

OPINION 6 THE LOST CAUSE OF INGENUOUS TRIBALS

WORLD 8 JUNTA TROOPS BURN MYANMAR VILLAGE

SPORT 12 FRANCE BEAT GERMANY IN EURO 2020 CLASH

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AN ACTOR, NOT A STAR: SHARAD 10 VIVACITY

## CAPSULE

**SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS ON COVAXIN WRONG: CENTRE**  
New Delhi: Facts have been "twisted and misrepresented" in some social media posts which suggested that indigenously developed Covaxin contains newborn calf serum, the Union Health Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

**AIADMK SLAMS SASIKALA FOR 'AUDIO POLITICS'**  
Chennai: Senior AIADMK leader D Jayaram on Wednesday slammed VK Sasikala, confidante of late party supremo J Jayalalitha, for attempting to create confusion in the party using "audio politics" and for trying to "divide and rule."

**12-YEAR-OLD LION DIES OF COVID AT TN ZOO**  
Chennai: An Asiatic male lion being treated for Covid-19 succumbed on Wednesday, becoming the second carnivore to fall victim to the virus at the zoo near here in two weeks, the first being a lioness.

**TRAI LAUNCHES CHANNEL SELECTOR WEB PORTAL**  
New Delhi: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Wednesday launched a TV Channel Selector web portal on Wednesday for consumers to check if they could access its mobile phone app of the same name due to lack of a smartphone.

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,96,98,009 (+65,800)
DEATHS:	3,81,826 (+2,224)
RECOVERED:	2,84,80,532 (+99,841)
ACTIVE:	8,24,053
MAHA:	58,34,880 (+10,107)
K'TAKA:	27,84,355 (+7,345)
KERALA:	27,61,475 (+13,270)
TN:	23,88,746 (+10,448)
DELHI:	14,31,710 (+212)

UP and Maharashtra on their own have already started taking measures — from ramping up paediatric beds to prioritising vaccination for parents of kids below 12 years.

# Twitter defies IT rules, loses legal protection

Gzb police book Twitter, 7 others over viral video of attack on elderly

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday asserted that microblogging platform Twitter has lost legal protection in India because it deliberately chose non-compliance despite multiple opportunities to it. Losing legal protection means Twitter's top executives, including the nation's managing director, face police questioning and criminal liability under the Indian Penal Code over "unlawful and inflammatory" content posted by users on Twitter.

## CHRONOLOGY OF TWITTER-GOVT TUSSLE

<b>FEBRUARY 3:</b> The Government issued notice to Twitter on farmers' genocide hashtag	against the new IT guidelines
<b>FEBRUARY 8:</b> The Government asked to remove 1,178 tweets related to farmers' protests	<b>JUNE 1:</b> WhatsApp named Paresb B Lal as its grievance officer for India
<b>FEBRUARY 24:</b> The Government asked Twitter to take down some tweets critical to its Covid handling	<b>JUNE 2:</b> Twitter subsequently sent an email where a lawyer, Dharmendra Chatur, was appointed an interim Nodal Contact Person and Resident Grievance Officer
<b>MAY 22:</b> Twitter flagged Sambit Patra tweet as manipulated media	<b>JUNE 5:</b> The Government wrote to Twitter, giving last chance to comply the guidelines
<b>MAY 24:</b> The Government asked to remove manipulated media tag from Patra	<b>JUNE 6:</b> Twitter replied that they had appointed a Nodal Contact Person and Resident Grievance Officer on a contractual basis as an interim measure
<b>MAY 26:</b> The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's deadline of three months given to social media giants and OTT, has expired	<b>JUNE 13:</b> Twitter said they have posted a job description to hire a CCO, NCP and RGO and that they will venture to fill these roles as quickly as possible
<b>MAY 28:</b> WhatsApp moved Delhi High Court	

The police questioning and criminal liability under the Indian Penal Code over "unlawful and inflammatory" content posted by users on Twitter is the first case that holds the social media giant responsible for third-party content. In a series of tweets, Prasad said there are numerous queries arising as to whether Twitter is entitled to safe harbour provision. "However, the single fact of the matter is that Twitter has failed to comply with the Intermediary (IT) rules. This means Twitter's top executives, including the nation's managing director, face

# Post-job deaths financially worse than that by corona

Victims of virus get compensation, but nothing for death due to shots

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

If a corona warrior passes away due to Covid-19 infection, his relatives might get compensation as high as ₹1 crore, but there is no compensation available to a common man in case of death linked to vaccination.

Clinical trial procedures do have compensation provisions which are paid by the companies, though the process is fraught with difficulties and may stretch years. A senior Union Health Ministry official said there is no provision of doing out compensation for recipients of Covid-19 vaccine against any kind of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) or medical complications that may arise due to inoculation. In this connection, he cited children immunisation programme where no compensation has been given so far. "The AEFI is defined as 'any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunisation' and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine. As per the Government



report, since the launch of the nationwide vaccination from January 16 till June 7, one person has died due to severe allergic reaction of vaccination while 488 succumbed post inoculation which the Government said were due to co-incident reasons, including co-morbidities, and cannot be directly attributed to the vaccination. So far, 26 crore people have been vaccinated in the country with Covaxin or Covishield. "Though under clinical trials conducted in India, there are specific rules defining compensation for participants, this is not so in case for the vaccination. There is no method under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act to provide any kind of compensation against any adverse event after receiving a vaccine approved for restricted emergency use. However, measures have been put in place like availability of anaphylaxis kits at each vaccination site, immediate referral to AEFI management centre and observation of vaccine recipients for 30 minutes at session site for any adverse events so as to take timely corrective measure. Also, the AEFI management of such cases are provided free of cost treatment in Public Health Facilities, he said.

## Chargesheet against Gitanjali former head in PNB fraud case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a chargesheet against the former international head of the Gitanjali Group of Companies, Sunil Verma, and was dependent on connection with an alleged fraud in the PNB involving an amount of over ₹7,080 crore, in which the promoter of the group, Mehul Choksi, is wanted by the agency, officials said on Wednesday. Two officials of the Punjab National Bank (PNB) — Sagar Sawant and Sanjay Chhabra — and a director of the Giti and the Nakshtra brands under the group, Dhaneesh Seth, have also been named as accused in the supplementary chargesheet filed by the CBI, they said. The supplementary chargesheet, filed more than three years after the first chargesheet, coincides with the legal proceedings against the fugitive diamondaire in a court of Dominica, where he was arrested for on May 24 after his mysterious disappearance from Antigua and Barbuda.

## BJP gains 6 prominent Sikh faces in Punjab

Shah takes up poll command

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

In a run up to the 2022 Assembly polls in Punjab, the BJP has stepped on the accelerator with Union Home Minister Amit Shah placing himself on the driver's seat before the poll process. Worst-affected by the farmers' ongoing agitation against the Centre's three agrimarketing laws and the resultant political circumstances in the State, the saffron party on Thursday inducted six "prominent Sikh personalities", besides directing its State leadership to put up its act together by taking the workers along.



BJP leader and Jai Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat greets Punjab intellectuals and other leaders who joined the BJP at party headquarters in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

## Chirag blames JD(U) for LJP split, vows to save party

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) Leader Chirag Paswan on Wednesday vowed to fight back to save the party founded by his father late Ram Vilas Paswan, saying he was "sher ka beta" (lion's son). In his first media interaction after split in the LJP parliamentary party and five of LJP MPs writing to Lok Sabha Speaker to appoint his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras as the leader of the party, Chirag blamed the Janata Dal (United) for crisis in the party.

While blaming the JD(U) for the split, he steered clear of questions regarding the role of the BJP in the development and added that what has happened is also an internal matter of his party for which he will not target others. Chirag may have avoided any reference to the role of the BJP behind the split in the LJP, but it is well known that the saffron outfit had lent its weight behind Paras. State BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal had met Paras just three days before the split

## Covid drugs used to treat adults not fit for kids: Govt guidelines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the third Covid-19 wave is projected to impact children in a bigger way, the Government has issued guidelines for Covid-care management for kids. According to the guidelines, drugs such as ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, favipiravir and antibiotics like doxycycline and azithromycin, which are prescribed for adult patients, should not be recommended for treating the minor. The Union Health Ministry's recommendations include augmenting existing Covid-care facilities to provide care to children with acute coronavirus infection. "Similarly, issues of optimal treatment for multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) need to be addressed by clinical trials, such as comparison of low dose with high doses steroids, comparison of steroids with IVIG and others," it said. Various States like Delhi,

# Starting from scratch to fulfil dreams

CHANDAN KUSHWAHA ■ NEW DELHI



It was never the same for Abhishek Chaubey, an IAS aspirant after the lockdown imposed in Delhi after Covid-19 pandemic hit him hard. He had rented a single room at Shakarpur in East Delhi and was dependent on local dhabas for food. After the lockdown was announced, the dhabas shut down and he had a tough time to survive. "I felt so helpless being new in the city, I spent the first few days with milk and bread but the situation turned grimmer after I tested positive for coronavirus with nobody to look after me. I was without food for days. This was the most traumatic period of life. I don't know how I survived," Chaubey said in a choked voice. The tragedy did not end

care. I also recovered following doctors' prescription," he said. There are many like him residing around the north campus of the Delhi University who were forced to leave the city after lockdown was announced. Similarly, Divya Prakash, who was preparing for civil services and lived at Gandhi Vihar had to leave the Capital. "I used to teach students here to fund my studies. But after the pandemic returned and lockdown was imposed, everything was destroyed. Kundan Kumar, a student of the Department of Buddhist Studies, was left with very limited options to survive during the pandemic as all the dhabas were closed. Kumar approached one of his friends and requested him to allow sharing the kitchen. "Two of my friends also

## Don't come back, TMC warns Guv as he meets NHRC chief

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a move unheard of in the contemporary political history of India, Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday called on National Human Rights Commission Chairman Justice Arun Mishra apparently to apprise him of what he called "retributive post poll violence" in the State. The ruling Trinamool Congress, the prime target of Dhankhar's attack, promptly reacted saying "Governor... don't come back to Bengal." The Governor is reported to have drawn the attention of the NHRC chief towards the attacks mounted on the Opposition supporters and human rights violation in the State. Dhankhar, who was on a three-day trip to New Delhi,

Dhankhar said how the State Government was turning a blind eye to the incidents of "retributive post poll violence" that had rendered thousands of people homeless and properties worth crores looted and destroyed. "Four Cabinet meetings have taken place in the past six weeks... not a single word has been spent on the post poll violence... no Minister or officer has visited the affected areas and no compensation has been declared," the Governor said, adding, "I told the Chief Minister to update me about the situation but... there was no response on her part... it seems that the police have forgotten their work... the police and the Home Department must rise above partisan politics (or else) I shall not overlook the matter."



# Hry Govt chalks out policy to produce more paramedical professionals

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

In a bid to overcome acute shortage of skilled paramedical professionals in the state, Haryana Government has chalked out a policy to introduce paramedical degree courses in government and private medical colleges.

The policy has been developed keeping in view the ever emerging need of paramedical care in the medical field especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the fierce second wave of COVID-19, Haryana also witnessed shortage of paramedical professionals, who assist the doctors in treatment and care of patients.

The policy has been prepared to start paramedical courses including B.Sc Radiography, B.Sc. Radiography & Imaging Technology, B.Sc Bachelor of Optometry, B.Sc Perfusion Technology, B.Sc Operation Theatre and B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Technology in medical colleges of the state.

At present, PGIMS Rohtak is the only government medical institution that offers all these six paramedical courses while government-aided Maharaja Agrasam Medical College in Hisar offers four paramedical courses.

"Only those Trust/Societies will be eligible to apply for paramedical courses who have a minimum 300 bedded hospital with facilities for having outdoor, indoor facility and emergency services. Further, the hospital should already have a functional Department as per the specific paramedical course applied", according to the draft policy.

Dr Shaleen further said that suggestions from the stakeholders have been invited to finalize this policy. According to the draft policy, "No paramedical school will be allowed to commence the course or seek admissions without obtaining affiliation from University as the case may be or any other Regulatory Body authorized by the State Government. The maximum number of seats in one course shall not exceed 10. Also, no institute will be entitled to apply for enhancement of seats till the first batch of the respective course passes out."

The policy stated, "Preference shall be given to start paramedical courses in already established or functionally medical colleges with an aim to develop an integrated campus wherein facilities like library, classrooms, auditoriums etc. can be shared. A separate teaching block will be a prerequisite where the applicant institute is a 300 bedded or above hospital and does not have any teaching block. Adequate area for the hostel should also be available as per norms."

As per the land norms under the policy, 0.5 acres land

# People between 21, 40 years most hit by Covid wave in Punjab

Urban areas with industry or with high population density witnessed more numbers of Covid cases than rural areas

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The second wave of the COVID-19, that has hit Punjab hard reporting a record number of deaths, has affected people of the 21-40 years age group the most. As per the latest statistics, from January to April 2021, the population between 21 and 40 years has been affected higher than in other age groups.

Besides, the state's urban areas, with industry or with high population density districts, like Ludhiana, Amritsar, SAS Nagar (Mohali), and Bathinda, reported more numbers of COVID-19 cases than the rural area. On the other hand, the rural areas in small districts have high numbers of COVID cases than in urban areas, like Ropar, Mansa, and Muktsar.

Sharing the details, the state Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu on Thursday said that the positivity rate of the peri-

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# Punjab SC panel summons Ravneet Bittu

Chandigarh: The Punjab State Commission for Scheduled Castes on Wednesday summoned the Congress MP from Ludhiana Ravneet Singh Bittu to "personally" appear before it on June 22 in connection with a complaint against him for using "unparliamentary" language.

The Commission chairperson Tejinder Kaur said that the summons were issued after a complaint from Shirmam Akali Dal (SAD) MLA Pawan Kumar Tinnu against a video being circulated widely on the social media and newspaper reports in which Bittu allegedly made the "casteist" remarks.

She said that the Commission will investigate the matter. "Bittu has been asked to appear before the Commission at 11.30 am on June 22 under Section 12(2) of the Punjab State Scheduled Caste Commission Act," she said.

Notably, a delegation of SAD MLAs, including Tinnu, Sukhwinder Sukhi, Baldev Khaira, met the state SC panel chairperson on Tuesday and sought her intervention.

The Ludhiana MP, according to the MLAs, had criticised the SAD for giving away "pious seats" of Sri Anandpur Sahib and Chankar Sahib to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) after forging a poll alliance with it. PNS

# Over 5% Himachal population fully vaccinated

PNS ■ SHIMLA

More than 4.38 lakh people, which is over five percent of the total population, have been completely vaccinated against COVID-19 in Himachal after getting the second dose of Covishield.

As many as 9,83,580 persons above 45 years of age and 7,36,647 persons above 60 years of age have received doses of Covishield vaccination in the state. Out of these, 70,693 of 45 plus and 25,596 of 60 plus have received their second dose of Covishield vaccination, said an official spokesman.

Himachal has an estimated population of 75 lakh. The spokesman said that as per recommendation by the national expert group on vaccine administration for Covid-19, the schedule of Covishield vaccine under national Covid-19 vaccination strategy is to administer the second dose at 12-15 weeks (i.e. 84 days) interval after administration of first dose.

