Pankaj Joshi, principal director at Urban Centre Mumbai, which works on urban planning, research, design, advocacy and community outreach.

"In Mumbai, land that houses slums has not increased, but the density has

grown manifold, with two to three floors being constructed over the base slums. This has not been built following any structural engineering principles. They are extremely weak and can collapse at any time," he added.

He explained that this was resulting in an increase in the population living in slums. At the same time, more people were living in fragile structures that, if met with a disaster, would hardly be able to withstand the impact, he added. Pankaj said the latest Development Plan for Mumbai had noticed these dangerous slums in each of the wards. "But the question is where will you rehabilitate them? The only option is to build more houses," he said.

Maharashtra's Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad said he was aware of the problem. In his initial days after taking charge, the Minister had clarified that his priority would be to help builders build more houses under slum redevelopment schemes, which could be given to slum-dwellers. "We can support the civic body in low-cost housing schemes, which may require huge funds. But that has to be a policy decision for which deliberations at a higher level are required," he said.

According to Sayli Udas-Mankikar, a senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), all slum land had to be treated as affordable housing reservations. "The Slum Rehabilitation Authority should fulfil its first objective of undertaking comprehensive planning of slum lands by modifying development control regulations in order to enable the production of affordable housing through the redevelopment route," she said.

## A similar tragedy

Around 25 kilometres away from Chembur stands Ambedkar Nagar at Kurar village in Malad, a western suburb of Mumbai. Two years ago, in July 2019, a retaining wall constructed by the BMC had collapsed due to the forceful flow of water from the Malad Hill Reservoir amid incessant rainfall. It killed 31 and injured over 110.

On July 18, those who are yet to be rehabilitated faced the nightmare once again.

"I lost my son in 2019. Water entered our hut and took him away from me. On Sunday, I held his two-year-old daughter to my chest and ran out in the dark. I thought the tragedy was being repeated and I did not want to lose more members of my family," Munni God said, as she recalled her son Shraavan's death. Close to 75 families - who are yet to be rehabilitated - from Ambedkar Nagar were forced to spend the entire night in the heavy rain after water entered their huts made of tarpaulin and supported by bamboo.

"We women work as domestic help in these big buildings," said Supriya Goregaonkar, pointing to the newly built high-rises that offer a scenic view of the lush-green hills to buyers. "These days, we go to work in the morning, cook for the families in the afternoon and then worry about our safety at night. We were promised rehabilitation. But now, no one listens to us. The government should worry about us when we are alive, not spend money on our kins after we die," she said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation for many who work as labourers, carpenters, tailors or as watchmen. Walli Sheikh, a carpenter who is unable to find work these days, can't stop worrying about the safety of his hut. "We cannot build a *pucca* [brick] construction here as this is forest land. But despite being eligible, we are not rehabilitated," he said.

Aneesh Yadav, a resident who is fighting for the rehabilitation of the remaining families, shows a letter dated August 28, 2020, from G. Mallikarjun, Director, Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), who had asked the BMC to take action to rehabilitate the families. The letter said the remaining families were in a danger zone and the process of rehabilitation needed to be initiated soon. A 1997-Bombay High Court order, too, had directed the administration to shift these families from forest land and rehabilitate them. No action has been taken yet. "We have written to the Chief Minister requesting his intervention after the Chembur tragedy. It was only then that a team of civic officials came to meet us and recorded the details," he said.

During every election since the 1997 court order, politicians have promised these residents *pucca* houses. "All of us have voter IDs and we do vote. They want our votes and if we are shifted from here, they will not get our votes. We feel cheated and neglected. We live in the hope that at least one politician out there will fulfil the promise," said Shriram Kadam, who works as a security guard.

Meanwhile, after surviving the mayhem that the rains had brought with it, the wedding of Subhash's cousin sister went on as scheduled. "How could we possibly postpone the date? It was simply not possible," he said. Already embarrassed that his brother-in-law had to suffer an injury on his trip to attend the wedding, Subhash made arrangements for his sister and her husband at a private hospital and sent them back home.

"The wedding had to go ahead as planned. Yes, it was difficult. But we completed all the rituals in the presence of four family members and sent my sister with her husband. I came here to join the others in digging the mud and cleaning my home," he said.

FROM PAGE ONE

## 60 killed as rain pounds western Maharashtra

Six persons were killed in Kevnale in Poladpur taluk. Thirteen injured persons were undergoing treatment at hospitals in Poladpur and Mahad.

Expressing anguish at the loss of lives caused by the Raigad landslide, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced ₹2 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased from the PM's National Relief Fund. A sum of ₹50,000 would be given to the injured, the PMO said.

"Anguished by the loss of lives due to a landslide in Raigad, Maharashtra. My condolences to the bereaved families. I wish the injured a speedy recovery. The situation in Maharashtra due to heavy rains is being closely monitored and assistance is being provided to the affected," Mr Modi tweeted.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and said the Centre would extend all possible help to the State government to deal with the situation.

The opposition BJP meanwhile blamed the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government for apathy and tardiness in rescue operations.

"When we reached here

in the morning, neither the local administration, nor any NDRF team was in sight... This government seems to be utterly callous to the fate of its people," said BJP Leader of Opposition Pravin Darekar, who reached the accident spot along with fellow BJP leader Girish Mahajan.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who held an emergency meeting to review the situation in the Konkan, assured that rescue operations were proceeding speedily and that the government's priority was to save lives at any cost.

He said rescue teams were facing enormous problems as in several places, roads had been utterly damaged or washed away by the floodwaters or rock-falls, especially in villages and hamlets in the mountainous tracts.

"Unfortunately, in Taliye, more than 30 persons have lost their lives in a landslide...now, heavy downpours have begun in Nagpur in Vidarbha as well. Our priority is to ensure that there is no loss of life. NDRF, Coastguard, SDRF and local teams have been mobilized on a war footing in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic," Mr. Thackeray said.

## Parliament stalled for the fourth day in a row

Earlier in the day, Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu berated the House for disruptions in past three days. "The moot question is who would benefit from a dysfunctional Parliament? Certainly, not the country and its people," Mr. Naidu said. The only business that has been transacted in last three days, he said, was a debate on COVID-19.

"The proceedings of the House hit a new low with the papers being snatched from the Minister and torn into pieces and thrown into the air. Such actions are a clear assault on our parliamentary democracy," he added.

The Lok Sabha was also

adjourned twice on Friday due to the ongoing protests by the Opposition parties over the Pegasus spying and the farmers' protests.

As the proceedings began, on behalf of all the members, Speaker Om Birla wished the 127 Indian athletes participating in the Tokyo Olympics success.

During the Question Hour, only a couple of queries could be taken up.

Owing to the continued slogan-shouting by the Opposition members, the House was adjourned till noon. When the proceedings resumed, sloganeering started again and the Chair finally adjourned the House till Monday.

## Kashmiris among snooping targets

"Others on the leaked database include at least two members of People's Democratic party (PDP) chief and former chief minister of J&K Mehbooba Mufti's family...their selection as potential targets of surveillance happened when Mufti was still chief minister of the erstwhile State and in a coalition with the BJP...when asked if she thought there was a link, Mufti declined to comment," it stated.

J&K Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari's brother Tariq Bukhari also appeared in the list, besides at least four members of separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani's family, including his son-in-law, journalist Iftikhar Gila-

ni; and his son, scientist Syed Naseem Geelani, it noted.

The current head of the Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was a potential target of surveillance between 2017 and 2019, apart from his driver, human rights activist Waqar Bhatti and at least five Kashmiri journalists, including Muzamil Jaleel of *The Indian Express*, Aurangzeb Naqshbani with *The Hindustan Times* at the time, Iftikhar Geelani (formerly with *DNA*) and Sumir Kaul of *PTI*, it said.

Shabir Hussain, a Delhi-based political commentator from Kashmir, was also in the list, it pointed.

## Drone with explosives shot down in Jammu

The drone was more than six km inside the IB. "The drone is an assembled one, with its parts manufactured in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The threads recovered were the same as that of those used to drop the payloads at the Air Force Station, Jammu. It seems the JeM has assembled many drones with the same series. The serial number of the flight controller found on the drone on Friday is just one digit different from the one that was shot down at Akhnour recently," Mr. Singh said.

"The drones recovered in

the recent past are being used to drop payloads, including AK-47 rifles and IED material. Such drones can travel up to 20 km, depending on the payload," he noted.

Around 16 AK-47 rifles, three M-4 rifles, 34 pistols, 15 grenades, 18 IEDs and ₹4 lakh cash have been ferried using drones in the last one and a half years in Jammu, he added.

The police have put in place an anti-drone system at several installations in Jammu, including the airport.

## Will speed up Ram temple: BSP

Party kick-starts series of public meetings to woo the Brahmin community

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

In a bid to woo the dominant and influential Brahmin community ahead of the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, the Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Friday promised to expedite the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya if it came to power with a full majority.

The BSP's national general secretary and its Brahmin face Satish Chandra Mishra launched a fresh outreach programme for the community from Ayodhya where the Ram temple is being constructed. It must be noted that the BSP identifies itself as an Ambedkarite party and while in power constructed parks, memorials and statues of Dalit and Backward Caste icons.

"When we form a full majority government in 2022, I would like to assure you that the lakhs and crores of rupees they have hoarded but are not putting to use to build a temple for bhagwan Shri Ram, we will compel them to build a grand temple," Mr. Mishra



BSP leader Satish Chandra Mishra addresses the 'Prabudh Varg Sammelan' in Ayodhya on Friday. •PTI

said.

At a public meeting of the *prabudh varg*, or enlightened class, aimed at the Brahmins, Mr. Mishra questioned the slow speed of the construction of the Ram Mandir, the foundation stone for which was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5, 2020.

Mr. Mishra, virtually the second-in-command in the BSP, said even the foundation block of the temple was not yet complete. "Nobody knows when they will complete the temple. How many years more will it take," he asked at

the gathering of Brahmins.

Ms. Mayawati recently reminded the Brahmins to emulate the Dalits and remain firm in voting for the BSP, without falling for any lure or temptation by other parties particularly the BJP. She also outlined that her 2022 campaign would heavily rely on the prospects of consolidating the sizeable Dalit votes and the Brahmins.

The BSP has often claimed that this formula had led to Ms. Mayawati's phenomenal majority win in 2007.

At the public meeting, Mr. Mishra reiterated the BSP

chief's remarks. He urged the Brahmins to "come together and showcase your strength" if they wanted to emerge as the descendants of Lord Parshuram and Chanakya, considered icons of aggression and strategy by the community.

If the Brahmins built a "brotherhood" with the Dalits, the two communities alone could come together as a strong force in the State, Mr. Mishra said.

**Deeper aim**

Not just the Brahmin vote, the deeper aim of such meetings appears to be an attempt to cash in on the capability of the community to influence other castes given the hierarchical social setup in the State. While talking to reporters after praying to Lord Ram at the makeshift Ram Janmabhoomi temple and at the Hanumangarhi temple and completing rituals at Saryu Ghat with his family, Mr. Mishra hinted at this goal.

"And you know that when the Brahmin comes, people of *sarv samaj* also come," Mr. Mishra said.

## Rahul accuses Modi and Shah of treason

'Pegasus is classified by Israel as a weapon and that weapon is supposed to be used against terrorists'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday demanded the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and a judicial inquiry by the Supreme Court against Prime Minister Narendra Modi for 'using' the Pegasus spyware.

Addressing journalists outside the Parliament complex, he claimed that he was not a potential target but "every single phone of his is definitely tapped".

He asserted, "I get phone calls from the IB [Intelligence Bureau] people who tap my phone. They call me up and say beware we are tapping you. My security people tell me that they have

to debrief what I say to their seniors". He, however, added that only those who were "thieves or corrupt will get scared of Narendra Modi".

He said, "Pegasus is classified by the Israeli State as a weapon and that weapon is supposed to be used against terrorists. The Prime Minister and the Home Minister have used this weapon against the Indian State. They have used it politically, they have used it in Karnataka, they have used to scuttle probes, they have used it against the Supreme Court, against all the institutions. The only word for this is treason. There is no other word for this and the Home Minister should resign".



