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FRENCH GRAND PRIX

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Eyes on Gupkar Alliance ahead of all-party meet

June 24 talks Centre's bid for political outreach

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

All eyes are set on the formal response of the People's Alliance For Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) to the invitation from Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, to attend the all-party meet convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on June 24.

The Prime Minister's meeting on June 24 with the political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is expected to be about the delimitation exercise.

The meeting is an attempt by the Centre to seek political validation of the administrative exercise which started in the first week of June. But Kashmiri leaders have their own agenda for initiating the talks.

"We have stressed for a collective fight and hence the PAGD will send two representatives to the meeting in New Delhi," a news channel quoted a senior leader, who attended the meeting, as saying.



"Mehbooba has not decided to boycott the meeting. We are in favour of a political process but it's a collective fight and hence we will all meet to decide who all should represent us in the meeting and convey the aspirations of the people," the senior leader stressed on the condition of anonymity.

Modi brainstorms with core team, fuels rejig

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of an expected Cabinet reshuffle and the June 24 Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) political outreach by the Central Government aimed at restarting the electoral process in the Union Territory (UT), a high-level ministerial meeting was chaired by

Delimitation panel may meet DCs virtually

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mid speculations of an Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the Delimitation Commission is expected to hold a virtual meet in the next few days with all Deputy Commissioners to discuss various inputs on geographical features of constituencies and the suggestions made by them. Delimitation involves redrawing the boundaries of Assembly and Lok

Sabha constituencies in a State or Union Territory.

Sources said that the Delimitation Commission is likely to visit J&K soon to begin the delimitation exercise which was on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The commission had recently sought data from all Deputy Commissioners on the area of existing constituencies, including geography and facilities available, and had asked them for their suggestions to make them more 'geographically compact.'

Having received the data and suggestions, the commission has decided to hold a virtual meeting with the DCs to take forward the matter. "As far as possible, the constituency should be fully geographically compact," sources said.

After the delimitation exercise, the number of Assembly seats in J&K will go up from 83 to 90. Twenty-four seats of the Assembly continue to remain vacant as they fall under Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK).

Cheers! Bars to reopen with 50% capacity

DDMA allows opening of public parks too

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The bars in Delhi will be allowed to reopen with 50 per cent seating capacity from Monday. These bars will function from 12 pm to 10 pm. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Sunday released the order allowing public parks and gardens also to reopen for public.

As per the order, the owners of restaurants and bars will be responsible for strict implementation of Covid safety measures and guidelines.

While the parks and gardens will also be opened, the Resident Welfare Association (RWAs) will have to ensure the visitors follow Covid-appropriate behaviour. "Public parks, gardens and golf clubs will be reopened and outdoor yoga activities will also be allowed," the DDMA stated in its order.

Prohibited activities and services, including schools, colleges and educational institutions, cinemas, gyms, spas, all kinds of political, social, cultural, religious gatherings among others, will remain closed till further orders or 5 am on June 28. The lockdown



was imposed in Delhi amid a surge in second wave of Covid-19 on April 19.

Many restrictions have been lifted in a phased manner with improvement in the Covid situation, starting with allow-

ing manufacturing and construction activities on May 31. In its order, the DDMA said it has been observed that the number of coronavirus patients and positivity rate has declined considerably and the overall situation has improved, but due caution and care has to be maintained for consolidating the whole process of Covid-19 management.

The prohibited and restricted activities, according to the DDMA order, will continue with effect from 5 AM on Monday till 5 AM on June 28 or further orders, whichever is earlier.

New 'national' vax drive to kick-off today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Come Monday and the next phase of India's vaccination drive will kick-off across the country with the Central Government providing free Covid-19 vaccines to everyone above the age of 18 years. Since the launch of the nationwide vaccination programme from January 16, the June 21 drive will mark a departure from its earlier 'liberalised and accelerated' vaccination policy.

India hits back at UN for criticising new IT rules

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The United Nations Special Rapporteurs have criticised the new Information Technology (IT) rules, prompting a strong rebuttal from the Government. In its letter dated June 11, UN special rapporteurs on right to freedom of opinion, peaceful assembly, and privacy said India's Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, in their current form, do not conform with international human rights norms.

The seven-page communication expressed concerns on various other aspects of the IT rules, and asked the Government for a response.

The letter is authored by Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Clement Nyaletossi Voule, Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and Joseph Cannataci, Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.

The UN special rapporteurs in its letter said India's new IT Rules are in violation of rules laid down in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a key international human rights treaty.

CAPSULE

LAKSHADWEEP SEEKS SHIFTING OF HC
Kochi/New Delhi: The Lakshadweep administration, which has been facing widespread protests from the islands' people over some of its policies, has mooted a proposal to shift its legal jurisdiction from the Kerala High Court to the Karnataka High Court.

SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE IN KL GOLD SMUGGLING
Kochi: The Customs probing the Kerala gold smuggling case has issued show-cause notices to 53 people including prime accused Swapna Suresh.

CAN'T PAY ₹4L EX-GRATIA TO VICTIMS: CENTRE TO SC
New Delhi: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that ex-gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh cannot be paid to the families of those who have died of Covid-19 as it is beyond fiscal affordability and the finances of Central and State Governments are under severe strain.

ASSAM AMONG TOP 5 IN SDG INDIA INDEX
Guwahati: Assam's Environment and Forest Department has emerged as a front-runner in the Life on Land category of the 2020 edition of the Niti Aayog's Sustainable Development Goal India Index.

Vaccination for all begins today in MP

All sections motivating people for taking jabs

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Now the whole of Madhya Pradesh has come on one platform to fight the invisible enemy corona virus which has come as a threat to human life. On Monday, June 21, the State Government is starting a vaccination campaign to provide protection to the people of the state from corona virus.

To ensure public participation in this campaign, different sections of the society are coming forward and motivating the people of the State towards vaccination.

Religious leaders, social workers, voluntary organizations, educationists, medical experts, communication representatives, besides public representatives and top officials of administrative staff, who play



A woman activist draws a rangoli to decorate a vaccination centre on the eve of a mega vaccination campaign, in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

a leading role in various societies, are playing an important role in the vaccination campaign by releasing their messages on social media.

With the combined efforts of all, once again a unique initiative of public participation is going to happen in Madhya Pradesh, which will prove to be a milestone in the battle against corona.

Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi said in his appeal that we all are still going through

the crisis of corona epidemic. The fear of a third wave of corona infection is also being expressed. We all love our family, people of society and our life.

Continued on Page 3

COVID IN MADHYA PRADESH		
Dists	Total Cases	Fresh Cases
Bhopal	123013	22
Indore	152744	9
Gwalior	53050	2

Millions to bend, stretch on Yoga Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From political personalities to commoners, from Bollywood celebrities to jawans guarding India's borders, people from all walks of life will stretch and bend in their homes, parks and grounds to mark the International Yoga Day on June 21, which will be celebrated amid the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic for the second year in a row.

The Union Ayush Ministry, which is the nodal Ministry for International Day of Yoga (IDY), said in a statement that in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions on congregational activities, the lead event of the day will be a televised programme.

The highlight of course will be Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation. This year's theme is



Two girls perform yoga near Taj Mahal ahead of the International Yoga Day in Agra on Sunday. PTI

'Yoga for Wellness.' The Prime Minister tweeted, "Tomorrow, June 21, we will mark the seventh Yoga Day. The theme this year is 'Yoga For Wellness', which focusses on Yoga for physical and mental well-being."

Scheduled to start at 6.30 am on all Doordarshan channels on Monday, the event will also include an address by Minister of State for Ayush Kiren Rijiju and a live Yoga demonstration by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga,

the Ministry said in a statement. With the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbating psychological suffering and mental health problems, many people across the world and in India have been embracing Yoga to stay healthy and to fight isolation and depression. Indian Embassies in various countries also held events for the D-Day. For instance, over 100 Chinese Yoga enthusiasts took part in an event organised by the Indian Embassy here on Sunday to celebrate the ancient Indian science ahead of the International Yoga Day on June 21.

Similarly, the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi, Thailand and South Korea were among those who observed the International Yoga Day on Sunday. Sprinter Usain Bolt from Jamaica too in his tweet on social media wished healthy and peaceful living to all for the D-Day.

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Har Pal Apke Saath

Yoga single panacea for all body problems: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that 'Shariram Madhyam Khaludharm Sadhanam', that body is the medium to follow all religions. The first pleasure is a healthy body. Keeping the body healthy, staying healthy, is necessary to achieve every goal.

If there is any panacea to keep the body healthy, it is yoga. Chouhan said this in a message issued to the people of the State on the topic of Wellness and Spiritual Tourism on the occasion of International Yoga Day.

Chouhan said that if we do yoga and pranayama continuously, the body becomes healthy, the intellect becomes

sharp and we go on becoming capable. Yoga is thousands of years old method. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhyana, Dharana, Samadhi are its parts. Even if we do not talk about Ashtanga Yoga, then at least do Yogasan and Pranayama daily.

Chouhan said that due to the initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the world is now taking advantage of yoga. International Yoga Day is on June 21. We have to do yoga on Yoga Day and take a resolution that we will do yoga every day.

The Chief Minister said that I do yoga, pranayama, yogasan and surya-namaskar. Therefore, I work up to 18 hours. I was hit by corona but

it only touched me. Because I used to do pranayama and yoga. Yoga, pranayama strengthen body's disease resistance power. So there was no serious infection. Would not you like to make your body free from diseases through yoga?

Chouhan appealed to the people of the state that do yoga on the International Yoga Day, besides include the yoga in your daily life, make the body healthy, fit, hale and hearty. Chouhan said that our body is a reservoir of eternal powers. It is necessary to save these powers and take them to the right direction. Yoga is the most effective medium for this. Do yoga every day, stay healthy and happy.

BJP's head-on vaccination campaign in MP

State Prez, Dists prez call people to get vaccinated

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

State President and District President invited people for vaccination by giving yellow rice. Chief Minister, State President, MP, District President will be involved in the Yoga program at Boat Club.

State President and MP of Bharatiya Janata Party Vishnudutt Sharma, former Minister of State Government Umashankar Gupta and District President Sumit Pachauri called citizens to get

maximum number of vaccines in the campaign of vaccination starting from June 21.

The State President and District President on Sunday invited people of Tagore Mandal and TT Nagar Mandal of Bhopal district to reach door-to-door to get the vaccine by giving yellow rice.

District President Sumit Pachauri informed that party workers would be present as motivators during vaccination at all booths in Bhopal district.

State President and District President will reach the vaccination center in Anna Nagar.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, State President of the party Vishnudutt Sharma and District President Sumit Pachauri will be present at the vaccination center at Anna



BJP State President VD Sharma offers yellow rice to the local residents to invite them to participate in a mega vaccination campaign on the eve of inoculation drive, at Banganga locality in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Nagar in Narela Vidhan Sabha at 12.30 pm.

District President Sumit Pachauri informed that Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, party's State President and MP Vishnu Dutt Sharma, MP Pragya Singh Thakur.

Minister of State Government Vishwas Sarang in Ward No. 58 of Narela Vidhan Sabha, Umashankar Gupta, former Minister of Gold Flower School in Ward 25 of South West Legislative Assembly, Rameshwar Sharma, MLA in Kolar and Bairagarh of Huzur Vidhan Sabha, Bagmugalia of Govindpura Vidhan Sabha and MLA Krishna Gaur in Minal, Dhruv Narayan Singh, former MLA in the Central Assembly. This information was given by Bhopal district media in-charge Rajendra Gupta.

Road repairing underway

PNS ■ MHOW

The Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation (MPRDC) administration has undertaken the repair of roads before the rainy season starts so that the roads don't deteriorate further in rainy season and to avoid formation of potholes in rainy season. MPRDC AGM Indore Siyaram Ahirwar told The Pioneer that we are repairing the 17-kilometer road from the Mhow to Simrole which is the second important road which connects Mhow to Indore and Khandwa.

The layering of 7-kilometer road is complete and the remaining 10-kilometer road will be repaired in next 4 days. This is a two-lane road which was constructed under Asian development bank project.

The builder company Rachna infrastructure limited Brajesh Rawal told that Asian development bank has given a grant of rs 180 crores for construction of 4 roads in Indore division i.e., Sanwer shipra 22 km, deplapur betma 22 km and kanwan mangod 48 km.

Captain Polyplast Ltd generates surplus revenue

PNS ■ INDORE

BSE listed Captain Polyplast Limited (CPL) (BSE: 536974) one of the leading brands in micro irrigation industry with its excellent quality products and strong distribution network has announced excellent results with revenues from operations up from ₹3990.20 lakhs (Q3FY21) to ₹6482.44 Lakhs (Q4FY21) and PAT rose from ₹177.56 Lakhs (Q3FY21) to ₹258.52 Lakhs (Q4FY21) CPL.

The company has announced a dividend also. It has a complete range of micro irrigation solutions with manufacturing facilities at Rajkot (Gujarat) and Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh). The company has marketing and distribution network across 16 states in India which cover 90% of micro irrigation market in India. CPL exports its products to countries in Africa, Latin America and Middle East.

The company deals in 4 main business segments, which are, Drip Irrigation system,

Sprinkler Irrigation Systems, Polymer marketing (IOCL) and others (Solar, Water soluble fertilizers). The company manufacturers complete range of micro irrigation systems and have also added ancillary products like solar pumps, rooftop solar, water soluble fertilizer, etc. selling through existing distribution network.

Captain Polyplast offers superior sprinkler irrigation system that is designed considering the crops grown, availability of water and its composition, type of soil, elevation, temperature, humidity and wind velocity in order to get the best possible results. Mini sprinklers simplicity and easy design allows for easy accessory options making them adaptable to almost any application and crop.

Designed by Captain Polyplast, Solar water pumps are considered simple and clean alternative to fuel burning engines as well as generators of domestic water, irrigation and livestock requirements.

Musical event held under MPSTM's 'Gamak' series

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under 'Gamak' series a literary musical performance was held on Sunday at Madhya Pradesh State Tribal Museum YouTube Channel.

Notably Gamak is a series focused on the activities of multiple disciplines being broadcasted online on social media platforms.

On Sunday under the series, the literary musical presentation by Dinesh Kumar Dholpure and group, Maksi-Shajapur was broadcasted.

The performance was based on devotional literature by Sahitya Akademi.

Dinesh Kumar Dholpure along with his group performed in the traditional Malawi folk style of Malwa, in which- the verses of Sant Kabir-Jeth mahino garmi, Prem Pyas Lag Jaave, Ya gaadi Mahara

desh ki ya, or Satguru Baitha Ri.

It was followed with the verses of Sant Ravidas- Santo ray Bhai Ravidas Bani , Meerabai's hymn - Saawariya sunle to Araj Meera, Krishna Meera's hymn, Gorakhnath hymn - Fakira Ray Sadhu and devotional song - Mat Rol Ray were presented.

In the presentation, Jagdish Chandra Rangeela gave accompaniment in co-singing, Shantilal Rajoria on Dholak, Ashok Kumar on Harmonium and Manu Lal Dholpure on Majira.

Dinesh Kumar Dholpure received singing education from the age of ten from his father, the national Kabir Bhajan singer Babul Dholpure.

Dinesh has performed on many prestigious forums of the country. You are a regular artist of All India Radio Doordarshan.

Covid awareness camp organised at Gandhi Bhavan

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The youngsters of the city were informed about Covid 19 precautions and vaccination. An awareness camp were organised at Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday.

Children's favorite cartoon characters Chhota Bheem and Mickey Mouse made people aware in the areas around Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday. Vaccination Maha Abhiyan will be held on Monday at Gandhi Bhawan, from 9 am onwards. Besides, a separate system of vaccination specially for women will be organised.

Under the vaccination campaign starting on Monday, vaccination will be done to protect against Covid-19 from 9 am to 6 pm at Gandhi Bhawan.

For the awareness of vaccination, publicity was spread



in different areas through cartoon characters Chhota Bheem and Mickey Mouse. On this occasion, especially the Secretary of Gandhi Bhawan Dayaram Namdev, Shyamala Hills station in-charge Tarun Singh Bhati, National General Secretary of Ekta Parishad, Anish Kumar were present.

A separate arrangement has been made especially for women in the Covid-19 vaccination camp being organized in Gandhi Bhawan.

Bike-borne bandits rob youth of mobile

Bhopal: A 28-year-old youth was robbed of his mobile phone by two bike-borne miscreants at Shanti Niketan under Govindpura police station area late in the night on Saturday.

Police said that the victim Manish Gupta was robbed while he was on his way to home and before he could reach, he was attacked and robbed by two bike borne miscreants. The victim in his complaint stated that the two miscreants obstructed his way and escaped with mobile phone over which he was talking. Based on the complaint after the preliminary investigation the police have registered a case under section 392 of the IPC and started search for the accused.

The victim works as contractor and after the work he was on his way to home and after covering little distance he received a call after which he picked the call and continued to move forward but unaware of the bike borne miscreants he was robbed of his mobile phone. SR



Roads wear a deserted look during Covid-induced weekend lockdown to curb coronavirus infection, in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

3-yr-old infant dies after falling from fourth floor

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A three old boy died after he fell accidentally from fourth floor of his house at Balampur colony of Airforce employee under Sukhisewani police station area on Saturday.

At the time of the incident the mother of the boy was busy in cooking while the boy tried to peep he accidentally slipped and fell on the ground.

The injured boy was rushed to nearby hospital in an injured state where he died during treatment. Police were

informed and after preliminary investigation body was sent for the post mortem.

A case under section 174 of the CrPC was registered by the police and started further investigation. The father of the deceased is employed with air force. The injured sustained severe multiple injuries which proved fatal for him.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old woman died under suspicious circumstances at Krishna Nagar under Khajuri Sadak police station on Saturday. The deceased identified as Usha

Sharma was found in an unconscious State and was taken to hospital where she was declared dead.

In the initial investigation police have found that the deceased died due to consuming poisonous substance but the reason could not be ascertained and could be revealed after the post mortem report is awaited.

The body was sent for the post mortem and a case has been registered by police. Further investigation has been started.

Shwash India provides 2 oxygen concentrators to 7th Battalion Police hosp

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Recently, Covid ward has been started in 7th Battalion of Police Hospital. Two oxygen concentrators were provided to Police Hospital 7th Corps Bhopal on behalf of "Shwash India Project Canada" for the Covid Center.

Shwash India Project has been established in Canada by Anoop Singh, son of retired IPS officer Mr. CP Singh and his daughter-in-law Vandana Singh, residing in Bhopal.

Under this project, he collected about 20000 dollars from

his friends and Indians settled in Canada and bought 12 oxygen concentrators by consensus and sent them to India. He has given ten concentrates to two hospitals in Delhi, remaining two to Police Hospital Bhopal. These concentrates will prove useful for better treatment in the police hospital.

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More participants in 22nd episode of 'Hunarstan'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bhopal's first ever digital 'Open Mic Initiative 'Hunarstan' is grabbing audience attention and is having more and more participants. The 22nd episode 'Hunarstan' was held on Sunday at Facebook, Instagram Live Stream. It was organised by a group Kala, Kebab aur Kisse.

As many as five performances were held on the day. There were solo singing musical performances, poetry recital, story narration.

In Solo singing the performers not only presented the new filmy tracks but also sang some of the musical tracks from old movies.

The participants beautifully presented songs, few Bollywood tracks added charisma in the online open mic.

The musical performance by young artists added much zest in the open mic. The audiences were seen totally engrossed in the melodious

The open mic was organised with a purpose to provide an online platform for talented people to showcase their talent before the Bhopalites

music performed by the youngsters of the city.

Other than the musical performances, some of the participants recited their poetries, short stories, Urdu shayaris and more. The beautiful poetic compositions showcased the transparency of Urdu language.

Being a wondrous presentation for the old songs and ghazal lovers, the show evoked a pretty good response.

The immense talent of young girls and boys of the city was a must watch for the live audience. The open mic was organised with a purpose to provide an online platform for talented people to showcase their talent before the Bhopalites.

Miscreants involved in burglary arrested; Police recover valuables worth ₹2L

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Ashoka Garden police has nabbed two miscreants and recovered valuables worth ₹2 lakh from their possession on Saturday; goods were burgled from a factory at Govindpura Industrial Area. The accused identified as Mohammad Waseem and Shamsad Ali of Chambal area near Apsara Talkies were narrowed and when they were quizzed after being detained they revealed burglary from Industrial Area of tools and electronic goods.