He said that in view of the possible third wave of Covid-19 in the country, all the people who are due for their second dose of vaccination have been requested to get themselves vaccinated as early as possible. These people will come forward for their vaccination.

# Hry Govt launches scheme to provide FMCG items through ration depot-holders

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Wednesday launched a scheme under which FMCG products will be provided at reasonable prices through ration depot-holders. This pilot project has been launched at Sirsa, Fatehabad, Karnal, Yamunanagar and Panchkula districts. If the trial of this pilot project becomes successful in these districts, it will be implemented across the state.

Through the medium of depot-holders, villagers of the state will also be able to take advantage of certain services of State Bank of India (SBI), he said.

The deputy chief minister, who also holds the portfolio of food, civil supplies and consumer affairs department, said: "The main objective of the state government is to create an ecosystem within Haryana through CONFEED, in which multinational FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) companies, self-help groups and other groups 'work amicably'."

The arrangement for giving

# Haryana CM directs to treat injured destitute cows in all districts

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday directed the officials concerned to make medical arrangements in all the districts for the timely treatment and care of destitute cows injured in road accidents.

The Chief Minister while presiding over the review meeting of the Haryana Gau Sewa Aayog said that timely treatment of every injured cow should be ensured in hospitals.

He said that medical arrangements should be made for the treatment of the cows in at least one dedicated veterinary hospital at the district level and there should be a system to keep at least 50 cows in these hospitals. If any hospital is not able to make such an arrangement then an arrangement of a temporary hospital should be made in a nearby cowshed.

The arrangement for giving medical treatment should be made under the supervision of a government veterinarian, he directed.

While reviewing various works and new projects of Haryana Gau Sewa Aayog, the Chief Minister directed the officers of Animal Husbandry and Dairying Department that the grant which is to be released to Gaushalas should be given on the recommendation of the Aayog.

Talking about making the gaushalas self-reliant, the Chief Minister also directed the officers to prepare an action plan for increasing the income of gaushalas.

He also directed to prepare a plan to integrate Gaushalas with natural farming.

Haryana Gau Sewa Aayog chairman Sarvan Kumar Garg apprised the Chief Minister that solar plants have been installed in 331 gaushalas of the state and the process of setting up solar plants in 229 gaushalas is in progress.

# After losing loved one to Covid-19, aggrieved families facing challenges in getting death certificate

MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

Life has become hell for me after I lost my husband on April 30 due to coronavirus. I visited the hospital several times but the hospital administration didn't have any record of my husband's death due to corona. Now, how will I get a death certificate from the municipal corporation? I am alone and not financially stable to take care of my two minor children," said Asha (changed name), resident of Panchkula with eyes welling up.

Asha further said, "My husband got a fever on April 29 and was admitted to Panchkula Government Hospital. The doctor said he died of cardiac arrest. I requested them to correct it but the hospital administration said they can't change their records."

Another woman of Panchkula said that her husband died on April 1 due to covid-19 and shortness of breath after battling for life for around an hour in Government Civil Hospital. On approaching the Panchkula Municipal Corporation for a death certificate, she was told that they had not received any report from the Hospital. On enquir-

ing with the Hospital, they denied having any such report saying as he was admitted to the hospital; they did not have any connection with coronavirus.

A retired Panchkula-based health official said that people are facing trauma and trouble due to missing or misleading records of the hospitals. Now, hospitals are also taking advantage of the state governments' lack of transparency in maintaining the records. Government should take corrective measures to address the concerns of aggrieved families that lost their loved ones due to coronavirus, he added.

When asked about people facing hardships in getting death certificates of their loved ones who succumbed to Covid-19, Panchkula Civil Surgeon Dr Jasjeet Kaur told 'The Pioneer' over the phone that aggrieved family members are given such certificates within a stipulated time. "For this, the authorities concerned have been strictly directed to provide a corona death certificate to aggrieved family members at the earliest. Anyone can directly approach me if they are facing problems to receive such a certificate in Panchkula district," she added.

# Haryana reports 39 deaths, 249 fresh Covid cases

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

39 people succumbed to COVID-19 in Haryana as 249 fresh cases surfaced in the last 24 hours. According to the health bulletin, the death toll reached 9109 on Wednesday while the total case tally reached 766,696 in the state.

334 people recovered from the virus in the last 24 hours taking the total recoveries to 753,918. In the last 24 hours, a maximum of six deaths were reported in Panipat and Sirsa districts. A maximum of 26 fresh cases were reported in Yamunanagar district.

There were 3579 active cases in the state, the bulletin stated. The fatality rate was recorded at 1.19 percent and the recovery rate was 98.34 percent. Over 96 lakh samples have been tested in Haryana till date, as per the bulletin.

41 CASES, 2 DEATHS IN CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh on Wednesday reported two deaths and 41 fresh cases, taking the union territory's infection tally to 61,241, according to a medical bulletin. Till now, 799 people have died from the infection. The number of active cases dropped to 462. With 63 patients recovering from the disease, the number of cured persons has reached 59,900. The total number of samples tested in the last 24 hours was 1783. Moreover, 6178 more people were vaccinated taking the total count to 424,931.

4 DEATHS, 210 CASES IN HIMACHAL Himachal on Wednesday reported four COVID-19 related fatalities and 210 fresh cases. According to the health bulletin, the death toll has reached 3398 while the COVID-19 caseload stands at 199,406. Shimla reported the highest number of 32 cases. There were 3733 active cases in Himachal.

**60th दिन**  
2021/22

Our Government has defined the development and social welfare in the second year of its tenure, as a result, the public welfare schemes are reaching the eligible person. Along with inclusive development, the Government has given new dimensions to Swavlamban, Svabhimaan, Saralasha, Svamitva, Sanrakshan, Svayata, Shiksha and Samadhaan. Upholding the spirit of Amityodaya, we have always taken care of every section of the state. These efforts will be continued in the future as well to make Haryana the best state of the nation.

- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

- Sushasan se Parinamaam**: One time registration for Government jobs, integration of 100 schemes and services with the Parivar Pehchan Patra portal, 'Operation Shudhi' through the Transport Department, Redressal of complaints through CM window, NDC Portal to obtain streamlined no-due certificate, Resolution of disputes related to areas of VAT, GST, Transport taxes, Mining and stamp duty etc. with various departments and boards
- New dimensions of Svabhimaan**: Mukhya Mantri Amityodaya Parivar Uthhan, Mukhya Mantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana, Procurement of Maximum 11 Crores on MSP, Matri Fasal Mera Byora, e-Khard Portal, Mera Pasi Mera Vikasat, Har-Hi Retail Store, Bharatwar Bharatya Yojana, Promotion of horticulture commercial crops, Welfare schemes for OBC/ST, Social Security Pension, Incentives to Divyang etc.
- Shiksha for Better future**: Aim to implement the New Education Policy by the year 2025, Shiksha Setu App during Covid-19, Online education through EduSud and Sampark Baitak mobile application, Tele-counselling for children and parents, Coaching facility under Super-100 programme, Free passport to students, Digital Library-Growth Kashi
- Sanrakshan**: Restructuring of CADA to MCGDA, Ground water and environment conservation schemes, Encouragement to sprinkler plant system, 'Day-Va' Panchkula and Kanal, Improvement in Sarsa rill
- Right of Svamitva**: Haryana is the first state to implement 'Lal Dora' Mukh Yojana, Enabling the ownership of urban property for small shopkeepers
- New definition of Swavlamban**: Efforts for Skill development of youth, various vocational and industrial training opportunities, employment opportunities, Expansion of industries, Facilities to traders
- Better Health Facilities**: Adopted the policy of test-track-trace-treat, Setting up of covid care centres equipped with oxygen beds, Covid Sanjeevani hospitals are functional, Free covid vaccination, Health facilities at home for home isolated patients, Health and financial package implemented for covid affected patients
- Ensuring Saralasha**: Narcotic Control Bureau, Student Transport Safety Scheme, Digital Testing and Technical Analysis Centre in Haryana
- Opportunities of Svayata**: Formation of inter-district council, Panchkula Metropolitan Development Authority, Formation of Haryana Smart Gram Pradhikaran, Reservation to women in panchayats, Formation of new municipal corporations, Councils and municipalities, Increase in financial resources of urban local bodies and panchayats

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | @prharyana

# Covishield doses gap based on scientific data: Min



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing criticism for increasing the gap between two Covishield doses without allegedly taking all the experts into confidence and being questioned if the indigenously developed Covaxin contained newborn calf serum, the Government on Wednesday defended itself on both the counts and termed the politicisation of the issue as "unfortunate".

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said the decision to increase the gap between two doses of Covishield has been taken in a transparent manner based on scientific data. "Decision to increase the gap between administering 2 doses of #COVISHIELD has been taken in a transparent manner based on scientific data. India has a robust mechanism to evaluate data. It is unfortunate that such an important issue is being politicised," he tweeted.

The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) chair N K Arora said, "The decision regarding enhancing interval between two doses of Covishield was based on scientific evidence and taken in a transparent manner." "There was no dissenting voice among the NTAGI members," he asserted.

Sharing details of the decision taken in this regard, the Health Ministry in a statement said that on May 13, it had approved extending the gap between the two doses of the Covishield vaccine from six to eight weeks to 12 to 16 weeks

following a recommendation from the NTAGI.

"The 22nd meeting of Covid-19 Working Group of NTAGI was held on May 10. There, a proposal for a change in dose interval for Covishield, used under the National Vaccination Policy, was considered. Based on the real-life evidence, particularly from the United Kingdom, the Covid-19 Working Group agreed to increase the interval between two doses of Covishield vaccine to 12 to 16 weeks," the statement said.

"This recommendation was taken up for discussion at the meeting of the Standing Technical Sub-Committee (STSC) of NTAGI held on May 13 under the joint chairmanship of the secretary of the Department of Biotechnology, the secretary, Department of Health Resources and the DG of the Indian Council of Medical Research," it said.

"The STSC of NTAGI gave the following recommendation: 'as per the Covid-19 Working Group recommendation, a dosing interval of minimum three months between two doses of Covishield vaccine was recommended,'" the statement said.

In both the meetings -- of the Covid-19 Working Group and of the STSC -- no dissent was given by any of the three members who have been quoted in the news report, namely Dr Mathew Varghese, Dr M D Gupte and Dr P P Mulyil, the statement said adding that Dr Varghese has denied talking to the reporter on the issue of his

## Cong: Was double gap in doses prompted by vaccine shortage?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday questioned the decision of the Modi Government to double the gap between the doses of the Covishield Covid-19 vaccine, asking whether it was prompted by a vaccine shortage.

The party also announced to launch a nationwide outreach programme to collect all the data pertaining to the pandemic, the affected families and losses incurred by the common man among others. Through the outreach programme, Congress aims to directly cover approximately three crore households in 30 days, as per an AICC press statement.

"The Congress said India needs quick and complete vaccination and not the BJP's 'brand of lies and rhyming slogans' to cover up the vaccine shortage caused by the government's inaction."

Congress leaders, including former party president Rahul Gandhi, said the government was trying to cover up a vaccine shortage. "India needs quick & complete vaccination," Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet.

The Government had said that the gap within two shots of covishield was increased based on scientific evidence and that the issue had been discussed in detail by members of NTAGI as well as its working group on COVID-19.

Rahul alleged that the Government was trying to

## Clarification sought over RTI reply that calf serum used in Covaxin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Earlier on Wednesday, the Congress sought a clarification from the Government following the controversy in the wake of an RTI reply that allegedly suggested that newborn calf serum has been used to make the Covaxin Covid-19 vaccine. Congress spokesman Pawan Khara said that the party wants "the Government and Bharat Biotech to respond to the reply that has come in the RTI, then we will give a detailed response on it".

Gaurav Pandhi, the national co-ordinator of Digital Communications and Social Media at AICC, had tweeted the RTI response to applicant Vites Patni. "The newborn calf serum is used

in the revival process of Vero cells, which is further used for the production of coronavirus during the manufacturing of Covaxin," read the response by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation.

Talking to Twitter, Pandhi cited the RTI response and said that the Modi government admitted that the vaccine manufactured by Bharat Biotech "consists Newborn Calf Serum which is a portion of dotted blood obtained from less than 20 days young cow-calves, after slaughtering them." "This is heinous. This information should have been made public before," added Pandhi. He also attached a screenshot of the response to the RTI application as well.

As for the nationwide outreach campaign, it aimed engaging party cadres from Pradesh. Congress Committee (PCC) to the Panchayat level and establishing contact with target groups in urban, semi-urban and rural areas.

Local leaders will organise visits of senior leaders to the households of the Covid-affected families and help in disseminating information regarding health issues and post-Covid care.

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## BJP rejects Cong's Covaxin charge, says party committed 'a big sin'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the Congress of "communal listing" and spreading disinformation on the indigenous Covaxin Covid-19 vaccine, the BJP on Wednesday demanded to know whether Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her party leaders, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, were vaccinated or not.

Addressing a Press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra rejected the Congress charge

that Covaxin has calf serum, which he said the party has committed a "big sin" by making such allegations. He said the scientific community and the Health Ministry has said there is no calf serum in Covaxin and that it is "fully safe".

Patra said Congress has given a "communal angle" to the vaccination process and asked whether "Gandhi family members Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka and Robert Vadra have vaccinated themselves and if so when, where

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## Use of drone made mandatory for monthly recording of road projects



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drones will play a major role in India's national highway construction plans. The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) on Wednesday made the use of drones mandatory for a monthly recording of all national highway projects during their different stages of development, construction, operation and maintenance.

The NHAI has mandated

that contractors and concessionaires will carry out the drone video recording in the presence of the Supervision Consultant, and upload comparative project videos of the current and previous months on NHAI's portal 'Data Lake', capturing all project-related developments in a month.

Supervision consultants will analyse these video recordings and provide their inputs/comments in the digital

monthly progress reports covering various aspects of the project development.

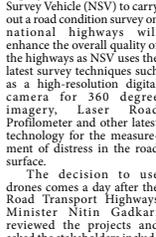
"Project Directors of NHAI shall undertake monthly drone survey from the date of signing of contract agreement till the start of construction of the project at site and also on completion of the project. NHAI will also undertake monthly drone survey in all developed projects where NHAI is responsible for operation and maintenance," the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a press note.

Further, mandatory deployment of a Network Survey Vehicle (NSV) to carry out a road condition survey on national highways will enhance the overall quality of the highways as NSV uses the latest survey techniques such as a high-resolution digital camera for 360 degree imagery, Laser Road Profiliometer and other latest technology for the measurement of distress in the road surface.

The decision to use drones comes a day after the Road Transport Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari reviewed the projects and asked the stakeholders including NHAI to put in use technology and innovative ideas to keep a track on the development of the highways and road infrastructure projects across the country.

As part of mission PRAGATI, the Centre has been monitoring the progress of several other major infrastructure projects including Bullet Train, Dedicated Freight Corridors and Ports among others.

## Rajnath for respect for sovereignty as China muscles into Indo-Pacific



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As China is muscling into the Indo-Pacific region causing concern, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday called for an open and inclusive order in the region based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.

