

OPINION 6
THE LOST CAUSE OF
INGENUOUS TRIBALS

WORLD 8
JUNTA TROOPS BURN
MYANMAR VILLAGE

SPORT 12
FRANCE BEAT GERMANY
IN EURO 2020 CLASH

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

*Late City Vol. 31 Issue 165
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JUNE 17 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



AN ACTOR,
NOT A STAR:
SHARAD
10 VIVACITY

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 its 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.

Accusing Twitter of deliberately refusing to comply with Indian laws, in identical posts on Twitter as well as its Indian rival Koo, Union IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Twitter was given "multiple opportunities to comply" but it deliberately chose non-compliance.

In a related development, the Ghaziabad police have booked Twitter Inc, its India unit and seven others in con-

CHRONOLOGY OF TWITTER-GOVT TUSSE

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

nection with a viral video of an attack on an elderly person and issued notices to them. This is the first case that holds the social media giant responsible for third-party content.

Twitter has lost its intermediary immunity (legal protection) in India after it failed to appoint statutory officers on the company's role, in accordance with the new Information Technology (IT) rules.

This 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 Twitter users on its platform.

In a series of tweets, Prasad said there are numerous queries arising as to whether Twitter is entitled to safe harbour provision. "However, the simple fact of the matter is that Twitter has failed to comply with the Intermediary Guidelines that came into effect from the 26th of May," he said.

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Compliance Officer retained: Twitter

New Delhi: Amid stand-off with the Government, Twitter shared details of an interim compliance officer with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. Twitter has reiterated that it is making all possible efforts to comply with the new IT rules. A Twitter spokesperson stated on Wednesday that the interim Chief Compliance Officer had been retained by the company.

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 doling 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.

In fact, in a written reply in Parliament, Union Health Minister of State Ashwani Kumar Choubey on March 19 said, "There is no provision of compensation for recipients of Covid-19 vaccine against any kind of side effects or medical complications that may arise due to inoculation. The Covid-19 vaccination is entirely voluntary for the beneficiary."

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 had said.

"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 type of compensation against any adverse event after receiving a vaccine approved for restricted emergency use."

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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 Jayakumar 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 who could not access its mobile phone app of the same name due to lack of a smartphone.

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 others in 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 Prasad — and a director of the Gili and the Nakshtara brands under the group, Dhanesh 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 diamantaire 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 "promi-

nent Sikh personalities", besides directing its State leadership to put up its act together by taking the workers along.

Those who joined the party in Delhi include former president of All India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF) Harinder Singh Kahlon, advocate Jagmohan Singh Saini who is also the president of Farmers' Intellectual Front (Patiala), advocate Nirmal Singh from Mohali, Kuldeep Singh Kahlon (former AISSF) from Gurdaspur, former vice-chancellor of Guru Kashi University Jaswinder Singh Dhillon, and Col Jaibans Singh from Patiala.

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

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 in the parliamentary party.



MP Chirag Paswan addresses a Press conference at his residence in New Delhi on Wednesday

When asked if "Hanuman" who is in trouble now will seek help from "Ram", a reference to his projection of his relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Bihar Assembly polls as that between the two famous characters of epic Ramayan, he said, "If Hanuman has to seek help from Ram, then what good is Hanuman and what good is Ram?"

It is going to be a long battle, Paswan said, as the group

headed by him fights the faction of five other party MPs, led by Paras, to claim ownership of the LJP.

The JD(U), he alleged, had been working to cause a split in the party even when his father was alive. Targeting the party, he said it has always worked to divide Dalits and weaken its leaders.

The LJP draws its support from Paswans, the largest Dalit caste in Bihar.

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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 added.

Various States like Delhi,

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 2,96,99,555 (+67,256)
DEATHS: 3,81,931 (+2,329)
RECOVERED: 2,84,84,544 (+1,03,853)
ACTIVE: 8,21,392
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.

Continued on Page 2

Starting from scratch to fulfil dreams

CHANDAN KUSHWAHA ■ NEW DELHI

Tales of despair

Life 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.

here as his mother also tested positive in Paroraha village in Bihar. "My landlord was kind enough to get me the medicines being circulated on WhatsApp. I did not see him after that despite knowing that he was the only person I was in touch with," he said.

"The condition of my mother was also deteriorating in the absence of proper treatment and lack of awareness. I could not afford to just sit and leave it to destiny. I caught the train and somehow managed to reach my village. Although, I was still struggling to breathe, I got my mother admitted to hospital. Her life was saved with proper medication and

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

tested Covid positive and after noticing the situation here, I decided to be back in my town.

I came back recently to Delhi and hope for a new beginning," he said.