A complaint was lodged by owner of Noble Engineering company Shahid Khan which deals in steel fabrication work and develop parts for railways. In his factory parts were kept which were targeted by the miscreants and along with the parts one LCD screen and one laptop were also stolen from the factory on June 18. Based on the complaint police registered case against the two and later a team was formed which tracked the accused who confessed burglary.

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY A moment with super consciousness

■ AWANISH SOMKUWAR

Yoga in Sanskrit means fusion or joining. It has a deeper meaning, which governs life. The simple meaning is the fusion of humans and divinity. The Yoga is a divine state when Consciousness mingles with the Super Consciousness. Every being has a privilege to attain this unique state. Though origin of Yoga has been copiously mentioned in all holy scriptures, it is an integral action of human life.

Today, an enthusiastic atmosphere prevails across the world. Everyone is doing Yoga. It is a matter of pride for the proud citizens of India. Finally, the world community is drawing benefits from India's heritage of Yoga. We and members of new generation are a proud witness to this historic moment. The United Nations' declaration of International Day of Yoga on June 21 itself is a declaration that the Yoga is beyond religion, caste, creed or colour. This year's theme is Yoga For Well-being. A massive vaccination drive against Covid19 is starting

"The new generation must have confronted a question regarding gains of Yoga. The simple answer is that Yoga leads to Spiritual Silence or Peace. This is the fundamental requirement for body and mind. A mind with no peace and body with no control negatively affects the entire society"

from today. The sole purpose is to save the life of every citizen. Realizing the healing power of the Yoga, the State Govt started Yoga Se Nirog programme during depressing times of second wave of Covid19. The result was amazing.

The new generation must have confronted a question regarding gains of Yoga. The simple answer is that Yoga leads to Spiritual Silence or Peace. This is the fundamental requirement for body and mind. A mind with no peace and body with no control negatively affects the entire society.

The Yoga is a gate opening to the Peace, which leads to concentration. An example of Swami Vivekananda is worth quoting. He was invited by various groups of scholars for discourses on Vendata after he

gave historic Chicago speech. When among American students, he was asked about the way to concentrate on studies. Swamiji said - There is only one way - Concentration, which emerges in peaceful mind. A mind full of peace is free from impure thoughts. Peace generates positive energies and this is always benevolent. A man with peace of mind can not take wrong decisions. When Body, Mind and Soul are in unison, there is no question of impurities and negativity.

The Katha Upnishad describes Yoga as absolute control over senses. Shrimad Bhagwad Gita says that Yoga is a disconnection from the suffering. Maharshi Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra describes Yoga as a method to exercise control over unruly mind. Maharshi

Aurobindo has gone to the extent of saying that human life itself is Yoga as it has many fusions and connections.

A question naturally comes to one regarding why one should practice Yoga. The simple response is that the utmost objective of Yoga is to enter an orbit of Supreme Consciousness. But what is Supreme Consciousness? It is a state where mind supports only justice and righteousness. The values like mercy, compassion, friendship and peace dominate. This state is compulsory in everyone's life regardless of religion, caste, community or place of living. Just imagine, when entire world is doing Yoga, there is no question of any prejudice. The awareness about geographical limits fades away. Be it USA, Australia, South Africa or Europe. The entire world will become united. When minds become one with each other, geographical limits are collapsed automatically.

It is a revolutionary step to awaken the world community towards Supreme Consciousness.

Youth rapes 16-yr-old girl on pretext of marriage

Bhopal: A 16-year-old Hyderabad based girl was sexually exploited by youth on the promise of marriage, victim was rescued from Chhidwara by police and a case was registered by Bilkharlia police on Saturday.

According to the police, the victim was sexually assaulted by the accused Shubham for the past few months and during the period assured her of marriage and continued to sexually exploit her. Based on the complaint, the police have registered a case of sexual assault and captivating her. The victim's mother married for the second after separation from her first husband. Victim's step father live in foreign country and due to which she lives for six months abroad and for six months in India. During her stay in India she came in contact with accused and after her mother find her speaking her over mobile phone she scolded her. Shubham got opportunity to lure her and two of his friends went to Hyderabad and brought her to Bhopal from Hyderabad. SR

'Yoga helpful in post-Covid recovery' 124 coronavirus cases, 7 deaths

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

While Yoga has become an integral part of lifestyle in the pandemic times, the national Capital will now have its Delhi Pharmaceutical Sciences Research University (DPSRU). Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia inaugurated the centre on Sunday and highlighted how Yoga will reach every house lauding it can

indeed be 'Jan Andolan'. "In these difficult times, people are feeling the need for yoga more than ever. Yoga can not only help improve immunity in the body but it also helps in recovery post-Covid," said Kejriwal.

Interacting with 450 Yoga instructions virtually, Kejriwal said Monday is the International Day of Yoga, and he believes that there could not have been a better way to cel-

brate this prestigious day. "It has been a dream for both me and Sisodia to make Yoga reach each and every house of Delhi and to devise ways in which we can do so. We have been repeatedly hearing from many people that Yoga needs to be propagated as a Jan Andolan, but how can that be done, the ways in which it can reach the doors of every house, is hardly spoken about," he said. Mentioning about post

Covid implications, he said those who have survived a strong case of Covid-19, need to rebuild their physical and mental health. Yoga and meditation can do that, he said. "We keep hearing people talking about taking Yoga to people, making Yoga a 'Jan Andolan', a people's movement. India has taught Yoga to the world, but how many people in India practise yoga," the Chief Minister said.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital reported 124 fresh cases of Covid-19 with seven more succumbing to the infection, according to data shared by the health department of the Delhi Government.

The positivity rate dipped to 0.17 per cent and the total number of active cases in the city reached 2,091 of which 600

are in home isolation, according to data shared by the health department.

The city has reported more than 14 lakh cases till now. A total of 72,670 tests, including 52,790 RT-PCR tests, were conducted a day ago, the bulletin said.

In order to deal with the "possible" third wave of Covid-19, the Delhi Government has speeded up revamping several

existing hospitals to increase the number of beds and also building new hospitals.

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi stated on Saturday that Delhi had received 1.67 lakh doses of Covishield on Friday for the 18 to 44 age group, now Delhi has 2.95 lakh vaccines available for the youth.

"There are 2 days of Covaxin and 14 days of

Covishield available for the youth, therefore we appeal to the youth of Delhi to book slots through the CoWin app and get themselves vaccinated," she had said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also announced plans to create a buffer stock of important medicines besides other initiatives to deal with the 'possible' further outbreak.

65L Delhiites vaccinated, 15.75L got both doses: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Around 65 lakh people have been vaccinated in Delhi, out of which, 49.38 lakh people have been given the first dose and 15.75 lakh people have been given both doses, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Kalkaji said on Sunday.

On June 19, 85,000 people were vaccinated in Delhi, out of which 50,000 youth got the vaccine.

"Currently, 8.25 lakh vaccines are available in Delhi for 45 and above age category out of which, 5 days of Covaxin and 57 days of Covishield are in stock. For the 18-44 age groups, 2.65 lakh vaccines are available out of which we have 1 day Covaxin and 13 days Covishield in stock," Atishi said.

"Currently the vaccination speed in Delhi has increased tremendously due to the availability of vaccine stocks. We



have administered 65,14,825 doses, out of which 49,38,050 were first doses while 15,76,775 people have received both the doses in Delhi as of June 20," she added.

She also said that, "The current vaccine stock in Delhi for the 45 and above age group is 8.27 lakh doses; we have 5 days of Covaxin and 57 days of Covishield. For the 18-44 age

groups we have 2.68 lakh doses available, that is 13 days of Covishield and 1 day of Covaxin."

Atishi also appealed that, "All the people who haven't gotten vaccinated till now should also step up and get themselves vaccinated. Getting oneself jabbed is the most important step to save Delhi from the next possible Covid-19 wave."

Master Plan 2041 creating confusion among traders in walled city: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has written a letter to Union Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Puri drawing his attention towards "confusion" amongst five lakh wholesale traders doing business in walled city spreading from Chandni Chowk to Sadar Bazar ever since Master Plan of Delhi 2041 has been introduced.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor in the letter said the MPD 2041 introduced a recent provision about redevelopment of the walled city that has caused panic among traders in the area. The BJP leader said traders have vastly contributed to development of Delhi but they are being threatened with redevelopment of areas.

He has requested the Minister to call a meeting of prominent trader associations of the walled city to understand their perspective on the future of trade in the walled city.

Soon, 75 PSA plants in Punjab to combat third Covid wave

CS constitutes State Oxygen Management Group

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To augment the supplies and ensure adequate medical oxygen in all the state healthcare institutions as well as private hospitals, the Punjab Government will set up 75 pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants in all the districts to combat the much-anticipated third COVID wave in the state.

Sharing the information while chairing a meeting to review the management of medical oxygen in the state healthcare institutions, the state Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan directed the senior health officers to make earnest efforts for early functioning of all the PSA plants in the State.

While two plants at Barnala and Nangal have already been made functional, the work on others is in full swing. Two under trial plants at Medical Colleges of Amritsar and Patiala have also been

While two plants at Barnala and Nangal have already been made functional, the work on others is in full swing

commissioned.

Besides, more than 5,000 oxygen concentrators (OCs) have also been provided to all the state hospitals, CHCs and health and wellness centres to take care of any emergent requirements. Furthermore, 3,000 OCs, purchased by the Punjab Government with assistance of the World Bank, are being distributed to the state hospitals.

The Chief Secretary also constituted a State Oxygen Management Group, headed by Principal Secretary (Water Supply and Sanitation) Jaspreet Talwar with Director (Industry and Commerce) C Sabin, Punjab Health System Corporation (PHSC) managing director Tanu Kashyap, and

Additional Secretary (Water Supply and Sanitation) Amit Talwar as its members. Talwar has also been appointed as state nodal officer to keep liaison with the Government of India in this regard.

Taking stock of the availability and requirement of medical oxygen in the State, the Chief Secretary asked the newly-constituted group to prepare an assessment report regarding actual requirement of the life-saving gas by the public as well as private healthcare institutions, requirement of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) plants, PSA plants, and OCs besides adequate storage and transport facilities and availability of MO cylinders.

The Chief Secretary was apprised that around 34,000 medical oxygen cylinders were already available in the state. In addition to this, 2,500 cylinders were received from the donors and 1000 more expected from the donors.

Haryana targets to vaccinate 2.5 lakh people on Yoga Day: Anil Vij

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Sunday said that on the occasion of "International Yoga Day" on June 21, a mega COVID-19 vaccination day will be observed in the state.

A target has been set to vaccinate 2.5 lakh people against COVID-19 during this mega drive day, Vij said.

Appreciating the decision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Health Minister said that vaccination is being done on a large scale in Haryana as part of the Prime Minister's scheme to provide free vaccine to all people above the age of 18 years.

Haryana Health Department is in action mode these days to further strengthen the protection against COVID-19. Vaccination camps were organized at 61 places in Ambala Cantonment area, he added.

Notorious criminal in 1-yr preventive detention

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has put a notorious criminal, whose criminal history for crime dates back to 1986, to one year preventive detention after getting a nod from the central advisory board. Police said that to curb his clandestine and nefarious activities, the provisions of Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PITNDPS) Act, 1988 were invoked, which provides for preventive detention for one year.

The accused has been identified as Sharafat Sheikh, a resident of Nizamuddin West area and presently lodged in Tihar jail. Police said he is involved in 36 criminal cases including attempt to murder, NDPS and Arms Act. He was allegedly involved in receiving stolen articles and ran a well organised gang.

"Recently a PITNDPS proposal was prepared by



Narcotics Cell, Crime Branch and was sent to PITNDPS Division, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance for the detention of well known drug traffickers, Sharafat," said Chinnmoy Biswal, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Crime Branch, Narcotics.

"Keeping in view his active involvement in drug trafficking cases the proposal was put up before Screening Committee comprising of six members, headed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Chief. The Screening Committee found it fit and the competent authority issued his detention order under PITNDPS Act, 1988 on April 2," said the DCP.

"Further, the detention order has now been ratified by Central Advisory Board, comprising of three High Court Judges headed by Chief Justice of Delhi High Court in a hearing which took place on June 1 and ordered detention of Sharafat for a period of one year," said the DCP.

"The basic objective of the Preventive Detention Law is to target the main operators such as, Organizers, financiers kingpins and others who generally remain and operate behind the scene, habitual or organised traffickers, licensed cultivators embezzling opium, illicit cultivators of cannabis or opium," said the DCP.

Giving details about Sharafat, the DCP said that after coming to Delhi, he was first arrested by the Delhi Police under section 324 (Voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means) and 325 (Punishment for voluntarily causing grievous hurt) of the

Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1986.

"During judicial custody he met with one Inayat, who was drug seller and in order to fulfill his desire to earn more money Sharafat came in contact with drug suppliers. He began his foray into the trade of illegal drugs as a peddler but soon he climbed up the crime ladder to become one of the top suppliers of heroin in Delhi and its peripherals," said the DCP.

"Expanding his criminal activities, Sharafat also started receiving stolen jewellery with the help of one Nitin Jain. His family is also indulged in drug trafficking and many cases have been registered against them for selling of narcotics substances," said the DCP.

"Even when he was lodged in Tihar jail in 2007, he was running the drug syndicate in the city and a call made by him, during that period was traced by Narcotics Branch, Shakar Pur which led to the arrest of three persons," said the DCP.

Farmers protest ahead of Khattar's arrival at Panchkula event

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A group of farmers on Sunday held a protest in Panchkula, hours before Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was to attend an event there.

Shortly before Khattar was to inaugurate a wellness centre at Thapli Nature Camp, some farmers carrying black flags to protest against the three agri laws used alternate routes in an attempt to reach closer to the venue.

The protesters were put into a police bus and taken into preventive custody.

There was heavy police deployment in the area as Khattar was to reach the venue after inaugurating a few adventure sports activities in the Morni area.

Some of the protesters said they were holding a peaceful

There was heavy police deployment in the area as Khattar was to reach the venue after inaugurating a few adventure sports activities in the Morni area

protest, but police used force to disperse them.

After the incident, BKU leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni alleged that after taking the protesting farmers into custody, police had beaten up two youths.

Notably, protesting farmers have been opposing public functions of the BJP-JJP leaders in the state over the farm laws issues.

Vaccination for all begins...

From Page 1

The most effective way to avoid corona infection is to get the corona vaccine. Get vaccinated today. Don't get confused by anything. Get involved in the vaccination campaign of the Government of Madhya Pradesh. We all have to save our lives and defeat Corona. So you must get the vaccine.

Swami Girishanand Ji Maharaj, the founder of Saket Dham, Gwarighat, Jabalpur, has appealed to the citizens to get vaccinated in the vaccination campaign starting in Madhya Pradesh from June 21, International Yoga Day. He said that do not be affected by the rumours being spread about the vaccine. People spreading rumours are playing with your life. Swamiji has said that vaccination is the most effective way of protection from corona.

Sardar Daya Singh Sandhu, Secretary of District Ashoknagar Gurdwara Committee and member of Rotary Club, has appealed to get more and more people vaccinated during the Corona Vaccination Maha Abhiyan. He said that this campaign is a national programme. My family and I have got the vaccine.

It doesn't have any side effects. Staying away from the misconceptions regarding the vaccine, people must go to the vaccination centres and get their vaccination done. He has also appealed to the people of rural areas to get vaccination to protect against corona and become a participant in the vaccination campaign.

DMRC achieves construction landmarks despite second wave

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Despite several constraints induced by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the last few months, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) continued with the construction work of its Phase-4 corridors and achieved important construction landmarks as well.

A senior DMRC official said some of the important works including the tunneling work between Janakpuri West and Krishna Park Extension on the Janakpuri West - RK Ashram Marg corridor for DMRC's first underground section of Phase-4 achieved during this period, he said. During these months, the DMRC completed the tunneling of 500 metres of one of the 2.8 kilometre long twin tunnels and casting of over 50 per cent of tunnel segments in the casting yard.

The official said in the same stretch, DMRC achieved another major milestone by erecting Phase 4's first ever T-girder at Mukarba Chowk last month. "These T-girders are pre-tensioned and are cast at the casting yard in Mundka. After casting, these girders are brought to the site and launched with the help of two mammoth 400 MT capacity cranes. The length of each girder is 37 metres and weight is around 90 MT," he said. On the Tughlakabad -



Aerocity corridor, the casting yard at Panchsheel Park was prepared for casting with installation of all necessary equipment such as the erection of gantry cranes, he said.

The Aerocity - Tughlakabad Metro corridor, colour coded silver will connect the Kashmir Gate - Raja Nahar Singh Violet Line with the Airport Express Line. During this period, all Covid related guidelines given by the government from time to time were also stringently followed. After the lifting of Covid related restrictions, now there is a gradual increase in the manpower available at DMRC's sites, he said.

Milkha Singh: The 'Flying Sikh' no one could catch

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

The track, to me, was like an open book, in which I could read the meaning and purpose of life. I revered it like I would the sanctum sanctorum in a temple, where the deity resided and before whom I would humbly prostrate myself as a devotee... Running had thus become my God, my religion and my beloved."

This famous quote from "The Race of My Life", an autobiography of legendary athlete Milkha Singh aptly sums up his dedication and passion for running that made him one of the greatest athletes of all time.

The ace sprinter, who was born in 1932 in undivided India, survived some hard-fought battles on both personal and professional fronts before his body lost the fight against Covid-19 on June 18 after a month-long struggle. His wife, Nirmal Kaur (85), former India women's volleyball captain had died due to Covid-19 on June 13.

Married for 58 years, Chandigarh's evergreen couple are survived by their son, renowned professional golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, and three daughters.

out of it in flying colours and beat this virus in no time. I have been keeping indoors except for morning jogging and exercise. I am in high spirits."

Perhaps, this is how the legend of the Flying Sikh will reverberate for generations to come.

Singh, who settled with his wife in Chandigarh in the 1960s was among the most prominent personalities of the city. The couple worked together in the Punjab Sports Department till 1980s and were a regular at the Chandigarh Golf Course to watch their son play there. In fact, Milkha Singh was himself a golf aficionado and used to play with many prominent personalities including politicians at CGC.

After the news of the death of the legendary athlete, many politicians and other personalities from the region had reached his residence in Sector 8 here to pay their tribute. The same residence had once become a hotspot, with people waiting outside to catch a glimpse of him after the release of blockbuster biopic on his life "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag".

"He (Milkha) fought hard but God has his ways and it was perhaps true love and companionship that both our mother Nirmal ji and now Dad have passed away in a matter of five days," a statement from the family said.



Milkha Singh, who missed an Olympic medal by a whisker in 1960, had set a new dawn in the country with a national record in 400m race that remained untouched for almost 38 years. Despite finishing fourth at the Olympic event, Singh became a sporting icon with many aspirants taking up sprinting to follow their dreams although only few Indians came close to match his calibre in the past several decades.

His was a rags-to-riches story that began in the pre-partition era and is tinged with incidents of horror and struggle. The most heart-wrenching part of his life story was when he saw his parents being killed during the 1947 partition.

He was lucky enough to escape the communal riots and came to Delhi to stay with his sister initially.

Milkha's pinnacle of glory came when he participated in the 400-meters race at the 1960's Olympic Games. Finishing the 400m final in 45.6 seconds, he had finished at fourth spot, missing a Bronze medal by just 0.1 seconds

After three failed attempts, he was finally recruited in the India Army in 1951 and it was when he was introduced to the sports and his journey to become a legendary athlete began. Milkha made it to Indian camp in 1956 and booked a berth for the Melbourne Olympics, beginning his 400 m stint.

It was his victory at the Commonwealth games in 1958 that catapulted him to fame. Milkha won India's first individual Gold medal at these games, a record that stayed with him for over five decades.

With a motto "Don't stop till you drop" during his training, Milkha soon became Asia's best and received several accolades during his career as an athlete.

Haunted by the bitter memories of partition, Milkha had initially refused to go to Pakistan but was persuaded by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to face his demons.

Milkha's pinnacle of glory came when he participated in the 400-meters race at the 1960's Olympic Games. Finishing the 400m final in 45.6 seconds, he had finished at fourth spot, missing a Bronze medal by just 0.1 seconds.

Even though he could not bring home an Olympic medal, Singh had become the only Indian to have broken an Olympics track record in 1960 and the event which made the nation glued to their radio sets later inspired many to take up sprinting to become the next Milkha Singh.

"The one medal I had yearned for throughout my career had just slipped through my fingers because of one small error of judgement," Singh had written in his auto-

biography recalling how he had lost steam short of the finishing line.