Rahul Gandhi with leaders from the Congress, the DMK and a few other parties protesting in New Delhi on Friday. •PTI

Talking about alleged tapping of his phone, he stated that it was not just about breach of his privacy but an attack on the people whose voices he raised.

He accused the government of using the spyware against the Supreme Court as well as former CBI Director [Alok Verma] when a case was about to be regis-

tered in the Rafale deal.

"I have said very clearly that there has been gross theft in Rafale. For whatever reason, none of you people supported me. But truth has a way of coming out. There is an inquiry in France and the Prime Minister himself is responsible for corruption in Rafale," he said.

"The real question is: why at the last minute when the CBI Director was about to file an FIR, why was his phone tapped and why was he blackmailed? And who did it? That's the real question," he remarked.

The press conference followed protests by Opposition members, including the Congress, DMK and the Shiv Sena over the Pegasus issue.

## CPI(M) MP moves privilege motion against Law Minister

John Brittas flags his reply on filling up vacancies in courts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Communist Party of India (Marxist) MP John Brittas moved a privilege motion against the Law Minister Kiren Rijju for a misleading reply to a question raised by him on the filling up of vacancies in the High Courts.

Mr. Brittas in a starred question in the Rajya Sabha had asked the Law Minister to provide details of the number of High Court judges recommended by the Supreme Court collegium for appointment during the last one year, and how many of these recommendations had been implemented.

In response, Mr. Rijju informed the house that out of 80 recommendations by the



Kiren Rijju

Executive and the Judiciary, requiring consultation and approval from Constitutional authorities at the State as well as Central level. No timeline could be given for filling up the vacancies, he had said.

Mr. Brittas in a letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu said that the reply given by the Minister was "in contravention of the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court". The top court has said, "If the Supreme Court collegium after consideration of the aforesaid inputs, still reiterates the recommendation(s) unanimously, such appointments should be processed and appointment should be made within 3 to 4 weeks."

## At farmers' parliament, 'minister' quits over farm bills

Protesting ryots continue parallel session, debates

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

On the second day of the 'Farmers Parliament' at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, the 'Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' tendered his resignation after he "couldn't meet eyes of the farmers".

At the mock Parliament just a short distance from the Parliament building, Ranveer Singh Brar of the Bhartiya Kisan Union-Kadian, pretended to be Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and attended to the questions raised by other protesters who took



In solidarity: Farmers on their way to Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

me. I couldn't look them in the eye," said Mr Brar, adding that the demands made by the farmers are legitimate which is why the minister had to resign - at least in this

session of mock parliament. Mr Brar said Mr Tomar also hailed from a farming family with a humble background and added that when people attain positions of

power, they forget where they come from. On taking on the role of the minister, Mr Brar said, "Whenever I was asked a question, I would change the topic. If the farmer would ask me about the laws, I would talk to them about employment. I they would ask me about something else, I would start talking about COVID," he said.

Every answer given by the pretend-minister was received with a loud roar of "Shame" from the gathered protesters.

The farmers' parliament on Friday had 52 members who spoke and six who conducted the parliament proceedings including a speaker each from Telangana and Ut-

tarakhand apart from Punjab. "The APMC Bypass Act brought in September 2020 should be immediately repealed by the Parliament; the Farmers' Parliament repeals this Act, and orders the Parliament to do the same," said Hardev Arshi from All India Kisan Sabha, one of the six speakers.

Responding to Union Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi's comment calling farmers *mawalis* (riffian) - which she later withdrew - Mr Arshi said, "They find the worst word in the dictionary and call us that. One of the ministers said that farmers should come to the table and talk. Will one ever call a *mawali* for talks? We condemn it."

## Mamata is chairperson of TMC in Parliament

She was unanimously elected to post

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was unanimously chosen as the Chairperson of the Trinamool Congress' Parliamentary party, placing her in a pivotal position to coordinate with the other opposition parties.

After TMC's victory in West Bengal Assembly elections in May this year, the party has been positioning itself as unifier for all opposition parties, a role that the Congress as single largest opposition party has been playing so far. The Congress often finds itself constrained since it is a political opponent to many of the regional parties in different States.

Party's Rajya Sabha leader MP Derek O'Brien at a press conference in Delhi said Ms. Banerjee has been the guiding force behind the parliamentary party for a long time.

"We are just formalising a reality. Our chairperson is a seven-time member of Par-



Mamata Banerjee

liament. She has the vision to guide the parliamentary party. She has the experience and insight. She was anyway guiding us. The decision has been taken both at a conceptual and tactical level. She has always been a call away. We feel more empowered," Mr. O'Brien said.

Ms. Banerjee is not an MP or an MLA. In recent Assembly elections, she had lost the Nandigram seat by a slender margin to TMC rebel Suwendu Adhikari. However, there are no rules prohibiting an unelected person from leading a parliamentary party.

## More time for report on Data Bill

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the Personal Data Protection Bill was on Friday given an extension till the Winter Session of Parliament to submit its long-pending report. Five members, including the Chairperson of the committee, Meenakshi Lekhi, were inducted into the Council of Ministers in the latest round of Cabinet reshuffle in the Modi government at the Centre.

Ms. Lekhi has been replaced in the JPC by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP P.P. Chaudhary. The JPC was constituted in the Lok Sabha in December 2019 and was expected to submit its report in the Budget Session. This is the fifth time the committee's tenure has been extended.

Ms. Lekhi at a press conference on Thursday claimed that the report had been submitted to the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday.

Former IT Minister Ravishankar Prasad had also said in an interview to *The Hindu* that he had read the report of the committee. The members have maintained that the draft report has not been circulated to them so far.

"How can Meenakshi Lekhi claim Personal Data Protection Bill report has been submitted to Speaker Om Birla when the report has not been circulated to members much less adopted," Congress leader Manish Tewari tweeted.

The Personal Data Protection Bill seeks to regulate the use of an individual's data by the government and private companies.





## Committed to climate action plan: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India will focus on implementing its "ambitious plans" through concrete actions domestically as well as globally via collaborations, such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, said Bhupender Yadav, Environment Minister, on the concluding day of the G20 Energy and Climate Joint Ministerial Meeting held on Friday at Naples, Italy.

He attended the event virtually, leading an Indian delegation that included representatives from the Environment Ministry as well as from the Power Ministry.

According to a statement from the Press Information Bureau, the Minister stressed that common but differentiated responsibilities to combat climate change, "as per respective capabilities and national circumstances" were at the heart of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Paris Agreement.

"We should not be shifting goalposts and setting new benchmarks for global climate ambition," Mr. Yadav said.

He added that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India had exhibited exemplary resolve by achieving its pre-2020 voluntary commitment of reducing emission intensity.

The G20 climate meeting is seen as a prelude to the United Nations Conference of Parties meeting in Glasgow, Scotland in November.

Mr. Yadav stated that India remains steadfast in its commitments to join and lead efforts to combat climate change within the multilaterally agreed convention and its Paris Agreement.

# Timeline not fixed to vaccinate all: govt.

All above 18 are likely to get the jab by Dec.: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Vaccination is an ongoing and dynamic process, and therefore, a fixed timeline cannot be given for the completion of the COVID-19 immunisation drive, but those above 18 years of age are expected to be vaccinated by December 2021, the Health Ministry informed the Lok Sabha on Friday in a written reply.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi was one of two MPs who had asked if all adults would be fully vaccinated by December 2021, sought information on the availability of vaccines, and other related questions. Trinamool Congress's Mala Roy was the other MP with the same queries.

The Minister of State for Health, Bharati Pravin Pa-



**Virus protection:** A vaccination drive in progress at a centre in New Delhi. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

war, said that between August and December 2021, a total of 135 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines are expected to be available, and asserted that there had been no delay in entering into purchase agreements with domestic vaccine manufacturers. Ad-

vance payments had also been made to manufacturers for the supply orders placed with them.

Dr. Pawar also informed the House that ₹9,725.15 crore had been spent so far on the COVID-19 vaccination programme, including on

the procurement of vaccines and the operational cost for vaccination.

"COVID-19 vaccination is an ongoing and dynamic process, which is being guided by National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) on

the basis of concurrent scientific evidence. In view of the dynamic and evolving nature of COVID-19 pandemic, no fixed timeline at present can be indicated for the completion of vaccination drive.

However, it is expected that beneficiaries aged 18 years and above will be vaccinated by December 2021," the Minister stated in her reply.

### 'Among the fastest'

In a statement laid on the Table of the Lower House, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya noted that as on July 20, 2021 a total of 32.64 crore persons had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, of which 8.55 crore persons had completed the two dose schedule. He added that as on July 20, 2021, a total of 34.83 crore doses had been supplied free of cost by the Government of India to States/Union Territories.

## HC quashes notice to Twitter India MD

Police sought personal appearance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court on Friday quashed the notice issued to Twitter India managing director Manish Maheshwari by the Uttar Pradesh police seeking his personal appearance as part of its probe into a communally sensitive video uploaded by a user on Twitter platform, saying it was mala fide.

The single Bench of Justice G. Narendar said that the notice under Section 41(A) of the CrPC should be treated as under Section 160 of CrPC, allowing Ghaziabad police to question Mr. Maheshwari through virtual mode, at his office or his residential address in Bengaluru.

Maintaining that the provisions of the statute under Section 41(A) CrPC should not be permitted to become "tools of harassment", Jus-

stice Narendar said Ghaziabad police did not place any material which would demonstrate even the prima facie involvement of the petitioner, though the hearing has been going on for the past several days.

"In the background of the fact that Section 41(a) notice was issued by mala fide, the writ petition (filed by Maheshwari seeking quashing) is maintainable. Accordingly, the notice under section Annexure A notice shall be read as Section 160 of the CrPC," the court said.

"The action of the respondent (Ghaziabad police) trying to invoke section 41(A) of the CrPC gives no doubt in the mind of court that the same has been resorted to as an arm-twisting method as the petitioner refused to heed to the notice under Section 160 of the CrPC," the court observed.

## Ten-fold rise in NSCS budget: Bhushan

Actual spending jumped 13 times to ₹812 crore in pre-poll year 2018-19, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Budget allocation for the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) increased 10 times from ₹33.17 crore in 2016-17 to ₹333.58 crore in 2017-18, said senior lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Friday.

Mr. Bhushan alleged that it was the year when the NSO Group of Israel, which has developed the Pegasus spyware, was paid hundreds of crores for snooping on several eminent individuals' phones.

He tweeted, "In 2016-17, NSA's budget was Rs 33.17 crs. Next year the budget increased 10x to 333 crores because 300 Crores was added under new head 'cyber security R&D'. This is the year



Prashant Bhushan

the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). According to the Expenditure Budget statements for the relevant years, the allocation for the NSCS first shot up 10-fold in 2017-18, but actual spending was less than double the previous year.

### Shot up by 13 times

However, in the following financial year, before the May 2019 general election, the spending by the NSCS shot up by over 13 times from the 2017-18 levels, to well over ₹800 crore.

The allocation for 2016-17 was indeed ₹33.17 crore, which was later revised to ₹81.03 crore. However, the actual spending was ₹39.09 crore.

when NSO was paid 100s of Crs for Cyber hacking of Opp, Journos, Judges, EC, Activists using Pegasus! Wow".

By NSA, Mr. Bhushan seems to be referring to the National Security Advisor whose Budget comes under

In 2017-18, the allocation surged to ₹333.58 crore, but revised estimates put the likely spending at ₹168 crore. The actual expenditure was ₹61.18 crore.

It was only in 2018-19 that the actual expenditure on this front shot up significantly. That year, ₹303.83 crore was allocated for meeting the 'administrative expenses'. However, revised estimates presented later were much higher at ₹841.73 crore.

While the original Budget allocation was earmarked as revenue expenditure, as per the revised estimates, only ₹125.84 crore was for revenue spending, with the balance ₹715.89 crore reflected as capital expenditure.

## 'No need to submit report on Stan Swamy's death before HC'

His appeal has abated, says NIA counsel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Maharashtra government on Friday said there was no need for the magistrate's report into the factors that led to Father Stan Swamy's death to be submitted before the Bombay High Court.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, for the NIA, told a Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and N.J. Jamadar that since Swamy's appeal (challenging NIA court's rejection of his bail)



Stan Swamy

Public prosecutor Aruna Pai agreed with Mr Singh.