He also flagged terrorism and radicalisation as the "gravest threats" to peace and security in the world and said a collective approach is required to combat the challenges. This observation was in apparent reference to Pakistan aiding and abetting terrorism.

Rajnath made these assertions while addressing the 8th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM Plus). The ADMM Plus is an annual meeting of Defence Ministers of 10 ASEAN countries and eight dialogue partner countries - Australia, China,

## ED arrests one in ₹500-cr bank cheating case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Vivekanand Shankar Patil, Chairman of Karnala Nagari Sahakari Bank, Panvel, Raigad, Maharashtra, in a bank fraud case worth over ₹500 crore.

The fraud came to light after an audit was done at the behest of the Reserve Bank of India in 2019-20.

The audit revealed that Patil was siphoning off funds since 2008 from the bank through 63 fictitious loan accounts of Karnala Charitable Trust and Karnala Sports Academy, which were founded by him, the agency said.

No collateral securities were taken against such loans Patil, he stressed.

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## Maritime museum to come up soon at Lothal



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A museum dedicated to the country's 5,000-year maritime history will be set up in Gujarat's Lothal by the Culture Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Shipping, Port and Waterways (MoSPW).

The two Ministries on Wednesday inked a Memorandum of Understanding for 'Cooperation in Development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat. According to a statement from the Culture Ministry, the world-class facility will be developed in the vicinity of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) site in Lothal, located about 80 km away from Ahmedabad.

NMHC would be developed as an international tourist destination where the maritime heritage of India -- from ancient to modern times -- would be showcased and an education approach using the latest technology would be adopted to spread awareness about the country's maritime heritage, it said.

The NMHC project has been taken up under the unique and innovative projects category of the Sagarmala programme under MoSPW. The Government of Gujarat has transferred 375 acres of land in Sarvagada village on lease for 99 years at a token rate to MoSPW.

"The complex will be showcasing the thousands of year old maritime strength of India," said Culture Minister Prahalad Patel.

Renowned architect Hafeez Contractor has been selected as the Principal Project Consultant to prepare a master plan and requisite design and engineering documents for inviting EPC tender and project management consultancy.

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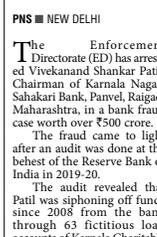
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UP ASSEMBLY POLLS

Political parties kick-start battle

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With the rumblings in the BJP, expulsion of rebel MLAs from BSP and the rebels seeking comfort zone, the political parties have kicked-started the battle for the 2022 UP Assembly elections. The political activities are likely to gather pace with a sharp dip in the Covid curve.

The Samajwadi Party, facing existential crisis after three consecutive defeats in UP (2014 Lok Sabha polls, 2017 UP Assembly polls and 2019 Lok Sabha elections) is desperately trying to reinvent itself. The SP, having burnt its fingers after forging alliance with the BJP in the 2017 UP Assembly elections and later with the BSP and Rashtriya Lok Dal for the 2019 Lok Sabha

elections, seems to have grown wiser. It has ruled out alliances with bigger parties and decided to have a truck only with small parties. The SP has already formed an alliance with the Rashtriya Lok Dal, (RLD) a predominantly Jat political outfit.

Newly elected RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary has made it clear that his party will contest the assembly elections in alliance with the SP to send a message to its support base, the Jat community in western UP. RLD has also announced its strategy to support candidates in the state panchayat chairpersons' elections.

The SP has also formed an alliance with the Mahan Dal that is said to be popular among Maurya, Kushwaha and Saini caste voters in western UP

districts. The Mahan Dal has also announced its support for the SP in the assembly elections. SP sources said the party leadership is worried by not getting the votes of non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jat SCs in the last three elections which it lost. SP has repeatedly committed the mistake to over-rely on the Yadav-Muslim vote bank, leaving the rest of the Hindu votes to the BJP, a senior SP leader said, adding, "To bridge this gap, the SP is forging alliance with small caste-based political parties to prevent the 'Ati Picchda' votes going to the BJP".

A SP leader said, "With 11 per cent Yadav votes and 19 per cent Muslim votes, we were actually treating the Muslims as a majority community".

Suspended BSP MLAs in dilemma over joining Akhilesh

Lucknow: The rebel BSP MLAs who met Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday are in a dilemma over joining the party. Right now, the prime objective of the rebel MLAs is to avoid disqualification from membership of Vidhan Sabha on the grounds of defection. Some of the rebels are trying to form a new party and later merge it with the SP while some are in touch with the BJP and also their parent party.

The sharp attack on the Samajwadi Party by the BSP chief Mayawati on Wednesday added to the discomfiture of the rebel MLAs. "The Samajwadi Party is propagating in the media that some BSP MLAs are switching over to the SP, which is a hoax. These MLAs were suspended from the BSP long ago and are defecting as a Dalit in the Rajya Sabha elections to connive with the SP and an industrialist, Mayawati said on Wednesday. PNS

UP BJP chief slams SP for Ayodhya land scam allegations

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh BJP president Swanatar Dev Singh slammed the Samajwadi Party saying that those who denied the existence of Lord Rama were now questioning the land purchase for the construction of a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya. Singh spoke to media persons after condoning the death of BJP regional chief Manvendra Singh's uncle at Vikrampur village of Etawah on Wednesday.

Attacking the Samajwadi Party further, Singh said that the party which did not have any love for Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, who denied the existence of Ram and Ram Setu and fired bullets at Ram Navak were now talking about Ram Mandir. "Every Ram bhakt knows the truth about the transparent way the lands were purchased in Ayodhya," he said. The BJP leader visited the Etawah village to pay homage to the BJP worker who died from corona on Wednesday and said that he was visiting the houses of all BJP workers and their families who lost their near and dear ones in the state during the corona period. Etawah also witnessed the death of BJP MLA Savitri Katheria's husband and regional vice-president Manvendra Singh's uncle. PNS

Priyanka slams Govt for irregularities in purchase of land in Ayodhya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Targeting the BJP Government over alleged irregularities in purchase of land by Shree Ram Mandir Trust, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that it had hurt people's faith and demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi to furnish the details of money spent as the Trust was formed by him. She also demanded a Supreme Court monitored probe in the murky land deal. In a Facebook post in Hindi on Wednesday, Priyanka said, "According to news reports there have been irregularities in buying land. On March 18, two people bought land in Ayodhya for ₹2 crore. And within five minutes the land was bought by the Shree Ram Mandir Trust which was formed by the Prime Minister for ₹18.5 crore".

The Congress honcho said that it meant that the value of land increased by ₹5.5 lakh per second. "Can anyone imagine and believe this? Not to be forgotten, the entire money belongs to the people of the Ram Trust. The rate of the rate of land increased which was why a whopping amount was paid. 'As per reports, the value of land was around ₹5 crore per the existing circle rate,' she pointed out.



Priyanka further said, "One of the witnesses is a Trustee of the Ram Mandir Trust (who is a former member of the Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh) and another one is a BJP leader and mayor of Ayodhya."

She further stated that the statement from Shree Ram Trust claimed that the rate of land increased which was why a whopping amount was paid. "As per reports, the value of land was around ₹5 crore per the existing circle rate," she pointed out.

Kerala: Now, SDPI launches agitation for new district

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

As a prelude to its original demand for the creation of a separate Malabar State incorporating the regions of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), the political outfit of the extremist organisation Popular Front of India, launched a month-long agitation on Wednesday in Malappuram asking for the setting up of a new district with Tirur as district headquarters.

According to a release issued by the SDPI, the next 30 days would see party activists staging demonstrations in front of all offices in the district calling for the immediate creation of the new district. The Muslim Youth League in its annual State conference held last year had declared that the party would launch an agitation for the creation of a separate Malabar State, bifurcating Kerala and adding some districts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

It may be remembered that Malappuram district was formed in 1969 by the then Union Government led by the CPI(M) in which the Muslim League, CPI and some regional outfits were the constituents. The Muslim League had joined the alliance on the condition that a separate Muslim district would be formed as a quid pro quo.

The year 2021 being the centenary year of the Moplah Rebellion of 1921, an event dear to the Islamic outfits in the State. Though it was seen as an agitation against Britain demanding the restoration of the Khalifa of Turkey, the struggle turned out to be a pogrom in which thousands of local residents belonging to a particular community were annihilated for their refusal to undergo religious conversion.

"We have been subjected to the worst kind of treatment during the last five decades and we want speedy economic development of this region. The formation of a new district with Tirur as head quarters is the only solution for the same," said the SDPI release.

Tirur is the birth place of Thunchathu Ramanujan Ezuthachan, the father of Malayalam language who authored Aadiyatama Ramayanam. But the local body controlled by conservative Islamists have not allowed to install a statue of the Father of the Malayalam language in his place of birth.

Leaders of the SDPI called on P Uthaidulla, MLA and submitted a memorandum demanding the formation of the new district.

Sadiq Naduthodi, vice president of SDPI told reporters that the agitation would be continued till July 16.

Police grills actor Mithun for inciting poll-violence

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Amid BJP's continued allegations of State repression of its workers and leaders the Kolkata Police on Wednesday grilled super star Mithun Chakrabarty for allegedly provoking violence during the elections.

The actor who was currently in Purī was virtually grilled for about 45 minutes by the additional Officer in-charge of the Manicktalla Police Station and was asked whether he had incited people through his speeches or not.

The Bollywood star had campaigned for the BJP in the State polls and had apparently in a bid to perk up the crowds recited a number of dialogues from Bengali films that he had acted in.

Out of those dialogues a famous one was "Marbo ekhane... Leash porle onarone hit you here and your corpse will hit at the funeral ground" that Chakrabarty had repeatedly performed in his public meetings.

Post polls an alleged TMC supporter Mrityunjay Paul lodged a complaint with the Manicktalla Police station in North Kolkata seeking action against the Mumbai star. Subsequent cases were registered against him under Sections 153, 504, 505 of the IPC.

Chakrabarty had earlier petitioned the High Court for an anticipatory bail but the Court had directed him to cooperate with the police virtually.

Cabinet clears corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Board

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) by splitting it into seven entities to improve autonomy, accountability and efficiency. There are 42 Ordnance factories spread all over the country and its employees had opposed the strike by workers of the OFB against the proposed corporatisation and their concerns in the notice dated 04.08.2020 from the three recognised Federations of Defence Civilian Employees, proposing to call an indefinite strike from 06.00 am of 12.10.2020 by the Defence Civilian Employees of Ordnance Factories against the government move to corporatize OFB.

An Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Minister of Defence to oversee and guide the entire process of corporatisation of the OFB, including transition support and re-employment plan of employees while safeguarding their wages and retirement benefits.

The EGoM products are priced on a cost based methodology without charging any profit over the cost of production for supply to the armed forces. Since the OFB is nominated as a production agency for supply of core items to the armed forces, no comparison with international prices can be made. This information was given by Minister of State for defence Shripad Naik in a written reply to Santanu Sen in the Rajya Sabha on September 19 last year.

The EGoM comprised Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister for Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of State for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Minister of State for Personnel, Public Drive and Pension Dr Jitendra Singh. PNS

TN logs 10,448 new cases, Kerala sees 13,270

KOCHI/CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu has stabilised the transmission of Covid-19 in the State as the data furnished by the Directorate of Health and Preventive Medicine shows that the instances of the pandemic is on a downward journey.

On Wednesday, the State logged 10,448 new cases while 270 succumbed to the pandemic. Coimbatore and Erode, the industrial hub, had 1,420 and 1,123 new cases respectively while Tirupur had 608 new patients.

Kerala, which began the lifting of lock down by phases on Thursday registered 13,270 new cases and 147 deaths. Test Positivity rate in the State on Wednesday evening was 11.79. There were 1.09 lakh patients across the State as on Wednesday.

The liquor outlets in the State would be operating from 9 am on Thursday and there is no restriction other than the Covid-related standard protocols. Tipplers are welcome to visit the nearest outlet and pick up their favourite brands. The re-opening of liquor outlets owned by the State Government has come as a major relief to regular customers who were at the mercy of black marketers who charged ten times the original cost. PNS

Maharashtra deaths drop to 1,236, cases rise to 10,107

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 deaths dropped to 1,236 in Maharashtra on Wednesday, even as the State logged 10,107 infections and recorded recoveries by 10,567 patients.

A day after the daily pandemic deaths - inflated by 1,070 'old' and unaccounted fatalities - jumped to 1,458 in the state, the fatalities went down to 1,236. The daily deaths comprised 237 new deaths and 999 'old' deaths.

The infections went up by 577 - from 9,350 on Tuesday and 10,107 on Wednesday. With 1,458 deaths reported on Wednesday, the Covid-19 toll in the State jumped from 1,14,154 to 1,15,390.

With 10,107 fresh infections, the total infections in the State rose from 59,24,773 to 59,34,880.

As 10,567 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the State after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 56,69,179 to 56,79,746. The recovery rate in the state rose 95.69 per cent to 95.7 per cent.

The total 'active cases' in the state dropped from 1,38,361 to 1,36,661. The fatality rate in the state went up from 1.93 per cent to 1.94 per cent. Pune with 17,820 cases continued to be remain first in the state in terms of maximum number of 'active cases' in the state, while Mumbai with 17,732 stood second, followed by Thane (14,170), Kolhapur (12,487), Sangli (10,900), Satara (7,488), Ratnagiri (7,385) Sindhudurg (5,057), Nashik (4,718) Nagpur (4,674), Ahmednagar (4,619) and Raigad (4,067).

Of the 3,86,41,639 samples sent to various laboratories across the state so far, 59,34,880 have tested positive (15.36 per cent) for Covid-19 on Wednesday. Currently, 6,78,781 people are in home quarantine while 5,401 people are in institutional quarantine.

PM to launch crash course for frontline workers on June 18

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch a 'Customized Crash course programme for Covid-19 Frontline workers' on Friday via video conferencing.

The launch will commence the programme in 111 training centres spread over 26 States.

The launch on June 18 will be followed by the Prime Minister at his address, Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Mahendra Nath Pandey will also be present on the occasion. The programme aims to meet and uplift over one lakh Covid warriors across the country, according to the Prime Minister's office.

The training will be imparted to Covid warriors in six customised job roles namely Home Care Support, Basic Care Support, Advanced Care Support, Emergency Care Support, Sample Collection Support and Medical Equipment Support.

The programme has been designed as a special programme under the Central Component of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0, with a total financial allocation of Rs. 276 crore.

The programme will create skilled non-medical healthcare workers to fill the present and future needs of manpower in the health sector, said the statement from the PMO.

UP CM increases aid for Covid orphans

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In yet another gesture towards the children who were orphaned due to Covid, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath upped the aid being given to children whose guardian's income is below ₹3 lakh per year.

"For the legal or natural guardian, the annual income of ₹2 lakh limit is very low, hence the monthly assistance will be provided to every orphaned child whose guardian's income is below ₹3 lakh per year," announced the Chief Minister at a high-level Covid review meeting in Lucknow on Wednesday.

Under the 'Uttar Pradesh Mukhyamantri Bal Seva Yojana', the State Government will provide financial assistance to a child's guardian while those who did not have anyone to look after will be sent to children's homes.