From a bloody partition to a lost childhood, hard won victories to an unforgettable heartbreak at Olympics, the nonagenarian saw it all in his life. Before his retirement, the legendary athlete became a four-time Asian Games Gold-medallist and the 1958 Commonwealth Games champion.

Milkha was briefly imprisoned at Tihar jail, for travelling on a train without a ticket and was bailed out by his sister, who sold her jewellery to obtain his release.

The news of his death on June 18 brought an outpouring of mourning and remembrance in the country. From President to Prime Minister, Governors to Chief Ministers, sporting personalities to actors, all took to social media platforms to mourn the death of the sporting superstar.

For many, the running legend Milkha Singh remains the best ever to grace the sport and he has left behind a legacy and influence that will see him live forever.

The Flying Sikh, whose inspiring story began from the ashes of a violent partition, wanted people to derive inspiration from the famous quote "Destroy your entire existence if you want to reach the zenith. Cos a seed has to become one with the dust to sprout and blossom into a flower."

'Take pride in wearing CRPF combat uniform'



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CRPF headquarters has issued a directive to all the formations across the country to take pride in wearing the paramilitary's Khaki/combat pattern uniform. The move comes after CRPF chief Kuldip Singh took exception to a number of officers and men wearing the CoBRA pattern fatigue while deployed in Jammu and Kashmir.

Despite repeated reminders for following the uniform rules, even senior officials have been flouting the norms in the Valley.

"During the visit to operational units in Jammu and Kashmir, the DG, CRPF observed that in spite of the instructions, some officers/men are still wearing CoBRA pattern of combat uniform. It is once again reiterated that we

need to take pride in wearing CRPF pattern uniform," an official said, quoting the circular sent recently across the formations.

The official further said, "The competent authority has desired that all officers/men including QATs/CTTs to wear only prescribed pattern khaki/combat uniforms as applicable in the area."

While QAT refers to Quick Action Teams, the CTT implies Counter-Terrorism Team.

Earlier, similar instructions were issued on April 16 and April 19 this year underscoring the need to adhere to the uniform rules.

In the circular issued on April 16, the DG's office had said, "Competent authority has observed that officers are exhibiting complacency towards their uniform. Uniform is a matter of pride and officers must have an

exemplary turn-out at all times. Commandants and senior officers should not hesitate to point out deficiencies. Henceforth, please ensure that officers and the men they command are smartly turned out." It called for a strict compliance of the order.

Likewise, in a separate letter on April 19, the Force reiterated the importance of wearing proper uniform.

Combat Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) is a specialized anti-Naxal force within the overall command of the CRPF.

The CRPF was raised in 1939 but despite being in existence for over 80 years, the paramilitary does not have a patented pattern for uniform. Besides the CoBRA, the Rapid Action Force (RAF) also has a distinctive pattern of fatigue. The RAF uniform pattern has been copied by the West Bengal

police and the disruptive pattern of the CoBRA uniform has been adopted by several state police forces in absence of any patents for these uniforms.

Despite being the biggest paramilitary with lead roles in various operational theatres, the provisioning directorate has not been able to properly address the continuity and cohesion factor that is instilled through a consistent pattern of uniform.

A senior official said that during the entire winter season every year, the CRPF has to rely on the Jammu and Kashmir Police pattern of jacket in the absence of any authorised pattern of winter jackets (angola dark shade) of its own.

During various official meetings, even the senior officers have been found asking the delegates to wear the JKP pattern of winter jacket to maintain uniformity.

"It is unfortunate that even the Police forces are having better and established dress codes and the lead paramilitary force like CRPF lacks any coherent uniform which is so important for inculcating discipline in the ranks and imparting an unique identity," the official added.

During the last 17 years, the CRPF uniform has been changed thrice and the fatigue in vogue currently was introduced during the then paramilitary chief K Vijay Kumar in 2012.

This combat pattern uniform has bright white patches which could give a distinctive advantage to the ultras during operations in various theatres as they may not be so effective in camouflaging, officials said.

"Frequent changes in the uniform pattern disrupts continuity in outlook and leads to lack of cohesive continuum with regard to the image of the force," this official added.

₹4L compensation to Covid-19 victims not feasible: Centre to SC

New Delhi: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that ex-gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh cannot be paid to the families of those who have died of Covid-19 as it is beyond fiscal affordability and the finances of central and state governments are under severe strain.

In an affidavit filed before the top court, the Ministry of Home Affairs said the Centre submitted that it has by ways of "Minimum Standard Relief", under section 12 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, taken several steps providing for substantial and speedy measures by way of increase in health, infrastructure, ensuring food safety to every citizen.

"The prayer of the petitioner for payment of ex-gratia to all deceased persons due to Covid-19 is beyond the fiscal affordability of the state governments. Already the finances of state governments and the central government are under severe strain due to the reduction in tax revenues and increase in health expenses on account of the pandemic.

"Thus, utilisation of scarce resources for giving ex-gratia may have unfortunate consequences of affecting the pandemic response and health expenditure in other aspects and hence cause more damage than good. It is an unfortunate but important fact that the resources of the governments have limits and any additional burden through ex-gratia will reduce the funds available for other health and welfare schemes," the affidavit filed by the Centre said.



It further submitted that under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, Section 12, the "National Authority" is empowered to recommend guidelines for the minimum standards of relief, including ex-gratia assistance and the function entrusted to the authority by the law passed by the Parliament.

"It is well settled through numerous judgements of the Supreme Court that this is a matter which should be performed by the authority, to whom it has been entrusted and not one where the Court will substitute its own judgement for the decision to be

taken by the Executive.

"Any attempt to second guess may create unintended and unfortunate constitutional and administrative ramifications. It may also be noted that the term 'ex-gratia' itself connotes that the amount is not based on legal entitlement," the affidavit stated.

The Centre told the apex court that it is wrong to state that the help can be provided only through ex-gratia assistance as "it would be a rather pedantic and narrow approach".

"A broader approach, which involves health interventions, social protection, and economic recovery for the

affected communities, would be a more prudent, responsible, and sustainable approach. Globally, the governments in other countries too have followed this approach, and have announced interventions that provide fiscal stimulus. Government of India has followed a similar approach," it said.

Earlier, on June 11, the Centre told the top court that issues raised in the pleas, seeking directions for ex-gratia compensation of ₹4,00,000 to the families of those who have died of Covid-19, are "genuine" and are under consideration of the government. PTI

Centre lost sense of responsibility towards people: Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday alleged the Centre has lost all sense of balance and responsibility towards people. The Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "Power-drunk Modi government has lost all sense of balance and responsibility towards people. In an affidavit to the Supreme Court, the BJP government claims it doesn't have money to pay even ₹4 lakh as ex-gratia compensation to families of Covid victims." "Does Modi Govt even feel the pain and suffering? No money for compensation to COVID-19 victim families but Rs 20,000 crore are being spent on Central Vista and a palace for prime minister. And where are the ₹3,89,662 crore collected in the year 2020-21 from the loot in prices of petrol and diesel?" he asked in another tweet.

Nadda asks party workers to focus on Covid-related works

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Keeping an eye on the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and expected third wave in the country, BJP national president J P Nadda on Sunday reviewed the progress of party's work on the ground towards helping out those affected by the virulent second wave of the Coronavirus infection.

In the backdrop of lives lost due to the pandemic across the country and large-scale unemployment following the lockdown, the BJP has reassessed its approach and asked all its central and state ministers, MPs and MLAs to personally focus on Covid-19-related work in their respective areas and mitigate impact of the pandemic.

Six States are going to poll next year including Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Gujarat.

Nadda will now be meeting ministers every Sunday for the next 6 weeks to bring party work in sync with the government's development and welfare policies, an exercise that party has been doing in the first inning of the Modi-



government.

The government has recently been criticised by the opposition for being caught off-guard during the second wave of the Covid-19 in April-May, leading to major casualties.

Nadda's meet will also focus on preparations for the third wave of COVID and be prepared with all that necessary to deal with the pandemic.

Nadda assessed the work done under the programmes 'Sewa hi Sangathan' and 'Vaccination Drive' saying, "Today, a review meeting was held with all the national vice presidents of the BJP on 'Sewa Hi Sangathan', 'vaccination drive' and other programmes and all partymen are doing

their best under the able guidance of the Prime Minister."

As part of its 'Sewa hi Sangathan', BJP has plans to train a woman and a youth worker each in two lakh urban neighbourhoods and villages in the country.

The Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry election campaigns had invited public criticism of Governments and political leaders who were seen to be busy with 'power games', ignoring the surge in the Covid-19 second wave.

The review meeting by Nadda is an attempt to be alert, this time round, to the public sentiments, and ward off opposition attack in view of the approaching assembly polls.

Chirag to launch 'aashirvaad yatra' from July 5

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Embroiled in a power tussle with his uncle, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Chirag Paswan on Sunday announced an "aashirvaad yatra" from July 5, the birth anniversary of his father and party founder Ram Vilas Paswan, from Hajipur in Bihar. The move is to popular legitimacy in his battle for the party's ownership with the rival faction, headed by his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras.

Accusing his family rivals of "stabbing" him in the back, Paswan made the announcement following a meeting of the LJP national executive which endorsed his leadership and hit out at the faction headed by his paternal uncle for working against the party's constitution.

Paras, in turn, dismissed the meeting as an assembly of "rented crowd" and claimed that it held no legitimacy.

The Election Commission will now decide whether his group is the real LJP or whether the Chirag-led faction is right, he told reporters.

The meeting chaired by Chirag also urged the Modi government to confer Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, on Ram Vilas Paswan, a popular Dalit leader from Bihar who died last year.

He claimed that over 90 per cent of the national executive members were in the meeting. The decision to launch the yatra from Hajipur is significant as Paswan's father was elected to the Lok Sabha from there for eight times, and Paras represents the seat now in the House.

Chirag said Hajipur had been "karmabhoomi" of his father and the yatra will roll out across the state and culminate with a meeting of the party's national council.

As he fights an all out battle to reclaim his father's legacy with all other party MPs, including his cousin Prince Raj, siding with Paras, Paswan launched an emotional attack on the rival members of his family for not waiting for even the first death anniversary of Ram Vilas Paswan and stabbing him in the back.



Mawya Sudan, a resident of Jammu and Kashmir, has become the first woman fighter pilot in the Indian Air Force (IAF) from Rajouri district. Hailing from the village of Lambari, of Border Tehsil of Nowshera in Rajouri, she was commissioned into the IAF as Flying Officer. Mawya has become the 12th woman officer and first from Rajouri to be inducted as a fighter pilot in the IAF. Pioneer photo

Congress alleges scam in land purchase by Ram Temple Trust



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday alleged a scam in the purchase of land by the Ram Temple Trust in Ayodhya and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Supreme Court to "fulfil their responsibility" by ordering a court-monitored probe to find the truth.

AICC chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that the "loot" of funds collected in the name of Lord Ram is "continuing" at the hands of BJP leaders in Ayodhya and questioned the "silence" of the prime minister and the Supreme Court.

He alleged that a BJP leader brought 890 metres of land in Ayodhya for Rs 20 lakh in February and sold it to the Temple Trust for a whopping Rs 2.5 crore, making a profit of 1250 per cent in only 79 days.

"Lord Ram's temple is being constructed as per the orders of the Supreme Court. Is it not the responsibility of the

Supreme Court and its judges and the prime minister who formed the Trust, to find out the truth and investigate this.

"Shouldn't the Supreme Court take cognisance of the matter? The Supreme Court should discharge its duty... hold an audit of the entire transactions under its monitoring and punish the culprits," Surjewala said when asked if the party would move the court.

"Now the question is whether the Supreme Court and the prime minister will discharge their duty, we leave it to their discretion," he said.

Surjewala said if it is anyone's responsibility, it is Prime Minister Modi's as he formed this trust.

"It is not only a question of morality, but it is also a question of constitutionality," he said, adding that the ball is now in the prime minister's court on what action he takes.

He said the people will never forgive anyone who loots donations in the name of Lord

Ram.

The Congress had earlier alleged that land purchased for Rs 2 crore was sold for Rs 18.5 crore to the Trust "within minutes," as per the land deed registered on March 18 this year, and demanded an SC-monitored probe into the "scam".

BJP leaders had hit out at the Congress, claiming those who were opposed to the Ram temple constructions were now trying to derail it by making false and misleading allegations.

Surjewala said with the "facts" now in the public domain, an investigation is required under the supervision of the Supreme Court to ascertain the truth.

Posing five questions to Prime Minister Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, he asked, "What is the reason that Modi-Adityanath ji are completely silent on taking action against the sinners who openly looted funds for the construction of the Ram temple.

Covid-19 cases falling in country, lowest in 81 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 cases in India continued to witness a declining trend in the country with 58,419 new cases recorded on Sunday, lowest in the last 81 days. In the same time span, 1,576 fatalities were reported which was lowest in 63 days, according to data released by the Government.

India recorded less than 60,000 new coronavirus infections after 81 days taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 2,98,81,965, while the active cases further reduced to 7,29,243. The death toll climbed to 3,86,713 fatalities.

The active cases further declined to 7,29,243 comprising 2.44 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate improved to 96.27 per cent. A net decline of 30,776 cases has been recorded in the Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

As many as 18,11,446 tests were conducted on Saturday

taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of Covid-19 in the country to 39,10,19,083.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 3.22 per cent. It has been less than 5 per cent for 13 consecutive days, the ministry said, adding the weekly positivity rate has declined to 3.43 per cent.

Recoveries continue to outnumber daily new cases for the 38th consecutive day. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,87,66,009, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.29 per cent, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16.

It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of 2 crore on May 4.

Covid-induced hyperglycemia patients can look towards ayurveda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Those who survived Covid-19 but are now battling with too much sugar in their blood, a condition called hyperglycemia that is a signature feature of diabetes, can look towards ayurvedic formulations like BGR-34 which are based on natural bioactive compounds with DPP-4 inhibitory effects to manage the health issues.

According to a global analysis published in the journal, Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism, at least 14.4 per cent of Covid survivors have reported hyperglycemia causing dysfunctioning of their immune response.

Though a plethora of medicines are available in the market to check hyperglycemia, DPP-4 inhibitors have been found to be most safe to arrest the condition, as per a recent study in Elsevier journal. Symptoms of hyperglycemia are frequent urination, excessive thirst, blurry vision, or unexplained weight

loss.

Developed by one of the labs of the Council Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), BGR-34 has natural bioactive compounds of Daruharidra with DPP-4 inhibitory effects. In fact, as per a research published in the Journal of Drug Research, the primary source of DPP-4 inhibitors is the herbal plant Daruharidra.

Dr AKS Rawat, scientist from CSIR's lab National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI), Lucknow, which has developed the ayurvedic drug, said, "Because of this property, the Daruharidra was added in the herbal formulation BGR-34.

The scientists had researched extensively to study its efficacy."

Besides Daruharidra, BGR-34 has two other herbal elements that control hyperglycemia.

One of these is Gymnemic acids, which again, according to a ChemRxiv journal, controls hyperglycemia in the dia-

betes patients. These are sourced from Gudmaar herbal plants.

Similarly, the chemical element Trigonoside found in fenugreek, yet another herbal plant, too checks high blood sugar levels, as has been detailed in the journal, Environmental Challenge. BGR-34 too, among various other herbal ingredients, contains bioactive compounds of both these medicinal plants.

Giloy, Vijaysaar and Majeeth, all known for their anti-diabetic properties, are already found in BGR-34. Dr Rawat said that these studies are proof that the herbal formulation is also effective in treatment of hyperglycemia in covid survivors.

While nearly one in six people with diabetes in the world being from India which is reeling under Covid-19, cases of hyperglycemia caused by damage of the pancreatic beta cells, leading to insufficient insulin production, is on increase.

Lakshadweep admin mulls shifting HC jurisdiction from Kerala to K'ntka

PTI ■ KOCHI/ NEW DELHI

The Lakshadweep administration, which has been facing widespread protests from the islands' people over some of its policies, has mooted a proposal to shift its legal jurisdiction from the Kerala High Court to the Karnataka High Court, officials said.

The proposal was initiated by the administration after several litigations were moved before the Kerala High Court against the decisions taken by

the islands' new administrator Pratul Khoda Patel.

These decisions included revising standard operating procedures for Covid appropriate behaviour, introduction of the 'goonda act' and demolishing hutments of fishermen for widening of roads.

Patel, who is the administrator of Daman and Diu, was given the additional charge of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep in the first week of December last year, when the former administrator

Dineshwar Sharma died after a brief illness.

This year, as many as 23 applications, including 11 writ petitions, have been filed against the administrator of Lakshadweep and also against the alleged high-handedness of either the police or the local government of the islands.

However, for reasons best known to the island's administration, which is under the spotlight over its handling of these issues, it has made a proposal for shifting its legal juris-

isdiction from the high court of Kerala to Karnataka.

Efforts to seek comments from the advisor of the administrator, A Anbarasu, and Collector of Lakshadweep S Asker Ali did not fructify.

Mails to their official e-mails and WhatsApp messages did not elicit any response to a question asking the rationale behind mooted of the proposal for shifting of legal jurisdiction.

The jurisdiction of a high court can be shifted only through an act of Parliament,

according to the law.

"Parliament may by law constitute a high court for a Union Territory or declare any court in any such territory to be a high court for all or any of the purposes of this Constitution," according to Article 241 of the Constitution.

Section 4 of the same article mentions that "nothing in this article derogates from the power of Parliament to extend or exclude the jurisdiction of a high court for a state, or from, any Union Territory or

part thereof". Talking to PTI over phone, Lok Sabha member Mohammed Faizal P P said, "This was his (Patel) first attempt to shift the judicial jurisdiction from Kerala to Karnataka." "Why was he so particular to transfer it... it's totally a misappropriation of the post. The mother tongue of the people on these islands is Malayalam," he said.

"One should not forget the name of the high court is Kerala and Lakshadweep High Court. This proposal was con-

ceived during his first visit to the islands," Faizal said and asked was there a need for this and how could he justify the proposal. Faizal said there have been 36 administrators before Patel and no one had this kind of an idea. "However, if this proposal will see any light of the day, we will oppose it tooth and nail on the floor of Parliament as well as with the judiciary," the Lok Sabha member from Nationalist Congress Party said.

He said the Save Lakshadweep Front (SLF) has

been making appeals to the Centre for changing the administrator at the earliest.

"The SLF is a non-violent people's movement which has been requesting the central leadership to change Patel with someone who can be people's administrator," he added.

Legal experts from Lakshadweep said that Malayalam is the spoken as well as the written language both in Kerala and Lakshadweep and, therefore, the process could be streamlined.

Kerala Covid situation still critical despite long-drawn lockdowns

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

There is no end in sight for the Covid-19 pandemic in Kerala despite the triple lock downs and double lockdowns slapped on the State since April 2021. The State diagnosed 11,647 new cases on Sunday while 112 persons succumbed to Covid-19 on a single day that took the total fatalities till date to 12,060.

The Test Positivity Rate, according to the press release issued by the Department of Health was 10.84 per cent. But elsewhere in Kerala, there were many regions with higher TPR, according to Government Medical Doctors.

More than 300 local self government bodies in the State have TPR of 30 per cent and high. There were 1.05 lakh patients across the State undergoing treatment for the pandemic.

Though the Government claimed that the situation is inching to normalcy, there has been no dearth of ambulances blaring their sirens ferrying critically ill patients from homes to hospitals.

The Government release on Sunday said that 1.07 samples were tested in the last 24 hours. Thiruvananthapuram topped the table of districts with the highest number of patients-1,600 while Ernakulam came close behind with 1,461 cases.

Monday will be crucial for Kerala as the lock down is being lifted in stages. All liquor outlets have been opened while bars, popularly known as watering holes too have started selling drinks, though in parcel mode. Leaders of Islamic organisations are expected to call on Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to seek his permission to get the mosques opened.

KERALA GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

Customs issues show-cause notice to 53 people

Kochi: The Customs Department probing the Kerala gold smuggling case has issued show-cause notices to 53 people including prime accused Swapna Suresh, suspended IAS officer M Sivasankar and two former diplomats in the UAE consulate, Thiruvananthapuram, official sources said here on Sunday.

The notices asking why action under Customs Act should not be taken against them in the smuggling cases were issued by Customs (Preventive) Commissioner Sumit Kumar on June 16. The case against them involves smuggling of a total of 167 kg of gold 23 times including the illegal trade of 30 kilograms gold worth nearly ₹15 crore that was seized by the Customs at Thiruvananthapuram Airport from a diplomatic bag on July 5, 2020, the sources told PTI.