The Bench said, "If the appeal goes, everything goes, nothing remains."

Senior advocate Mihir Desai, for Swamy, told the court that he was invoking constitutional jurisdiction of the High Court. He said it may not be in the strict sense of the appeal, but it was in supervisory jurisdiction.

had abated, there was no question of having a report in this appeal.

He argued that every appeal as per the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) shall abate on the death of the accused, provided the appeal was against the sentence or conviction.

The court told him to send his written submissions on this and that they would ponder over it, and adjourned the matter on August 4.

Mr. Desai sought an investigation into the factors that led to Swamy's death under sections 176 of the CrPC.

## 'Gatekeeper Model' mooted to prevent suicides in prisons

NIMHANS issues guidelines for dealing with mental health challenges

S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI

In a bid to prevent suicides triggered by mental health issues in prisons across the country, the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, has recommended the "Gatekeeper Model" where selected inmates, trained to identify prisoners at risk of suicide, would refer them to treatment or supportive services.

Acting on the request of the Ministry of Home Affairs, NIMHANS, an Institute of National Importance, issued a set of guidelines on the man-

agement of mental health issues of the prisoners and prison staff. Referring to the Bangalore Prison Mental Health Study, the advisory pointed to the prevalence of mental illness and substance use disorder in about 80% of the prison population.

NIMHANS experts said prisoners with mental disorders had to be regularly assessed for severity of suicidal risk and also put on regular and supervised medication. To address the prisoner's mental health needs, the correctional facility should have links to community-based initiatives like the Dis-



The MHA said COVID-19 posed unique challenges, which had affected prisons and correctional facilities. ■FILE PHOTO

trict Mental Health Programme.

### "Buddy system"

The advisory said the concept of a 'Buddy System' – social support through trained prisoners called "buddies" or "listeners" –

was found to have a good impact on the well-being of suicidal prisoners. Periodic telephone conversations with friends and family would also foster support, it said.

These initiatives were part of several other recommendations made by NIMHANS

to effectively manage mental health issues among prisoners and staff.

Communicating the guidelines to all States, the MHA said the COVID-19 virus had posed unique challenges to the world and prisons and correctional facilities were also affected by the pandemic.

Though appropriate measures were taken by the authorities to check the spread of the virus in prisons, there was a need to continue monitoring the situation rigorously without letting the guard down and provide care to inmates and prison staff.

Emphasising on the mental health of prisoners, the Ministry said incarcerated

people could face many vulnerabilities during the pandemic, which might impact their mental wellbeing. The prison staff was also working under tremendous pressure and faced challenges in performing their duty while safeguarding themselves from contracting the infection.

In Tamil Nadu, Director-General of Police, Prison & Correctional Services, Sunil Kumar Singh said 58 mobile phones were purchased for prisoners to make video calls to their family members in lieu of the physical interviews that were temporarily suspended in view of the pandemic.

(Assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts is available on the helpline number 104.)

## Editors Guild expresses concern over I-T raids

It condemns snooping on journalists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Editors Guild of India (EGI) on Friday expressed concern over the Income Tax raids on the offices of *Dainik Bhaskar* and *Bharat Samachar* on Thursday.

"They [raids] come against the backdrop of in depth reporting on the pandemic by *Dainik Bhaskar*, which brought to fore the gross mismanagement by government authorities and the immense loss of human lives," an EGI statement said.

"*Bharat Samachar*, too, has been subjected to raids

by the tax authorities. It is one of the few channels in Uttar Pradesh that has been asking difficult questions from the State government with respect to pandemic management. Notwithstanding the merits of the case, the timing of these raids is concerning given the recent critical coverage by both the organisations," the EGI said.

"This is all the more disturbing given the recent media reports on the wide spread surveillance of journalists and civil society activists using the Pegasus software," the statement read.

TH **CROSSWORD** + 13308  
(set by Hypatia)

Never go off the grid now. We are digital. Come solve online. @ <https://qr.go.page.link/jjptn>

SCAN TO PLAY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7									
11									
13									
15									
19									
25									
28									
30									

- **ACROSS**
- Magnificent balloon (5)
  - He needs this drink in hot weather! (5)
  - Cover with seat belts (7)
  - Solitary soldier's cryptic clues (7)
  - Basically evaluates drafts: improves them substantively! (5)
  - Nervous date at bar with bruised criminal (9)
  - Emergency situation in Paris – milk and butter held back with the

### SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

**Solution to puzzle 13307**

S	C	R	A	W	L	D	A	U	B	E	D		
Y	A	A	S	P	O	O							
R	U	L	K	R	E	P	E	R	T	O	I	R	
C	E	N	S	A	I	O	K	M					
B	O	N	S	A	I	L	I	N	E	S	M	A	N
P	E	O	L	S	H	N							
D	E	S	P	E	R	A	T	E	T	E	X	T	
E	H	L											
P	A	E	S	E	T	O	N	F	I	R	E		
R	U	L	K	S	P	L	I	H					
J	A	U	N	D	I	C	E	F	L	A	Q	U	E
K	I	L	S	A	O	Z	B						
G	R	E	A	T	M	I	N	D	S	U	T	A	H
I	R	E	S	E	R								
T	R	Y	S	T	S	A	D	V	E	R	B		

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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



## Instapick

**3D-printed bridge:** Amsterdam is checking the innovative box yet again. It has just unveiled the world's first 3D-printed steel bridge, fabricated from 4,500 kg of stainless steel rods. Designed by artist Joris Laarman, and built by Dutch robotics company MX3D, the curving S-shaped structure spans the Oudezijds Achterburgwal in the city's Red Light District.



## Talking point

**Tokyo 2020:** The Olympics is underway and you can catch the action on SonyLIV. The OTT platform is hosting 20 live streams, in Hindi, English, Tamil and Telugu (download the app for iOS and Android). Now there's no excuse to miss Chennai sailor Nethra Kumanan hit the waves, catch Jaipur's air rifle favourite, Avani Lekhara, in action at the Paralympics, or watch 13-year-old English girl Sky Brown conquer the skatepark.

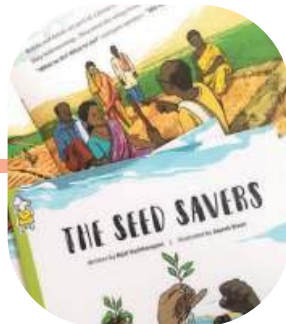
## Pick of the week

Virtual tours, workshops, and other events you just can't miss



### Hello, shopping

American cosmetics company, **Anastasia Beverly Hills**, is opening its first stand-alone store in India, in Noida, by the end of the month. But if you can't travel, don't worry. Shop brow pomades, eyeshadow palettes, mascaras, and more on Nykaa, which recently rolled out the brand's products in the ₹1,200-₹6,000 price range. Meanwhile, **Chumbak** has launched the **Squad Smartwatch** that monitors blood oxygen levels, menstrual cycle, steps, and sports. Available in six designs; at chumbak.com; ₹4995.



### Nature diaries

A world without seeds; it's a scary thought. This dystopian idea, pegged on a real-life incident – of cotton farmers from Odisha's Bhimdanga village – had formed the backbone of **Bijal Vachharajani's** 2018 book, **The Seed Savers**. Now, Mumbai-based Repertory Theatre is turning the tale about how the villagers came together to open a seed bank into a one-hour shadow theatre show and workshop. This Sunday, at 4.30 pm, for children between six and 12 years. Tickets at ₹349. [in.bookmyshow.com](http://in.bookmyshow.com)



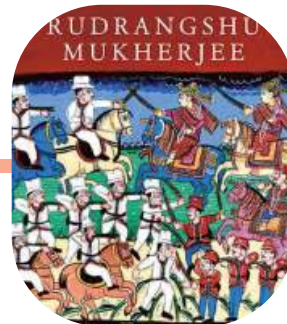
### LV for your ears

Thanos would love to steal this one! Looking like it would fit perfectly into the Marvel multiverse, Louis Vuitton's new portable **Horizon Light Up Speaker** is futuristic and fashionable. Inspired by the Toupie handbag, the latest addition to the luxury brand's collection of connected products incorporates glass, stainless steel, and leather, **35 LEDs**, three-inch subwoofers, two 0.75-inch tweeters, and up to 15 hours of playback – all for the whopping price tag of approx ₹2,15,200. Out end of August. [eu.louisvuitton.com](http://eu.louisvuitton.com)



### Refills for the win

Here's some good news for those looking for plastic packaging alternatives. Mumbai's **Reliance Smart Acme Mall** is now home to a Unilever pilot project: the in-store vending model, **Smart Fill**. Set up in partnership with Reliance Retail, the initiative helps customers get a refill of their homeware products – for brands such as Surf Excel, Vim and Comfort – rather than purchase a new packet. As added incentive: consumers can get ₹30 off on the MRP if they get their own bottle and ₹15 off if they buy the Smart Fill bottle.



### Reading and viewing

**A Begum & A Rani: Hazrat Mahal and Lakshmi Bai in 1857** captures the different struggles of the two women who chose to be a part of India's first war of independence. **Author Rudrangshu Mukherjee** is the chancellor and professor of history at Ashoka University. Penguin Random House; ₹699. See rather than read at Terrain.art that has a solo exhibition by emerging contemporary artist Jayeti Bhattacharya. **Shifting Coordinates** shows the context of migration in many ways. On view until July 30.



### South Korea calling

It is BTS by BTS. The K-pop group's latest single, **'Permission to Dance'**, has beaten their May hit, 'Butter', to nab the no. 1 spot on Billboard Hot 100. The catchy tune, co-written by Ed Sheeran and with a five-minute MV, is an earworm. Meanwhile, if you are into all things Korean, head to InKo Centre's **Annyeong Station** – a new platform for conversations, exchanges and demonstrations (last Thursday *jaiphae*, the popular Korean glass noodles dish, was on the menu). **Details: inkocentre.org**



### Right of admission

What happens when four estranged college friends reunite on Zoom during the pandemic and then decide to stay in touch? That's what stand-up comedian and writer **Anuvab Pal** explores in **Admission**. Starring actors Kunaal Roy Kapur, Tillotama Shome, Rasika Dugal and Noah Lucé, the **55-minute play** is directed by Rohan Sippy. Bookings are open now (tickets from ₹199 onwards), and the show, which opens on July 31 at 6.30 pm, will be available for streaming for 24 hours on [in.bookmyshow.com](http://in.bookmyshow.com)

YARN IT!

# Irresponsibly yours

How can we keep sane if we can't flash ruby smiles or throw parties?

JANE DE SUZA

This city is full of irresponsible people. It makes me furious. Look at that stupid couple having a party, without even inviting me?

Yesterday, I entered the lift and everyone inside rushed out. How do they expect us to spread cheer if people are taking social distancing to this degree? Of course, I had not worn my mask (it was a one-minute lift ride, after all – what can spread in one minute?). And then again, when was the last time they saw someone's dazzling smile? (Lipstick shade Scandalous Ruby, in case you're interested.) I mean, what's the point of sending forwards that say 'Keep Calm and Smile' if no one can see that smile, and they are doing the opposite of keeping calm by stampeding over each other to avoid me and my Scandalous smile?

I was the first to get my vaccine shot when they started it for senior citizens. Of course, you know I don't appear remotely senior. I had to just flash my Aadhaar card, and can go back to being late-30s now. I made my husband's driver (who is a senior citizen – I am honest that way) stand in the queue for three hours for my slot. The embarrassment! I saw a neighbour and before she opened her mouth, I pushed an old woman along, pretending I was there only to help my senior citizen aunt. My 'aunt' turned around and smacked my hand. My mean neighbour is now sending me ads for retirement homes and yoga for ageing bones.

I shared my picture across social media. I put a flag emoji on the arm on which I got my vaccine. I have co-morbidities, I explained, even though I am in my late 30s. I had to

make up some of the lesser co-morbidities to not appear both old and sick.

Look at people thronging markets, to buy essential goods. When I threw a Covid party, I made sure everyone arrived at 10-minute intervals. No one ever saw crowds en-

tering or leaving my house – I was super responsible like that. The building security said someone complained about the noise, and I said I was only watching TV. I am slightly deaf, I explained – it is one of my co-morbidities. They even tried to stop my maids

from coming in. The maids are at risk from travelling, they said. Am I to now clean my own house? After the party that I (never) threw? I am throwing crying fits at the thought. Is that how you people want to spread cheer?