Taking care of the upbringing and education of children orphaned by Covid, a monthly financial assistance of ₹4,000 will be given to a child's guardian or caretaker, till he or she attains adulthood.

Further, the State Government will also provide tablets or laptops to all such children studying in schools, colleges, or pursuing vocational education.

UP to make stringent laws for gambling in public places

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government is expected to make more stringent laws for gambling in public places. The State Law Commission has not only made the Public Gambling Act enacted during the British era stricter but also publicising gambling and various forms of betting in the category of non-bailable offences.

After studying the laws of several states, the draft of Uttar Pradesh Public Gambling (Prevention) Bill has been prepared under the chairmanship of a commission led by Justice A N Mittal. A draft scripted by the Commission was submitted to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday. It is believed that the state government would soon implement its own law across the state with regards to gambling.

The State Law Commission in its draft has recommended to increase the amount of fine along with the provision of maximum punishment of three years. The special component is that the draft of this new law has been made keeping in mind the fast growing habit of online gambling in the last decade.



Potters make earthen pots at their house as pots are in much demand during the summer season, at a village about 30 km from Jammu on Wednesday

Mumbai cops, BMC launch probe into fraud in pvt HSG society vax camp

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After the residents of a city housing society alleged a fraud in the vaccination camp held by a private agency in their housing society, the Mumbai Police and BMC Corporation (BMC) and Mumbai police on Wednesday launched independent investigations into manner in which three persons claiming to be Hiranandani Heritage Society residents fled from the camp on the pretext of organising a vaccination camp.

A day after the residents of the Hiranandani Heritage Society, comprising 435 flats in three towers at Kandivli (west) in north Mumbai flagged the issue in the media, BMC Additional Commissioner Suresh Kakani took suo moto cognisance of the residents' grievance and asked his deputy Vishwas Shankarwar to conduct an enquiry and submit his report within 48 hours.

Similarly after the office bearers of Hiranandani Heritage Society's Welfare Association (HHRWA) lodged a complaint with the,

Kandivli police also launched investigations into the alleged fraud. The HHRWA office bearers told the police that the three alleged fraudsters collected ₹4.92 lakh from 390 residents, housekeeping staff, security guards, drivers of domestic helpers on May 30 for conducting a vaccination camp.

The camp was conducted through three facilitators, including Rajesh Pandey and Sanjay Gupta, who claimed to represent leading private hospitals like the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (KDAH) and the Nanavati Hospital. They agreed to provide 400 vaccine doses for around ₹1,260 each, for which the society paid around ₹4.92 lakh. However the vaccination facilitator did not provide receipts for the money taken.

On their part, the KDAH and the Nanavati Hospital have distanced themselves from the questionable vaccination camp by saying that they had nothing to do with the vaccination camp conducted at Hiranandani Heritage Society. They said that they were not approached by the housing society.

The residents got suspicious after as none of the beneficiaries were given the vaccination certificates. They also noticed that the vials used for vaccination camp bore 'Not For Sale' stamp.

The society members approached one of the facilitators Sanjay Gupta for vaccination certificates.

However, Gupta said that the certificates would be given after 3-4 days. Later on the residents found out after June 8 that the certificates were being generated from different hospitals in the city, without the date of vaccination i.e., May 30.

Before long, some of the aggrieved residents checked their status on CoWin only to learn that they were yet to get their first vaccine dose, a development that prompted to lodge a complaint with the police.

Meanwhile, local BJP leader Yogesh Sagar alleged that there could be a nexus between the BMC and unscrupulous elements in such private drives and the beneficiaries must make full enquiries before getting lured by such offers.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Jab gap rethink

As confusion abounds, India still lacks a comprehensive outlook on tackling the virus

The latest UK medical study says the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine against the Delta variant of COVID-19 is 92 per cent effective against hospitalisation after two doses and suggests that it is "vital to get both doses as soon as they are offered to you, to gain maximum protection against all existing and emerging variants". That has made the Indian Government experts rethink on reducing the gap between the doses that now stands at 12-16 weeks. Should the Government be doing a rethink every time a study surfaces? Each has its own definition of the efficacy of the vaccines and doses. Percentages differ. Criteria also vary. Demographic situations in countries are starkly different. Each study has its own, internal purpose. The UK-based studies are analysing symptomatic infections. India is looking for effectiveness against severe disease. That leads to the question: Where is the real-world data in India? Take the



jab gap issue, for instance. Independent virologists say there is no real-world data in India to establish the most effective jab gap. The Government on May 13 increased the gap to 12-16 weeks from six-eight weeks, reportedly based on a UK study even though the UK itself reduced the gap from 12 to eight weeks much before data was available on vaccine efficacy. The country merely went by the criterion of greater infectiousness of the variant. Now, there is a rethink in India about the gap. Members of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation say they only recommended a gap of 8-12 weeks because they had no data about efficacy of a gap beyond 12 weeks.

They say the 12-16 weeks idea came from the Government. Dr NK Arora, chairman of the COVID working group on vaccines, has no reply other than that there is no dissent within NTAGI. So, whom to believe? Secondly, Dr Arora quotes two Indian studies from PGI, Chandigarh, and CMC, Vellore, to say that irrespective of dose interval, "both the doses are having similar protection against the Delta variant (B.1.617.2) and Alpha variant (B.1.1.7)". But the Vellore study says: "Our study corroborates these studies that vaccination is protective, although we did not look at the variants responsible for the massive second wave." So, whom to believe? The issue is, India still lacks a comprehensive outlook on tackling the virus. Vaccination, medical care and safety protocols that make up the outlook are seen more in isolation than unison. The basic nature of the vaccine is it will not stop the infection, but only reduce the severity. That means medical facilities for COVID-19 positive patients are as important as vaccination. That also means the Government has to strictly enforce safety protocols. In reality, however, the availability of vaccine is erratic, there is no informed stand on jab gap, new cases continue to be reported and the States are eager to lift the lockdown substantially, if not fully, well aware that people are throwing caution to the wind, prompting fears of a relapse.

### PICTALK



A boatman rows on a relatively clean Khushalsar lake in the middle of the old city in Srinagar

## Blood money

The closed case of the Italian marines is mired not only in legality but in morality, too

More than nine years after they shot dead two fishermen off the Kerala coast, the Supreme Court has quashed the criminal charges against Massimiliano Latore and Salvatore Girone, the two Italian marines on board the *Enrica Lexie* and accepted the compensation of ₹10 crore deposited by the Government of Italy. The Division Bench directed the Governments of Italy, India and Kerala to coordinate in respect to disbursement of the compensation, which is to be deposited with the Supreme Court Registry. With this, all legal proceedings initiated against the marines stand cancelled. Doramma, the widow of Valentine, and the sisters of younger victim Ajesh Pink are to get ₹4 crore each. The owner of the damaged boat, *St Antony*, would get ₹2 crore. This is over and above the *ex gratia* amount of ₹1 crore each paid to the parties. The long-drawn case has already vanished from the public mind, especially after the legal heirs of the deceased fishermen withdrew their affidavits and submissions to the Kerala High Court in April 2012. The fate of the case was sealed then and there, according to a Kochi-based marine law expert.



The incident dates back to 2012 when Kerala was ruled by Oommen Chandy and the Union was headed by Manmohan Singh. However, the Catholic Church's role in the issue hasn't been in the public domain. For one, there has been Cardinal George Alencherry, head of the Catholic sect in Kerala, who was quoted in the immediate aftermath of the marines' arrest as boastfully saying that he would remain in "close contact with the Catholic ministers of Kerala who would help pacify the situation". Meanwhile, the take of Jayapalan, president of the South Indian Fishermen's Federation, is that the blood money concept is alien to India. Similarly, VM Shyam Kumar, the counsel for the sisters of Ajesh Pink, asked: "Italy could afford to pay the compensation. Had the ship belonged to a poor country, what would be the consequences? Those who question the legality of blood money in the *Enrica Lexie* case should bear in mind that many Indians accused of murder have been saved in West Asia after paying blood money. Last week saw MA Yousof Ali, a Gulf-based businessman, paying ₹1 crore to save Becks Krishna, a Thiruvur youth, from the gallows for killing a Sudanese youth in the UAE. It should be two-way traffic, isn't it?"

# The lost cause of indigenous tribals

The poor forest dwellers are at the mercy of no one, despite being the best caretakers of the forested greens and the environment



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

The recent upsurge in Maoist violence puts the focus back on tribal issues, rarely discussed in the mainstream. Even though the tribal population is nine per cent, they live as invisible Indians. Their presence is felt only when they make headlines for the wrong reasons, for obstructing traffic with their protests, for defiance, and thereafter again fade into oblivion.

These are the people who have been on the frontline of India's war of independence and the ones to have suffered the most. The British branded 150-odd tribes as "criminal tribes" by imposing the Criminal Tribes Act, starting in 1871. It took the Nehru Government five years to de-nature these tribes and replace the derogatory law on April 31, 1952. *Addivas* now celebrate April 31 as the alternative Independence Day.

Even today, tribals live on the sidelines of the Indian political landscape. They are indeed the marginalised entities in India's political life. The *addivas* have lived in forests at peace with nature for ages. But they have been castigated, charged, blamed and demonised, often stripped of their basic human rights, their right to life and property included. They are evicted from their dwelling places in the name of conservation and national interest. To use the conservationist lingo, their habitat is shrinking. It is being usurped legally. Despite some Supreme Court verdicts, the condition of tribals has not improved even after Independence. They remain on the margins, their life and livelihood constantly under the threat. The neo-colonial mindset has replaced the older one. Conservation is one big plank that is a legit and subtle way to evict tribals from their land.

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, for the first time recognised the rights of tribal communities to forest resources. Hitherto, Government Acts and policies did not recognise the symbiotic relationship of the forest dwellers with the forests. This, ironically, was always present in their dependence on the forest as well as in their traditional wisdom for the



conservation of forests.

The path-breaking law gave three generations of tribals the right to live on their land. But they were asked to prove their ownership, which most of them can't and that is the biggest stick to beat them up with. Though the authorities want them to show papers of the inheritance, they have lived on the land even before paper was invented! Even so, they have been branded a "danger to forest land and wildlife".

The *addivas* have managed their environment better than neo-conservationists. People in Gosaba, Sunderbans, are killed by the Bengal Tigers. There is a village in Gosaba named Vidhwapalli, a village of widows whose husbands were killed by tigers. The very same people feel the tigress who takes shelter in the village when she is about to deliver her cubs! Now think about the Delhi ridge or Mumbai's Aarey forest constantly waning each passing year. Nearly 80 per cent of biodiversity in the world is in areas inhabited by tribals. They have conserved the forests pretty well. They take from it what they need, without making permanent damage and giving time and chance to nature to recuperate and grow.



THERE IS A VILLAGE IN GOSABA NAMED VIDHWAPALLI. A VILLAGE OF WIDOWS WHOSE HUSBANDS WERE KILLED BY TIGERS. THE VERY SAME PEOPLE FEED THE TIGRESS WHO TAKES SHELTER IN THE VILLAGE WHEN SHE IS ABOUT TO DELIVER HER CUBS

Their religious practices forbid them to even enter the core areas. The modern conservation programmes would have these forests as open zoos for the inspection of tourists.

While tourists and other outsiders are welcome, the *addivas* are not. They are aliens in their own homes. Even if they venture inside, they are beaten up, tortured, even killed by rangers. Their houses are burnt and properties vanishing. Not very long ago, a 13-year-old boy was shot in the Kaziranga for wandering inside the protected area. The park has a shoot-at-sight policy. The Jenu Kuruba, tribals living in the Nilgiri in Karnataka, are frequently shot while collecting mushrooms. Over 50 people have been shot dead by the guards in the last five years. Of late, there has been a trend of read about them. They were seldom reported!

Another aspect of tribal persecution is the Maoist violence in forested areas. It is often reported from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and others. The security forces are up against the armed resistance in the forests. However, not all tribals are supporters or sympathisers of Maoists. Most of them face

pressure both from Maoists as well as the security forces. They are routinely rounded up and made to suffer.

It is indeed a problem that refuses to go away. The Government, for its part, has never tried to find the root of the problem and solve it politically. The Maoists draw cadres from the wronged people. Since they never run out of cadres, the basis of the problem is indeed economic being addressed with force. Since 2010 when it was at its peak, it has come to subside. It is now confined to around 30 districts, but there is a long way to go. The gains of security forces are no guarantee that the problem is over. Maoism is a problem born out of the social and economic milieu of the region and lack of development. The Government gives them enough fuel and exploitation that oils this war machinery.

If the current rate of exploitation of nature continues, we may lose the forests and forest dwellers. And, with them, their wisdom to survive without harming nature.

(The writer is a columnist and documentary film-maker. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### UNSCRUPULOUS ELEMENTS PRIET ON MISERY

Sir — As per reports, a housing society in Mumbai's Kandivli area has complained to the police that it was cheated by some persons who organised a COVID-19 vaccination camp by claiming to represent a private hospital, and the vaccine administered could be spurious. The society, Hiranandani Heritage Residents Welfare Association, has now sought investigation into the matter.

A vaccination camp was arranged by the residential complex on May 30. But later it found that the Co-WIN portal did not have any record of the people who participated and they received certificates in the name of different hospitals, it said. "The HIRWA has now sought investigation into the matter. A person who claimed to be a sales representative of a private hospital in Andheri. As many as 390 members received the jobs at ₹1,260 per person. They were shocked to receive vaccination certificates in the name of Nanavati Hospital, Lifeline Hospital and NESCO COVID Camp, among others. Nanavati Hospital denied any involvement and said they themselves a victim of the situation.

There are even doubts whether the residents were actually given Covishield or if it were just glucose or expired/waste vaccine. Meanwhile, the BMC, from this week, has made signing of a Memorandum of Understanding mandatory between private vaccination providers and housing societies if such camps are organised.

### Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### THE REAL FACE OF THE G7 SUMMIT

Sir — The group of seven largest industrial and developed nations was founded in 1970 with a focus on economic issue and to resolve global problems. The 47th G7 Summit was held in the city of Cornwall, the United Kingdom. The western media focused only on the

## Police high-handedness must stop



Within a fortnight of a Supreme Court (SC) Bench of Justices UU Lalit and Vinod Saran quashing a seditious FIR against veteran journalist Vinod Dua in Himachal Pradesh for his criticism of the Narendra Modi Government's handling of COVID-19 and the use of the Pulwama attack and Balakot airstrike to seek votes, the SC Bench upheld citizens' right to criticise or comment upon the measures undertaken by the Government and its functionaries. Dua's March 30, 2020, statements had neither incited people to violence against the Government nor created disorder, it added.

Or what the Allahabad High Court said when it released Dr Kafeel Khan: "A complete reading of the speech *prima facie* does not disclose

any effort to promote hatred or violence. It also nowhere threatens peace and tranquillity. The address gives a call for national integrity and unity among the citizens." Now, the three orders by the Delhi High Court were delivered by Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup, Jaivan Bhambhani, perhaps the first instance of a court calling out alleged misuse of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against individuals in cases that do not necessarily fall in the category of "terrorism" cases. The Bench's observation came while granting bail to JNU's Devanagana Kalita and Neelisha Narwal, along with JNU student Asif Iqbal Tanha, and gave the Delhi Police a dressing down for "casually" invoking provisions of anti-terror laws.