Assam among top 5 in Life on Land category of SDG Index

Guwahati: Assam's Environment and Forest Department has emerged as a front-runner in the Life on Land category of the 2020 edition of the Niti Aayog's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) India Index.

The index for SDGs, launched in 2018, evaluates the progress of states and union territories on social, economic, and environmental parameters. Among the 17 broad-based global SDG goals with 232 indicators,

Assam ranks fifth in the category 'Life on Land' with a composite score of 78 per cent, according to the Niti Aayog's report. Arunachal Pradesh tops the list with a composite score of 93 per cent, followed by Madhya Pradesh 84 per cent, Odisha 83 per cent, and Telangana 81 per cent.

To be enlisted in the category of front-runners, a state or Union Territory needs to score in the range of 65-99, including both. PTI

Amid Cong solo chant, Sena leader Sarnaik asks Uddhav to patch up with BJP

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Amid the ruling Maharashtra Congress' latest posturing that it wanted to go it alone in the 2024 State Assembly polls, Shiv Sena leader Pratap Sarnaik has shot off a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, saying that the Sena must patch up with its erstwhile alliance partner BJP.

In a letter written to Uddhav who is also the Shiv Sena president, three-time MLA from Thane Sarnaik said: "The municipal corporation elections in Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation are round the corner. Our alliance with the BJP may have ended, but we as the erstwhile saffron alliance leaders are maintaining good relations between us. Instead of letting the relations between us deteriorate further, it is better we come closer to other".

"we come together, it will benefit the party workers like me and the Shiv Sena in the long run. This is what I feel. It is for you to take a proper decision in the matter," Sarnaik said in a letter written to the Chief Minister on June 9. The June 9 letter made its way to the media on Sunday.

Alluding to the bickering within the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), Sarnaik said: "On one hand, setting aside politics, you (Uddhav Thackeray) are doing justice as the Chief Minister, while on the other, our alliance partners Congress and NCP have gone to town saying

that it is because of them that you have become the chief minister. And the Congress is talking about going it alone in the 2024 State Assembly polls".

"Instead of weaning away leaders and workers from other political parties, the Congress and NCP are trying to break the Shiv Sena. Simultaneously, some MVA Ministers and IAS officers are cosying up to the BJP leaders at the Centre to ensure against the central investigating harassing them," Sarnaik said.

"In certain quarters of our party level, the talk that goes around is; the works of the Congress-NCP workers get done faster at the State Government level. But, despite having our party's Chief Minister in the state, the Shiv Sena MLAs are not able to get work done in various Government departments. The question that is being asked in the party circles is: whether the Shiv Sena broke its alliance with the BJP and formed the MVA to make the Congress-NCP stronger," Sarnaik said.

"At a time when the Congress and NCP are trying to weaken our party by weaning away our party workers, I feel personally that it is better that we get closer to Shri Narendra Modi. If the party does that, harassment being meted out to Sena leaders like Pratap Sarnaik, Anil Parab and Ravindra Waikar will stop. This is what the Sena workers feel," the Sena leader said.

TN limping back to normalcy

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu has succeeded in taming the Covid-19 pandemic to a great extent, according to the data for Sunday released by the Directorate of Preventive Medicine and Health.

The State logged 7, 817 new cases of Covid-19 on Sunday while the fatalities for the day stood at 182. Across the State, 1.66 lakh persons were subjected to RT-PCR tests. Coimbatore, the industrial capital of Tamil Nadu,

which had showed more than thousand cases on an average per day, registered just 904 new cases on Sunday while neighbouring Erode (870) and Tirupur (477) districts too showed that the Covid virus was getting flattened.

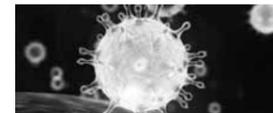
Chennai logged 455 cases while the death toll date rose to 31,197. At the time of going to Press, Tamil Nadu as a whole was in different stages of lifting of lock downs indicating that normal life is returning to the State though with restrictions.

Maha infections rise to 9,361, deaths drop to 605

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 deaths in Maharashtra dropped to 605 and the infections went up marginally to 9,361 on Sunday, even as 9,101 patients were discharged after full recovery from various hospitals across the State.

A day after the State logged 8912 infections and 682 pandemic deaths, the infections rose to 9,361, while the daily deaths came down by 77. Of the 9361 deaths reported on Sunday, 190 were current ones, while 415 were "old unaccounted" fatalities.



With 605 deaths reported on Friday, the Covid-19 toll in the state jumped from 1,17,356 to 1,17,961.

With 9,361 fresh infections, the total infections in the state rose from 59,63,420 to 59,72,781.

As 9,101 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the State after full recovery, the total number of peo-

ple discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 57,10,356 to 57,19,457. The recovery rate in the state stood static at 95.76 per cent.

The total "active cases" in the state dropped from 1,32,595 to 1,32,241. The fatality rate in the state stood static at 1.97 per cent.

Mumbai recorded 19 deaths and 747 infections. As a result, the Covid-19 toll in the metropolis increased from 15,279 to 15,298, while the infected cases in Mumbai went up from 7,19,266 to 7,20,013.

10 cr people to be vaccinated in UP by Aug-end

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government set a target of administering 7 lakh Covid vaccine doses per day which will be ramped up from July 1 and 10 crore people will be jabbed by the end of August.

"The administration has chalked out an action plan and made all arrangements to meet the target smoothly and swiftly," a Government spokesman said. Earlier, the state was administering about 4.5 lakh vaccine doses a day under 'Mission June'.

While chairing a high-level Covid review meeting on Sunday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated, "The decision of the prime minister to give free vaccines to all citizens above 18 years will boost the vaccination campaign. Taking advantage of this opportunity, we have to conduct our vaccination campaign to full capacity. Make preparations with a goal to

administer 7 lakh doses per day and then ramp it up to around 12 lakh doses from July 1," he said.

In this regard, the CM has ordered to increase the vaccination centres from 6,000 to 10,000. The Health department has directed the district magistrates to make all the arrangements accordingly. The cold chain capacity has been doubled in the state. From 80,000 litres, the capacity has been increased to 2.25 lakh litres to stock up the vaccine doses provided by the Centre, the spokesperson said.

He said from July onwards, to meet the target of 10 crore doses, the government will aim to administer nearly 12 lakh doses a day. Therefore, the next task for the state is to ensure that it has enough manpower and vaccine delivery centres. The services of more than 12,000 new nursing students will be taken for the purpose. The

UP Government has tweaked its strategy and adopted a 'cluster approach' to ensure maximum vaccination. The entire population will be divided into clusters. Focusing on rural areas, more than 97,000 revenue villages of all the development blocks in the state will be divided into clusters. The campaign promising 'ease of vaccination' aims to vaccinate one cluster a week in the village panchayat ghars. The date and place of vaccination will be given to the villagers in advance in the form of 'bulawa parchis'.

In each revenue village of the state, mobilisation teams will be constituted with gram pradhans, lekhpals, ASHA & Anganwadi workers, teachers of primary schools, panchayat secretaries and Yuvak/Mahila Mangal Dal. The cluster mobilisation teams will start the awareness drive three days prior to the pilot project.



People visit a crowded market near the historic Charminar after the Telangana Government lifted Covid-induced restrictions, in Hyderabad on Sunday. PTI

Malls, restaurants to open in UP from today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Restaurants and malls will open from Monday across the state as the government has announced further relaxation, extending the timings of markets from 7 am to 9 pm on weekdays and allowing full attendance in government offices. However, the guidelines issued late Saturday night by Chief Secretary RK Tiwari made it clear that all the relaxations would be withdrawn immediately in the districts where the number of active cases exceeded the 500-mark.

The weekend curbs will stay for while educational institutions, cinema halls, clubs, swimming pools and gyms will remain closed till further orders. According to the fresh guidelines to be enforced from Monday, all the markets can open from 7 am to 9 pm from Monday to Friday. Government offices will open with full attendance while restaurants and eating points will have to follow the 50 per cent capacity rule. Private com-

panies can also function under Covid protocol but they have been asked to promote work from home as far as possible.

The government also allowed the reopening of malls and roadside eateries, fast food joints and sweet shops. Vegetable markets will be open like before, but people have to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour.

The movement of UPSRTC buses has been allowed with some riders. The Transport department has been asked to carry out regular sanitisation of the buses. Only two passengers are allowed in three-wheeleders and e-rickshaws while only four in cars.

In closed or open wedding venues, only 50 guests will be allowed at a time while not more than 50 devotees are allowed to gather at religious places at a time.

The corona curfew was clamped in UP on May 1. The Government started extending relaxation from June 1 when the number of Covid cases started coming down.

Sikkim reports 87 new cases, 2 more deaths

PTI ■ GANGTOK

Sikkim reported 87 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, pushing the coronavirus tally to 19,296, a health department bulletin said on Sunday.

The Covid-19 death toll rose to 293 as two more persons succumbed to the infection, it said. The new cases were reported from East Sikkim district (57), West Sikkim (22), South Sikkim (6) and North Sikkim district (2).

The Himalayan State now has 2,697 active Covid-19 cases, while 16,056 patients have recovered from the disease, the bulletin said.

At least 250 Covid-19 patients have migrated to other states, it said. Sikkim's Covid-19 recovery rate now is 83.2 per cent.

Idol of Lord Vishnu unearthed from village in UP's Bahraich

Bahraich (UP): A stone idol of Lord Vishnu was unearthed on Sunday morning during digging work undertaken at an old mound in a village here, police said.

Ramgopal, a resident of Anwarganj village under Nanpara tehsil, had brought some labourers to level his land. As they went about digging the earth, the workers stumbled upon a stone idol.

The labourers dug out the stone idol of Lord Vishnu, which was three feet high, Nanpara police station SHO Sanjay Singh said. As news spread of the finding, villagers gathered at the spot. Later, police and administration officials arrived at the spot, took the idol in their custody, and deposited it in the tehsil treasury.

The SHO said the district administration has informed the archaeology department about the idol. PTI

Minor girl raped in Bihar's Aurangabad

Patna: A 12-year-old girl, residing in a school hostel in Bihar's Aurangabad district, was allegedly sexually assaulted by the school owner, police said on Sunday.

As per the FIR registered with the women police station, the victim alleged that the accused Raju Kumar, the owner of the school, located in Daudnagar locality in Aurangabad, raped her for the last two days.

On Sunday, she managed to escape from the hostel and reached the nearest police station. When she revealed her ordeal, she was immediately sent to the women police station under police custody.

"The victim was the only girl student living in the hostel. Her father and mother are employed with a private firm in Gujarat. The owner knew the status of the girl and took advantage of it. He sexually assaulted the victim on Friday and Saturday night. The accused also threatened her to dire consequences if she revealed the incident to anyone," Suman Kumar, investigating officer of the women police station, said. "We have conducted medical examination of the victim which confirms rape. An FIR under POCSO Act has been registered against Raju Kumar. He is at large now," she added. IANS



Hindu devotees perform rituals while offering prayers in the river Ganga on the occasion of Ganga Dussehra at Sangam, in Prayagraj on Sunday. PTI

Temple in Karnataka dug up in 'treasure hunt'; 7 held

Hassan (Karnataka): Hunt for treasure purportedly buried under the sanctum sanctorum of a century-old temple in a village in Karnataka's Hassan district led seven people, including a priest, to try to dig up the structure, police said on Sunday.

This seven-member gang, which also included a prominent astrologer and Assistant Director of Co-operative Societies, however, developed cold feet after digging around a 10 feet pit in front of the chief deity of their village Bosmanahalli, abandoned their mission halfway through, and left the temple. All seven have been arrested.

According to the police statement, the arrested were identified as Manjunath, an astrologer from Bosmanahalli, L. Thippeswamy, a temple priest, Hassan Co-operative Societies Assistant Director Narayan, B. H. Jayaram, Chetan, Manjunath, and Kumar.

The police said that the entire treasure hunt plan was hatched by Manjunath, an astrologer from Bosmanahalli, who often used to visit the old Chowdeshwari (Parvatamma) Temple, of the village's deity, situated on the outskirts of the village.

"Most of the arrested are devotees of this temple. The astrologer persuaded these five gullible residents and a priest from a temple in Davangere district. Manjunath thought that under the lockdown, temples which are locked may not attract any notice of residents of this village, besides the incident will only come to public notice once lockdown measures are eased.

"Hence, they decided to carry out digging after performing 'homa-havana' (offerings poured in sacred fire while chanting vedic Mantras) on intermediate night of Friday-Saturday," a police officer said. IANS

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Afghan landmine

All stakeholders are busy formulating plans so as to have the most power once the US exits

Afghanistan is a worsening quagmire of confusion with the immediately involved parties working towards their own individualist goals. The United States is singularly focused on vacating the military bases and moving tones of equipment as a prelude to the withdrawal of its troops before September 11. The Taliban, working to a post-withdrawal plan, are intent only on bringing maximum territory under their control because that alone would give them leverage in the future to either negotiate or grab power. The Afghan Government is caught between a withdrawing ally and an aggressive rival, looking for every scrap of support to be able to wield power after September. There is no dearth of friends for the Afghan Government in the region, but none with the clout to nail a permanent peace agreement with the Taliban. The primary, and only, concern of the world is the prospect of the return of terrorism to Afghan soil once the Americans leave. Even with them around, the US never once felt satisfied that the threat to its national security from terror groups in the country has abated. On the one hand, the Taliban are only waiting to turn the country into an Islamic State and, at worst, what they call a "Caliphate". They are already flashing their religious identity as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, intent on taking the country back into the dark ages with their irrational social codes. On the other, they have convivial relations with terrorist groups active in Afghanistan, including Al-Qaeda, and that makes their peace overtures suspect.



Despite signing the Doha Agreement with the US in 2020, the Taliban never attempted to formally distance itself from the terrorist group. India is at the forefront of nations wanting to ensure that terrorism does not raise its head in Afghanistan once again. It has no formal communication links with the Taliban and the word is that it may be reaching out to sections of the Taliban leadership that consider themselves nationalist and not under the influence of Pakistan. Much of the terrorist leadership is currently holed up in Pakistan; so is the orthodox and aggressive Taliban leadership for that matter. Having invested a lot in Afghanistan — it gave nearly \$2 billion in reconstruction aid already — India wants to have a greater say in the country's return to democracy. However, it will have to contend with Pakistan which to date played a subdued role because of the formidable American presence, and now plans a more direct role because of its links with the Taliban and the protection it extends to some terrorist groups. It is to be seen if the signs of a bilateral thaw in the India-Pakistan ties do not face rough weather because of their clashing positions over Afghanistan. An indication will be available at the meeting of the National Security Advisers of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan — virtual or in person — at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting next week.

PICTALK



Girls perform yoga ahead of the International Yoga Day, in Surat

PTI

The third coming

There is an urgent need for our citizens to heed experts and desist from reckless behaviour in public

The third wave of the COVID-19 virus is rapidly stealing upon us, if one were to go by either expert opinion or by the insouciant behaviour of our fellow countrymen in crowded public places. Barely has the nation's nose emerged from the sinking feeling that was the second wave of the Novel Coronavirus and its myriad variants, what with the accompanying horrors of the shortage of medical oxygen, hospital beds and ancillary medical supplies, the scary prediction now comes that the third wave could be far closer to us than we had imagined. Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences director Randeep Guleria has said in no uncertain terms that the third wave is inevitable in the "next six-eight weeks" if people don't adhere to COVID-appropriate behaviour. The virus can make a comeback within two months, much earlier than the trend noticed in India so far, if the unlocking process is not measured. Even though the vaccination drive is going on in full swing, with both the Centre and the State Governments doing their best to make amends for the earlier oversight and the time lost because of it, there is still a disconcertingly huge window during which the virus can stage a dreadful comeback before the effects of the inoculation drive kick in.



So far, India has been able to fully vaccinate only about five per cent of its 950 million eligible population, leaving the other teeming millions vulnerable to infections and deaths. Needless to say, there is an urgent need for aggressive surveillance strategy in the COVID hotspots and even to again order lockdowns in case of significant surge in any particular area. Meanwhile, while the number of cases is still declining in the country, this is the right time to reflect upon past mistakes and take lessons for the future: Remember how the second wave took the complacent nation by surprise and swept the healthcare system off its moorings in many States? The drop in the infection rate in India surely is a positive sign, but that should be no reason for us to slacken our vigil. If there is a sudden jump in the numbers, god forbid, no healthcare system in the world can deal with such a large number of people simultaneously needing intensive care. We need to utilise this time to strengthen our healthcare facilities; each life is worth fighting for.

Brutal tactics to keep the Uyghurs in check



PRAFULL GORADIA

Why can't the Hans of China learn from the example of Indian Hindus towards Muslims and be considerate enough to let the Uyghurs be?

Reports about the treatment of Uyghurs in general and their pregnant women in particular in Xi Jinping's China sound barbaric. If the purpose is family planning, fair enough, but it should be implemented by law and not by force. Cases were reported in this journal from Istanbul which mentioned several women who were up to six-and-a-half months pregnant being forcibly aborted, evidently posing a threat to their lives. True, Muslims are reputed to procreate much more prolifically than other people but that does not mean that the Government should resort to violent means to achieve smaller families.

According to the *Hadith* (Traditions), Prophet Muhammad once asked a man whether he was married. On being replied in the negative, Muhammad reacted by saying: "Then you are a brother of the Devil." In Islam, even ascetic orders are expected to marry rather than remain single. One of the Prophet's companions, Usman ibn Maz'un, wished to lead a life of celibacy; Muhammad forbade him. Normally such consent is given on condition of the celibate becoming an eunuch. In the same context, the Prophet exhorted his followers to marry women who will love their husbands and be very prolific: "For I wish you to be more numerous than any other people." (*Mishkatul Masabih* book XIII)

We in India have a long and enormous experience of being ruled by Muslim sultans and, of course, coexisting with them for centuries. This led to serious and prolonged oppression in the 50-year reign of Aurangzeb, which ended in 1707. There was a serious emotional parting of ways. In 1887, the then most prominent Islamic leader Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Aligarh fame declared in a public speech that the Hindus and Muslims were separate nations. He repeated his contention the following year.

The next eminence to pronounce the same sentiments in the early 20th century was Justice Syed Ameer Ali. Then in 1930, poet Mohammad Iqbal voiced



that Muslims should have a separate homeland even if inside an Indian confederation. Most Hindu leaders, Gandhiji downwards, ignored these statements and continued to believe that the Congress Party represented all communities. Rightly or incorrectly, because the Congress had members of all communities, the leaders presumed that all of their communities followed the Party. Eventually, Mohammad Ali Jinnah had the Pakistan Resolution passed by the Muslim League at its Lahore session on March 23, 1940. Yet, the Hindus took only limited notice. Nor did the British realise how serious was the Muslim desire for a separate homeland, a New Medina.

On August 16, 1946, Bengal Chief Minister HS Suhrawardy directed a massive pogrom, later called the Great Calcutta Killing; which over three days saw the bloody end of thousands of people. This was Jinnah's way of proving particularly to the British that Hindus and Muslims cannot coexist in the same country. India had to be divided. This is also based on the Islamic theology that Muslims need a Dar-ul-Islam, wherein the law laid down by Sharia is

INDIA STILL HAS MORE MUSLIMS THAN ANY OTHER COUNTRY EXCEPT INDONESIA. THIS IS AN UNUSUAL PARADOX. IF SO MANY MUSLIMS CAN HAPPILY LIVE IN INDIA, WHERE WAS THE NEED FOR PARTITION? YET, THE HINDUS HAVE ACCEPTED THIS CONTRADICTION WITHOUT A PROTEST

the only land wherein Muslims can flourish and fulfil themselves. Today, India still hosts more Muslims than any country except Indonesia. This is an unusual paradox. If so many Muslims can happily live in India, where was the need for Partition? Yet, the Hindus have accepted this contradiction without a protest. My question is if the Hindus can be so tolerant, why cannot the Hans of China be considerate enough to let the Uyghurs be?

After all, China has to coexist with many other peoples and countries. There are 57 Islamic countries and they have not yet protested because of what? Possibly sheer fear or business interests. But for how long? Sooner or later, the Islamic fury must explode. In any case, I appeal to the Han race for tolerance in the cause of peace.

In a spirit of freedom and brotherhood, we allowed the Ayodhya litigation to go on for nearly a century, waiting for a court judgment. Then only we have begun to build a temple for lord Ram whom poet Iqbal had described as "Imam-e-Hind". The Muslims of Ayodhya were in favour of building the temple because it would multiply pilgrimage

and consequently bring prosperity. The fight was about an edifice which had no minarets, no *woozu* for washing hands and feet before proceeding to prayers. In fact, it must have been meant as a *mazar* in Babar's memory after he died.