Whenever someone sends me a link to donate for the Covid-unemployed, I tell them I am tirelessly supporting the economy. I spend days online-shopping for designer clothes, but where to wear them?

Really! I even started a donation drive for myself and my co-morbidities. I am breaking my back being responsible, I said. No one has donated a single *paisa*. Irresponsible people.

Where Jane De Suza, the author of *Happily Never After*, talks about the week's quirks, quacks and hacks



• SREEJITH R KUMAR



# The modern brown woman experience in America

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

*Never Have I Ever*, as a show, has deeply divided South Asian audiences in its portrayal of an Indian transplant family in California, with the kids striving for western modernity and the elders clutching tightly on to traditions. One half of audiences claim the show is hyperbolic and unrelatable, while the other praises the portrayal of the struggle of the South Asian diaspora in the United States.

The Netflix series, narrated by John

McEnroe and written by Mindy Kaling and Lang Fisher, follows Devi Vishwakumar (Maitreyi Ramakrishnan), a straight-A student at a Sherman Oaks high school in California. She lives with her widowed mother, Dr Nalini Vishwakumar (Poorna Jagannathan), and her picture-perfect cousin, Kamala Nandiawada (Richa Moorjani), a brilliant scientist completing her PhD. Season two offers an uplifting take on brown feminism, where Nalini's mother-in-law Nirmala (Ranjita

Chakravarty) comes to live with the family.

### Virtual prep

The second season was greenlit during the pandemic, so the table reads were all remote. Moorjani, 32, recalls being nervous about how the virtual reads would "kill the creative process and wouldn't be that funny", but then she realised "it is still performance" and everyone adapted seamlessly. Whereas Jagannathan, 48, brought a

This season, I learned about how much women of colour in STEM go through. It's a real systemic problem where their names are taken off research papers



lot of collaborative energy to the show's mission to be as authentic as possible. "Even the plate in which Nalini's mother-in-law, Nirmala, offers food had to be right. Because you can't cater during Covid, they had to teach someone how to make South Indian food; so eventually 11 dishes were made [including *paruppu*]," she says.

### The STEM gap

Moorjani collaborated with costume designer and Kaling confidant, Salvador Pérez Jr, to retain the essence of Kamala, while keeping it professional for

her lab sessions. "When she wears a black leather jacket and goes to put her name on a research paper [omitted by a misogynistic male colleague], as the actor I felt empowered!"

Speaking of labs and commitments, the actor duo is proud to portray strong women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). "This season, I learned about how much women of colour in STEM go through. It's a real systemic problem where their names are taken off research papers," explains Moorjani.

### Video games and short films

Beyond the quirky Kamala and the ever-witty Nalini, the actors strive to enrich their careers with different mediums such as video games, short films, theatre and dance.

Having voice-acted in *Fallout 76* – a video game by Bethesda – Moorjani is keen on diving deeper into this rich storytelling medium. She is also in post-production for *Broken Drawer* directed by Rippin Sindhur – a film loosely inspired by true events about a young Sikh mother who was killed while working at her family-owned convenience store in rural California.

Meanwhile, Jagannathan is in post-production for *I'll Show You Mine*, portraying author Priya Suri. She had a busy 2020, assuming supporting roles in AppleTV+'s legal-drama *Defending Jacob* opposite Chris Evans, in Netflix's *Messiah*, and in HBO's *Big Little Lies*.

Season two of *Never Have I Ever* is now streaming on Netflix

Scan the QR code to watch the interview, or visit [weekend.thehindu.com](http://weekend.thehindu.com) for the full article and video



Stills from the show  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Gond art on quinoa packs

India's traditional artists are getting a new canvas

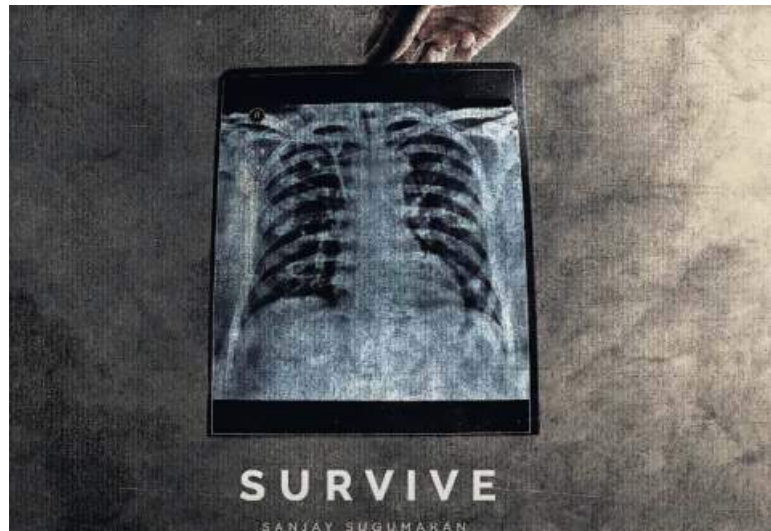


The last year has been quite transformative for India's traditional artists. As exhibitions got cancelled and inventories began piling up, they started looking at alternative ways to make a living. Pattachitra masks, Madhubani wall panels depicting scenes from the pandemic, and the like began popping up on e-stores and timelines. Brands, too, began doing their bit to help get their visibility.

The latest champion is Taru Naturals. The grassroots movement that connects 10,000 small-scale farmers to markets has just launched its organic D2C (direct to consumer) brand – think stone-milled flour, ready-to-eat breakfast foods, indigenous grains, and more. What sets it apart, however, is its packaging featuring Gond art. Developed by Saurav Roy, founder of Goa-based Roy Studio, the vibrant artwork – by renowned artists such as Gati Rita, Suresh Kumar and Mukesh Varia – not only showcases the story of the farming community but pushes the Studio's ongoing efforts to "re-contextualise how design and craft can come together".

The packaging also features the artist's name and where one can get in touch with them.

How grieving musicians across the country are keeping the memories of loved ones, especially dads, alive through their art



# Saying goodbye: songs of loss

LALITHA SUHASINI

In April this year, Bengaluru-based composer Sanjay Sugumaran lost his father to the second wave. While most turn to art when coping with tragedy, artistes like Sugumaran have channelled their grief into their music. He chose rap to pay homage, and released the multi-lingual track, 'Survive', on YouTube a month later. Like his other counterparts, 27-year-old hoped his song brought people together with its message of hope, with lines like 'I will stand, no matter what / I will fight no matter what / I will love, no matter what / Survive, no matter what.'

"My father had taken a loan and bought me my first keyboard and without him, I wouldn't have been the musician that I am today," says the rapper, who collaborated with singer John Mozart and rapper Joshua



(Clockwise from above) Siddhant Karnick, album artwork, Abhilash LR, a still from 'Without You', Allister Martins and Karnick's album

Kirubagaran.

Since the pandemic also robbed those in mourning the chance to bid farewell to their loved ones with a gathering of friends and family at a

funeral, making music was especially healing for artistes. Last year, TV actor Siddhant Karnick saw his father, an ex-army man, fight Covid-19 and finally succumb to it.



"Writing my thoughts down was the only way to make sense of the senseless," says Nashik-based Karnick on how the lyrics of 'Best Before' – released on Father's Day (June 20) this year – came to be.



On the other hand, Karnick's 'Best Before', available on Amazon Music, is surprisingly buoyant for a track about loss.

**Phone calls and CT scans** Sugumaran explains how he began making notes for the song (also available on Spotify) right from the time his father was hospitalised. He recreated a phone conversation that he had with his father, and the video for the composition as well as the artwork is an image of his father's last CT scan.

"I wanted to use the principle of playing against the dialogue, which is a popular technique used in theatre. It's where, for example, the darker dialogues are delivered by the villain with a sense of comic timing," explains Karnick, who approached Pune-based producer Gandhaar Amin to compose it.

"I expected them [the lyrics] to be more about the incident, but Siddhant turned it around into something positive," says Amin. "Siddhant is someone who is always on the go, so I wanted the song to reflect that."

Unexpected death, combined with the inability to spend enough time

**The pandemic has shown us that we're all in this together**

SHARONI PODDAR, VOCALIST, THE MILIPUTS

## FOOD SPOT

An organiser of musical shows turned chef during the pandemic with Babo's Home Kitchen



(clockwise from left) Vegetable platter with fish combo; Bhetki fry; shorshe ilish  
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



RAHUL VERMA

The dark clouds of the pandemic have a silver lining. People across the country are breathing life into talents that were perhaps known just to family and friends. Certainly, when it comes to food, a great many men and women have been demonstrating how well they wield a *karchhi*.

One such talented chef is Dipayan Mazumdar, who used to earlier organise classical musical evenings in the capital. Now he runs BHK or Babo's Home Kitchen ([baboshomekitchen.in](http://baboshomekitchen.in)); phone nos. 9769416232, 9810016405).

Always fond of cooking, he took it up professionally last October once such concerts came to a standstill thanks to the pandemic. The food that he cooks and delivers is largely Bengali. He picked up the recipes from his mother and grandmother, he says.

I ordered some food from BHK last week when two friends – one who

## A Bengali kitchen comes alive in Delhi

loves fish and the other who is allergic to it – came over for dinner. So, to make both happy, we asked for a vegetarian platter (₹999 for two) and fish combo (₹750 for two). The platter comprised *shukto*, *narkol mung dal*, *jhingey aloo posto*, *mochar ghonto*, and *aamer* (mango) chutney. The fish combo consisted of two rotund fish chops and two large pieces of mustard fish.

The friends had come

with PotPot's haleem and nihari, so there was no dearth of meaty dishes. We had the fish chops – mashed fish and potatoes crumbed and fried golden brown – as starters, and thought they were superb. *Shukto*, which is a Bengali dish of mixed vegetables cooked in a very light sauce, was excellent, as was the coconut-flavoured *mung dal*.

The *khus-khus* (*posto*) with potatoes and ridge

gourd was the way it is cooked at home – light, yet tasty. The fish-loving friend enjoyed the *katla* cooked in a sharply flavoured *shorshe* (mustard) sauce. The chutney was delicious – hot, sweet and sour. The *mocha* (banana florets) didn't appeal to me much, but all in all, we had a great meal.

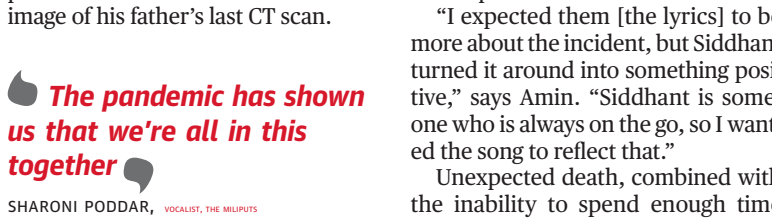
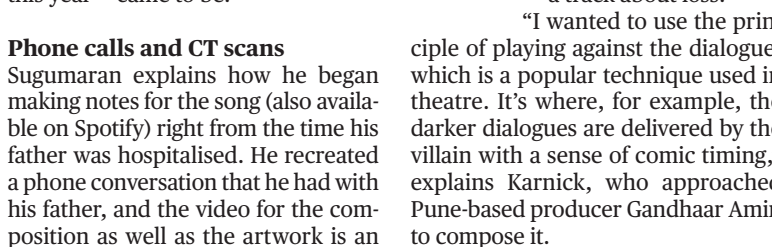
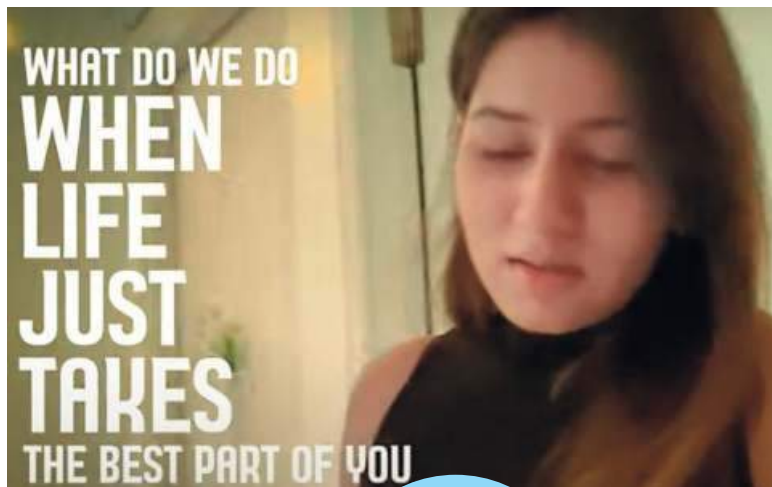
BHK's most popular dishes include Kolkata *bhetki* fish fry or cutlet: fillet marinated in lime and garlic, dipped in beaten egg and fried. Deliciously crisp, it has a minty flavour that I enjoyed.