This is not only a slap to the Delhi Police, which is run by Amit Shah's Home Ministry, but also to the Delhi Government for giving prosecution sanction against the students. Actually, the High Court has rightly reminded us of the basic tenet. The police, who often slap outrageous charges on protesters, should heed it.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### beaches and the glowing sun.

The G7 grouping took three important decisions to restrict China, which is considered to be moving in an unethical way. The first is the threat to humanity, the sanction of \$40 trillion and re-investigation into the alleged Wuhan labs virus leak. We have always seen that when a programme is being held in developing nations, the news and articles underlining the headlines of "Hiding the poverty" in the international media pops up. But when the same thing happens in the developed world, it is hushed up. The poorest city of the United Kingdom, Cornwall, where the G7 summit was organised, doesn't get any space in international coverage.

The powerful nations didn't even focus on how to address the issue of the appetite of the poor by providing shelter to their families and food to their stomach. It seems that poverty is the selling point only in certain cases.

Aman Jaiswal | New Delhi

### THE MISSING SPIRIT OF RAJA FESTIVAL

Sir — Raja, the famous festival of Odisha, was badly hit by the COVID-19 second wave. Due to the rising cases, the Government imposed lockdown in most of the state. During this festival in the pre-pandemic times, people used to wear new clothes, moved around having fun, enjoyed savouries and involved themselves in 'Raja Mauja' for various games and activities.

But this year, the evergreen and colourful Raja witnessed no colours due to the second wave of the pandemic. People, being in a state of fear and negative mindset, were adverse to letting their hair down. Maybe the State Government should start a show that will add some colour and flavour to the life of the Odia people.

Sarmistha Pradhan | Cuttack

## SOUND BITE

Till the end, I tried my best to keep the family and the party united. I even went to my uncle's house. But all went in vain.



LJP Leader — Chirag Paswan

At the moment, it doesn't look like this particular disease of a zoonotic origin came from a lab.

UK Prime Minister — Boris Johnson

Taking Man home in Shimla after two years. She has stayed indoors all this time. Now vaccinated with both jabs.

Actor — Anupam Kher

I will try to achieve the time of 11.15 seconds in the upcoming Indian Grand Prix IV in Patiala on June 25.

Ace sprinter — Dutee Chand

Congress president Sonia Gandhi and presidents of PCC presidents will write condolence letters to the next of kin of those who passed away due to the pandemic.

Congress general secretary — KC Venugopal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### ITALY'S EXIT WILL HIT CHINA'S PLANS

Europe took a long time to see through Chinese strategy of gaining control of strategic assets



GAURIE DWIVEDI

From football teams to strategic infrastructures like ports and airports, China's influence in Europe has grown exponentially in under two decades. Chinese companies own four airports including Frankfurt-Hahn Airport in Germany, six ports and a dozen European soccer clubs. By the time Europe started screening Chinese investments in 2019, Beijing's clout had risen manifold. And Italy's endorsement of Xi Jinping's flagship project Belt and Road Initiative gave it the legitimacy it needed. A G-7 European country endorsing a global program did more damage to European unity than any other recent event. The statement of Mario Draghi, Italy's Prime Minister, indicating the possibility of Rome undoing its biggest geo-political blunder in decades, could derail a lot of China's European plans, which were stitched on the back of its seemingly large wallet. To deepen its access inside Europe, Beijing had focused on Greece and Italy both of whom were struggling with high debt levels. Heavily-indebted Athens felt it would be better off encashing Chinese cheques than following EU's prescription to cut costs any more. Greece also upgraded its relationship with China a year after the Chinese had gained control of the



Greek port of Piraeus. Under Chinese ownership, Piraeus emerged as the second-biggest container port in the Mediterranean and Europe's biggest passenger port. Piraeus' elevation sparked major fears of loss of trade in Rome, causing it to embrace China and the BRI. China successfully exploited the several fault lines that existed in Europe; the one between industrialised North and relatively weaker South. Add to this, the desperate fund crunch of stagnant Southern economies like Italy and Greece which made large Chinese cheques even more appealing. Europe took a long time to see through the Chinese strategy of gaining control of strategic assets, building inroads into prominent think tanks and exploiting the continent's vulnerabilities to build political leverage.

Beijing engaged with each of countries on the European continent. First, China identified weaker economies like Greece and Hungary to break the EU's solidarity. Beijing engaged with non-EU countries like Serbia that were in dire need of capital. It continued to build trade ties with large economies like Germany and the UK. But China never lost sight of its geo-political ambition. The EU failed to speak in a single voice after Beijing lost the case regarding its acquisition of the Scarborough Shoal in international tribunal UNCLOS in 2016. Greece, Hungary and Croatia had thwarted EU efforts to name China despite Manila's unequivocal win at the tribunal. Recognising the need to act against China's top-sided economic model, ahead of the EU-China summit in 2018, 27 of the 28 EU country ambassadors to China signed a report charging the BRI with pushing "the balance of power in favour of subsidised Chinese companies". Nine months later, however, Italy formally joined the BRI.

In a post-pandemic world order, an increasingly isolated China is seeing the world coming together against it. With America's renewed push to forge trans-Atlantic cooperation to take on Beijing, Draghi's decision could prove to be the biggest reset on the continent. An EU veto on Chinese investments and a revisit on the EU-China investment deal can put intense pressure on Beijing. BRI holds the key to China's power, in Europe and elsewhere. Italy's decision could begin the unwinding.

*(The author is a senior journalist and Visiting Fellow at the United Services Institution of India. The views expressed are personal.)*

## Why it is difficult to make things happen

No matter how good an idea is, it will get converted into a policy only if the ultimate decision-making authority, a politician or a group of politicians, puts its stamp on it

Things don't happen easily in the government. And, if they do happen, it is difficult to sustain them. I had been of the view that for anything to happen and sustain in the government it had to be politically acceptable, socially desirable, technologically feasible, financially viable, administratively doable and judicially tenable. This in itself was quite a handful. However, the unexpected agitation against the Farm Bills has compelled me to add another dimension: "Emotionally relatable".

There is a feeling outside the government that not much happens in the government. Not only that, each one of them will have an idea on how to make things happen. However, if the six afore-mentioned aspects are not taken into consideration, the idea will perhaps not travel much distance on the ground. Let us consider each one of them.

No matter how good an idea is, it will get converted into a policy only if the ultimate decision-making authority, a politician or a group of politicians, puts its stamp on it. For example, many would argue that reservation in government jobs is adversely impacting governance. If there is a referendum, perhaps the majority will vote against it. But can we dispense with it now or at any time in the future? Perhaps not, because it will never be politically acceptable. That is why decision making in democracies takes much longer than in countries like China. A lot of time gets spent in consensus building. This is not to say that democracies are worse than autocracies because political acceptability, as an underlying principle of democracy, has its own merits.

Social desirability of an idea is equally important even if it may not appear to be so. It is important in the context of implementation of an idea that may be politically acceptable. A number of schemes announced by the government, hence politically acceptable, fail on the ground because while formulating the scheme, the social context is not taken into consideration. Thus, the infamous Family Planning effort of the government during the dark days of Emergency not only met with failure but led to the fall of the government. This may be an extreme example but many schemes and ideas face enormous problems if they are not socially desirable. Understanding the needs of the stake holders is critical for the success of any scheme.

Technology is changing by the day. Hence, the feasibility of technology becomes an important determinant in the implementation of an idea and sustaining it. Many of those that have not travelled to various parts of the country advocate the use of internet to reach out to children during COVID-19 times for schooling. They are perhaps unaware of the fact that internet has not reached out as yet to a large part of the country. The situation may change over a period of time but as of now, it may not be possible to reach out to all the children through the net.

The most critical part in implementation of an idea is the availability of funds to back such an idea. Till a couple of years ago, number of railway lines were announced by successive Ministers for Railways in their budget speeches (fortunately this has ceased now) without the funds to back them. These railway lines were socially desirable and technologically feasible.



SOCIAL DESIRABILITY OF AN IDEA IS IMPORTANT EVEN IF IT MAY NOT APPEAR TO BE SO. IT IS IMPORTANT IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF AN IDEA THAT MAY BE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE. A NUMBER OF SCHEMES ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT, HENCE POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE, FAIL ON THE GROUND BECAUSE WHILE FORMULATING THE SCHEME, THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IS NOT TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION

*The author is a former IAS officer. The views expressed are personal.*



They were obviously politically acceptable as well. But they never happened on the ground. Similar apprehensions are raised about the recently announced National Education Policy (NEP). The Policy recommends allocation of six per cent of GDP to Education Sector. This is nothing new. It was recommended long ago by Dr Kothari in his Report as well. But the money never came despite a cess levied by the government to raise resources. In fact, during the period from 2014 to 2018 the budgetary allocation to school education actually came down in real terms. Without requisite money to back ideas, such ideas will not travel a long distance.

Even if we have the requisite money, if the desired human resources are not available, the idea will not work on the ground. One of the reasons of failure in delivery of health care in rural areas is the shortage of doctors. Health care is politically acceptable and socially desirable. There is reasonable amount of money available. But shortage of human resource is a major constraint. School education in the country is another example where there is an acute shortage of human resources. There is an additional

problem relating to their management as well. This management of the teachers who are the pivot of school education, has left a lot to be desired. The biggest mafia in school education is the one that provides pre-service training, the B.Ed and D.El.Ed colleges. A large number of them exist only on paper but they can give you a degree. The selection of teachers to government schools is another racket. One former Chief Minister is behind the bars for manipulating selection. What can be expected of teachers who have come through such a process? Human resource management is the key to the success of any programme.

Finally, no matter what the government does, the final arbiter is the judiciary. It can undo all that may have been attempted. The over-indulgent judiciary can make matters worse.

The Farm Bills appear to be fine on all these dimensions mentioned above. Even those who are opposing it on account of political considerations were themselves pushing for such reforms when they were in power. Most of them would privately agree that the Bills would benefit the farmers and will free them from the

clutches of "middle-men". However, opposition to the Bills was still so huge. It reflected the inability of the proponents to make this idea "emotionally relatable" to the farming community. The Bills are indeed socially desirable but the government which has otherwise demonstrated to be so skillful in communicating messages, has apparently been unable to do so in the present instance. Hence, the Bills that are so beneficial to the farmers are not perceived as such. There is, therefore, this problem of perception and a large number of farmers are not able to relate emotionally with the Bills.

The listing of these limitations does not mean that things don't happen in the government. The success of *Ayushman Bharat*, the Coal Block auctions and unprecedented increase in coal production during 2014-16, the successful management of Covid-19 fallout in Mumbai and many districts of the country and the like prove that it can happen. These programmes/schemes/efforts understated the limitations and worked around them. There is indeed a lot to learn from how they made it happen for others to make it happen.

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

YOU NEED TO TRAIN DIFFERENTLY AND ADAPT TO THE CHANGE. IN ENGLAND, THE LENGTH IS FULLER BECAUSE OF THE SWING. — INDIAN BOWLER ISHANT SHARMA



INDIA ARE A WORLD-CLASS OUTFIT WHO POSSESS MATCH WINNERS ALL THROUGH THEIR LINE-UP. WE ARE UNDER NO ILLUSION. — NEW ZEALAND HEAD COACH GARY STEAD

## Iran: giving up on Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

An immediate end to US sanctions and a quick rollback of Iran's deviations from strict adherence to the treaty's terms might have done the trick

Lifting Trump's sanctions, @SecBlinken is a healthy moral obligation, NOT negotiating leverage. Didn't work for Trump - won't work for you," tweeted Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif late last month. But what if US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (and President Joe Biden) have just decided that reviving the 2015 nuclear deal is a lost cause?

There are quite a few people in the Biden administration, and particularly in the State Department, who can count to twenty without even taking their shoes off. So they must have realised that there was going to be an election in Iran next Friday (18 June).

Many of them would even have known that this time the



GWYNNE DYER

*The author's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)'. The views expressed are personal.*

Iranian election has been rigged so that the "hard-liners" are bound to win it.

Joe Biden therefore only had five months to reverse Donald Trump's deliberate wrecking of the 2015 treaty that prevented Iran from working on nuclear weapons. After the June election, the wreckers would be in power in Tehran, and they would sabotage the talks.

So why didn't Blinken's people move faster?

It was the Trump administration that unilaterally pulled out of the JCPOA treaty (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) and slapped crippling economic sanctions on Iran in 2018. Since then, Iran has repeatedly said that if the US just cancelled Trump's sanctions and rejoined the treaty, all would be well. Now



it's probably too late. Iran did nothing for more than a year, waiting and hoping that the other signatories (Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China) would find ways to help Iran get around the American sanctions. The other countries all agreed that Iran was not violating the terms of the treaty in any

way, but none of them wanted to get into a showdown with Trump by breaking the US sanctions. So when Trump tightened the sanctions further in May 2019, crushing Iran's remaining oil exports, Tehran began to go beyond the treaty limits - a little bit. It didn't leave the treaty; but it began to enrich its uranium a

bit beyond the treaty limit of 3.67% (far below weapons-grade). It allowed inspections to continue, it kept nothing secret, but every three or six months it moved the enrichment up another notch to create some counter-pressure on the other signatories to sort their American problem out.

Finally, Trump lost the 2020 election, Biden replaced him in the White House last January, and it became possible to repair all the damage. However, the new secretary of state, Antony Blinken, then announced that Iran would have to roll back all its post-2019 increments to the enrichment process BEFORE the US lifted its sanctions.

The shoe is clearly on the wrong foot there. It was the United States that showed itself

to be untrustworthy by quitting the treaty. The Iranian economy paid the price, starving in the gutter for three years.

The question of who goes first is fundamental if there is trust, but America has forfeited the right to demand that Iran trust it. Biden and Blinken must know that demanding Iran go first dooms the negotiations, and that a rigged election in Iran will shortly close the door on the deal for good. It would break them off, because Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has arranged for his faithful supporter Ebrahim Raisi to win the election by banning more open-minded candidates from running at all.

Both men are fiercely anti-Western ultra-conservatives, but

they wouldn't have got away with rigging the election like this four years ago, when the treaty was new and popular hopes were still high in Iran. The despair created by Trump's renewed sanctions killed those hopes. Biden may be wrong to let the JCPOA treaty die. An immediate end to US sanctions and a quick roll-back of Iran's deviations from strict adherence to the treaty's terms might have been done the trick. Even a new hard-line government in Iran would have found it hard to unspike that sort of done deal.

But it would have been a gamble, and Biden seems to have decided that he couldn't afford to risk his political capital that way. It will be years before we know if this was a fatal mistake (and who it was fatal for).



# Repair, prepare eco, health infra: Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As India emerges from a devastating second wave of Covid-19 infections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the focus must be on repairing and preparing the health infrastructure as well as the economy for future challenges.

To prepare a base for a sustained higher growth rate, the Government continues to unleash reforms and has also extended free food distribution schemes to aid the poor hit hard by the pandemic.

"Over the past year, we have witnessed a lot of disruption in different sectors. Much of it is still there," Modi said at the VivaTech Summit. "Yet, disruption does not have to mean despair. Instead, we must keep the focus on the twin foundation of repair and prepare."