India has had three Muslim Rashtrapatis, Zakir Hussain, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Abdul Kalam, plus several judges including Supreme Court Chief Justices and election commissioners appointed by, of course, Hindu Governments.

When it comes to elections, all adult citizens have the right to vote. There is no discrimination. In the bargain, Muslims in earlier elections voted *en masse* for one party and it won. The others were slack in casting their votes. But this was tolerant and no solution was applied to stop this practice. The easy solution was compulsory voting; that would have neutralised the *en masse* voting. But the Hindu ethos was too liberal for a drastic measure although nearly a dozen countries, led by Belgium and Australia, practise it.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Sir — In the first political engagement since the August 5, 2019, move by the Centre to end J&K's special status, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on June 24 give an audience to the region's mainstream leadership, including those who were incarcerated for opposing the Centre's move. Modi will chair the meeting. All the leaders have been asked to go for a RT-PCR test before attending the meeting.

It will be the second major peace move in J&K after the successful renewed ceasefire agreement in February this year with Pakistan, which has been demanding a roadmap on J&K to expand the engagement with New Delhi. The sudden move by the Centre also comes in the wake of pressure from the international community, especially the United States, to restore democratic and electoral processes in J&K, which remains under the Centre's rule since 2018. It is a step in the right direction but how far this move will succeed remains to be seen.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

Sir — Yoga means "to add"; to add to the good habits in life, to add to peace and prosperity. In the current scenario, the COVID pandemic has devastated almost everything but one thing remains that has helped life move on smoothly, and that's HOPE.

During the troubled days, yoga can be a step towards positivity, relaxation of mind and physical strength. The United Nations gave its nod to the idea on December 10, 2014, and from June 21, 2015, the entire world started celebrating the International Yoga Day. The theme for 2021 is "Yoga for the wellbeing". India has contributed a lot but the patent of that invention was in the hands of the white-skinned developed nations.

We have contributed zero, decimal and a lot more to the world. Several inventions by Indians were being taken away and credited to foreigners. However, we never criticised such moves because we wanted peace and prosperity, unity in diversity. Yoga is not

Let Telangana schools remain shut



The Centre has advised the States to ease the COVID-19 curbs carefully since we are still living with the virus; it is not fully eradicated. All the States are accordingly easing curbs. In Tamil Nadu, the places of worship have been shut for a long time. Those who believe in God, seek peace and solace by visiting temples. I request the Government to open the temples for the public observing all the norms and COVID protocols.

Meanwhile, the Telangana Government has lifted the lockdown completely. It is shocking that the State has asked the education department to open all categories of educational institutions beginning July 1. Playing with the lives of students

in these times of the pandemic is a matter of serious concern.

The first wave was severe. The second was ferocious and claimed many lives. The third wave is said to be round the corner. It is likely going to affect children the most. Our vaccination strategy is slow. Only 30 crore people have so far been inoculated. Another one crore are in the queue. Our wards, who are below 18 years of age, are yet to be included in the inoculation drive. It may take another few months to inoculate them since the vaccine supply is not commensurate to the population of India. Without masks or maintaining social distancing, people are seen moving around.

At this point, the move to reopen educational institutions seems to be worrisome, problematic and unproductive. It amounts to inviting trouble. It is hard to enforce discipline among students to adhere to the standing protocols against COVID. The heavens will not fall if schools are not opened right now, when the third wave is likely to hit the nation with more severity in a few weeks. The Telangana Government should roll back its decision of reopening of educational institutions.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

of any particular religion but it's for the goodness of the entire humanity. Therefore, we all need to add yoga as an irreplaceable part of our daily routine and life. This will not only make us physically, but also mentally and spiritually, stronger.

Aman Jaiswal | New Delhi

WEAR FACE MASKS TO SAVE LIVES

Sir — As India prepares to battle the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccinating as many citizens as possible with both doses is unquestionably the most rational way of countering the virus. However, it is equally important for each one of us to prove our pertinacity by wearing face masks.

A face mask is a crucial protective gear to safeguard ourselves. Scientific evidence goes deep into the containment of the Novel Coronavirus by wearing face masks. When

a person expels droplets into the air, they quickly evaporate and shrink to become tiny airborne particles, called "droplet nuclei".

But in a moist atmosphere, between a person's mouth and the mask, it takes nearly a hundred times as long for a droplet to evaporate and shrink into droplet nuclei. This means that nearly any kind of simple cloth mask is great for source control. The mask creates humidity, and prevents the virus-containing droplets from turning into droplet nuclei, allowing the fabric of the mask to block the droplets. Studies suggest that if 80 per cent of people wear masks in public, the COVID-19 transmission can certainly be halted.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

SOUNDBITE

The Congress believes that grant of full statehood to J&K as also holding elections... instead of a rule by Delhi, is the only way forward, so that people are able to elect their representatives



Congress general secretary — Randeep Singh Surjewala

The Government is in no rush to reopen the country's international borders.

Australia's Trade Minister — Dan Tehan

I look at it this way — I want my beard also to tell a story, to define me.



Actor — Arjun Kapoor

Psychologically, I think it (the draw) is a big boost and it definitely will put England on the back foot.

India women's cricket team skipper — Mithali Raj

Over the last two years, Shri @ombirlakota Ji has ushered in a series of steps that have enriched our parliamentary democracy and enhanced productivity.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

PEOPLE NEED TO TAKE INITIATIVE

World leaders keep meeting on climate change issue but there is no genuine commitment to the cause



VK BAHUGUNA

The Covid-19 lockdown last year had one positive fallout - the sky regained its brilliant blue as the perennial haze of pollution lifted and one could see the Himalayan range from far-off places like Delhi and Chandigarh. Metros like Delhi and Mumbai became pollution-free, wild animals started foraging for food in cities and towns, and rivers became cleaner. This is, however, a grim reminder that humanity must change its materialist, extravagant lifestyle and establish equilibrium with nature. That is the special message of the pandemic.

When the air pollution levels came down, there was a perceptible decline in respiratory diseases. One study said the improved air quality index on account of reduced human activities in Chennai was similar to that of European countries. The forests got a reprieve with reduced instances of forest fires, illegal felling of trees, and poaching. This writer noticed how migratory birds which normally returned home during February-March stayed back till May end. In zoos sans tourists the animals regained their natural composure and behaviours. In the Satpura Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh, tigers, which had got used to regular movement of tourists, started liking their isolation and fretted upon seeing forest guards on patrols. According to Central



Pollution Control Board, the Ganga, Yamuna, and Gomati rivers' water became cleaner. Dolphins were sighted in the Ganga near Meerut.

These examples tell people to adopt climate-friendly behaviours in their day-to-day lives. Look at Jadhav Payeng from Jorhat, Assam who got the 'Forest Man of India Award' in 2010 for turning 550 hectares of barren land into a lush green forest.

National Governments the world over started climate change negotiations after the Kyoto Protocol came into being in 2005. However, there is no genuine commitment to climate change even though world leaders meet every now and then because of never-ending politics. In India too, despite good initiatives like the solar alliance, the bureaucracy is unable to stem the rot in the field of environmental conservation.

Let us consider some citizen's initiatives which can make a big difference to the environment. Let us go for water harvesting and recharging in every home. Climate change was responsible for about 74 per cent of flash floods and droughts in the last 20 years. In cities 90 per cent of rainwater goes waste because of excessive construction activities. In contrast, 90 per cent of the rainwater gets absorbed in forests, recharging the aquifers, streams, and rivers. Every household having a 200 sq. mt. area can recharge around two lakh litres of rainwater every year.

Second, each tree gives oxygen for 10 people to survive. Everybody should plant a tree every year. A big tree absorbs 21 kg of carbon dioxide (CO2) and in 100 years reduces one tonne of CO2.

Third, food wastage is the biggest environmental problem as it wastes water and food grains. In 2019, nine billion tonnes of food was wasted in the world, releasing 70.41 lakh tonne methane gas. If we stop this wastage, eight percent reduction in greenhouse emissions can be ensured. Four, we must stop the use of paper cups to save at least 65 lakh trees and billions of gallons of water. Five, we need to use electricity carefully because 40 percent of carbon emissions are due to electricity production. If we can switch off the wi-fi and laptops we can reduce the emissions by 16 percent. Six, cars contribute to huge carbon emissions and if we limit the car speed to 70 kmph, it will reduce emission by 8 percent. The principle is at the speed 100 kmph the emissions increase by 28 percent.

(The writer is Chairman, Centre for Resource Management and Environment. The views expressed are personal.)

Dealing with Delhi CM Kejriwal's 'ration mafia'



UTTAM GUPTA

The scheme mooted by the Delhi Government will only create more avenues for the middlemen to make money at the cost of the taxpayer

Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister, National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has justified his much-trumpeted scheme for door-step delivery of ration on the ground that this will help rein in what he describes as 'ration mafia' while ensuring that every grain of the subsidized food reaches the person (read: the poor) for whom it is intended.

Who is this 'ration mafia'? How does it plunder the subsidized food? Can the scheme prevent it?

Under the National Food Security Act, 2013, the Union Government directs the Food Corporation of India and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and organize its distribution to a mammoth population of 800 million people through an elaborate network of fair price shops (in common parlance, these are called 'ration shops') at the subsidized price of ₹2, ₹3 and ₹5 per kg for wheat, rice, and coarse cereals, respectively. Each person is eligible to receive 5 kg of cereals per month.

Considering that the cost of procurement, handling, and distribution is higher (in fact, many times more) than these ridiculously low selling prices, the Centre reimburses the excess amount as 'food subsidy' to the FCI and other agencies and is paid from the Union Budget.

During 2020-21, a total of ₹463,000 crore was paid to FCI. Apart from regular payment of ₹215,000 crore, this included about ₹150,000 crore towards free food given to all the 800 million beneficiaries as also to the migrant labour during April-November, 2020 under the Aatmanirbhar package. The balance amount was used for paying off a good slice of the loan taken by FCI from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) to finance the shortfall in subsidy reimbursements by the Centre in the past. Additionally, Rs 40,000 crore was paid to other state agencies under decentralized procurement (DCP).

During 2021-22, payment to FCI is expected to be about ₹302,000 crore including ₹202,000 crore being the budget allocation and an additional about ₹100,000 crore to provide for free food under Aatmanirbhar till November 2021 (announced subsequently to mitigate the impact of the second pandemic wave). A further ₹40,000 crore is available for DCP.

The scheme is pan-India, covering all the 28 states and eight union territories including the NCT of Delhi. The stuff unveiled by Kejriwal is merely an improvisation of this scheme. Unlike the latter wherein the beneficiary has to go to the ration shop for collecting 5 kg of cereals per month, under the former, the State Government will arrange for delivery of 4 kg of wheat flour and one kg rice at his/her doorsteps. Hopefully, he/she need not pay extra for getting 'wheat as flour' or receiving ration at home.

However, the delivery will be at a huge cost to the state exchequer by way of the Government having to pay vendors for picking up wheat from the ration shop, process it into flour and deliver back to the shop in round one, and then lifting the wheat flour plus rice and delivering the packet to each of the millions of beneficiaries at their homes in round two. This cost will have to be funded by the state as an 'additional subsidy' over and above what is given by the Centre.



THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM CANNOT BE SEEN IN ISOLATION FROM ITS SOURCE. IT HAS TO DO WITH PLENTY OF FOOD AVAILABLE 'VIRTUALLY FOR FREE' WHICH IGNITES THE GREED OF STAKEHOLDERS LEADING TO PILFERAGE AND OTHER ILLS. THIS FREE CULT HAS TO STOP

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)



Fundamentally, the Delhi scheme being the same as the Centre's, if the charge (read: 'ration mafia') leveled by Kejriwal holds for the latter then this will also hold for the former. Let us examine.

When the owner of a ration shop has in his stock wheat/rice meant for distribution to ration card holders (RCH) at ₹2/₹3 per kg, he may get a strong temptation to divert it to the open market where they can fetch a minimum of ₹25/₹35 per kg. He will take deliveries from the FCI godown in the name of a 'fictitious' RCH and sell all those quantities in the market raking in a clear bonanza of ₹23 and ₹32 per kg on wheat and rice, respectively. This indeed is happening on a massive scale all over India and has been recognized by the Prime Minister too.

To stem the rot, the Modi Government has taken several measures including the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme which has at its core, the e-POS machine at all ration shops. Under this modus operandi, supply of the subsidized food to the beneficiary is made conditional upon him/her authenticating - using Aadhaar - taking delivery with the sale getting registered on the e-POS machine. This is uploaded onto the web portal on a 'real time' basis which should help in detecting

dubious sales if any.

Since 2014, reportedly, the Government has weeded out close to 44 million bogus ration cards which are equivalent to 176 million beneficiaries (assuming four persons on a card) or nearly 20 per cent of 800 million covered under NFSA. This is a creditable achievement. However, considering the large-scale diversion which in some states could be as high as 50 per cent, there is still a long way to go.

The menace of bogus ration cards is only a part of a larger problem in the public distribution system (PDS) as pilferage could be happening even at other levels in the supply chain; for instance, at the rake unloading points and godowns of the FCI. Reports of the disappearance of food stocks worth about ₹20,000 crore in Punjab in 2016 is a glaring example. The misuse of budgetary resources also manifests in other forms such as inefficiencies in handling operations of FCI/other state agencies and inflated claims (including bogus claims) towards various expenses.

All this happens because, under the existing system, the agencies get reimbursement for the costs on an 'actual' basis. This indeed is the most serious flaw in the scheme. Camouflaged under the noble banner of 'food subsidy',

albeit, for the millions of poor, this often goes unchallenged even when irregularities are pointed out by Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

The scheme mooted by the Delhi Government does nothing to address this flaw. It will only create more avenues for middlemen to make money at the cost of the taxpayer. What is the way forward?

The solution to the problem cannot be seen in isolation from its source. It has to do with plenty of food available 'virtually for free' which ignites the greed of stakeholders leading to pilferage and other ills. This free cult has to stop.

The Government should unshackle the food supply and distribution chains. It should put the subsidy currently built into the sale price of food, say, ₹32 per kg on rice (cost: ₹35 per kg minus subsidized price: ₹3 per kg) or ₹160 per person per month (under the NFSA, he/she is eligible to get 5 kg in a month) in the account of a beneficiary who can use it to buy from wherever he/she chooses. This is the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of subsidy. While fully protecting the poor, it can help in curbing the colossal loot and wastage of public money that is germane to the existing dispensation.

Will Prime Minister Modi bite the bullet?

POINT-COUNTERPOINT

I HAVE REQUESTED THE LOK SABHA SPEAKER TO REVIEW HIS DECISION (OF ACCEPTING PK PARAS AS THE LJP LEADER IN THE HOUSE).
— LJP LEADER CHIRAG PASWAN



WE HAVE FORMED A NEW NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE PARTY. ALL OTHER PARTY WINGS HAVE BEEN DISBANDED.
— LJP FACTION LEADER PASHUPATI KUMAR PARAS



Re-inventing privacy in the digital market

Digital markets that emerged as State's attempts to ensure safety for lives of citizens now shape up benefitting organised and powerful corporates

The Covid-19 pandemic has facilitated the rapid expansion of e-commerce and digital trade, commerce, and financial transactions. At the same time, it put paid to socially interactive marketplaces and face-to-face contacts. Safety is the key concern that confines citizens to digital platforms and shrinks the space of personal liberty, social interaction, and human collectives and communities. One is reminded of Benjamin Franklin's warning, "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."

If in the name of safety, the 'social contract' is relinquished and it is replaced by the authority of the State to gov-



PRASENJIT BISWAS

(The author is a philosopher and political analyst based in Shillong. The views expressed are personal.)

ern the lives of private citizens in exchange for safety and security, it ends up benefiting the minions of the digital markets that set up a new normal for citizens.

What philosopher Michael Sandel characterized as a transition from market relations in socially necessary fields like health, education, and human security to an overall 'market society' is seemingly taking a digital turn during the pandemic. This picture of digital markets restrains choice-based consent and limits it to partially informed advantages. Digital economy tweaks choices, restrains access to essential resources, and dilutes ethical practices to market sentiments, even if it creates moral hazards. An AI-controlled collusive



behaviour on the part of human traders and customers is the outcome of uncontrolled digital deals that might tamper with the sovereign individuals.

A moral hazard of such a digital marketplace is the way the bot called Tay on Twitter, which learned abuses from the trolls, heaped it back upon a

feminist activist. Both State and non-state actors use botnets to surreptitiously control infected devices to hack, spy, and disable targets. As botnets cannot be attributed with intent, it helps to distance the actus reus of the perpetrator and allow them to escape with impunity. As a result, botmasters enjoy economic incentives to spread these bot networks that can be used for mining cryptocurrency, credit card fraud and distributed denial of services, etc. The bots can further position themselves as autonomous agents (AA) by camouflaging their point of origin, while they can feed their masters confidential information so that the targeted victim suffers definitive harm in multiple socio-economic parameters.

Given this default and design difficulty in fixing liability on cyber-attackers, there is a greater risk for liberty and freedom of speech of internet users. In a sense, cyberspace itself can be used to curtail and abridge various freedoms like privacy rights and the right to dissent by deploying surveillance and secret watch. Digital marketplaces facilitated a direct connection between cyberattack and surveillance, as personal data breaches are the route through which these actions are carried out. Though cyberattacks are illegal, surveillance assumes both legality and legitimacy by subjecting users to irrevocable meta consent as the new social contract in digital, virtual, and

cyberspaces. The ecosystem of the digital market, therefore, constructs the human agency and utilizes underlying technological structures to give meanings to both security and surveillance mechanisms. Digital markets create contested information spaces where the defense of users' rights versus the powers of governmental institutions remain locked up in a battle of legitimacy.

The digital marketplace makes it possible to reduce the human being to a node, or better, into datasets on its networks. The digital life of such a reduced person is endowed with nominal rights of privacy and liberty, as such rights are subjected to the arbitrary ordeal of policing, profiling, moralizing. This is how digi-

tal marketplaces make it impossible for the marginalized segments of society by making them 'illegible' in political and economic affairs, if not completely 'ineligible'.

In the name of safety and security concerns, privacy breaches have been normalized by thinning down the line between legal surveillance and illicit attacks. The growth of digital trading and the increase in economic transactions in cyberspace now provides both the final reason and justification for increased control by both state and non-state actors. Once the right to privacy is breached in this manner, the resultant insecurity defeats all ethical-legal injunctions that could have given healthy immunity to digital markets.

Ex-Prez Karzai says US failed in Af

AP ■ KABUL

Afghanistan's former President said on Sunday the United States came to his country to fight extremism and bring stability to his war-torn nation and is leaving nearly 20 years later having failed at both.

In an interview with *The Associated Press* just weeks before the last US and NATO troops leave Afghanistan, ending their forever war, Hamid Karzai said extremism is at its "highest point" and the departing troops are leaving behind a disaster.

"The international community came here 20 years ago with this clear objective of fighting extremism and bringing stability...But extremism is at the highest point today. So they have failed," he said.

Their legacy is a war-ravaged nation in "total disgrace and disaster."

"We recognise as Afghans all our failures, but what about the bigger forces and powers who came here for exactly that purpose? Where are they leaving us now?" he asked and answered: "In total disgrace and disaster."

Still, Karzai, who had a conflicted relationship with the US during his 13-year rule, wanted the troops to leave, saying Afghans were united behind an overwhelming desire for peace and needed now to take responsibility for their future.

"We will be better off without our military presence," he said. "I think we should defend our own country and look after our own lives...Their presence (has given us) what we have now...We don't want to continue with this misery and



Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai speaks during an interview with *The Associated Press* at his house, in Kabul, Afghanistan on Sunday. AP

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had been greatly diminished and bin Laden was dead. America no longer needed boots on the ground to fight the terrorist threats that might emanate from Afghanistan, he said.

Still, the US' attempts to bring about a political end to the decades of war have been elusive. It signed a deal with the Taliban in February 2020 to withdraw its troops in exchange for a Taliban promise to denounce terrorist groups and keep Afghanistan from again being a staging arena for attacks on America.

There is little evidence the Taliban are fulfilling their part of the bargain. The United Nations claims the Taliban and al-Qaida are still linked. The architect of the US deal and current US peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad says some progress has been made but without offering any details.