It is also known for its breakfast fare of *koraishutir kochuri* – puris stuffed with mashed and mildly spiced, *hing*-flavoured peas – and baby potatoes coated with asafoetida (*hing*). I had a bit of BHK's *shorshey ilish* (hilsa in mustard) the next day for lunch, and found both the fish and preparation exceptionally good. A good chef has to know his fish (or fishmonger!) well, too.

Next week it offers, along with other favourites, something called *prawn-pouri*, fried prawns and prawn *malaikari* (₹750 for two).

HBK only takes pre-orders and has limited slots. "Our goal is to help people discover Bengali cuisine," Mazumdar says. I hope the kitchen continues post COVID-19, too. Food with music will be a good combo.

The writer is a seasoned food critic



## The feminist in burlesque

How Sukki 'Singapora' Menon is taking her burlesque moves and feminist views to a larger platform

SURYA PRAPHULLA KUMAR

Conservative is not a word you'd call Sukki Menon. But surprisingly, the 31-year-old – born to a Singaporean-Malayalee father and an English mother – hails from a hyper traditional family. And she's thankful for it.

Sukki Singapora (as she is known to her fans and critics) is a burlesque dancer striving for Asian representation and women's empowerment through her performing art. She is also a Netflix star, who shot to prominence after appearing on the popular 2019 docuseries, *Singapore Social*, which has since lead to movie offers and invites to Oscar parties. "Had my parents fully supported me [growing up], would I be as impassioned as I am?" she wonders out aloud, over a morning call from London. "Would I have had the angst, the fire in my belly, to take on a whole country, to travel the world and fight to make a difference for other young girls?"

Because fight she did. First, she successfully campaigned for burlesque to be seen as a legitimate art form in Singapore. And now she's her taking

calling card of entertainer, feminist, activist and humanitarian across the world, to make inroads for brown performers. Perhaps why she isn't too chuffed about being called Asia's Dita Von Teese. "It is a compliment, of course; Dita is a queen. However, I do think as Asian artists we need to stop saying we're the Asian version of something western. It's an antiquated statement that somehow lessens us and our achievements to a subversive colonial thinking," she says. "It's like saying Shah Rukh Khan is the Indian George Clooney. No, George Clooney is like the western SRK!"

**Taboo breaker**

Burlesque may be viewed with prejudice by the majority, but it resonated with Sukki because it celebrated female sensuality, something that was seen as taboo in her childhood. "There are many misconceptions about the art form, such as it is a seedy activity in a night club with men crowded around. But it could not be farther from the truth. My shows are held in theatres around the world, and 80% of my audience is female."

To the staunch feminist – who believes that feminism is another word for human rights – burlesque is all about women taking charge, of their bodies, their choices. "I think that when a woman follows her heart and builds a career, she becomes an inspiration to other women. And while it is difficult when you are the first at anything, because you are inevitably alone, creating that role model for the next generation is important to me," she concludes.

Read the full story on [weekend.thehindu.co.in](http://weekend.thehindu.co.in)

### Tapping into her roots

Malayalam may not be her strong suit, but Sukki enjoys her visits to her family home in Annakara (two hours from Thrissur, in Kerala), which she calls very grounding. She was last there in October 2019, for her birthday, and, going by Instagram, she had a blast hanging out with her cousins, and making time for cows, her perfectly coiffed rainbow hair in place. She also gave a talk at the local school about being brave and following one's heart. With plans to visit this December, Covid permitting, she hopes to make a bigger splash. "Brace yourself. I plan to bring burlesque there."

# Xi visits Tibet, first trip by leader in years

He landed in Nyingchi, which is located 20 km from the border with Arunachal Pradesh

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's President Xi Jinping this week became the first Chinese leader in many years to visit Tibet as well as its southeastern border region with India, as he inspected a newly opened and strategically important railway line.



**Strategic move:** Xi Jinping visiting the Drepung Monastery in the western suburbs of Lhasa on Thursday. **AP**

The official Xinhua news agency reported on Friday Mr. Xi arrived in Tibet on Wednesday on a three-day visit, landing at the airport in Nyingchi, which is located less than 20 km from the border with India's Arunachal Pradesh. The Xinhua report said Mr. Xi drove to the Nyang river bridge to inspect the Yarlung Zangbo river, or Brahmaputra river – the Nyang is its second largest tributary. He also visited Nyingchi town and its railway station to inspect the newly built Sichuan-Tibet railway.

This is Mr. Xi's first visit to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) since taking over as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China in 2012. He had visited in 2011 when he was Vice-President. That visit was to mark the 60th anniversary of what the Communist Party calls "the peaceful liberation of

Tibet", and this week's trip was timed to mark the 70th anniversary.

The Seventeen Point Agreement was signed on May 23, 1951. China refers to the agreement as heralding what it calls "the peaceful liberation of Tibet". The agreement has been rejected by the Dalai Lama, who has said the Communist Party had both forced it on Tibet and subsequently violated its commitments, leading him to eventually flee to India in exile in 1959.

From Nyingchi, Mr. Xi travelled to Lhasa, where he visited the Potala Palace – the traditional home of the Dalai Lamas – and Drepung mo-

nastery. He called on monks there "to support the leadership of the Communist Party of China" and "maintain the unity of the motherland". He said the Communist Party would "actively guide the development of Tibetan Buddhism", part of a broader effort to promote what the Party calls the "Sinicisation" of Tibetan Buddhism with an emphasis on patriotism and ensuring Beijing's authority on the appointment of lamas and key religious figures.

**Military ideology**  
Mr. Xi on Friday, the last day of the trip, met with soldiers of the Tibet Military Command of the People's Liberation

Army, state media reported, calling on them to "implement the Party's military ideology in the new era" and to "comprehensively strengthen training and preparation work".

Developing connectivity to border areas was a particular focus of the visit, evident in the visit to Nyingchi, which assumed particular significance coming a month after China started operating the first bullet train line in Tibet, linking Lhasa to Nyingchi near the border with Arunachal Pradesh. The China State Railway Group said the 435-km line, on which construction began in 2014, has a designed speed of 160 km per hour and would connect the capital city of the Tibet Autonomous Region to the border city of Nyingchi with a travel time of three and a half hours.

The Lhasa-Nyingchi rail is one among several major infrastructure projects recently completed in Tibet's southern and southeastern counties near the Arunachal border. Last month, China completed construction of a strategically significant highway through the Grand Canyon of the Yarlung Zangbo river, the "second significant

passageway" to Medog county that borders Arunachal.

The Lhasa-Nyingchi rail is one section of the Sichuan-Tibet railway line connecting the two provincial capitals, a strategic project described by the Chinese leader as "a major step in safeguarding national unity and a significant move in promoting economic and social development of the western region." This will be the second railway line connecting Tibet to the hinterland, following the already open Qinghai-Tibet rail.

The first section of the new line, from Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan, to Yaan, was finished in December 2018, while work on the 1,011 km Yaan-Nyingchi line will compete the entire railway line by 2030. Zhu Weiqun, a senior Party official formerly in charge of Tibet policy, was quoted as saying by state media the railway will help "transport advanced equipment and technologies from the rest of China to Tibet and bring local products out". "If a scenario of a crisis happens at the border," he said, "the railway can act as a 'fast track' for the delivery of strategic materials."

# For peace deal, Taliban say Afghan President must go

'Will lay down arms when govt. acceptable to all is formed'

ASSOCIATED PRESS ISLAMABAD

The Taliban on Friday said they don't want to monopolise power, but insisted there won't be peace in Afghanistan until there is a new negotiated government in Kabul and President Ashraf Ghani is removed.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Taliban spokesman, Suhail Shaheen, also a member of the group's negotiating team, laid out the insurgents' stance on what should come next in a country on the precipice.

The Taliban have captured territory in recent weeks, seized border crossings and are threatening a number of provincial capitals, as U.S. and NATO soldiers leave Afghanistan. This week, the top U.S. military officer, General Mark Milley, said that the Taliban have "strategic momentum," and he did not rule out a complete Taliban takeover. But he said it is not inevitable. "I don't think the end game is yet written," he said.

Afghans who can afford it are applying by the thousands for visas to leave Af-



Ashraf Ghani

**'Taliban claim of control of over 90% of border a lie'**

KABUL  
The Taliban's claim to hold 90% of Afghanistan's borders is an "absolute lie", the Defence Ministry said on Friday, insisting government forces were in control of the country's frontiers. "It is baseless propaganda," deputy spokesman of the Ministry of Defence Fawad Aman said. **AP**

ghanistan, fearing a violent descent into chaos. The U.S.-NATO withdrawal is more than 95% complete.

Shaheen said the Taliban will lay down their weapons when a negotiated government acceptable to all sides in the conflict is installed in Kabul and Mr. Ghani's government is gone.

"I want to make it clear that we do not believe in the monopoly of power because any governments who (sought) to monopolise power in Afghanistan in the past, were not successful governments," said Shaheen, apparently including the Taliban's own five-year rule in that assessment. "So we do not want to re-

peat that same formula."

But he was also uncompromising on the continued rule of Mr. Ghani, calling him a war monger and accusing him of using his Tuesday speech on the Islamic holy day of Id-al-Adha to promise an offensive against the Taliban. Shaheen dismissed Mr. Ghani's right to govern, resurrecting allegations of widespread fraud that surrounded Mr. Ghani's 2019 election win.

After that vote, both Mr. Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah declared themselves President. After a compromise deal, Mr. Abdullah is now No. 2 in the government and heads the reconciliation council.

## China imposes sanctions on U.S. citizens

REUTERS BEIJING

China said on Friday that it has imposed counter-sanctions on U.S. individuals, including former U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, in response to U.S. sanctions on Chinese officials in Hong Kong.

The sanctions are the first imposed by China under new anti-foreign sanction law, and come days before U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman is due to visit China.

## Pak. raises 'concern' over reports of spyware use

PM Imran Khan was allegedly targeted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Friday voiced 'serious concern' over media reports about India allegedly eavesdropping on foreigners, including Prime Minister Imran Khan, using Israeli spyware Pegasus and urged the UN to thoroughly investigate the matter.

According to reports, Mr. Khan was a potential target of the Israeli-made Pegasus spyware programme by clients of the NSO Group cy-

berespionage firm.

The Foreign Office (FO) through a statement responded to the media queries related to India's alleged use of the Israeli spyware.

"We have noted with serious concern recent international media reports exposing Indian government's organised spying operations against its own citizens, foreigners as well as Prime Minister Imran Khan, using an Israeli origin spyware," the Foreign Office said.

## Pelosi says Capitol probe will go on despite GOP's boycott plans

Republican leader slams her for rejection of 2 party nominees

ASSOCIATED PRESS WASHINGTON

Unfazed by Republican threats of a boycott, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared that a congressional committee investigating the January 6 Capitol insurrection will take on its "deadly serious" work whether Republicans participate or not.

The Republicans' House leader, Kevin McCarthy, called the committee a "sham process" and suggest-

ed that GOP lawmakers who take part could face consequences. Mr. McCarthy said Ms. Pelosi's rejection of two of the Republicans he had attempted to appoint was an "egregious abuse of power."

The escalating tension between the two parties is emblematic of the partisan anger that has only worsened since former President Donald Trump's supporters laid siege to the Capitol. With most Republi-

cans still loyal to Mr. Trump, and many downplaying the severity of the violent attack, there is little bipartisan unity to be found.