This time last year the world was still seeking a vaccine and today two vaccines are being made in India, and more are in the development or trial stages, he said.

"We have to continue repairing health infrastructure and our economies," he said. "And when I say prepare, I



Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivers keynote address at the 5th edition of VivaTech, in New Delhi Wednesday

"This goes on to show that India as a nation is adaptable and agile," he said. After the brutal second wave in April and May, the Covid case has fallen more than 80 per cent since its peak 5 weeks ago.

This as also the pick up in the pace of vaccination had aided state governments to relax restrictions at a relatively faster pace than in 2020.

"I believe where conventional fails, innovation can help. This has been seen during the Covid-19 global pandemic, which is the biggest disruption of our age. All nations have suffered losses and faced anxiety about the future," Modi said.

# Sellers not declaring local content percentage of goods at GeM portal to lose out on biz: Comm min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sellers who do not declare local content percentage while uploading their products at public procurement portal GeM will lose out on business and will not be able to participate in bids in which buyer has chosen to procure only made-in-India items, the commerce ministry said on Wednesday.

The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal was launched in 2016 for online purchase of goods and services by all central and state government ministries and agencies.

The Ministry also said GeM was the first e-commerce portal in the country which had started displaying the 'country of origin' of all products prominently for giving its buyers the right to make informed decisions of procurement.

Now, it is mandatory for all sellers to upfront declare the 'country of origin', without which they cannot upload products on the platform. Going a step further, GeM has also started highlighting the local content % (percentage) on the product description page prominently.



Department of Commerce Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India

informed decisions accordingly," it said. Buyers have been provided with a filter in the marketplace to identify and select products from among MII (make in India) compliant sellers' products only, it said.

"Sellers who do not declare local content % (percentage) while uploading product and creating catalogue on GeM will lose out on business and will not be able to participate in bids in which the buyer has chosen to procure only MII compliant products," it added.

In the portal, a MII filter has been provided using which a buyer can filter out all non-local suppliers and restrict its procurements under direct purchase and L-1 (lowest bid) purchase from among local

# Adani Total up 921%, Adani Enterprises up 890% vs 60% for Nifty in last 1 year

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Total Gas went up by 921 per cent while Adani Enterprises went up by 890 per cent in the last one year compared to 60.7 per cent return for the NSE Nifty index, as per Trendlyne data.

Adani Group stocks have been scorers in the stock market in the last year before they started unravelling in the last three days and have been going down ever since.

Adani Group investors have seen wealth erosion of ₹ 1.10 lakh crore in the last three trading sessions. Adani Enterprises was down 5.82 per cent at ₹149.30. Adani Enterprises Ltd has gained 213.40 per cent in the last six months. It has a market cap of ₹1.59 lakh crore.

Adani Total Gas is up 917.9 per cent in the last one year and has a market cap of ₹1.53 lakh crore. It was down on Wednesday by 5.02 per cent at ₹1.39.

Speaking with reporters, GeM Chief Executive Officer P K Singh said there are 9,980 start-ups registered on GeM currently. He said that to address the credit access challenges faced by MSMEs, GeMSAHAY app has been rolled out.



group with the highest market capitalisation.

Adani Green's market cap is at ₹1.83 lakh crore, even though it is a relatively new company. Adani Green has given a one year return of 238.4 per cent. Along with other stocks, Adani Green was down by 3.38 per cent at ₹ 1,171.25 on Wednesday.

Adani Ports has given a one year return of 108 per cent compared to 61.1 per cent for the Nifty. Its market cap is at ₹1.44 lakh crore. It was down 7.22 per cent at ₹706.85 on Wednesday.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd has lost 19.14 per cent in the last one week.

# Sensex, Nifty fall from record highs, investors eye US Fed meet

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Key benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty retreated from record-high levels on Wednesday following intense selling in Reliance and HDFC twins as investors turned cautious ahead of the outcome of the US Federal Reserve's policy meeting.

The 30-share BSE index ended 271.07 points or 0.51 per cent lower at 52,501.98. It had closed at an all-time high of 52,773.05 on Tuesday.

The broader NSE Nifty retreated from a record high and declined 101.70 points or 0.64 per cent to 15,767.55.

PowerGrid was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding around 2 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Reliance, L&T, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finance.

"Indian indices slipped ahead of the Fed policy announcement as global markets turned cautious. Weakening MoM sales data and rising prices in the US are adding concerns to ongoing inflationary trend. Fed is maintaining an accommodative

policy and a calm comment on short-term inflationary pressure can drive the markets ahead," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Choice banking in a note said that the domestic market took cues from the weak global market ahead of the US Fed's decision.

# Rupee slips to 73.32 against dollar ahead of FOMC announcement

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Extending its losses for a seventh straight session, the rupee slipped by 1 paisa to end at 73.32 against the US dollar following risk-off sentiment among investors ahead of the outcome of the US Federal Reserve meeting.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 73.29 per dollar as against its previous close of 73.31.

It hovered in the range of 73.26 to 73.38 during the day. The domestic currency has lost 52 paise in the seven inflationary sessions to Wednesday.

# Govt hikes subsidies for DAP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a ₹ 700 per bag hike in subsidy for DAP fertilizer to protect farmers from its surging prices due to the increasing cost of raw materials globally. This will cost an additional of ₹14,775 crore to the exchequer. The hike is part of the government's effort to ensure that farmers get the key soil nutrient at old rates of ₹1,200 per bag.

With rise in global prices, the actual price of DAP reached ₹2,400 per bag. DAP is the second most popular fertiliser among Indian farmers behind urea. In 2020-21, 119.13 lakh tons of DAP were purchased, compared to 350 lakh tons for the top-selling urea. Beside DAP, the government is providing ₹ 900 per bag subsidy on urea.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Briefing the media, the Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday said the Cabinet has approved increasing the subsidy amount for DAP fertiliser for the benefits of farmers.

# Govt says edible oil prices falling; nearly 20% decline in some cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Wednesday said edible oil prices have started falling in the past one month, and the quantum of decline is nearly 20 per cent in some cases. Stating that India imports a significant quantity of edible oils to meet domestic demand, the Centre said it is working on a series of mid- and long-term measures to make the country self-sufficient.

"Edible oil prices in India are showing a declining trend across a wide array of oils. As per data from the Department of Consumer Affairs, over the past month, the prices of edible oils are now coming down," an official statement said.

In some cases, the decline is as much as nearly 20 per cent, as shown in prices in Mumbai, it added.

Citing examples, the government said the price of palm oil was ₹142 per kg on May 7 and now, it has come down to ₹115 per kg, a drop of 19 per cent. Similarly, the price of sunflower oil has dropped 16 per cent to 157 per kg, from ₹188 per kg on May 5.

# India's exports up 46 pc to \$14 bn during June 1-14



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's exports rose by 46.43 per cent to USD 14.06 billion during June 1-14 on account of

healthy growth in shipments in sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products, according to preliminary data of the com-

# NPPA asks drug firms to cut prices in wake of GST rate reduction

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Drug pricing regulator NPPA has asked pharmaceutical companies and medical device makers to reduce prices on products on which the GST has been lowered in order to pass on the benefit to the consumers. In a notification, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) noted that a change in tax rates has an impact on the fixation of maximum retail prices (MRP) of various drugs and formulations.

As per DPCO 2013, MRP of drugs and formulations are inclusive of taxes. Therefore, any downward change in tax or GST rates should be reflected in the MRP and benefit of the reduction should be passed on to the consumers, it noted.

"In view of the above, all the manufacturers and marketing companies are required to revise the MRPs of drugs/formulations on which tax/GST rates have been reduced taking into effect the revised GST rates," NPPA said.

Recalling or re-labelling or re-stickering on the label of the container or pack of the already released stocks in the market is not mandatory if manufacturers are able to ensure price compliance at the retailer level through issuance of a revised price list, it noted.

# IT cos set to slash 3 mn jobs by 2022 due to automation, to save \$100 bn in cost: Report

Mumbai-With automation taking place at a much faster pace across industries especially in the tech space, domestic software firms that employ over 16 million are set to slash

headcounts by a massive 3 million by 2022, which will help them save a whopping USD 100 billion mostly in salaries annually, says a report. The domestic IT sector

employs around 16 million, of them around 1 million are employed in low-skill services and BPO roles, according to Nasscom.

### EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF PUJA SPECIAL TRAINS

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of following Puja Special Trains as under-

Train No. & Name	Extended Upto
02511/02512 Ghorakpur-Kochuvel-Gorakhpur Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05119/05116 Chhapra-Delhi-Chhapra Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05018/05017 Ghorakpur-Lokmanya Tilak (T)-Gorakhpur Spl. Exp.	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05101/05102 Chhapra-Lokmanya Tilak (T)-Chhapra Special Exp.	30.06.2021 to till further advice
02597/02598 Gorakhpur-Chhatrapati Shivaji (T)-Gorakhpur Spl. Exp.	30.06.2021 to till further advice
02595/02596 Gorakhpur-Anand Vihar (T)-Gorakhpur Special Exp.	30.06.2021 to till further advice
02581/02582 Manduadih-New Delhi-Manduadih Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05022/05023 Gorakhpur-Pune-Gorakhpur Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05022/05021 Gorakhpur-Shalimar-Gorakhpur Special Exp.	30.06.2021 to till further advice
02587/02588 Gorakhpur-Jammu Tawi-Gorakhpur Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05097/05098 Bhagalpur Jn. - Jammu Tawi - Bhagalpur Jn. Spl. Exp.	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05045/05046 Gorakhpur - Okha - Gorakhpur Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice

For any kind information such as timings, composition and stoppages enroute passengers are advised to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

# Centre plans to simplify green nod for quick operationalisation of mining projects



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Wednesday said the government is planning to simplify the green clearances required for the quick operationalisation of mining projects, including coal.

It assumes significance as mining projects in various states face delays in production due to lack of approvals such as forest and environment clearance.

"(With regard to) EC (environment clearance) and FC (forest clearance), we are actually trying to do something with the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF). I think some simplification is going to be done."

"The secretary MoEF... Told us in a meeting that EC, FC norms are of course friendlier so that we will be able to have operation in a quicker way," Coal Additional Secretary M Nagaraju said.

He was speaking during the Virtual Chhattisgarh Mining Summit organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The additional secretary also stressed that the state



government should ensure that the mines that are allotted are operationalised at the earliest by hand-holding the allottees and holding regular meetings, among others.

"Expect these two clearances (EC and FC), rest of clearances come from the state government. In fact, for EC and FC, a lot depends on the efficiency of the state government's forest department.

# APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a man, Name: Unknown S/o Unknown, R/O Unknown Age: about 30-35 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Crushed, Build: Medium, Wearing: Green coloured round, printed t-shirt and red coloured slipper in feet, has been found dead on 14.06.2021 from Train accident at Pole No. 21/6G to 21/8G, Under Akshardham Flyover in Track, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for 72 hours at the Mortuary of GTB Hospital Station. In this regard a DD No. 02A, dated 14.06.2021, US/174 Cr.P.C., has been lodged at P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi.

If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers: SHO P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi Ph: 011-22145602 Mob.: 8750671314

DP/164/RLY/2021

### DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

#### GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

#### STATE CHILD PROTECTION SOCIETY, SECRETARIATE (1st Floor, ISBT BUILDING, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI-110006)

Notice- Inviting "Expression of Interest" for Grant-in-Aid from NGOs for running Child Care Institutions for the Financial Year 2021-2022 under Child Protection Services

Expression of Interest for Grant-in-Aid is invited for running of Child Care Institutions for Protection and wellbeing of the Children through Child Care Institutions under Child Protection Services for the financial year 2021-2022.

The Grant-in-Aid is subject to approval of Project Approval Board (PAB) at Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India and Grant-in-Aid (GIA) shall be as per the financial norms of the ICPS/ Child Protection Services. Kindly refer to the website of Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI ([www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in)) for financial norms under ICPS and other relevant details.

Procedure for applying : Interested NGOs/VOs may download the Application Form, from official website: [www.wcd.nic.in](http://www.wcd.nic.in) and submit their application along with requisite documents by email on: [scpsdelhi@gmail.com](mailto:scpsdelhi@gmail.com) The Last date of submission of Application/proposal is 30.06.2021 latest by 5.00 p.m.

The NGOs running Child Care Institutions may note that misrepresentation of facts shall amount to disqualification.

Director Department of Women and Child Development GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

For any query, email us at [scpsdelhi@gmail.com](mailto:scpsdelhi@gmail.com)

DIP/Shabdarth/0101/21-22



**Bollywood**  
 'Perceptions change with every film and nothing should be taken to heart.'  
 —Zareen Khan



The COVID-19 outbreak elicited a wide spectrum of merchants' sentiments and behaviours. The retailers are focussing on innovation to operate to the best of their capacities in the new normal. If the modifications, that merchants are compelled to make as a result of the pandemic, are good enough, they will become the new benchmark for customer experience. When you introduce customers to a new level of convenience, reduced pricing, or better fit, their future expectations will be established accordingly. As sad as a pandemic of this magnitude is, merchants simply cannot afford to waste time.

During the first several months, dealing with the new social distance standards was difficult, and only a few shops could open, largely selling food, medical supplies, and necessities. With many establishments closing, the retail sector business faced a very low consumer base and was at times nil. However, as time passed, each sector learned new strategies to deal with the new difficulty.

Consumer behaviour was forced to alter during the lockdown. With physical stores closing, everyone, even sectors and client groups that had previously avoided doing so, had to turn to the digital realm for their retail requirements. Now that this behavioural change has been adopted, it is doubtful that things will revert to their previous state.

## GO TOUCH-FREE

Technology will drive revolution in the forthcoming years, thus, retailers should invest in digitally advanced infrastructure and facilities, says SANJAY KOTHARI

This indicates that the offline-online link is more crucial than ever before. Brands that are unable to balance the two might struggle. Physical retail remains a very powerful tool for customer engagement and the digital environment will never be able to compete with its value and experience, hence, being omnichannel is the way forward to exist in composure.

E-commerce will continue to eat market share because it already has the tools in place to provide what customers want — price, selection, free and rapid delivery, to mention a few. Many brick-and-mortar stores were failing even before the outbreak. The reasons for this are numerous and complicated, but it is reasonable to assume that the rise and popularity of e-commerce are to blame for a large portion of it.

Another trend that will undoubtedly become popular in the future is contactless shopping, which helps avoid



crowded stores while preferring low exposure; a retail experience in which no items are touched, displays are not restocked, and large crowds are not required. Products are displayed in displays, and purchases are either made

there and then and produced from the rear, or they are delivered directly to your home the following day. While this is a format that has emerged as a result of the short-term restrictions of working in a Covid environment, it is quite likely that customers will come to accept it and then prefer it.

Technology will drive a revolution in the forthcoming months and years and thus, retailers should invest in digitally advanced infrastructure and facilities. Digital transformation will pave the way for touch-free shopping experiences, merchandising, transactions, and eliminate physical interactions, therefore, investment in retail technology will be seen. The use of VR and AR for marketing changed the playing field dramatically. Leading companies are adopting augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) into their digital marketing strategy to attract customers, advertise their goods, improve sales, retain consumers, and give consumers new experiences. Their applications are expanding in a variety of fields, including healthcare, medicine, astronomy, education, defence, and consumer products.