Karzai has had harsh words and uncompromising criticism of US war tactics over the past two decades in Afghanistan. Yet he has become a linchpin of sorts in a joint effort being launched by the US and Britain to get a quarrelsome Afghan leadership in Kabul united enough to talk peace with the Taliban. The insurgent group has shown little interest in negotiating and instead has stepped up its assaults on government positions.

The Taliban have made considerable strides since the May 1 start of the US and

NATO withdrawal. They have overrun dozens of districts, often negotiating their surrender from Afghan national security forces.

But in many instances the fighting has been intense. Just last week a brutal assault by the Taliban in northern Faryab province killed 22 of Afghanistan's elite commandos, led by a local hero Col. Sohrab Azimi, who was also killed and widely mourned.

"The desire of the Afghan people, overwhelmingly, all over the country is for peace," said Karzai, who despite being out of power since 2014 has lost little of his political influence and is most often at the centre of the country's political machinations.

Diplomats, Western officials, generals, tribal elders and politicians on all ends of Afghanistan's political spectrum regularly beat a path to Karzai's door in the heart of the Afghan capital.

As the final military withdrawal is already more than 50% complete, the need for a political settlement or even a visible path to an eventual settlement would seem to be taking on greater urgency even as Afghans by the thousands are seeking an exit.

They say they are frustrated by relentless corruption, marauding criminal gangs — some linked to the powerful warlords in Kabul — and worsening insecurity. Few see a future that is not violent.

Oz accused of 'excessive and unnecessary' secrecy

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia's suppression of information seen as pivotal to a free and open media is at the centre of accusations that the country has become one of the world's most secretive democracies.

Last week, a former Australian spy was convicted over his unconfirmed role as a whistleblower who revealed an espionage operation against the Government of East Timor.

It's the latest high-profile case in a national system in which secrecy laws, some dating back to the colonial era, are routinely used to suppress information. Police have also threatened to charge journalists who exposed war crime allegations against Australian special forces in Afghanistan, or bureaucrats' plan to allow an intelligence agency to spy on Australian citizens.

Australians don't even know the name of the former spy convicted Friday. The Canberra court registry listed him as "Witness K". His lawyer referred to him more respectfully as "Mr K" in court.

K spent the two-day hearing in a box constructed from black screens to hide his identity. The public and media were sent out of the courtroom when classified evidence was discussed, which was about half the time.

The only sign that anyone

was actually inside the box was when a voice said "guilty" after K was asked how he pleaded.

The Australian government has refused to comment on allegations that K led an Australian Secret Intelligence Service operation that bugged government offices in the East Timorese capital in 2004, during negotiations on the sharing of oil and gas revenue from the seabed that separates the two countries.

The government cancelled K's passport before he was to testify at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in 2014 in support of the East Timorese, who argued the treaty was invalid because Australia failed to negotiate in good faith by engaging in espionage.

There was no evidence heard in open court of a bugging operation, which media reported was conducted under the guise of a foreign aid programme.

K was given a three-month suspended sentence. If he'd been sent to prison, there were court orders designed to conceal his former espionage career by restricting what he could tell friends and associates to explain his predicament.

He had faced up to two years in prison. Since his offence, Australia has continued to tighten controls on secrecy, increasing the maximum sentence to 10 years.

Pak to complete fencing of border with Afghanistan by June end: Min

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

In the wake of looming uncertainty in Afghanistan due to the withdrawal of the US troops, Pakistan has announced that it would complete the fencing of its border with the war-torn country by the end of June.

Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed stated this on Saturday on the floor of the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The minister informed the house that 88 per cent work on the fencing of the border with Afghanistan has been completed and the "rest would be completed by June 30," he said. The fencing of the 2,640 km land border with Afghanistan began in March 2017 after a spate of attacks from across the porous border.

Pakistan shares a long and porous border with Afghanistan, which runs through mountainous terrain and is largely unpatrolled. The Durand Line was drawn by the British rulers in 1896 and is disputed by Afghanistan, which also resists Pakistani attempts to erect any border fence.

Rocket falls near Iraqi military base housing US troops

Baghdad: At least one Katyusha rocket fell close to the perimeter of a military base that hosts US troops in northern Iraq on Sunday, Iraq's military said. The rocket fell near the sprawling Ain al-Asad air base in western Anbar province but did not explode, the military said in a statement.

There was no significant damage, the statement said. An Iraqi security official said a fence at the perimeter of the base was minimally damaged. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

An investigation by security forces found the projectile had been launched from the nearby al-Baghdadi area. The attack is the latest targeting the American presence in Iraq. Rockets and, more recently, drones have targeted military bases hosting US troops and the US Embassy in the heavily fortified Green Zone in Baghdad. AP

Diplomats: Progress made in Vienna at Iran nuclear talks

AP ■ VIENNA

Top diplomats said Sunday further progress had been made at talks between Iran and global powers to try to negotiate and restore a landmark 2015 agreement to contain Iranian nuclear development that was later abandoned by the Trump administration.

They said that it was now up to the governments involved in the negotiations to make political decisions.

It was the first official meeting since Iran's hard-line judiciary chief won a landslide victory in the country's presidential election last week. Some diplomats expressed concern that Iran's election of Ebrahim Raisi as president could complicate a possible return to the agreement.

Enrique Mora, the European Union official who chaired the final meeting of the sixth round of talks between Russia, China, Germany, France, Britain and Iran, told reporters that "we are closer to a deal, but we are not still there."

"We have made progress on a number of technical issues," Mora added. "We have now more clarity on technical documents - all of them quite complex - and that clarity allows us to have also a great idea of what the political prob-



Iran's Governor to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Kazem Gharib Abadi, and political deputy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Abbas Araghchi, from left, leave the 'Grand Hotel Vienna' where closed-door nuclear talks took place in Vienna, Austria on Sunday. AP

lems are."

He did not further elaborate on the nature of the technical issues.

Top Russian representative Mikhail Ulyanov said the members of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, "took stock of the significant progress made at the Vienna talks, including at the sixth round, and decided to make a break to allow participants to consult with their capitals in preparation for what is supposed to be the final round of negotiations."

"There are a few controversial points which require political decisions. Apparently diplomatic efforts to find common language have been

almost fully exhausted. So the time has come for political decisions," Ulyanov added.

The nations involved in the negotiations have been trying to resolve the major outstanding issues on how to return the US into the landmark agreement, which then-US President Donald Trump pulled Washington out of unilaterally in 2018. Trump also restored and augmented sanctions to try to force Iran into renegotiating the pact with more concessions.

Ulyanov said that after heading back to report on the talks' results to their respective governments, he expected the diplomats to return for the final round of talks in Vienna in 10 days or by mid-July.

Israeli PM: World powers must wake up on Iran nuke deal

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Sunday opened his first Cabinet meeting since swearing in his new coalition Government last week with a condemnation of the new Iranian president. He said Iran's presidential election was a sign for world powers to "wake up" before returning to a nuclear agreement with Tehran.

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief, Ebrahim Raisi, was elected Saturday with 62% of the vote amid a historically low voter turnout. He is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Raisi has not commented specifically on the event.

Bennett said at the Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem that "of all the people that (Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali) Khamenei could have chosen, he chose the hangman of Tehran, the man infamous among Iranians and across the world for leading the death committees that executed thousands of innocent Iranian citizens throughout the years."

Iran and world powers resumed indirect talks in Vienna on Sunday to resurrect Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal. AP

Libyan guards accused of assaulting minors

Cairo: When Libyan security forces rescued her earlier this year, the young Somali woman thought it would be the end of her suffering. For more than two years, she had been imprisoned and sexually abused by human traffickers notorious for extorting, torturing and assaulting migrants like her trying to reach Europe.

Instead, the 17-year-old said, the sexual assaults against her have continued, only now by guards at the government-run center in the Libyan capital Tripoli where they are being kept. She and four other Somali teenagers undergoing similar abuses are pleading to be released from the Shara al-Zawiya detention center. It is one of a network of centers run by Libya's Department for Combating Illegal Immigration, or DCIM, which is supported by the European Union in its campaign to build Libya into a bulwark against mainly African migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

"While it is not the first time I suffer from sexual attacks, this is more painful as it was by the people who should protect us," the 17-year-old said, speaking to *The Associated Press* by a smuggled mobile phone. AP

GLOBE TROTTER

LANDSLIDES, FLOODS KILL 18 IN NEPAL
Kathmandu: At least 18 people have been killed due to landslides and floods triggered by heavy rain across Nepal last week, while 21 others went missing, police said on Sunday.

CRASH, 'LIKELY' DUE TO STORM, KILLS 12 IN US
Atlanta: Tropical Depression Claudette claimed 12 lives in Alabama as the storm swept across the southeastern US, causing flash flooding and spawning tornadoes that destroyed dozens of homes.

CHINA: 1 BN VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED
Beijing: China on Sunday said it has administered over one billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines in the country. China has accelerated its pace of free Covid-19 vaccinations for the whole nation since late March and administered a billion doses by Saturday, the National Health Commission (NHC) said.

BRAZIL TOPS 5L DEATHS, PROTESTS AGAINST PREZ
Rio De Janeiro: Anti-Govt protesters took to the streets in more than a score of cities across Brazil on Saturday as the nation's confirmed death toll from Covid-19 soared past half a million — a tragedy many critics blame on President Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to minimise the disease. Thousands gathered in downtown Rio de Janeiro.

FORM G INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (Under Regulation 36A (1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Regulations, 2016) (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016	
Relevant particulars	
1. Name of the corporate debtor	City Mart Maintenance Services Private Limited
2. Date of Incorporation of Corporate Debtor	23/01/2008
3. Authority under which Corporate Debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies-Delhi
4. Corporate identity number / limited liability identification number of corporate debtor	U90309DL2008PTC173046
5. Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of the Corporate Debtor	Registered Office ("R/O"): Kt. No. 300, Gopi Ram Building, Sutanpur Village, New Delhi, South Delhi-110030, India
6. Insolvency commencement date in respect of Corporate Debtor	18.03.2021
7. Date of invitation of expression of interest	21.06.2021
8. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code is available at	The Committee of Creditors did not prescribe the any eligibility criteria for Resolution Applicant under Section 25(2)(h) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
9. Norms of ineligibility applicable under section 29A are available at:	Available on the website of IBI (https://www.ibi.gov.in/legal-framework/). Please refer to the latest version of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Further clarification can be sought by writing an email at ciip.deltatronics@gmail.com
10. Last date for receipt of expression of interest	06.07.2021
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	16.07.2021
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	21.07.2021
13. Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	31.07.2021
14. Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	21.07.2021
15. Manner of obtaining request for resolution plan, evaluation matrix, information memorandum and further information	Will be shared in electronic form with the eligible prospective resolution applicants.
16. Last date for submission of resolution plans	30.08.2021
17. Manner of submitting resolution plans to resolution professional	As per Clause No. 17.9 of the Request For Resolution Plan. RFRP is to be issued as per column no. 14 above.
18. Estimated date for submission of resolution plan to the Adjudicating Authority for approval	29.09.2021
19. Name and registration number of the resolution professional	Santosh Sharma Reg. No. IB/PA-002/PA-000898/2019-2020/12842
20. Name, Address and e-mail of the resolution professional, as registered with the Board	Address: Rajaraj Sharma G/129, Near Prakash Dairy, Lodhi Morcha, Sushdara, New Delhi-110032 Email: sci.santoshsharma@gmail.com
21. Address and email to be used for correspondence with the resolution professional	Address: Unit No. 110, First Floor, JMD Pacific Square, Sector 15, Part I, Gurugram, Haryana-122001 Email: ciip.astarism@gmail.com
22. Further Details are available at or with	Further details can be sought by writing an email at ciip.astarism@gmail.com . More specifically the detailed EOI can be sought from the Resolution Professional by writing an email at ciip.deltatronics@gmail.com
23. Date of publication of Form G	21.06.2021

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/ Dankuni/E-Procurement/21-22/10 Dated: 17.06.2021. PCMM/CLW/DKAE on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is/are for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/ likely suppliers are requested to look up the website www.ireps.gov.in. These are E-Tenders; only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. For detailed instructions please refer to website: **SI; Tender No.; Description of Stores; Qty.; Due On; Tender Cost; [24]; 34212977; Microprocessor based Electronic Speed Indicating and Recording System with 01 (one) no. Evaluation Software for every 10 (ten) sets of Speedometers (without Memory Card Reader Unit & Communication Cable for master to slave) for WAG-9/WAP-7 & WAP-5 Locomotives to RDSO Specn. No. E.LRS/SPEC/SPM/0002, REV-4 or latest; As Per Tender Doc.; 23.07.2021; 0.00. [25]; 34212565; Contactor Filter ON/OFF and Adaption [Contactor Type-I] to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0086/A or latest; As Per Tender Doc.; 13.07.2021; 0.00. [26]; 34212649; Set of Metallic Pipes for WAG-9HC/WAP-7/WAP-5 Locomotives as per Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0121/G OR LATEST (Set Details as per annexure uploaded); As Per Tender Doc.; 19.07.2021; 0.00. [27]; 34212930; Set of Screw Type Terminal Block for WAG-9HC AND WAP-5 Locomotives as per Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0645/F or latest (Set Details as per annexure uploaded); As Per Tender Doc.; 19.07.2021; 0.00. [28]; 34212663; (1) Set of Bracket for WAG-9HC & WAP-7 For Panel Section as per CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0121/G or latest. (Set Details as per Annexure uploaded); (2) Set of Bracket for WAG-9HC & WAP-7 for Non-Panel Section as per CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0121/G OR LATEST. (Set Details as per Annexure uploaded); (3) Set of Bracket for WAG-9HC & WAP-7, consisting of 4 items (Type-6, 9, 11 & 12) for Dankuni to CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0112/G or latest. (Set Details as per Annexure uploaded); As Per Tender Doc.; 20.07.2021; 0.00. [29]; 34212701; (1) Warning Plate (Aluminium) as per CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0450/F. (2) Angle Plate (Aluminium) Type-1 as per CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0450/F. (3) Angle Plate (Aluminium) Type-2 as per CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0450/F. (4) Base Plate (Aluminium) Type-13 as per CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0450/F; As per Tender Doc.; 21.07.2021; 0.00.**

Principal Chief Materials Manager.
CLW, Dankuni

[30]; 34212673; Set of Cover for WAG-9/WAP-7 to CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0139/D or latest. (Set Details as per Annexure uploaded); As per Tender Doc.; 22.07.2021; 0.00. [31]; 34212720; Set of Pipe Saddle for WAG-9/WAP-7 LOCO to CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0038/E or latest (Set Details as per annexure uploaded); As per Tender Doc.; 22.07.2021; 0.00. [32]; 34212563; Buzzer Over speed/Fire Alarm/Vigilance Warning to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0078/B or Latest; As per Tender Doc.; 23.07.2021; 0.00. [33]; 34212661; Set of Cable Disconnection TM-1-TM-6 as per Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0128/C; As per Tender Doc.; 23.07.2021; 0.00. [34]; 34212533; Earthing Choke as per CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0018/B or Latest; As per Tender Doc.; 26.07.2021; 0.00. [35]; 34212769; Minimum Voltage Relay in SB1 to Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0060/B; As per Tender Doc.; 09.08.2021; 0.00. [36]; 34212725; Aluminium Cable Cleat For Traction Motor for WAG-9 and WAP-7 to Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0039/F; As per Tender Doc.; 06.08.2021; 0.00. [37]; 34212560; Earth Fault Relay Harmonic Filter/Aux. Converter to Spec. No. CLW/ES/3/0090/C; As per Tender Doc.; 06.08.2021; 0.00. [38]; 34212681; (1) Exp. Insulated Tube 11/22 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (2) Exp. Insulated Tube 30/52 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (3) Exp. Insulated Tube 8/15 PA to CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (4) Exp. Insulated Tube 18/32 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (5) Exp. Insulated Tube 10/15 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (6) Exp. Insulated Tube 14/20 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (7) Exp. Insulated Tube 22/35 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (8) Exp. Insulated Tube 28/40 PA as per CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q. (9) Exp. Insulated Tube 70/91 PA to CLW's Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0154/Q; As per Tender Doc.; 23.08.2021; 0.00. [39]; 34212508; Scavenger Resistance to TM/Oil Cooling Unit including Motor (Wound with Corona Blower to TM) to CLW Specification No CLW/ES/3/0021/I/I or latest and RDSO/SPEC/NE-10/3/09 (MOTOR) with Amendment Nos 01, 02, 03, 04 & 05 or latest; As per Tender Doc.; 12.07.2021; 0.00. [40]; 34212625; Oil Pump with Motor for Transformer to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0106/F or latest & RDSO/SPEC/E-10/3/09(MOTOR) with Amendment Nos. 01, 02, 03, 04 & 05 or latest; As per Tender Doc.; 16.07.2021; 0.00.

Principal Chief Materials Manager.
CLW, Dankuni

Jordan's unprecedented palace drama moves to the courtroom

AP ■ AMMAN (JORDAN)

Jordan's version of a trial of the century gets under way Monday when a relative of King Abdullah II and a former chief of the royal court are to be ushered into the defendants' cage at the state security court to face charges of sedition and incitement.

They are accused of conspiring with a senior royal, Prince Hamzah, a half-brother of the king - to foment unrest against the monarch while soliciting foreign help.

The palace drama erupted into the open in early April, when Hamzah was placed under house arrest. It has since broken taboos in Jordan and sent jitters through foreign capitals, with Western powers rallying behind Abdullah, an indispensable ally in an unstable region.

"As far as I know, there has not been a case this big in the history of Jordan," said defense lawyer Ala Khasawneh. The state news agency Petra said the trial starts Monday.

The 41-year-old Hamzah is the central figure, though he is not facing charges. In clashing narratives, he is either a champion of ordinary Jordanians suffering from economic mismanagement and corruption, or a disgruntled royal who never forgave Abdullah for taking away his title of crown prince in 2004 in favour of the king's oldest son.

The indictment, leaked to state-linked media, alleges Hamzah "was determined to achieve his personal ambition" of becoming king. It says the prince and the defendants — Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, a royal, and Bassem Awadallah, a former royal adviser — conspired to stir discontent.

Security agencies began monitoring them in mid-March, at a time of public uproar over an oxygen outage at a hospital in the town of Salt that killed eight coronavirus patients. Hamzah met with bereaved families just after the king visited Salt.

Govt open to more measures to boost economy: CEA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government is open to coming out with more measures to boost the economy which has been hit by the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, says Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) K V Subramanian.

He, however, added that the demand for a fresh stimulus package has to be considered against the backdrop of a host of initiatives taken by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget for 2021-22 presented in February.

The Chief Economic Advisor was responding to a suggestion made by some industry bodies that the government needed to come out with a Rs 3 lakh crore stimulus package to boost the economy which was badly hit by the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic in April-May. According to an assessment by the Reserve Bank, the second wave has cost the nation about Rs 2 lakh crore in terms of output loss.

"Like last year, we do remain very open to coming up with more measures as well...But I think it is really important to take into account the big differences

between last year and this year when we talk about stimulus," he told PTI in an interview.

Elaborating his point, the CEA said that unlike the previous budget which was framed before the pandemic, the 2021 budget was presented amid the pandemic and had already incorporated significant fiscal expansion.

The focus is particularly on infrastructure spending which leads to construction activity and subsequently creation of jobs in the informal sector and demand generation, he said. It was witnessed during the January-March quarter of the last financial year, he added.

The significant capital spending by the government led to a 15 per cent increase in the construction sector in the fourth quarter and the gross fixed capital formation to GDP surged to 34 per cent, the highest in the last six years.

Emphasising that the final objective is to ensure that the economic recovery gathers pace, he said, the government will do whatever is necessary to ensure that.

With regard to food security for the poor, he said, the government has already

extended the free food programme for 80 crore population till November.

The extension of PM Garib Kalyan Yojana would cost about Rs 70,000 crore, he said, adding free vaccination for all is another important economic measure.

"Vaccine as you would appreciate is by far the most important from the perspective to get back into the path of economic recovery," he said.

On the effect of the second wave on growth, Subramanian said, there will be some impact but it is not likely to be very large.

The Economic Survey 2020-21 released in January this year had projected GDP growth of 11 per cent during the current financial year ending March 2022.

India's economy contracted by less-than-expected 7.3 per cent in the fiscal year ended in March 2021 after growth rate picked up in the fourth quarter, just before the world's worst outbreak of coronavirus infections hit the country.

The GDP print was better than expected contraction of 8 per cent for 2020-21 as projected by the Economic Survey.