Mr. McCarthy said on Wednesday that he would withdraw the names of all five Republicans he had appointed after Ms. Pelosi rejected two of them. Ms. Pelosi made clear that she won't relent, and Democrats mulled filling the empty seats themselves.

## U.S. sanctions Cuba over crackdown on protests

More measures to come, warns Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

The U.S. imposed sanctions on Cuba's Defense Minister and a special forces unit on Thursday for repressing peaceful protests, a step President Joe Biden warned is "just the beginning" of measures against Havana.

The U.S. Treasury Department said its Office of Foreign Assets Control froze the assets of Alvaro Lopez Miera and the Special National Brigade (SNB), a divi-

sion of Cuba's Interior Ministry, in relation to human rights abuses committed during a crackdown on protests earlier in July. "This is just the beginning – the U.S. will continue to sanction individuals responsible for oppression of the Cuban people," Mr. Biden said.

The sanctions were imposed under the Magnitsky act, which allows a U.S. president to take action against human rights abuses and corruption.

# Ben & Jerry's angers Israel by boycotting settlements

'Sales in occupied territories is inconsistent with our values'

STANLY JOHNY



A Ben & Jerry's ice cream truck outside the factory in Be'er Tuvia. **AFP**

Ice creams hardly play a role in international conflicts. But the U.S.-based ice cream brand Ben & Jerry's decision to stop selling its products to the Jewish settlements in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories of East Jerusalem and West Bank has triggered an uproar in Israel, which has taken the battle against the brand to its parent company and 35 American States. Israel Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has warned Unilever, the London-based parent company, of "severe consequences" over its subsidiary's decision.

**'Values' over profit**  
In its July 19 statement, Ben and Jerry's, known for taking up progressive causes such as Black Lives Matter, said the sales of its products in the occupied Palestinian territories was "inconsistent with our values".

Israel seized the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the 1967 war and has promoted Jewish settlements in the territories since the 1970s. Currently, there are about 140 Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem where more than 6,00,000 Jews live.

Ben & Jerry's, founded in the 1970s by two American hippies, operates in Israel through a licensee, Ben & Jerry's Israel, which makes and distributes its products in Israel and the occupied territories.

"We have informed our licensee that we will not renew the license agreement when it expires at the end of next year," the company said. It added that it would seek another arrangement

to sell its ice creams within the internationally accepted borders of Israel.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign, an activist group based in the U.K. that promotes boycotting Israeli goods, has welcomed Ben & Jerry's decision. "This is Huge. Very important step by Ben & Jerry's and a message to all complicit companies. The tide of history is turning. #BDS," the PSC tweeted on Monday.

Activists who support the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement has been campaigning for a years for economic measures to put pressure on Israel to change its policies regarding settlements and occupation.

**Unilever's position**  
Unilever, the British multinational, acquired Ben & Jerry's in 2000 for \$326 million in an unusual agreement that allowed the brand to keep an independent board with the right to make decisions on its social missions and brand integrity. The decision to end sales to the Jewish settlements came from the Board.

In a statement, Unilever said: "Ben & Jerry's was acquired by Unilever in 2000. As part of the acquisition agreement, we have always recognised the right of the

brand and its independent Board to take decisions about its social mission. We also welcome the fact that Ben & Jerry's will stay in Israel."

There were signs of tensions between the parent company and the independent board of Ben & Jerry's. Anuradha Mittal, the Board's chair, told NBC that Unilever issued the statement against the wishes of the Board.

**Israel's response**  
Gilad Erdan, Israel's Ambassador in Washington, has written to each of the 35 Governors of American States that have passed laws against BDS, urging them to sanction the ice cream brand.

In the letter, a copy of which was posted on Twitter, Ambassador Erdan wrote Ben & Jerry's decision amounted to "de-facto adoption of anti-Semitic practices and the de-legitimization of the Jewish state".

In 2018, Airbnb announced it would remove listings on its website in the Jewish settlements in Palestine, but reversed the decision a few months later after having come under enormous pressure from Israel and a lawsuit in a federal U.S. court.

This time too, Israel is leaving no chance behind to mount economic and legal pressure on Ben & Jerry's and Unilever to undo the decision.

The challenge Israel faces is that if Ben & Jerry's sticks to its decision in solidarity with the Palestinians, it could set a successful precedent for other corporations and give a boost to the BDS movement.

**Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited**  
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit – III, Bhubaneswar – 751 001  
Tel. : (0674) 2380660, Website: [www.osmcl.nic.in](http://www.osmcl.nic.in), Email: [logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in](mailto:logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in)

**NOTICE INVITING BID**

Bid Reference No.: OSMCL/2021-22/COVID/27

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for supply of COVID-19 Items as per the particulars mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time
1.	Date & time of release of bid	23/07/2021, 2 PM
2.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time: 23/07/2021, 3 PM End Date & Time: 06/08/2021, 11 AM
3.	Date & time of online Technical bid opening	06/08/2021, 11.30 AM
4.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: [www.osmcl.nic.in](http://www.osmcl.nic.in) and <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. OSMCL reserves the right to reject or modify any conditions of the tender or cancel the tender or cancel the issued purchase order at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

SD/-  
Managing Director  
OSMCL Ltd., Odisha

CAD-667 OIPR 10112/11/0040/2122

**सेंट्रल माइन्स प्लानिंग एण्ड डिजाइन इन्स्टीट्यूट लिमिटेड**  
**CENTRAL MINE PLANNING & DESIGN INSTITUTE LIMITED**  
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Ltd.)  
Gondwana Place, Kanke Road, Ranchi - 834031, Jharkhand, India

**NOTICE**

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. [www.coalindia.in/](http://www.coalindia.in/) respective Subsidiary Company (CMPDI, [www.cmpdi.co.in/](http://www.cmpdi.co.in/)), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in/>"

**RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)  
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur - 302005, India  
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064 Website: [www.msc.health.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.msc.health.rajasthan.gov.in)  
CIN:U24232RJ.2011SGC035067 E-mail: [edprms@nic.in](mailto:edprms@nic.in)

Ref. No.: F.02(330)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-20/2021/1266 Dated: 16.7.2021

**Notice Inviting E-Bid**

E-bids are invited upto 6.00 PM of 10.08.2021 for E-BID FOR RATE CONTRACT CUM SUPPLY AND EMPANELMENT OF DRUGS AND MEDICINES. Details of NIB may be seen in the Bidding Documents at our office or at the website of State Public procurement Portal <http://sppp.raj.nic.in> (UBN-MSCL2122GLOB00054) [www.dipronline.org](http://www.dipronline.org), <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://mrsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in> and may be downloaded from there.

RO.No. Samwad/C/3681/ Executive Director (Procurement)  
2021-2022 dt.20/07/2021 RMSCL

**KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD**  
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)  
# 49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080- 22267899 website : [www.kiadb.in](http://www.kiadb.in), e-Mail: [cof@kiadb.in](mailto:cof@kiadb.in)

**No. KIADB/COF/E-Auction-01/4412/2021-22 Date: 22.07.2021**

**PAPER PUBLICATION**

This is to inform that Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB), intends to invest its Surplus Funds in the short term deposits with Nationalized Bank. The details of the quantum of amount and period to be kept in short term deposits are as under:

- 1) **Rs.75.00 Crores** – For 31 days in Nationalized Banks.
- 2) **Rs.75.00 Crores** – For 46 days in Nationalized Banks.
- 3) **Rs.75.00 Crores** – For 61 days in Nationalized Banks.
- 4) **Rs.75.00 Crores** – For 91 days in Nationalized Banks.

The complete details of the E-Auction can be downloaded from the e-portal of the Government of Karnataka at the below address: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

**Schedule of Various Events For e-Auction is as below:**

- 1) Date of E-Auction can be Downloaded: **27.07.2021**
- 2) Last Date to upload the Declaration in Annexure-B in the e-portal: **04.08.2021 on or before 15.30 Hrs.**
- 3) Date and time of opening: **05.08.2021 after 16.00 Hrs.**
- 4) Live Bidding: **07.08.2021, Commences at 11.00 Hrs. & Concludes at 13.00 Hrs.**

Sd/-  
**Controller of Finance, KIADB**  
DIPR/DOUR.O:913/2021-22

**STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.**

Wear Mask | Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, Project Division, West Zone, Joint Commissioner (West) Office Premises, 2nd Floor, Sampige Road, Sheshadripuram, Bengaluru-560 020

No.: EE/P-WTEND/12/2021-22 Date: 22.07.2021

**INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)**  
Short Term Tender Notification (Two Cover System) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Project Division, West Zone invites tenders from eligible tenderers for the construction of works detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Estimate Amount (Rs. in Lakhs)
1	Comprehensive development and construction of Multipurpose building and Public Toilet and other improvement works at Ward No. 101 at Rajajinagar Constituency Package 03. Standard Bid Document: KW-4	500.00

Note: Paying of EMD for this work is exempted as per GOK Order No: 675 ವಜ್ಜೆ-12/2020, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು (ದಿನಾಂಕ: 22-12-2020 ಬಂದ 31-12-2021ರ ವರೆಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ)

**Calendar of Events:** (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded through e-portal from: **26.07.2021**. (2) Date & Time for Pre-bid Meeting: **16.08.2021 at 4:00 P.M.** (3) Last date and time for receipt of queries (through E-Portal only): **17.08.2021 upto 4:00 P.M.** (4) Last Date and Time for receipt of Tenders: **25.08.2021 upto 4:00 P.M.** (5) Opening of Bids (Technical Bid): **27.08.2021 at 4:30 P.M.** (6) Opening of Bids (Financial Bid): **30.08.2021 (if possible)**. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours or website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Division, West Zone, BBMP  
**COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC. BE AWARE**

Wear Mask | Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene



# Pandemic-hit Tokyo Olympics off to a muted, subdued start

Opening ceremony features athletes training on a treadmill in the dark, depicting how they prepared; Osaka lights cauldron; Emperor declares Games open



SHYAM VASUDEVAN  
TOKYO

"It's finally happening! We did not know until last week if this would be possible," beams a volunteer as the five gigantic wooden Olympic rings make their way into a near-empty Olympic Stadium on Friday.

The volunteer is ecstatic to see the Games, postponed by a year due to the coronavirus pandemic, get underway, while hundreds of locals gather outside the stadium to protest the holding of the Games.

Such is the contrast, such are the two parallels in Japan — where some see the Games as an opportunity to show the world that Japan can host the Games even in such testing conditions, others protest the very decision. In fact,



**Proud moment:** Manpreet and Mary Kom lead the Indian contingent during the Opening Ceremony on Friday. Osaka had the honour of lighting the cauldron while IOC president Bach is seen with Japanese Emperor Naruhito. ♦PTI

such is their antipathy to the Games that a 53-year-old woman named Kayoko Takahashi tried to douse the Olympic torch last week.

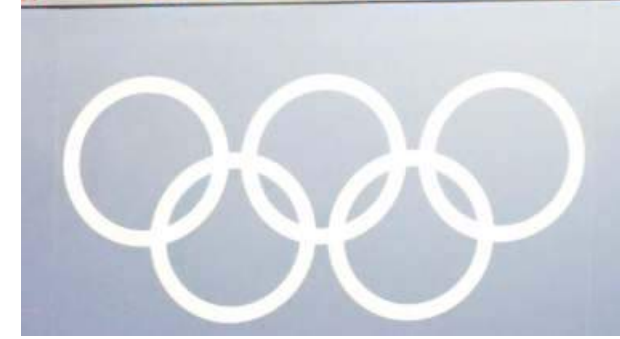
She reportedly screamed "No Olympics. Stop the Games," and tried to squirt water with a watergun during the torch relay before be-

ing arrested. Back at the Olympic Stadium, the opening ceremony was a rather subdued and muted affair as the stands sat empty.

The 205 contingents walked out gleefully, waved their flags with gusto, to be greeted by the officials, journalists and volunteers.

In keeping with the times we live in, the ceremony featured a segment with a performer running on a treadmill and surrounded by darkness — depicting how athletes had to train in isolation during the pandemic.

The opening ceremony also had a strong Manga (Japa-



nese comics and graphic novels) flavour as all the text on the placards was inspired by the speech bubbles featured in comics.