AR and VR also allow for in-store experiences to be had from the comfort of one's own home, eliminating the need to travel to the store. AR is rapidly being used by e-commerce platforms to allow buyers to experience the goods as if they were there in a real-life situation. The use of augmented reality and virtual reality in retail establishments, e-commerce, and advertising is the next big thing poised to disrupt marketing paradigms. AR is more successful since it has reduced costs and assisted consumers in making purchasing decisions while they are engaged with the information.

'Shopping by appointment' is another shopping trend now gaining more popularity. This is a concept happening with a lot of designer labels and fashion firms, and it's a trend that may continue to spread when Covid fades into obscurity. In a nutshell, 'appointment only' refers to booking an appointment and receiving a time window in the store for yourself only or with a restricted number of other clients. While the short-term goal is to maintain social distance standards and make the client feel safe, the long-term goal is to deliver a variety of substantial benefits leading to a lasting experience. Customers with an appointment are more likely to make purchases, allowing retailers to spend more of their time and effort on other aspects of their business.

With huge retailers suffering and are in the midst of a recession, landlords will need to rethink their options and tactics if they want to keep filling their facilities with brands that attract customers and confirm growth.

(The writer is the Vice Chairman of KKG Group.)

## 'Let my work do the talking'

Actor AYUSHMANN KHURRANA says that whatever his equity is today, it is mainly due to the success of his social entertainers

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana's equity has been soaring since the past few years as he delivered eight back-to-back hits in theatres. His booming credibility with inclusive, conversation-starting social entertainers in India has made him one of the most sought-after brand endorser in the country.

Now, Ayushmann has been roped in to be the face of a mobile phone brand. As we all know, mobile phones and banking are two sectors that thrive on the credibility of the artist to become the face. Recently, mobile phone brands have signed on the superstars like Robert Downey Jr and Virat Kohli. So, Ayushmann being roped in for a mobile phone brand surely means his credibility with the masses is only on the rise.

When asked if Ayushmann could decode what makes him so brand-friendly, he candidly says, "Whatever my equity is today, it is mainly due to the success of my social entertainers

which have made me connect to the people of India. These films have told people who I'm, how I think, and what my intent is as an entertainer."

He adds, "I'd like to believe brands have noticed this and connected with the idea that I try to tell real stories of real people. I feel thrilled that I'm part of a brand's vision and journey to reach out to the audience with a narrative that resonates with my journey in cinema. I'm grateful that my films have worked wonderfully at the box office and also got the love and appreciation from people."

Ayushmann says he has been fortunate to get the right films that have become huge hits. Success always translates to equity, he feels.

"I have always believed in letting my work do the talking. I have been fortunate enough to pick projects that have contributed to the new discourse of how cinema in India can be unique, clutter-breaking, conversation-starting, entertaining, that don't need to follow the same, stereotypical norms of how stories have been told," says Ayushmann.



Two years ago in June, Dia Mirza-starrer and Sonal Nair-directorial *Kaafir* made their debut as a web television series and instantly connected with the audience across the world. Written by Bhavani Iyer, the series told the wrenching story of Kainaz Akhtar, a woman who mistakenly crosses the LOC, is presumed to be a militant, and is held prisoner.

The series was a grim and poignant retelling of a similar incident and reminded the audience of the human cost paid by innocent citizens when nations mistrust each other.

Dia says, "It is difficult to not empathise with a woman who goes through so much suffering for no fault of hers. A woman who is also a mother and no longer knows if she will ever experience a sense of home. It is a human story that will always be relevant for its message of love and peace but is particularly pertinent now because we are being reminded every day by the pandemic of our shared humanity. We are being



## 'Hate is a futile emotion'

Actor DIA MIRZA says that *Kaafir* is relevant for its message of love and peace, especially now when we are being reminded of our shared humanity everyday



reminded that hate and violence are ultimately futile emotions. What remains after we are gone is just this question, 'Did we love this world and those inhabiting it enough?'

Dia says, the fundamental humanism informing the story instantly drew her to the character of Kainaz and she says,

"Deep-rooted prejudices make us forget that we are human first and *Kaafir* continues to remind us of this fact. Hate is a corrosive emotion and robs us of our ability to empathise with each other and vivates life so much that we forget to love, to be kind, to build a world where there is more light than darkness. Yes, geopolitical tensions are real but so is the hope that one day we can

resolve them." *Kaafir* was also Dia's digital debut and she says, "The performance had to be subtle and yet expressive of the turmoil within the character and I felt truly humbled when so many fans and critics sent me appreciative messages after watching the series." She also won a Critic's Choice nod for Best Actor (OTI) at Gold Awards.

## Yoga for kids

As we approach International Yoga Day, a new series by Shrradha Setalvad will centre around '3Fs' — fitness for the body, focus on the mind, and fun for the soul

According to a National Centre for Complementary and Integrative Health survey, one in 12 children practice yoga. Over the years, yoga has become increasingly popular among Indian children. It helps in improving balance, strength, endurance, and aerobic capacity. It can also help to boost memory, self-esteem, academic performance, and classroom behaviour, thereby reducing anxiety and stress in children.

As we approach International Yoga Day, Tata Sky Fitness is introducing *Yoga Ki Paathshala* by Shrradha Setalvad. The series will focus on '3Fs' — fitness for the body, focus on the mind, and fun for the soul. Setalvad explains '3Fs' in detail:

**FITNESS FOR BODY**  
 Asanas like Shavasana, Navasana, Tolasana, Suryanamaskar, Chakrasana helps in strengthening the overall well-being of kids. It aims to develop both physical health as well as cognitive skills in children. It opens the energy channels throughout the body, increasing flexibility of the spine, strengthening bones, and stimulating the circulatory and immune systems. Along with proper breathing, these



poses or asanas also calm the mind and reduce stress.

**FOCUS ON MIND**  
 Asanas like Pranayama, Padmasana, Sukhasana, and others, help a child to be aware of themselves and help them control their emotions. These act as a tool for calming and energising the child to develop a state-of-relaxed mind, which is crucial for learning. It also develops social-emotional awareness, body awareness and coordination, and interpersonal skills.

**FUN FOR SOUL**  
 Children can adapt to all kinds of exercise and practicing yoga asana at an early age can lead them to have a healthy head start in life. In this fast-paced world, it helps to rejuvenate kids inside out. The meditative poses help to relax both our mind and body. It promotes spiritual awakening and awareness of higher consciousness. It is a perfect choice if you want a holistic approach to mind and body strength.

—IANS

## TRENDBLAZER



### 'CAN'T WAIT TO START FILMING DHAAKAD'

Actor KANGANA RANAUT shared a poster of her forthcoming film *Dhaakad*, saying she looks forward to starting work on the film.

"Can't wait to start filming *Dhaakad*," she wrote on the image, which she shared on her Instagram story.

In the picture Kangana is seen in an action-packed avatar. A toppled burning car is visible in the backdrop. She is armed with a machine gun and a pistol.

Apart from *Dhaakad*, Kangana's forthcoming roster includes *Thalaivi* and *Tejas*.

### fairtalk

SHARAD KELKAR



"I don't like to term myself a star because I am not. I am an actor. I would be very happy if even a chunk of people even considered me as a good actor. That's enough for me. My first love has always been acting. So, for me the medium actually doesn't matter. If that (being remembered as an actor) stops, it would be a matter of concern for me."

### dailytalk

JASMIN BHASIN



"If I start worrying about fame and burden myself with responsibilities and expectations, I'll lose myself. I've always been straightforward, I don't have filters. So, I don't think I should change because this is how I'm and that's why I'm loved by my fans. I want to stay this way, real and responsible. I would never want to lose myself."

### OWEN RECALLS REACTION TO MOBIUS IN LOKI

Actor OWEN WILSON has opened up on his first reaction to his role of Agent Mobius in the web series *Loki*.

Wilson said Mobius just sounded too complicated and interesting to gloss over.

He described the character and the show as "maybe not something you would expect from a comic book world, while still providing some of the excitement and thrills and sense of adventure that you do expect from these stories."



# Sankalp Se Siddhi — Mission Van Dhan

The Minister for Tribal Affairs, ARJUN MUNDA, virtually launches livelihood initiatives and inaugurates seven new Tribes India outlets along with the new office for TRIFED

**S**ankalp Se Siddhi — Mission Van Dhan, was launched by Arjun Munda, Minister for Tribal Affairs on June 15. The event also witnessed the inauguration and launch of several other programmes, including the new premises of the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) headquarters. Keeping in line with the Prime Minister's directive to call 'Vocal for Local' and to build an *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*, with TRIFED has been coming up with several initiatives, aimed at sustainable livelihoods for our tribal population.

Munda formally inaugurated the new office by cutting the ribbon in the presence of Renuka Singh, Minister of State for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Bhaskar Khulbe, Advisor to the PM, Ranvir Chaudhary, Meena, Chairman of TRIFED, and Pravir Krishna, Managing Director of TRIFED.

Speaking on the occasion, Munda remarked, "I am delighted to inaugurate the new premises of

TRIFED and unveil some noteworthy initiatives that TRIFED has been working towards, such as *Sankalp Se Siddhi — Mission Van Dhan*. Implementation of this crucial mission will result in the transformation of the tribal ecosystem in our country. Today is a momentous day for tribal people, as today sees the culmination of the valuable effort put in by the TRIFED team over the past years. It is commendable that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the TRIFED team has achieved this, despite the difficult circumstances of the past two years."

Renuka said, "It is noteworthy that the new initiatives being unveiled today take care of all aspects of tribal empowerment, be it spreading awareness about the various tribal livelihood initiatives, natural produce with the immunity boosting product hampers and the attractively designed H&IG products which are not only sustainable, or preserving the culture through the vivid colourful Coffee Table

book." The new TRIFED Office premises at NSIC Complex, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-III, New Delhi is around 30,000 sq ft in area and has state-of-the-art infrastructure and is equipped with two conference rooms for video conferencing and other latest amenities. It houses office space for the Minister for Tribal Affairs, Managing Director, senior officials and all staff members.

The most notable initiative unveiled was *Sankalp Se Siddhi — Mission Van Dhan*. TRIFED has been implementing several noteworthy programmes for the empowerment of the tribals. Over the past two years, The Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP has impacted the tribal ecosystem in a major way. It has injected ₹3,000 crores into the tribal economy, even during such difficult times, aided by government

push. The *Van Dhan* tribal startups, a component of the same scheme, have emerged as a source of employment generation for tribal gatherers and forest dwellers and the home-bound tribal artisans. In less than two years, 37,362 *Van Dhan Vikas Kendras* (VDVKs), subsumed into 2240 *Van Dhan Vikas Kendra Clusters* (VDVKCs) of 300 forest dwellers each, have been sanctioned by TRIFED out of which 1200 VDKC Clusters are operational. A total number of 134 Tribes India Outlets have been opened for retail marketing to date, and have made a total sale of ₹53.66 crores. Besides, two TRIFED Projects at Jagdalpur and Raigarh (Maharashtra) are being shortly commissioned for undertaking value-addition of various forest products being produced by beneficiaries of Van Dhan Kendras. As a result of the above, an estimated amount of ₹3800 crores has so far been injected in the tribal economy while impacting the lives of 50 lakh members of the tribal population.

The Sarnath outlet is the first successful collaboration with the Ministry of Culture at an ASI heritage site. With these outlets, the total number of Tribes India outlets have gone up to 141.

A Tribes India Coffee Table Book, which showcases the rich cultural tribal heritage and highlights the journey of various tribal artisans practising different arts and crafts and how TRIFED has impacted their livelihoods, was also unveiled today. With the mission to make Tribes India the ultimate gift destination, TRIFED has compiled a hamper of unique handicrafts, GI products and immunity boosters from different parts of the country. These hampers, unveiled today, will make for unique gifts both here and abroad. TRIFED has also been providing skill upgradation and design development workshops for the development of tribal artisans through handicraft and income generation training programmes. During the pandemic, efforts were made for the skill development of

tribal artisans and 17 training programmes were approved for benefiting 340 tribal artisans and developing 170 new designed products. Twenty five newly designed products from the recently completed Design workshop training programmes for the Boksra tribal artisans at Rishikesh and Meena tribal artisans at Jaipur, were also launched.

Speaking on the occasion, Pravar said, "TRIFED is working consistently on its mission towards making the tribals *atmanirbhar* and self-reliant. These are just a glimpse of the activities it has undertaken in this regard. The team is striving in this direction and will continue to do so."

With the emphasis on being 'Vocal for local' and building a self-reliant India, TRIFED, as the nodal agency working towards tribal empowerment, continues to launch and start new initiatives that helps in improving the income and livelihood of the tribal people, while preserving their way of life and traditions.

## POWERGRID supports Municipal Corporation, Shimla



**J**ai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh (HP), flagged off truck-mounted sewer jetting and litter picking machines provided by the Municipal Corporation of Shimla by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

Suresh Bhardwaj, Urban Development Minister of HP, V K Singh, Director (Personnel) of POWERGRID, Kailash Rathore, Executive Director, Northern Region-II of POWERGRID and other senior officials were also present on this occasion.

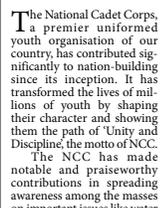
POWERGRID had sanctioned funds amounting to ₹1.98 crores for providing four special purpose vehicles (SPVs) to the state of HP. One truck-mounted sweeping machine with vacuum cleaner and one truck-mounted compactor had been handed over to the Municipal Corporation of Shimla in December 2020. The remaining two machines were flagged off on the day before yesterday.

This initiative of POWERGRID shall help the municipal corporation in creating smart city infrastructure. These

machines shall help in maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene of the city. Furthermore, with the introduction of these technologically advanced machines, the process of cleaning, especially in difficult terrains of the hilly region, will be done easily and rapidly.

Earlier, one SPV mounted vacuum-assisted road sweeper, two sewer cleaning twin-bin dustbins having financial implication of ₹1.31 crore had been handed over to the Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Manali, district Kullu. Apart from this, 3,250 solar LED street lights and 13,000 mobile units costing ₹1.06 crores to Bilaspur District Authorities, two ambulances in IGCMS Shimla and District Hospital, Chamba have been provided in the State of Himachal Pradesh.

## NCC as an elective subject



**T**he National Cadet Corps, a premier uniformed youth organisation of our country, has contributed significantly to nation-building since its inception. It has transformed the lives of millions of youth by shaping their character and showing them the path of 'Unity and Discipline', the motto of NCC.

The NCC has made notable and praiseworthy contributions in spreading awareness among the masses on important issues like water conservation, environment protection, *Swachhata Abhiyan* and enforcing COVID-19 protocols. It is time that NCC now be considered as a general elective subject/credit course in all universities and colleges which are affiliated with NCC in an extracurricular capacity.

Secretary of the Department of Higher Education from the Ministry of Education, Amit Khare held a meeting with Lt Gen Tarun Aich, Director-General of NCC and Maj Gen M Indrabalan, ADG of NCC, on facilitating the implementation of NCC general elective subject/credit course across universities and technical colleges in India. He welcomed the circulars issued by UGC and AICTE that recognises NCC as a credit course designed by Directorate General National Cadet Corps (DGNCC), which he hailed as a landmark step.