Sebi reconstitutes Takeover Panel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has reconstituted its Takeover Panel, which looks into the applications seeking exemption from the mandatory open offer that an acquirer needs to make to minority shareholders.

The regulator has appointed N Venkatram MD and CEO, Deloitte India as the new member of the Takeover Panel, latest update with Sebi showed.

The panel, chaired by N K Sodhi, the former Chief Justice of the High Courts of Karnataka and Kerala, makes its recommendations to Sebi on such applications after which the regulator gives an opportunity to concerned parties before passing an order.

Sodhi was also the former presiding officer of the Securities Appellate Tribunal.

The other members of the panel are Darius Khambata (former advocate general, Maharashtra) and Thomas Mathew T (former chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India).

Sebi had first constituted a four-member Takeover Panel in November 2007, under chairmanship of former Bank of Baroda chairman K Kannan.

Draft Cabinet note floated for 100% FDI in oil PSUs approved for disinvestment: Sources



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Commerce and Industry Ministry has floated a draft Cabinet note seeking inter-ministerial views on a proposal to allow up to 100 per cent foreign investment under automatic route in oil and gas PSUs, which have an 'in-principle' approval for disinvestment, sources said.

The move, if approved by the Union Cabinet, would facilitate privatisation of India's second biggest oil refiner Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL).

The government is privatising BPCL and is selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in the company.

Sources said that as per the draft note, a new clause would be added in the FDI policy under the petroleum and natural gas sector.

According to the proposal, foreign investment up to 100

per cent under the automatic route would be allowed in cases where an 'in-principle' approval for disinvestment of a PSU has been granted by the government.

For BPCL privatisation, mining-to-oil conglomerate Vedanta had put in an expression of interest (EOI) for buying the government's 52.98 per cent stake in the PSU. The other two bidders are said to be global funds, one of them being Apollo Global Management.

After collating the views, the commerce and industry ministry would seek approval of the union cabinet on the proposal.

At present, only 49 per cent FDI is permitted through automatic route in petroleum refining by the public sector undertakings (PSU), without any disinvestment or dilution of domestic equity in the existing PSUs.

Air India has time till mid-July to challenge Cairn lawsuit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India has time till mid-July to challenge the lawsuit filed by Britain's Cairn Energy PLC demanding that a US federal court force the airline to pay a \$1.26 billion arbitration award it had won against the Indian Government in December last year, sources said.

Air India is controlled by the Indian Government so much that they are 'alter egos', Cairn had said in the lawsuit filed with the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. The court should hold the airline company liable for the arbitration award, the company had said.

A three-member international arbitration tribunal that consisted of one judge appointed by India had unanimously in December overturned levy of taxes on Cairn retrospectively and ordered refund of shares sold, dividend confiscated and tax refunds withheld to recover such demand.

The government of India, despite participating in the arbitration proceeding over four years, has not accepted the award and has filed a 'setting aside' petition in a court in The Netherlands - the seat of the

arbitration.

With Cairn seeking to recover the award from state-owned entities such as Air India, the government has said it will contest any enforcement. Air India has time till mid-July to file a plea contesting Cairn lawsuit, three sources aware of the matter said.

The airline, which is in the process of being privatised, is likely to argue that it is a separate entity and not the alter ego of the Indian government and cannot be forced to pay for any liability of the government, they said.

Air India spokesperson declined to comment on the story.

Cairn has identified USD 70 billion of Indian assets overseas for potential seizure to collect award, which now totals to USD 1.72 billion after including interest and penalty.

The assets identified range from Air India's planes to vessels belonging to the Shipping Corporation of India, and properties owned by state banks to oil and gas cargoes of PSUs, the sources said.

These assets are across several jurisdictions, they said without giving further details.

Petrol crosses ₹97 in Delhi, diesel nears ₹88 after another price hike

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price in the national capital crossed ₹97 a litre and diesel neared ₹88 after fuel prices were raised yet again.

Petrol price was hiked by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 28 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The hike -- 27th in seven weeks -- pushed fuel prices across the country to new historic highs.

In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of ₹97.22 a litre, while diesel is now priced at Rs 87.97 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges.

And because of this, petrol retails at over Rs 100 per litre mark in eight states and union territories -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

Among the metros, petrol is already above Rs 100 in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

In Mumbai, petrol now costs Rs 103.36 a litre and diesel comes for Rs 95.44.

Sebi bars PNB Housing shareholders from voting on ₹4,000 cr-Carlyle deal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a rare regulatory move, Sebi has restrained PNB Housing Finance from going ahead with shareholders' voting on the proposed ₹4,000 crore deal with Carlyle group and directed the company to carry out the valuation process as per the relevant legal provisions.

The watchdog said the resolution regarding the deal, which was to be put for shareholders' vote on June 22, was "ultra-vires" of the company's Articles of Association (AoA).

The transaction, which has come under the lens of Sebi and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) following concerns raised in certain quarters, including by a proxy advisory firm, would eventually see private equity major Carlyle group taking control of PNB Housing Finance, which is a subsidiary of Punjab National Bank.

The company's meeting is scheduled for Tuesday (June 22) to take up the matter for approval of the shareholders.

"The current resolution bearing item no. 1 (issue of securities of the company and matters related therewith) of EGM notice dated May, 31,

2021 is ultra-vires of AOA and shall not be acted upon until the company undertakes the valuation of shares as prescribed under 19(2) of AOA, for purpose of preferential allotment, from an independent registered valuer as per the provisions of applicable laws," PNB Housing Finance said in a late night filing referring to Sebi letter to ensure compliance.

The company, promoted by PNB, said it had received the letter from Sebi on June 18, 2021, calling upon the company to comply with the legal provisions in the matter. The said report shall be considered by the company's board while deciding on the preferential issue of shares and warrants, Sebi has asked.

"The company and its board of directors have considered the Sebi letter, and continue to believe that the company has acted in compliance with all relevant applicable laws, including the applicable pricing regulations prescribed by Sebi, and the AOA of the company, and that such preferential allotment is in the best interests of the company, its shareholders and all relevant stakeholders," PNB Housing Finance said in the filing.

FPIs infused ₹13 k cr in Indian markets in June so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pumped in a net ₹13,667 crore so far in June as Indian markets continued to remain attractive to overseas investors.

However, market experts noted that FPIs withdrew money from Indian equities this week.

According to depositories data, FPIs invested ₹15,312 crore in equities between June 1 and June 18.

"The US Federal Reserve has signalled that it will start raising interest rates in 2023. This caused a sell-off on a global level that caused some money to be withdrawn from Indian equities," said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.

However, India is not a destination where investors put in money based on short-term trends.

India has always been an attractive spot for FPIs and these short-term trends will have short-term effects only, he added.

In the longer horizon, India will continue to get invest-

ments as its economy continues to expand, Jain further said.

"Of late, INR depreciation is attracting incremental buying interest in IT stocks," noted VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

During the same period, overseas investors withdrew Rs 1,645 crore from the debt segment.

The total net inflow stood at Rs 13,667 crore.

Prior to this, they had pulled out Rs 2,666 crore in May and Rs 9,435 crore in April.

"The US Fed's hawkish statement that it might raise interest rates much earlier than assumed could further adversely impact flows into Indian debt markets," said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director-manager research, Morningstar India.

Regarding other emerging markets, Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice president, equity technical research at Kotak Securities, said that most of them have seen FPI inflows this month to date except for Taiwan and South Korea.

Aloe vera chemical may be of use in memory chips: IIT-Indore study

PTI ■ INDORE

A study by the Indian Institute of Technology Indore in Madhya Pradesh has found that aloe vera has an "electronic memory effect chemical" that may be useful in making memory chips and other data storage devices, an official from the premier facility said on Sunday.

The study was carried out by the Materials and Device (MAD) laboratory of the institution's physics department, he said.

"As part of our study, we used electric current in aloe vera fruit juice, which brought forth that it has an electronic memory effect chemical, and as per need, its conductivity can be increased and decreased," Dr Rajesh Kumar, Associate Professor of the Physics Department of IIT Indore told PTI on Sunday.

"Synthetic chemicals are used for making data storage devices like memory chips. If experts on the subject go for in-depth research, the natural chemical found in aloe vera fruit juice might open up a new vista in place of synthetic chemicals with which these devices are made," he informed.

Kumar said the study was conducted by the physics department's Materials & Device (MAD) laboratory with the participation of PhD student Tanushree Ghosh along with Suchita Kandpal, Chanchal Rani, Manushree Tanwar, Devesh Kumar Pathak and Anjali Choudhary.

Labour Ministry mulls extending ABRY deadline till March 2022 to boost fresh hiring

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Labour and Employment is considering extending the timeline of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY) till March next year from the existing June 30, in a bid to boost fresh hiring in the country amid the pandemic, said sources.

Under the ABRY approved by the Union Cabinet in December last year, the Government pays mandatory employees provident fund contributions of workers as well as employers for new recruits for a period of two years.

Under the scheme with an outlay of Rs 22,810 crore, workers recruited from October 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021, were covered.

"The Ministry of Labour and Employment is in the process of circulating a Cabinet proposal for extending the timeline for ABRY till March 2022," sources told PTI.

The source explained that about 21 lakh new recruits are benefited so far which is far less than government's expectation of 58.5 lakh.

Therefore, the labour ministry would push for extending the deadline of the scheme till March next year as the allocation of funds for the scheme was done keeping in mind the 58.5 lakh beneficiaries, the source added.

During the pandemic, the government took a series of steps to boost employment generation and to give relief to workers grappling with job loss and pay cuts.

The ABRY was one of those measures. Government had allocated Rs 22,810 crore for the entire period of implementation of the scheme from 2020 to 2023.

Demand for talent will be key dependency for growth amid rapid digital shift: Rishad Premji

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The demand for talent will outpace supply and become a "key dependency" for growth as enterprises globally accelerate digital adoption with virtual, Wipro Chairman Rishad Premji said.

The Bengaluru-based company has effected "bold changes" in the last six months to help serve customers better and is well-positioned to leverage as well as enable digital transformations for its clients.

Premji said in the company's annual report for FY21.

The former Nasscom chairman noted that technology is often at the forefront of economic recovery, but especially now, as the pandemic precipitated structural changes across industries and challenged established ways of working.

Whether it is digital commerce, online education, or telemedicine, technology-enabled business models have emerged across the board, with cloud technology as the cornerstone of this transformation, he added.

"With the rapid shift to digital, the demand for talent will outpace supply, and become a key dependency for growth. Already we see new delivery models, such as 'work from anywhere' and

'Crowdsourcing', become the mainstay. We expect virtual, remote, community-based, and distributed work models to be the future of work," Premji said.

He added that as vaccination efforts ramp up globally and economies start seeing a rebound, clients keen to invest in and accelerate their digital transformation and the key to success for IT players would be "to respond to this opportunity with speed and agility".

Premji said the company had triggered its business continuity plans to quickly enable remote working as the pandemic broke out, and less than 3 per cent of its global workforce currently is working from office.

"We have settled well into this new way of working and have continued to make our customers successful. We enjoy their confidence, and I have no doubt that a hybrid model may well be how we work in the future," he added.

Premji said global cooperation is critical, especially in view of the pandemic and that vaccines for COVID-19 are one of the greatest examples of collaboration and pioneering science.

"We must now work to scale the supply chain, build mechanisms for equitable distribution and drive an effi-

cient administration for these life-saving vaccines," he added.

Rishad, who took over as chairman in 2019 succeeding his father Azim Premji, said Wipro Ltd, Wipro Enterprises and Azim Premji Foundation, together committed about Rs 1,125 crore (about USD 150 million) in April 2020, towards tackling the unprecedented health and humanitarian crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

"Over the past 12 months, we have supported more than 1,500 projects covering humanitarian aid, integrated healthcare support, and livelihood regeneration. Cumulatively, we have reached out directly to more than 18 million people through our coordinated and comprehensive COVID-19 response, to provide humanitarian aid and help with livelihood regeneration," he said.

For employees, the company has undertaken a number of initiatives, including providing COVID-19 Isolation Care centres for staff and their families, partnering with major hospitals to provide medical support to critically ill employees, additional medical reimbursement and leaves related to COVID-19, as well as vaccination at campuses.

Life insurers may see short-term pressure on profitability due to pandemic: ICICI Pru Life

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic life insurance industry may see pressure on its profitability in the short-term as the coronavirus pandemic has cast doubt on the certainty related to morbidity and mortality in the country, ICICI Prudential Life said in its annual report.

India became an epicentre with a spike in cases in the second wave of the pandemic, amidst shortage in medical supplies. There are concerns about the possibility of a third wave hitting the country, ICICI Prudential Life said in its annual report for 2020-21.

In FY21, the life insurance industry reported a modest 3 per cent growth in new business premium, said the report, adding the industry continues to get a higher share of household savings because of the increased attractiveness of life insurance savings products, the unique proposition of protection and annuity products among others.

"In the short-term, the profitability of the insurance industry is expected to be an area of concern given the increase in mortality and morbidity rates induced by the pandemic. Even more

than a year after the pandemic first struck, there continues to be significant uncertainty regarding its absolute impact on mortality and morbidity experience," the insurer said.

The pandemic has posed multiple challenges for the Indian life insurers. The onset of the pandemic saw a sharp fall in equity prices, while interest rates also declined.

Insurers have exposure to equities in unit-linked and participating businesses. Thus interest rate movements impact their liabilities and guarantees based schemes. While, a credit risk can impact their investments made incorporates.

The sharp movements in markets, coupled with any asset liability mismatches that insurers may have, can impact the solvency position.

The report said there are emerging risks related to environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues on the insurance industry of which climate change is a bigger challenge.

Apart from climate change, there are emerging risks associated with public health trends such as increase in obesity related disorders and demographic changes such as population urbanisation and ageing, said the

report.

Industry's growth even during the pandemic shows a promising future for the domestic life insurance sector, however, the pandemic has also exposed the gap in the protection gap in the country, said the report.

The number of Covid-19 related death claims is fraction of the number of overall lives lost, highlighting the vulnerability of the families, ICICI Pru Life said.

The insurer said it has become imperative for every working individual to add life insurance as a key ingredient of financial planning.

During the year, the pandemic amplified the need for life insurance among people, leading to the category slowly moving from being a "push product" to a "nudge product", ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said.

The company's total premium income during FY21 was Rs 35,733 crore of which Rs 13,032 crore was new business premium.

"On the back of the risk-averse behaviour of our customers, there was considerable interest for traditional long-term savings products which grew by 61.2 per cent for the year," said the insurer.

DTPA says many teething problems in new IT portal

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Direct Taxes Professionals Associations (DTPA) claimed that many tax professionals are facing numerous problems or teething issues in the revamped Income Tax portal which was launched recently.

The DTPA in a letter to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman claimed about 40 problems in the new income tax portal for filing of returns.

The DTPA has also urged the Finance Minister to extend by two months date for payment of tax under Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme as also date for furnishing TDS/TCS statements and for other compliance which are due by June 30 as offices are non-functional in most states due to COVID-19 pandemic.

DTPA Representation Committee chairman Narayan Jain said, "No option for Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme (VSV) altogether despite the scheme is still on for payments, unable to file TDS/TCS statements, form 10A for making application for fresh registration of societies and trusts etc, under Sec 12AB and 80G not also available in

this portal while its last date is June 30."

He told PTI that "IT acknowledgements and Intimation under Sec 143(1) cannot be downloaded, DIN Number is not getting auto-populated, IT payment challan numbers not getting validated, digital signature certificate not getting registered or updated, new incorporated companies or firms are not able to get registered, e-proceedings tab not working".

DTPA president NK Goyal said that many taxpayers have got notices from National Faceless Assessment Officers and Faceless CIT (Appeal) but taxpayers are unable to comply in the absence of e-proceeding tab in the portal.

Taxpayers are also unable to file Income Tax Returns for AY 2020-21 and of earlier years as there is no facility or options even for furnishing income tax return under Sec 148 or making application against issuance of notices u/s 148, Goyal claimed.

Professional urged the government to resolve these issues immediately as the date for compliance is approaching.



Bollywood
 'I am mindful of the fact that I feel centered within my own self.'
 —Malaika Arora Khan

<https://www.dailypioneer.com/vivacity/>

WALK INTO THE FUTURE

RACHNA AGGARWAL ideates on changes the post-pandemic world's entertainment sector can adopt to ensure the health of its patrons while retaining the joy of an outing

Over the past year, we have invariably seen the decline of the entertainment real estate industry due to the pandemic. As people are turning to the internet to help fill the void, OTT platforms are booming, and theatres and cinema halls have been left abandoned, grim and desolate. All other service sectors like salons and restaurants are opening up, but entertainment zones remain at the bottom of the list, given the crowds that throng these places, leaving them jam-packed and gasping for air.

Industry experts have been trying to put together new rules for theatres that help offset the adverse effect of the pandemic by distancing people through strategic and well-planned seating. One or two seats left between each occupied seat compel people to stay at a distance. However, when families go out to entertain, their sole purpose is to spend time together instead of being alienated, thereby failing the distancing approach. Entertainment spaces are social areas and a system that tries to separate people becomes the antithesis of its typology. Moreover, ailments similar to COVID-19 in the years to come will remain highly infectious and airborne. So, if one needs to rethink



entertainment design, one needs to go way beyond this basic concept.

Bearing in mind the collapse and turmoil caused by the malady in entertainment industries, one can't expect a sweeping upgrade in these spaces at the moment. Therefore, allotting more area per person is not an option, as it has substantial cost repercussions. How, then, can one stay in the domain of cost-effectiveness and yet keep the spaces safe during these unprecedented times?

When we think of virus transmission, the first thing that comes to our mind is the spread caused by coming in close contact with someone or touching surfaces which have been in contact with someone else who was infected. A practical solution to keep surfaces touch-free and uncontaminated is automation. Sensors and automation technology must be integrated within every micro-system, allowing people to move through doors and

carry out mundane tasks without having to lay a finger on any object. One such example is washrooms. When we open the door to a restroom, we need to press the push-plate that has also been touched by many others, making it a virus hotspot. A door that senses you and opens on its own and sanitary fixtures that can function with the wave of a hand can dramatically reduce virus transmission and enable hygienic safety to a large extent.

Nonetheless, some surfaces like seating upholstery or carpets can't be left untouched. To optimise their hygiene value, we need to become mindful of the specifications of the materials we use. Stainless steel was considered a hero material for clean, hygienic spaces, employed everywhere from small door handles to bulkier furniture pieces. The most sought-after metal has now ironically become one of the least preferable ones, quickly being replaced by alternatives to avoid creating habitable sur-

faces for the virus. Swinging away from steel surfaces and carpet materials that are a breeding ground for biological entities, we need to shift our focus towards materials like Flotex, which have a high surface tension, making it difficult to absorb any particles. An alternative is utilising surfaces that can be sanitised in a jiffy at regular intervals. Laminate companies are already leading in the race with newer technologies that enable such safe resources.

The air in urban cities was previously chock-full with pollutants, and the influx of the virus added to the problems, making it much worse. Air purification systems which regulate the PM level of air are now passé; we must upgrade to technologies that can eliminate biological aerosol contents from the air. Air conditioning will become a crucial element since controlling the viral load suspended in these enclosed spaces is tricky when people spend several hours inside the room. Owing to several hazardous accidents that have occurred in the past, the fire safety certification has become a compulsion for all buildings to ensure public safety. The recent turn of events will bring in a 'new norm' wherein air quality certification will be required to gain people's confidence and trust.

Perhaps, a technology that can accommodate social interaction as well as social distancing within the same realm, is a 'bubble' or 'pod system' that can be installed for families to spend

some leisure time while remaining confined within their micro-environments. Similar to this concept is the idea of a drive-in cinema from yesteryear that has begun trending again. But it does not come without cons, as these cinemas take up ample area and only function in a limited capacity for a limited number of hours during the day.

Another way to relook entertainment design is to change how we perceive these spaces. In the prosaic model, we are accustomed to enclosed rooms that are glammed-up with artificial mood lighting. Breaking this conventional style, lobbies can be redesigned into porous structures that open up to the outside world, allowing breeze and sunlight to wash the interiors. It ultimately boils down to people's choice — whether they prefer open, airy spaces or enclosed ones.

While the world is struggling to release itself from the clasp of the pandemic, people are trying to find newer ways to go out, interact and redeem the lifestyles they had in the pre-pandemic times. While eradicating the deadly disease stays a far-fetched dream, there will be innovations and ideas galore to restore our entertainment spaces to their lived-up state, bustling with people and energy that once offered us some recreational pleasures...