Nineteen Indian athletes took part in the ceremony and were marshalled by 2012 London Olympics bronze-medallist Mary Kom and the

Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh.

A 114-member Indian contingent had marched at the 2016 opening ceremony, which was held in front of a capacity crowd of 78,000 people at Rio's Maracana stadium, while 81 Indians marched on at the 2012

Games. But such is the world we are now in — masks and social distancing are the need of the hour and the razzmatazz of an opening ceremony at Tokyo's \$1.45 billion stadium is curtailed by the sight of thousands of empty seats.

Japanese tennis star Nao-

omi Osaka lit the cauldron. She lifted the Olympic torch, which had unfurled at the top of a ramp representing Mount Fuji.

Japan's Emperor Naruhito officially opened the Games. "I declare open the Games of Tokyo," said the monarch.

## Deepika ninth in ranking round

Indian men produce a below-par performance

### ARCHERY

Y.B. SARANGI

World No. 1 Deepika Kumari logged 663 points to finish ninth in the individual women's category while Indian men archers gave a below-par performance in the ranking round of the archery competitions on the opening day of the Tokyo Olympics on Friday.

Pravin Jadhav, Atanu Das, and Tarundeep Rai scored 656, 653, and 652 respectively out of a maximum 720 to take 31st, 35th and 37th slots respectively on the men's ranking list.

Koreans Je Deok Kim (688) and Jinhyek Oh (681) were placed first and third with USA's Brady Ellison second at 682.

Deepika, who will face Bhutan's Karma in the first elimination round, could



**Tough task ahead:** Deepika Kumari is likely to run into the top-ranked Korean An San in the quarterfinals. ♦REUTERS

run into South Korea's top-ranked Olympic-record holder An San in the quarterfinals. An set an Olympic record with 680 points.

Pravin will face Russian Galsan Bazarhapov, Atanu will meet Yu-Cheng Deng of Chinese Taipei and Tarundeep will take on Oleksii Hunbin of Ukraine in the opening elimination round.

The Indian men's team, which managed the ninth

spot with 1961 points, way behind top-ranked Korea (2049), will square off against Kazakhstan on Monday.

Pravin and Deepika, taking part in the mixed team event, were lying ninth with 1319 points while Korea topped with 1368. Deepika and Pravin will take on Chinese Taipei's Chia-En Lin and Chih-Chun in the round of 16.

### SATURDAY'S MEDAL EVENTS

**Archery:** Mixed team  
**Cycling:** Men's road race  
**Fencing:** Men's sabre, women's epee  
**Judo:** Men's 60kg, women's 48kg  
**Shooting:** Men's 10m air pistol, women's 10m air rifle  
**Taekwondo:** Men's 58kg, women's 49kg  
**Weightlifting:** Women's 49kg

### INDIANS IN ACTION TODAY

**Archery: Mixed team:** Deepika Kumari & Pravin Jadhav vs Chia-En Lin & Chih-Chun Tang (Tpe), 1/8 eliminations, 6 a.m.; quarterfinals, 10.45 a.m.; semifinals, noon; bronze medal match, 12.55 p.m.; gold medal match, 1.15 p.m.  
**Badminton: Group stage: Men's doubles:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty vs Lee Yang & Wang Chi-Lin (Tpe), 8.50 a.m.; **Men's singles:** B. Sai Praneeth vs Misha Zilberman (Isr), 9.30 a.m.; **Boxing: Men's welterweight (round of 32):** Vikas Krishan vs Seowonreys Quincy Mensah Okazawa (Jpn), 3.50 p.m.  
**Hockey: Men (Pool A):** vs New Zealand, 6.30 a.m.; **Women (Pool A):** vs Netherlands, 5.15 p.m.  
**Judo: Women's 48kg** (7.30 a.m. onwards); Shushila Likmabam.  
**Rowing: Men's lightweight double sculls (Heat 2):** Arjun Jat and Arvind Singh, 7.30 a.m.  
**Shooting: Women's 10m air rifle:** Apurvi Chandela, Elavenil Valarivan, Qualification, 5 a.m.; Final, 7.15 a.m.; **Men's 10m air pistol:** Abhishek Verma, Saurabh Chaudhary, Qualification, 9.30 a.m.; Final, noon.  
**Table tennis: Mixed doubles (round of 16):** Sharath Kamal & Manika Batra vs Lin Yun-ju & Cheng I-Ching (Tpe), 8.30 a.m. **Women's singles (first round):** Manika Batra vs Tin-Tin Ho (GBR), 12.15 p.m.; Sutritha Mukherjee vs Linda Bergstrom (Swe), 1 p.m.  
**Tennis: Men's singles (first round, from 7.30 a.m.):** Sumit Nagal vs Denis Istomin (Uzb).  
**Weightlifting: Women's 49kg:** Mirabai Chanu, 10.20 a.m. All times IST

## Mirabai ready for lift off

Coach Vijay confident of a podium finish

### WEIGHTLIFTING

SHYAM VASUDEVAN  
TOKYO

Mirabai Chanu is all set to lift an Olympic barbell stacked with weights of different kinds in her weightlifting medal event on Saturday. Besides the hundreds of kilograms of steel, the weight of a billion expectations also lie on her shoulders.

The Manipuri weightlifter is among India's strongest medal contenders in a depleted field in the women's 49kg category.

Mirabai's coach Vijay Sharma expects her to be engaged in a three-way battle with China's Hou Zhihui, the current world record holder, and USA's World Cup winner Jourdan Elizabeth Delacruz. Indonesia's Asia Windy Cantika, who beat Mirabai to the silver at the Asian Championships, could also pose a



**Golden opportunity:** Mirabai will hope to make the most of a depleted field in the 49kg category. ♦TWITTER/@MIRABAI\_CHANU

threat. Vijay, however, felt that Mirabai is certain to seal a place on the podium. "Her preparations have been going on really well. Our training camp in the USA was the key to help her maintain her peak. We're very confident of returning with a medal, but the colour of the medal will depend on how she per-

forms on Saturday," said Vijay here on Friday.

He added that her stupendous show at the Asian Championships in May has put her in good stead for the Olympics. Mirabai set a new clean and jerk world record of 119kg and also set a new personal best with a combined total of 205kg.

### TOKYO TITBITS



#### Biles first athlete to get a Twitter emoji

TOKYO  
Four-time Olympic champion Simone Biles has become the first Olympic athlete to have her own customised hashtag emoji on Twitter. ANI

#### Israeli athletes killed at Munich remembered

Israeli Olympic team members killed by Palestinian gunmen at the 1972 Munich Olympics were remembered during the Tokyo Olympics opening ceremony with a moment of silence. REUTERS

## China's domination set to continue

### TABLE TENNIS

AMOL KARHADKAR

The Chinese juggernaut in table tennis is all set to roll on in Tokyo. On the first day of the tournament on Saturday, however, not many Chinese will be in action.

Top seeds Xu Xin and Liu Shiwen will start the proceedings in the mixed doubles pre-quarterfinals, a category introduced in Tokyo.

Besides the Chinese pair, Japan's veteran Jun Mizutani and Ito Mima will be hoping to get off the blocks quickly against Stefan Fegrel and Sofia Polcanova of Australia and make it to the quarterfinals.

Nikhil Kumar, who has joined Kanak Jha of Indian origin from the United States of America as the second



Sutritha with coach Soumyadeep Roy. ♦TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

paddler, will open his campaign against Mongolia's Lkhagvasuren Enkhbat.

Men's and women's first round and intense action in mixed doubles will be thrilling to witness.

Three of the four Indians will start their campaigns on Saturday. The mixed doubles pair of A. Sharath Kamal

and Manika Batra, seeded 12th, will start against the third-seeded pair of Lin Yun Ju and Cheng I Ching.

#### Acid test

The match will be an acid test for India's 2018 Asian Games bronze medal-winning pair.

Manika and Sutritha Mukherjee will also be seen in action in women's singles. While Manika will be up against Ho Tin-Tin of Great Britain, Sutritha will hope to repeat her recent exploits against Sweden's Linda Bergstrom.

Manika holds a 2-0 advantage in head-to-head matches. Sutritha, meanwhile, enjoys the advantage of winning the last of the two matches against Bergstrom, at the World Tour event in Hungary last year.

## Apurvi, Elavenil poised to excel in air rifle

Saurabh, Abhishek have the calibre to deliver big in men's air pistol event

### SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

A golden start in shooting will be the best way forward for the Indian contingent in Tokyo. The onus will be on two of the best women air rifle shooters Apurvi Chandela and Elavenil Valarivan, who have dominated the event and taken turns to be World No. 1.

After the breakthrough of Anjali Bhagwat and Suma Shirur, making the Olympic finals in the event in Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004, India has never had it this bright.

Apurvi had won two World Cup gold medals in 2019 before the pandemic and shot a world record



**Best bets:** Apurvi Chandela and Elavenil Valarivan carry India's expectations. ♦PTI



252.9 in the Delhi final. That record still stands against her name. Incidentally, it is better than the men's world record. The 28-year-old Apurvi, competing in her second Olympics after Rio, has the experience. A recent dip

in her score has only helped Apurvi focus a lot more. The 21-year-old Elavenil, a prodigy trained by Olympic medalist Gagan Narang, will be happy to prove her class.

From being the World Championship junior silver

medallist in 2018, Elavenil has come a long way, winning the World Cup gold in Rio and the World Cup Final gold in Putian China, in 2019.

The 20-year-old Mary Carolyn Tucker of the US and the 19-year-old Eszter Meszaros of Hungary will be the ones to follow.

In men's air pistol, India has Saurabh Chaudhary and Abhishek Verma, who have also taken turns to be World No. 1 in the event.

Both have taken quick steps to reach the top of the world, starting with their maiden international exposure in the Asian Games in Palembang in 2018.

Saurabh won the gold and Abhishek a bronze in the Asian Games, in a world-class field.

## Fernando, Rajapaksa guide Lanka to consolation win

Shaw, Samson come good before India loses the plot as Akila Dananjaya and Jayawickrama strike

### INDIA IN LANKA

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
COLOMBO

Avishka Fernando and Bhanuka Rajapaksa hit half-centuries as Sri Lanka beat India by three wickets for a consolation win in the rain-hit third ODI here on Friday.

#### Century stand

Chasing 226 for victory in the reduced 47-overs-a-side contest, Sri Lanka rode on a 109-run second-wicket stand between Fernando (76) and Rajapaksa (65) to achieve the target with 48 balls to spare

in Colombo. India won the three-match series 2-1.

Debutant leg-spinner Rahul Chahar returned figures of 3/54 to put Sri Lanka in trouble before Ramesh Mendis steered the team home with an unbeaten 15.

Earlier spinners Akila Dananjaya and debutant Praveen Jayawickrama took three wickets each to help bowl out India for 225 in 43.1 overs.

Jayawickrama, a left-arm spinner who returned figures of 3/59 on his ODI debut, combined with Dananjaya to trigger a middle-order col-

lapse as India slipped from 179/4 to 195/8.

India elected to bat and started strongly, only to lose its way after a 100-minute rain delay.

The visitors were 147/3 when rain stopped play.

Earlier skipper Shikhar Dhawan was out early, caught behind off Dushmantha Chameera for 13, but fellow-opener Prithvi Shaw and Sanju Samson took the attack to the opposition bowlers.

Shaw made a run-a-ball 49, and Samson, hit 46 off 46 balls, put on 74 for the second wicket.



**Setting it up:** Fernando laid the foundation for the chase. ♦AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**India:** Prithvi Shaw lbw b Shanaka 49 (49b, 8x4), Shikhar Dhawan c Minod b Chameera 13 (11b, 3x4), Sanju Samson c Avishka b Jayawickrama 46 (46b, 5x4, 1x6), Manish Pandey c Minod b Jayawickrama 11 (19b), Suryakumar Yadav lbw b Akila 40 (37b, 7x4), Hardik Pandya lbw b Jayawickrama 19 (17b, 3x4), Nitish Rana c Minod b Akila 7 (14b), K. Gowtham lbw b Akila 2 (3b), Rahul Chahar c & b Karunaratne 13 (25b), Navdeep Saini c Avishka b Chameera 15 (37b), Chetan Sakariya (not out) 0 (1b); Extras (lb-1, w-9): 10; Total (in 43.1 overs): 225.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-28 (Dhawan, 2.3 overs), 2-102 (Shaw, 15.5), 3-118 (Samson, 18.4), 4-157 (Pandey, 24.5), 5-179 (Hardik, 28.3), 6-190 (Suryakumar,

30.6), 7-194 (Gowtham, 32.3), 8-195 (Rana, 32.5), 9-224 (Rahul Chahar, 42.4).