In phase one, adoption of the course in colleges already having NCC units will be made possible. Subsequent expansion to other colleges would depend on the creation of necessary capacity with DGNCC or by the colleges themselves. DGNCC revealed that under Fully Self-Financed Scheme, one lakh vacancies have been released for private colleges over and above the 15 lakh sanctioned strength of NCC.

Interestingly as a JS in 2015, Khare had initiated a similar process. But at that time it was considered as an elective subject since choice based semester system was not in place. He mentioned that the National Education Policy, 2020 has already recognised the importance of holistic education, social service, community development at the credit courses under the

Choice Based Credit System and NCC training already falls in this ambit.

Out of the 979 universities in India, only 54 are central universities, 425 are state universities and 125 are deemed universities. To achieve implementation of NCC elective in state universities, the DoE would approach the state governments to facilitate the process. The DoE would also consider the suitability of introducing the NCC credit course in IITs and NITs.

Khare also conveyed that the benefits of the NCC credit course to students need to be adequately publicised to generate awareness and interest among universities and students. He appreciated the efforts being made by DG of NCC and the state directorates engaging with universities and colleges in assisting the implementation.



## CISF organises promotion-cum-pipping ceremony

**A** promotion-cum-pipping ceremony of other ranks was organised by CISF Headquarters, New Delhi and simultaneously at all the zone headquarters across India.

In a path-breaking initiative for the welfare of the personnel, 2100 constables/GD have been promoted to the rank of Head Constable/GD. Sudhir Kumar Saxena, DG of CISF put ranks to promoted CISF personnel during the promotion-cum-pipping ceremony held at CISF HQ, Arvind Dev, ADG (North), P S Phalnikar, ADG (APS), Prateek Mohanty, IG (Pers) and other senior officers of CISF were present during the ceremony. The ceremony witnessed immense pride and enthusiasm amongst the promoted personnel. To implement this transformational agenda, the officers and staff of CISF HQ pursued hard and maintained liaison & coordination with MHA, for promoting the force personnel.

Because of the COVID menace and guidelines of social distancing, only a

few constables were invited from Delhi-NCR Units and IGI Airport for putting their rank on promotion during the pipping ceremony. Similarly, pipping ceremonies were also organised in all the zone headquarters of CISF for promoting the CISF personnel to the next higher rank.

Saxena congratulated all the promoted head constables. He said that regular promotions to the personnel go a long way in enhancing our capabilities and also motivates other personnel to improve in their tasks and aspire for a similar promotions. It thus improves the overall employee morale and job satisfaction thereby promoting the development of the organisation as personnel feel connected with their organisation and willingly give their best for its effective functioning and growth. He also added that in the present scenario of negativity, these promotions will not only boost the morale of the personnel but also help to create a positive functional atmosphere at workplaces.

## NAFED launches Fortified Rice Bran Oil

**S**udhanshu Pandey, Secretary of Food and Public Distribution for the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India launched NAFED Fortified Rice Bran Oil on June 15. This Rice bran oil will be marketed by NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd), India's apex Agri-marketing Organisation which has been serving the country since 1958.

On the occasion, Sudhanshu stated that this initiative by NAFED will reduce the country's consumption dependence on imported edible oil in the future. He also said that this will provide opportunities for Indian edible oil manufacturers while giving an impetus to the *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* initiative.

Guest of Honour, Arun Singhal, Chief Executive Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of



India (FSSAI) highlighted the benefits of rice bran oil stating it is one of the healthiest cooking oils and has numerous benefits like being rich in antioxidants and having anti-cancerous, anti-ageing properties.

Atish Chandra, Chairman & Managing Director of Food Corporation of India (FCI) also graced the launch and outlined the various health and lifestyle benefits of rice bran oil and the importance of standardisation of this product in the industry. Recently an MoU has been signed between NAFED and FCI for the production and marketing of fortified rice kernel.

Regarding this initiative, Sanjeev Kumar Chaddha, Managing Director of NAFED, said, "We aim to support consumers by providing immunity boosting products in the backdrop of the pandemic by introducing products aimed at promoting healthy food habits." He also mentioned that this initiative will provide easy access to NAFED branded high-quality rice bran oil, which will boost the indigenous oil manufacturing industry.

Ranjit Kumar Prasad, NAFED's Additional Managing Director, concluded the event by highlighting that such initiatives will broaden the

organisation's consumer marketing segment by offering daily essential healthy products at affordable price.

Rice bran oil from NAFED will be fortified and will contain additional nutrients and vitamins. According to the FSSAI, fortified oil can help a person fulfil 25-30 per cent of the recommended dietary intake for vitamins A and D. NAFED Fortified Rice Bran Oil will be available at all NAFED Stores and also on various online platforms and is recommended by the American Heart Association and the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the best substitutes for other edible oils.

## Financial results for RITES Ltd

**R**ITES Ltd (NSE: RITES, BSE: 541556), the leading Transport Infrastructure Consultancy and Engineering firm, announced its standalone and consolidated financial results for the Quarter and Year ended on March 31, 2021.

Commenting on the results, Rajeev Chhokra, Chairman and Managing Director, RITES Limited, said, "Given the testing scenario, our focus remained on project delivery & execution which helped us to register Quarter to Quarter operational revenue growth in every quarter of FY21. Our Q4FY21 results surpassed the Q4FY20, but were not enough to make up for the shortfalls in first three quarters."

and turnkey. Similarly, operating revenue, excluding other income, is up by 12 per cent to ₹619 crore in Q4FY21. EBITDA, excluding other income, and PAT has shown a growth of 7.3 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively and sustained margins at 27.8 per cent and 21.3 per cent respectively. During the quarter, exports started for cape gauge locomotives to Mozambique and coaches to Sri Lanka and as a result, exports have shown a YoY growth of 54.5 per cent. However, revenue from some commitments which were ready for shipment is spilling over to Q1FY22. Consultancy and leasing remained almost flat and seen revenue reaching towards the pre-COVID levels.

**FY21 (consolidated)**  
FY21 total consolidated revenue stands at ₹2005 crore against ₹2735 crore in FY20. Similarly, the operating revenue, excluding other income, stand at ₹1860 crore against ₹2474 crore in

FY20. The decrease is attributable to a decrease in exports by ₹448 crore, disruptions in the supply chain and restrictions imposed due to pandemic and one-time settlement income of ₹9 crore during FY20. Excluding exports, the fall in operating revenue is 8.7 per cent. EBITDA (excluding other income) and PAT stands at ₹505 crore and ₹444 crore respectively, against ₹668 crore and ₹633 crore respectively in FY20. EBITDA and PAT margins are sustained at 27.2 per cent and 22.2 per cent respectively due to timely cost reduction measures.

**FY21 (standalone)**  
Similarly, standalone revenue also got impacted, due to disruptions in the supply chain and restrictions imposed due to pandemic and total standalone revenue now stands at ₹1947 crore against ₹2665 crore in FY20. EBITDA (excluding other income) and PAT stands at ₹460 crore and ₹424 crore, against ₹602 crore and

₹596 crore respectively in FY20. In consultancy and turnkey, the margins were maintained at 44.2 per cent and 3.8 per cent however exports and leasing margins moderated to 19 per cent and 35.6 per cent respectively, due to fewer exports and reduced locomotive requirement in H1FY21.

**Dividend**  
After declaring two interim dividends of ₹120 crore (₹5 per share) and ₹96 crore (₹4 per share) for FY21, the Board of Directors has recommended a final dividend of ₹96 crore (₹4 per share) for FY21 which is 40 per cent of paid-up capital. This dividend will take the dividend payout of the company to 73.6 per cent for FY21 based on the PAT of FY21.

**Revenue and profit growth**  
Q4FY21 total revenue is up by 6.1 per cent to ₹632 crore against ₹596 crore in Q4FY20 and has shown a QoQ growth of 36.2 per cent. Revenue improved due to growth in consultancy, exports

and turnkey. Similarly, operating revenue, excluding other income, is up by 12 per cent to ₹619 crore in Q4FY21. EBITDA, excluding other income, and PAT has shown a growth of 7.3 per cent and 2.4 per cent respectively and sustained margins at 27.8 per cent and 21.3 per cent respectively. During the quarter, exports started for cape gauge locomotives to Mozambique and coaches to Sri Lanka and as a result, exports have shown a YoY growth of 54.5 per cent. However, revenue from some commitments which were ready for shipment is spilling over to Q1FY22. Consultancy and leasing remained almost flat and seen revenue reaching towards the pre-COVID levels.

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**Performance of our subsidiary and JV**  
Revenue from our subsidiary REMC Ltd stands at ₹69 crore against ₹81 crore in the previous

financial year. Profit after tax stands at ₹24 crore against ₹35 crore in FY20. Consultancy revenue from this subsidiary got impacted due to less traction power requirement by railways during FY21, however, power generation revenues are up by 46.9 per cent to ₹16 crore in FY21. In FY21, our wagon manufacturing joint venture, SRBW-PL, revenue and profit stands at ₹161 crore and ₹2.5 crores against ₹265 crore and ₹15.5 crores respectively in FY20. In our joint venture of IRISCTE, revenue and profit stand at ₹39 crore and ₹5 crore respectively against ₹50 crore and ₹5 crores in FY20.

**PFIC LOGS HIGHEST EVER NET PROFIT**

State-owned non-banking financial firm PFC records highest ever net profit of ₹8,444 crore for FY 21, up 49 per cent on Y-o-Y basis.

**STANDALONE**  
Highest annual PAT of ₹8,444 crore. Approximately 49 per cent jump in Standalone Profit After Tax from FY 20.

Around 28 per cent increase in net interest income from FY 20.

Dividend of ₹2 declared per share. Thus in FY 21, PFC has given a total dividend of ₹10 per share i.e. 100 per cent.

Aided by profit growth, company's net worth for FY 21 is up by 16 per cent to ₹52,393 crore and has crossed the fifty thousand mark.

Around 25 per cent Stressed Book Resolved in FY 21.

Gross NPA ratio saw a sharp reduction of 238 bps from FY 20. The current GNPA ratio is at 5.70 per cent against 8.08 per cent in FY 20.

Lowest Net NPA levels in past four years. Net NPA ratio saw a sharp reduction of 171 bps from FY 20. The current Net NPA ratio is at 2.09 per cent against 3.80 per cent in FY 20.

The Capital Adequacy Ratio of the company has also improved sequentially to 18.83 per cent as on March 31, 2021. The capital adequacy is at a comfortable level with sufficient cushion over and above the prescribed regulatory limits.

**CONSOLIDATED**  
FY 21 vs FY 20  
Around 66 per cent increase in consolidated profit after tax from FY 20. PAT at ₹15,716 crore for FY 21 vs ₹9,477 crore for FY 20.  
Loan Asset book grows at 12 per cent for FY 21, it was at ₹7,45,189 crore and for FY 20, it was at ₹6,67,330 crore.  
Reduction in consolidated net NPA ratio to 1.91 per cent in FY 21 from 3.57 per cent in FY 20 due to resolution of stressed assets.  
Reduction in consolidated gross NPA ratio to 5.29 per cent in FY 21 from 7.36 per cent in FY 20 due to resolution of stressed assets.

Table with match times: 6:30 pm, 9:30 pm, 12:30 pm. Includes logos for various sports events.

STAIN WAR

Hummels own goal helps Les Blues win opening game against Germany

FRANCE OFF TO WINNING START

Mats Hummels own goal was enough to hand France a 1-0 victory over Germany on Tuesday as the world champions made a winning start to their Euro 2020 campaign by controlling the game in Munich.



French players Lucas Hernandez (21), Adrien Rabiot and Kylian Mbappe (10) celebrate after Germany's Mats Hummels, center, scored an own goal during the Euro 2020 group F match between Germany and France at the Allianz Arena in Munich on Tuesday night.

Budapest. The home defeat piles the pressure on Germany ahead of their next game against Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal on Saturday, also at Allianz Arena. "It was a brutally intense game," said Germany head coach Joachim Low. "We fought until the end and I can't blame the team, we gave it everything we had. What was missing was a bit of penetrating power in the final third. We didn't do enough there."

Miranchuk reignites Russia's campaign

A special goal by Aleksii Miranchuk allowed Russia to kickstart their Euro 2020 campaign with a 1-0 win over Finland in Saint Petersburg on Wednesday, but the game was marred by an injury to Mario Fernandes.



Russia's Aleksii Miranchuk, front, celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal.

Depay hints Barca deal is close

Netherlands star Memphis Depay has hinted that he is on the verge of sealing a move to Barcelona as he admitted his desire to team up again with former national team coach Ronald Koeman.

Arnautovic banned for goal celebration

Austria forward Marko Arnautovic has been given a one-game Euro 2020 ban for insulting a North Macedonia player in his side's opening match at the tournament, UEFA said on Wednesday.



Marko Arnautovic (7) celebrates after he scores against North Macedonia.

Coca Cola take \$24 billion hit after Ronaldo's PC

Budapest. Portuguese superstar Cristiano Ronaldo removed Coca-Cola bottles placed in front of him at a Euro 2020 press conference here, which reportedly cost the global beverage giant a staggering \$4 billion.

Gavaskar expects both Ashwin, Jadeja to play in WTC final

Legendary opener Sunil Gavaskar believes that India will go in with both Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin against New Zealand in the World Test Championship final as Southampton's "boiling hot" weather is going to ensure that the pitch dries up progressively and assists spinners.

They are all awesome bowlers. Prasanna is called the wily fox because he had this wonderful ability to trick the batsmen into playing bad shots. Apart from varying degrees of off-spin, he had a deceptive floater where he got batsmen clean bowled or caught at slip with the ball that went straight through.

English Women's dominate Day 1

Indian Women picked up the crucial wicket Tammy Beaumont (66) in the second session but England Women consolidated their position by reaching 162 for two at tea on the opening day of the one-off Test here on Wednesday.



Pandey made a promising start, doing just enough to trouble the English batswoman on more than one occasion. In the seventh over, Goswami induced an edge from Winfield-Hill as the batter went for an extravagant drive but Smriti Mandhana dropped the chance in the slip cordon despite getting both hands on the ball.

Winfield caught by wicket-keeper Taniya Bhatia, giving India the breakthrough. As many as five players made Test debut for India, including Verma, Deepika Sharma, Vastrakar, Rana and Bhatia, while for England

Sophia Dunkley was the lone player to earn a Test cap. Indian women team is playing its first Test match in seven years. It last played the traditional format of the game in November 2014 against South Africa in Mysuru.

7 Oz stars skip WI tour

Seven top Australian cricketers who recently played in the IPL have pulled out of the country's white-ball tour of West Indies and Bangladesh. The two tours are part of team's preparations for the T20 World Cup later this year.

PUBLIC NOTICE from ICICI Bank regarding loan defaults and recovery actions. Includes details of borrowers, guarantors, and property addresses.

HPPWD TENDERS table with columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Estimated Cost in Rs., EMD, Time Limit, Cost of Tender Fee. Lists various construction and repair work items.