(The spokesperson is founder and design ideator of an award-winning architectural and interior design firm.)

WEBBED



SAMANTAR S2

S1 of this original Marathi series revolved around the life of Kumar Mahajan, who realises that he is living a life that some other man named Sudarshan Chakrapani has already lived. After S1 ended in a cliff hanger, watch the forthcoming season to know what happens next. It releases on June 24 on MX Player.



SEPTEMBER MORNINGS

The life of a transwoman who has just gained her independence takes an unexpected turn when an unknown son she had with a woman 10 years ago shows up out of the blue. This series releases on June 25 on Amazon Prime.



BOSCH S7

Based on Michael Connelly's best-selling novel *The Burning Room*, the final season of Bosch puts Detective Harry Bosch's famous motto center stage — "Everybody counts or nobody counts." Releases on June 25 on Amazon Prime.

With fame comes great sacrifices

While many of us fancy the idea of being a Bollywood actor, it's definitely not as easy as it looks on the outside. By **TEAM VIVA**

Our B-town stars devote an incredible amount of hardwork and dedication to do justice to their on-screen characters. Celebrating the zeal of such film stars, today we list down 4 Bollywood actors who underwent major physical transformation for their roles. Take a look...

ADITYA ROY KAPUR

Just when the nation tried to label Aditya as the chocolate boy next door, the versatile actor left cinema with his massive physical transformation for his blockbuster role in *Sanju*. A dark thriller which was packed with its unpredictable plot and a riveting, *Malang* turned the game changer for the actor. An impressive how the actor performed a massive physical transformation in the film. He was seen in two extreme looks in the film, one being a lean and the other being a bulked-up star. For his next *Om*, Aditya has worked hard to achieve the desired look.

RANVEER SINGH
 Known to be a director's actor, Ranveer has time and again undergone physical transformations for his role in various films. The actor had worked really hard on his body for Rohit Shetty's cop drama *Simmba* and underwent weight training to attain a beefed-up body. And yet again, not too long ago, Ranveer worked hard on his physical appearance and looks for his upcoming film

83, for which he developed a lean physique. We hear that he had intense workout sessions. The actor also had a meticulous diet regime in place for the same.

RANBIR KAPOOR

Ranbir has earned his name in every top film with his performance. He will be next seen opposite girlfriend Alia Bhatt, in a transformation for the upcoming acclaimed film, *Sanju*. He has the required bulked-up look for the Sanjay Dutt biopic. Ranbir had to have eight meals a day and wake up at 3 AM to drink a protein shake, along with intense workouts.

VICKY KAUSHAL

Last seen in *Bhoot Part One: The Haunted Ship*, Vicky is known not just for his exemplary acting skills but also for his incredible physical transformations. For the upcoming film, *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, Vicky went through a complete physical transformation and gained 15 kilos to portray a soldier of a military man. In one of his most recent roles, Vicky followed a similar path and did immense work for the film *Soorya Singh*, we hear that he worked hard in a never seen



Ginger, music director, record producer and occasional actor, Shekhar Ravjiani happens to be a busy man. Currently in Singapore, he talks about his School of Music, which will celebrate its one year anniversary tomorrow.

How has your experience been providing personalised musical training to handpicked students across 21 campuses of the Global International Indian School?

It has been an exciting and satisfying journey. We are celebrating one year of GIIS-Shekhar Ravjiani School of Music, and I want to say despite the pandemic-related challenges, this has been a successful journey.

The School of Music was a meeting of minds for me and GIIS, as both parties wanted to encourage talent in youngsters. Children are our future, and I realised that many of them are blessed with oodles of talent.

The first year had 14 graduates from Singapore, Japan, UAE and Malaysia. Each one of them was mentored by me. We had one-on-one sessions wherein I listened to them, shared my inputs, gave them assignments on the parts they needed to work on et al. Six of them have now been selected for the second level of the mentorship programme for 2021. This year, we have seen a five-fold increase in the number of aspirants and we are excited at the prospect of working with more children.

While online classes are a handy tool in the backdrop of

Melodies of life

On the occasion of World Music Day, **SHEKHAR RAVJIANI** takes a break from work for a quick chat with **CHRISTY VARGHESE**



the pandemic, did you experience any difficulties while virtually imparting musical training?

I agree virtual classes cannot replace physical classes, no doubt. However, given the situation, virtual classes worked out fine. GIIS is a smart school. Its infrastructure is state-of-the-art. The founders have really invested in making it a school of the future. GIIS gave us a great licensed platform to hold virtual classes, gave us audio-visual equipment that was of excellent quality, and the students were given ample time and resources to practise and perfect their art. Of course, there were some technical glitches like

internet lag, but that was nothing compared to what the students walked away with. Overall, there were more positives than there were hiccups, and I am glad we did not let the pandemic dampen our spirits.

Do you have any plans for your music school in the near future?

This music school is my dream, so of course, I have a lot of ideas for the school and its talented students. As of now, I am working on pushing them to the next level through proper exposure and guidance. We have planned some collaborative activities with established members of

the industry for the students to get hands-on experience. It is going to be an amazing experience for them and this is just the beginning of our school's journey.

In the future, we will ideate on many such avenues to give the best to our students. Depending on the type of talent pool we acquire, we will determine the type of platforms they will have exposure to. We would not like to disclose much at this time but we are brainstorming and we are positive that many more avenues will open up in the foreseeable future.

We would love to know what are the forthcoming projects you are working on.

We are currently working on the music for *Pathan* and *Jayeshbhai Jorda*. Both of these films are set to release later this year.

I also have an extremely interesting surprise in store, something you will be hearing about, soon.

What is your message to people on the occasion of World Music Day?

In a world filled with uncertainty and anxiety, I believe that music has the power to help us all feel centred and loved. Our country has an undiscovered treasure trove of musical talent that is waiting to be heard. I urge music lovers to open their minds and hearts to these musicians and help them find their audience. It is also my dream that more and more kids pursue their love for music and I hope to do my bit in making this happen.

TRENDBLAZER



PLANT SOME SAPLINGS: DEVGN

Actor **AJAY DEVGN** and son Yug were spotted planting trees in Juhu, as part of the 'Mega Vriksha Campaign' by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

"I can only try and set an example. I want everyone including all the kids to get involved in this initiative. Things will not change just because I am doing it, they will change when everyone gets involved. The least I can do is create awareness about it."

fairtalk

SHAMA SIKANDER



"This pandemic gave me the time to do a lot of meditation and yoga. I request parents to enroll their children for yoga classes as this would lead them to experience the magic of meditation and change their world for the better. We need to lay enough emphasis on mental health."

dailytalk

TAHIR RAJ BHASIN



"It's great to see Mumbai regaining normalcy, and for the industry to restart. Mumbai has a very different energy and I have loved every bit of my time here. It is a city that has given me wind beneath my wings to aspire and soar creatively, so it really feels great to be back at work here."

DETERMINED TO MAKE IT TO 100: DICK

American actor, comedian, writer, singer and dancer **RICHARD WAYNE 'DICK' VAN DYKE**, 95, is determined to make it to his milestone birthday in 2025.

"The song says, 'I hope I die before I get old'. And I thought, what a sad thing. Old age can be a great time! The point is to enjoy life. I'm looking forward to 100. George Burns made it and I'm gonna do it too," Richard told *Closer US* magazine.





Spain face threat of early exit

AFP ■ SEVILLE

Luis Enrique admitted he expected more from Spain at Euro 2020 after a 1-1 draw with Poland on Saturday left his team facing a fight to reach the last 16.

Gerard Moreno missed a penalty and Alvaro Morata squandered the rebound as Spain's scoring woes struck again, with Robert Lewandowski's header earning Poland a valuable point in Seville.

After starting with a stalemate against Sweden, Spain sit third in Group E and may well now have to beat Slovakia in their final game on Wednesday to avoid an embarrassing early exit.

"I was expecting more," said Luis Enrique. "I was expecting six points and zero goals conceded. But this is the situation."

"We're coming into the crunch match now and if we want to progress we need to win. If we win, we'll go through. If not, we'll be out. That's the reality."

Morata poked in from close range to put Spain in front but Lewandowski's 60th goal of the season pulled Poland level before Moreno's penalty hit the post.

The rebound came quickly to Morata but with Wojciech Szczesny committed down to his right, the goal was open for the striker to score his second.

Instead, the whistles that accompanied Morata against Sweden last week were saved for the whole Spanish team at the final whistle.

Poland, meanwhile, formed a huddle on the pitch before going to over to salute their supporters, after the deadly Lewandowski came up trumps again to keep his own team's hopes of progress alive.

Luis Enrique had launched



Poland's Robert Lewandowski, right, celebrates after scoring his side's first goal against Spain at La Cartuja in Seville

a passionate and prepared defence of Morata on Friday as he said the team would be "Morata and 10 others".

But he also replaced Ferran Torres in the starting line-up with Moreno, the Villarreal striker whose 23 goals was second only to Lionel Messi last season in La Liga.

Morata's best moment came in the 25th minute and it could hardly have been easier, even if a little shuffle put him in the right position to poke in Moreno's shot from the right.

The offside flag went up and Spain's players appeared to expect the cancellation but instead the goal stood.

Poland came again though and twice went close before Lewandowski came up trumps again to keep his own team's hopes of progress alive.

Luis Enrique had launched

'Barca move will give Depay something extra'

Amsterdam: Netherlands coach Frank de Boer is hopeful Memphis Depay's Euro 2020 form will be positively impacted after the confirmation the striker will play for Barcelona next season.

Depay has long been linked with a move to the Camp Nou and on Saturday Barcelona announced the 27-year-old had signed a two-year deal to join on a free transfer from Lyon.

"Maybe the transfer to Barcelona will give him something extra to help him perform at his best," De Boer told reporters ahead of the Dutch team's final Group C game against North Macedonia. "We need Memphis at his

best to go as far as we want in this tournament but we have confidence in him and he is a confident player."

Depay, who scored 20 goals in Ligue 1 for Lyon in the season just finished, converted a penalty in the Netherlands' 2-0 win over Austria.

However he has come in for some criticism from some fans and media for failing to take other chances.

"I think Memphis is his first critic and I'm sure the criticism doesn't affect him," De

Boer said of the former Manchester United player, who is a huge star in the Netherlands.

"He knows if he played well or not so let's hope for the Netherlands that he can reach the level that we have in mind."

The Oranje have already secured qualification for the last 16 as winners of Group C after beating both Ukraine and Austria in their first major tournament since the 2014

World Cup.

"When we are doing well we can beat anybody. Hopefully we can grow into the tournament and we still have some better performances to come," said De Boer, whose team will play in Budapest in the first knockout round against one of the best third-placed sides on June 27.

Victory there would set up a quarter-final in Baku against the runners-up in either Group A or B.

"We know our path to the final and to get to the final you have to win every game, so I don't really care who we play next," De Boer said. "We have no influence on it."

'Bubbling' Germany back on track: Müller

AFP ■ MUNICH

Thomas Müller said confidence is now sky high in the Germany camp after getting their Euro 2020 campaign back on track with a 4-2 thumping of holders Portugal on Saturday.

"We are allowed to feel a little euphoria," said Müller after Germany moved second in Group F, level on three points with Portugal and a point behind leaders France.

"It's just fun playing in this atmosphere. The cauldron is boiling."

Germany now need to beat Hungary in Munich on Wednesday to be sure of reaching the knock-out stage.

"Now we have the three points, we are well in the tournament and have it in our own hands," added Müller.

"We mustn't get carried away and become arrogant — but we must believe in our quality."



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen reacts after winning the French F1 Grand Prix at the Paul Ricard racetrack in Le Castellet on Sunday

Max wins French GP to extend c'ship lead

AP ■ LE CASTELLET

F1 championship leader Max Verstappen overtook Lewis Hamilton on the penultimate lap to win the French Grand Prix on Sunday and extend his lead over his title rival to 12 points.

Verstappen used the DRS system to catch Hamilton on Lap 52 and pass him on the inside before zooming off to clinch his third win of the season and 13th of his career. A bonus point for the fastest lap made it a great day for Red Bull, which had never beaten Mercedes on the Paul Ricard circuit in southern France.

It was a close call, though, with Red Bull's gamble on a two-stop strategy for Verstappen countered by a one-stopper for Hamilton as Mercedes kept him out on the same tires.

With five of 53 laps left, Hamilton was only 3.5 seconds ahead.

Verstappen quickly ate into that lead, kept calm and then positioned himself perfectly to attack on a long straight in the

way Hamilton has done countless times in his record 98 wins.

"When we made the call to do a two-stop, luckily it paid off," Verstappen said. "We had to work hard for it."

Verstappen, who won by 2.9 seconds, has 131 points to Hamilton's 119 after seven races.

Red Bull's Sergio Perez sneaked past a dejected Valtteri Bottas to take third place and strengthen Red Bull's lead in the constructors' championship: 215 points to 178.

"We pulled the trigger and we went with the two-stopper (for Verstappen) and it worked. And great job from Sergio making the one-stop work," Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said. "It's a team effort, the strategy guys are working the numbers and they go for it."

Verstappen has already matched his career best for a season with three wins and is emerging as a massive rival for the defending champion Hamilton, who is trying to win a record eighth F1 title to move one ahead of Michael Schumacher.

Shafali will be very important for us in all formats: Mithali

PTI ■ BRISTOL

Shafali Verma's spectacular debut has caught the imagination of the Indian women's team Test skipper Mithali Raj, who feels the teenager would be a key member of the side in all the formats of the game in future.

The 17-year-old, who had smashed a stroke-filled 96 in the first innings, made 63 in the second, to become the youngest woman and fourth overall to score twin half-centuries in her debut Test and was rightfully adjudged player-of-the-match.

"She will be very, very important to the Indian batting unit in all formats. She beautifully adapted to this format," Mithali said in a virtual media interaction after India, following on, salvaged a draw in the one-off Test against England.

"She didn't go like how she would go batters in the T20 format. She played sensibly against the new ball and it's great to have her."

Asked what prompted the Indian team management to hand Verma a Test debut in England, Mithali said: "She has great range of shots, and she



Shafali Verma receives her Test cap from Indian skipper Mithali Raj before the start of first day play of Women's Test match against England in Bristol

can be very, very, effective in a format like this if she gets going. In no time, we could see that the score would be somewhere else if she gets going.

"Once we knew that it's a used wicket and there won't be much of a movement, we thought it would be a good time to give her a Test debut and she lived up to it."

Mithali rated the young opener's knock in the second

innings ahead of her first innings score of 96 as the teenager showed utmost composure and maturity.

"The (second innings) fifty came with a little more sorted head and a little bit more experience. Those sweetly-timed drives, it was beautiful to watch her. I'm sure she will grow from here on."

Knight supports 5-day Test match

PTI ■ BRISTOL

England captain Heather Knight has hailed the one-off Test against India as a great advertisement for the women's game and said she would support five-day matches, instead of the current four-day contests.

"What a brilliant game of cricket. It was unfortunate it didn't have the dramatic and exciting finish that it could have done but what a game of cricket," Knight said after the match.

"It's been a great advert and shows that women's Test cricket has a place in the game... Maybe even play a five-day Test match."

Asked if she would be open to women playing five-day Tests, Knight said, "I would definitely be open to it. There has been a lot of draws in women's cricket, so it's definitely something that should be looked at."

"(We were) almost robbed of that finish because there wasn't an extra day and we didn't have the time in the game. So, yes, something I'd definitely be open to."

"I think if there was another day what a great finish it would have been," said Knight who hit 95 in England's first innings and took three Indian wickets in the match.

Jamieson 5/31 holds India to 217

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Kyle Jamieson continued his love affair with the Indian team, tormenting the star-studded line-up with disconcerting bounce and swing as New Zealand bowled out the opposition for 217 on day three of the World Test Championship final here.

Jamieson decimated India with marvellous figures of 22-12-31-5 as New Zealand took control of the Test match by reaching 36 for no loss at tea. Openers Devon Conway (18 batting) and Tom Latham (17 batting) negotiated the Indian pace attack pretty well.

However, it was 6 feet 8 inch tall Jamieson, who after last year's series in New Zealand, has once again turned into a nightmare for the Indian batsmen.

Having removed Rohit Sharma on Saturday morning, Jamieson was relentless with his length and the bounce did the rest with clever traps laid for skipper Virat Kohli and the dangerous Rishabh Pant.

Kohli and his deputy Ajinkya Rahane walked into a nicely laid trap as India failed to reach 250, a good total in the prevailing conditions as per batting coach Vikram Rathour.

The overcast conditions made batting difficult and the likes of Jamieson, Trent Boult



New Zealand's Kyle Jamieson, right, appeals successfully for the wicket of India's captain Virat Kohli, left, during the third day of the WTC final in Southampton

(21.1-4-47-2) and Neil Wagner (15-5-40-2) indulged in a 'who blinks first' game with the Indian batters and came out trumps with some incisive seam, swing and short pitched bowling.

Kohli (44, 132 balls) couldn't add a single run to his overnight score as his RCB teammate Jamieson made life

WTC Final (Day 4)
Live from 3:00 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

then got a boundary with a flick through mid-wicket. Two balls later, he took the bait when Jamieson angled one on the imaginary fifth off-stump. He went for an expansive drive only to be snapped in the third slip by Tom Latham.

Once the 61-run stand with Kohli had ended, Rahane (49, 119 balls) sensed that the scoreboard needed a move on and started playing a few shots.

But perhaps, the milestone was working on his mind and despite playing a mistimed pull-shot one ball earlier, Wagner with his signature short ball prevented him from reaching a well-deserved fifty.

Rahane's disappointment was evident as he fell into the trap to play the pull-shot despite knowing that Wagner had kept a deep fine leg and long leg for the shot.

Ravichandran Ashwin (22, 27 balls) threw his bat around and got some useful runs but was never going to last long as Tim Southee (22-6-64-1) took care of him just before lunch break.

Post lunch break, Jamieson removed Ishant Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah off successive deliveries but Mohammed Shami prevented him from completing a hat-trick.

TOCOG working on safe stay & training of Indian athletes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Tokyo Olympic organisers are working on how to ensure safe stay and seamless training of the Indian athletes inside the Games Village, according to a letter they have sent to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

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

Stricter regulations have been put in place for all travellers — including athletes, coaches and support staff — of 11 countries, including India,



Seiko Hashimoto, left, president of the Tokyo Olympic Organizing Committee, and Saburo Kawabuchi, mayor of the Olympic Athlete Village, pose for a photo during a media tour at the Olympic Village for the Tokyo 2020 Games

where different variants of Covid-19 have been identified, within 14 days of their arrival

in Tokyo. Terming the rules as "unfair and discriminatory", the IOA

had written to the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (TOCOG) to

ensure that mechanisms to prevent Covid-19 do not have any "adverse and detrimental impact" on performance of athletes.

In reply to the IOA letter, TOCOG said: "Tokyo 2020 is working to define how athletes of your NOC as well from other 10 countries and all other 195 NOCs can stay safe in the Villages and have training."

"We hope to provide you with those information and discuss together as soon as possible we develop it," the Games organisers said in a letter to the IOA.

The IOA, on its part, said that its president and secretary general were in discussion with TOCOG and seeking clarifications on the conditions imposed on the Indian contingent for Tokyo Olympics.

Uganda Olympic team member tests +ve on arrival in Japan

AFP ■ TOKYO

A member of the Uganda Olympic team has tested positive for coronavirus on arrival in Japan, just over a month before the pandemic-postponed Games, officials said.

The first group to arrive from Uganda — a nine-strong party, including boxers, coaches and officials — landed at Tokyo's Narita airport on Saturday. They are the second team to arrive after Australia women's softball squad on June 1.

But one of the African nation's delegation tested positive during screening at the airport, a Government official told reporters. The person tested twice but their condition



Members of Uganda's Olympic team prepare to leave for Osaka

remained unknown, reported local media.

"I heard the person has been isolated based on regulations," Hidemasa Nakamura, the Tokyo 2020 Games delivery

officer, told reporters, renewing a pledge to take strict measures against infections.

Public broadcaster NHK said the group had all been vaccinated and tested negative in Uganda before they came to Japan.

The team was originally due to have arrived in Japan on June 16, but their flight was cancelled following a surge in Covid-19 cases in Uganda, local media said.

The other members of the Ugandan party have already left the airport for Osaka, western Japan, where they will train ahead of the Games.

This was the first case showing positive Covid test results among Olympic arrivals from overseas, local media said.



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