**Sri Lanka bowling:** Chameera 8.1-0-55-2, Akila 10-0-44-3, Karunaratne 6-0-25-1, Jayawickrama 10-0-59-3, Shanaka 8-0-33-1, Mendis 1-0-8-0.

**Sri Lanka:** Avishka Fernando c Shaw b Rahul Chahar 76 (98b, 4x4, 1x6), Minod Bhanuka c Sakariya b Gowtham 7 (17b, 1x4), Bhanuka Rajapaksa c Gowtham b Sakariya 65 (56b, 12x4), Dhananjaya de Silva c & b Sakariya 2 (9b), Charith Asalanka lbw b Hardik 24 (28b, 3x4), Dasun Shanaka c Pandey b Rahul Chahar 0 (1b), Ramesh Mendis (not out) 15 (18b, 1x4), Chamika Karunaratne st. Samson b Rahul Chahar 3 (10b), Akila Dananjaya (not out) 5 (2b, 1x4); Extras (b-4, lb-6, w-15,

nb-5): 30; Total (for seven wickets in 39 overs): 227.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-35 (Minod, 5.3), 2-144 (Rajapaksa, 22.6), 3-151 (de Silva, 24.6), 4-194 (Asalanka, 31.6), 5-195 (Shanaka, 32.4), 6-214 (Avishka, 36.2), 7-220 (Karunaratne, 38.4).

**India bowling:** Saini 5-0-27-0, Sakariya 8-0-34-2, Rahul Chahar 10-0-54-3, Gowtham 8-0-49-1, Hardik 5-0-43-1, Rana 3-0-10-0.

**Toss:** India.

**Man-of-the-Match:** Avishka Fernando.

**Man-of-the-series:** Suryakumar Yadav.

*Sri Lanka won by three wickets with eight overs to spare, India clinched series 2-1.*

**First T20I:** July 25, Colombo, 8 p.m. IST.

# Some nations march with one flag-bearer

The IOC has pledged to work towards gender equality at the Games

## TOKYO OLYMPICS

REUTERS  
TOKYO

A few countries stood out at the opening ceremony on Friday for having only either a man or a woman bearing the flag, as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) encouraged both male and female flag-bearers.

Ethiopian male swimmer Abdelmalik Muktar and Tajikistani male judoka Temur Rakhimov waved the flags of their respective countries, despite having a mixed delegation.

Congo, on the other hand, had only female sprinter Natsha Ngoye Akamabi represent its mixed team.

### IOC's statement

In February, the IOC issued a statement asking participant countries to select both a male and female flag-bearer where possible for the first time ever.

Other countries that only had a male flag-bearer, such as the United Arab Emirates, had a male only delegation.

Delegations of countries known for conservative gender values complied with the



**Not obliging:** Ethiopia was one of the countries that did not have a female athlete also holding the nation's flag at the opening ceremony • GETTY IMAGES

IOC request, as male rower Husein Alireza and female judoka Tahani Alqahtani both smiled and waved as they held up the Saudi Arabian flag.

The IOC pledged to work towards gender equality after previous Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee President Yoshiro Mori was criticised for making sexist

remarks about women in February.

Mori eventually stepped down from his role.

The opening ceremony was mired in scandal in the

lead-up to the Games.

A composer and creative director involved in the ceremony both stepped down from their roles days before the start.

# Unique order of nations at parade

Athletes enter the stadium following Japan's writing system



**Localised:** Ireland came in as the fourth team into the stadium because of using the local alphabet to determine the sequence of the nations • GETTY IMAGES

REUTERS  
TOKYO

Global viewers of Friday's opening ceremony for the Tokyo Olympics may have been confused at the order of the national parade, where Andorra was followed by Yemen. Look no further than Japan's unique alphabet.

Unlike previous Olympics held in Japan, where athletes marched into the stadium in the English order of their names, Tokyo 2020 followed Japan's writing system.

"After Italy, Israel, Iraq, India, Indonesia I thought there was a system but that

was followed by Uruguay, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and overall it seems random," one perplexed viewer wrote on Twitter.

"Can anyone explain why Ireland got to 4th in the Parade of Nations? So intrigued as to the running order of team entering the stadium," tweeted another.

Blame Japan's writing system, a bane for learners both native and foreign.

### Complicated

In addition to two alphabets – strictly speaking, syllabaries – comprised of 46 characters each to write the modern language's sounds

phonetically, written Japanese also uses imported Chinese characters, about 2,000 of which are taught through junior high school and are required for basic reading of newspapers and official documents.

The order follows Japanese pronunciation syllable by syllable: a, i, u, e, o, ka, ki, ku, ke, ko and so on through the list of consonants paired with the five vowels.

Moreover, countries were listed by their Japanese pronunciation. For example, Yemen – "Iemen" in Japanese – comes near the front, not the back.

## Different hues



**View from Tokyo:** Shuttler Chirag Shetty will hope some of tennis ace Novak Djokovic's magic rubs off on him, Sumit Nagal goes through the paces, fencer S. Bhavani Devi discusses with her coach while boxer Simranjit Kaur soaks in the Olympic atmosphere. • TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

# Olympic cauldron to be powered by hydrogen

Unlike propane, hydrogen does not produce carbon dioxide when combusted

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO

Inspired by the sun, the Tokyo Olympic cauldron is designed to be better for the planet.

The flame at Tokyo's National Stadium and another cauldron burning along the waterfront near Tokyo Bay throughout the Games will be sustained in part by hydrogen, the first time the fuel source will be used to power an Olympic fire.

Previous flames have usually run on propane, although magnesium, gunpowder, resin and olive oil have also been used since the first modern cauldron was lit for the Amsterdam Games in 1928. The torch relay was introduced eight years later for Berlin.

Unlike propane, hydrogen does not produce carbon dioxide when combusted. The Tokyo cauldron is fuelled by hydrogen produced by a factory in the Fukushima prefecture that runs on renewable energy. Propane and hydrogen were both used during the torch relay.

Organisers for the London Games in 2012 touted plans for a low-carbon torch but couldn't get the design right in time. They instead used a mix of propane and butane.

**Smaller size**  
Brazilian officials commissioned a smaller cauldron for Rio in 2016 to reduce the amount of fuel needed.

The Tokyo cauldron was designed by Canadian archi-

tect Oki Sato. His sun-inspired orb unfolds like petals from a flower, which organisers say "embody vitality and hope."

The first torch for these games was lit in Olympia, Greece, 16 months ago, but the relay was suspended for much of 2020 due to the pandemic.

Officials put the torch on display at prefectures affected by the earthquake and tsunami that ravaged the region in 2011 until the relay was officially restarted in Fukushima on March 25, 2021.

Some stages of the relay were pulled off roads this month due to fears about spreading the coronavirus before the flame made its way to the National Stadium in Tokyo's Shinjuku City.



**Renewable energy:** The cauldron will be sustained in part by hydrogen, the first time the fuel source will be used to power an Olympic flame. • GETTY IMAGES

# Tannu and Priya become cadet World champions

## WRESTLING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Young wrestlers Tannu and Priya became the latest world champions as India's spectacular run continued at the Cadet World Championship, here on Thursday.

Tannu did not concede a single point en route the 43kg title, winning three of her four bouts by fall, includ-

ing the final against Belarus' Valeria Mikitsich.

Priya grabbed the 73kg title with a 5-0 win over Belarus' Kseniya Patapovich.

Aman Gulia (48kg) and Sagar Jaglan (80kg) took titles in men's freestyle competition to propel India to the Team championship title for the first time in the history.

Another Indian, Varsha won the bronze medal in the 65kg category with a victory by fall against Turkey's Duy-

gu Gen.

India finished on top with 147 points, ahead of USA (143) and Russia (140).

On Saturday, Komal will also be in contention for world title as she reached the 46kg final after beating Belarus' Sviatlana Katenka by technical superiority. She will take on Azerbaijan's Ruzanna Mammadova.

Nitika (61kg) and Harshita (69kg) though lost their semifinal bouts.

# Nivedita Karki clinches gold

SSCB men, Haryana women retain team championships

## BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SONIPAT

Uttarakhand's Nivedita Karki stunned reigning youth World champion Gitika of Haryana 3-2 in the 48kg final to clinch the gold at the youth National boxing championships on Friday.

Haryana women and Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) men retained the team championships.

Haryana women claimed 12 medals, including seven gold and five silver while the SSCB men finished on top in the men's event with 10 medals – seven gold and three silver.

Haryana's Tamanna outboxed Rajasthan's Anjali Choudhary 5-0 in 50kg final. Neha (54kg), Preeti (57kg), Preeti Dahiya (60kg), Lashu Yadav (70kg), Khushi (63kg) and Deepika (+81) were the other gold medallists for Haryana in the women's

category. Meanwhile, Haryana men finished second with four gold and five silver medals.

Bishwamitra Chongtham led the glorious run for SSCB in the men's event as he blanked Himachal Pradesh's Abhinav Katoch 5-0 in the 51kg final. Vishwanath Suresh (48kg), Viktor Singh Shaikom (54kg), Vijay Singh (57kg), Ravichandra Singh (60kg), Jaydeep Rawat (71kg) and Deepak (75kg) were the others who claimed gold.

# Milwaukee Bucks players return home to a rousing welcome

Fans have embraced Antetokounmpo for his loyalty to the team that drafted him eight years ago

## NBA

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MILWAUKEE

Thousands of fans lined downtown Milwaukee streets on Thursday to catch a glimpse of their beloved Bucks in a parade to celebrate the city's first NBA championship in half a century.

### Victory parade

Six police officers on horseback clapped past cheering fans at the head of a procession that included a hook-and-ladder fire truck, occasionally blaring its horn, and open-air buses and flatbed trucks carrying Bucks stars, including Finals MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo and Jrue Holiday, as well as the trophy they captured on Tuesday night with a Game 6 victory over Phoenix Suns.

Fans could be heard chanting "Bucks in Six", an odd but beloved rallying cry



**Crowd's darling:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had a major role to play in ending Bucks' title drought. • AFP

with roots in a former Bucks player's fruitless prediction in 2013 that the team would take down the playoffs' top seed at the time.

Antetokounmpo held his

son, one-year-old Liam, atop a bus as fans along the route chanted "MVPI!" Later, he shot a basketball into the crowd.

"Milwaukee, we did it be-

cause we did it!" Antetokounmpo said to a cheering crowd in the Deer District, the area outside the Bucks' Fiserv Forum.

Neil and Rachana Bhatia,

both 34 and from suburban Waukesha, brought one-month-old son Zain to the Deer District, saying they wanted to give Zain an early taste of being a Bucks fan.

"It unifies the city and puts the city on a global stage. It's great for the city and the state. It's just bringing everybody together to celebrate something that hasn't happened in 50 years," Neil said.

"The city has had its struggles. What I know is that it's been a city that's coming together," said longtime Bucks fan Dameon Ellzey.

"In my neighbourhood, you could hear everybody on their porches screaming," Ellzey said. "Black, white, Asian. In a city like Milwaukee, that's big."

Milwaukee has long ranked among the most segregated cities in America. Team president Peter Feig called it "the most segregated, racist place" he'd ever experienced, remarks he later

softened.

As the Bucks drove toward a championship this year, some people were cheered by the diversity of the massive crowds that gathered in the Deer District to watch the Bucks on big TV screens.

The team's ascendance has also invigorated a Midwestern city far from the league's more cosmopolitan venues like Los Angeles, Boston or Miami – cities that have traditionally found it easier to attract the game's top players.

### Loyalty

One reason fans have embraced Antetokounmpo is his loyalty to the team that drafted him eight years ago when he was just 18. "He recognises the city and its quality and he resonates with it," Timothy Seymour, 20, said of Antetokounmpo. "He really reflects our work ethic. He works hard. And he reflects how we're only going to get better."