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, also met Union Ministers



Prahlad Singh Patel and Prahlad Joshi before tweeting, "... Had useful interaction with Union Minister of Coal and Mines and Parliamentary Affairs..."

Earlier dwelling on the post poll violence and the alleged Governmental apathy, 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."

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SECOND COVID WAVE

Pregnant, postpartum women more severely affected: ICMR study

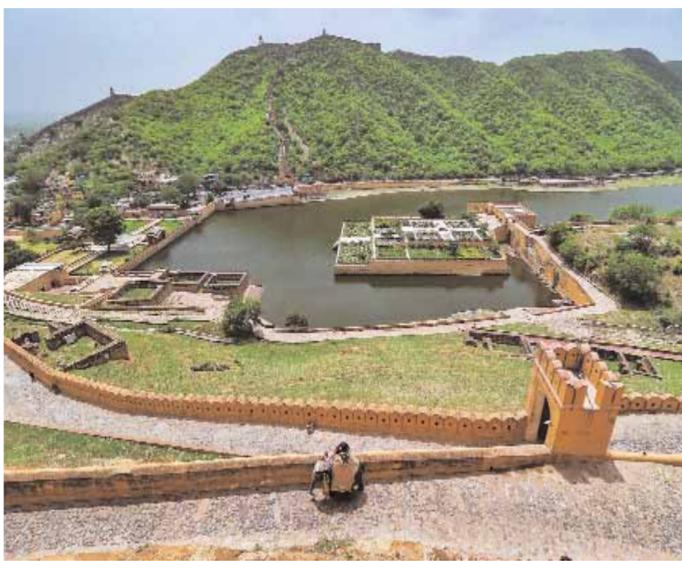
New Delhi: Pregnant and postpartum women were more severely affected during the second wave of Covid-19 as compared to the first with symptomatic cases and the case fatality rate being significantly higher among this category this year, according to a study by ICMR.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Wednesday said cases related to pregnant and postpartum women during the first wave (April 1, 2020 - January 31, 2021) and during the second wave (February 1, 2021 to May 14) of the pandemic in India were compared.

"Symptomatic cases were significantly higher at 28.7 per cent in the second wave (111/387), compared to the first wave (162/1143) when the proportion was 14.2 per cent," the apex research body said.

"The case fatality rate (CFR) among pregnant women and postpartum women was 5.7 per cent (22/387) during the second wave, which was significantly higher compared to the scenario encountered in the first wave with CFR 0.7 per cent (8/1143)," it said.

Total number of maternal deaths during both the waves of pandemic were 2 per cent (30/1530), of which the majority (28/30) were due to Covid-19 pneumonia and respiratory failure. **PTI**



Aerial view of historical Amer Fort that reopened after authorities eased restrictions of Covid-19 lockdown, in Jaipur on Wednesday **PTI**

Manipur cancels board exams

Imphal: The Manipur Government on Wednesday cancelled class 10 and 12 board examinations in the State-run schools in wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The announcement was made separately by the Council of Higher Education Manipur (COHEM), which conducts the class 10 board examinations, and the Board of Secondary Education (BOSEM) that conducts the class 12 exams.

"In view of the uncertain conditions due to Covid-19 pandemic and the feedback obtained from various stakeholders, it is hereby notified... That the High School Leaving Certificate Examination 2021 is cancelled," the BOSEM said in a statement.

In another statement, COHEM said, "The higher secondary and class XI exams, stand cancelled."

"The modus operandi of the award of marks, certificates of the students shall be done with due approval of the Government," it added. **PTI**

Security stepped up on TN-Karnataka border to check Maoists movement

PTI ■ ERODE

Security has been stepped up in some areas on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border following information that Maoists will infiltrate Tamil Nadu via Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve Forest area, police said on Wednesday.

Armed police personnel have been deputed on the border police stations of Thalavadi, Hassanur, Bhavanisagar, Kadambur and Burgur.

The police also provided additional armed guards at ten Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border checkpoints in the forest area alone and round the clock monitoring is being done to prevent entry of any Maoists into Tamil Nadu via Erode district forests, police said.

According to V. Sasi Mohan, Superintendent of Police, ten specially trained commando personnel have been selected among the Armed Reserve Police and they will be sent to the forests along with armed policemen to keep vigil. **PTI**

2 kids among nine killed in car-truck collision in Guj

Anand (Guj): Nine persons, including two children and as many women, were killed when their car collided head-on with a goods-laden truck near Indranaj village in Gujarat's Anand district on early Wednesday morning, police said.

The accident took place on a state highway connecting Tarapur to Vataman at around 6 am and all nine, returning home after attending a marriage function in adjoining Maharashtra, died on the spot, the police said. Six of the victims were members of two families, each including a husband, wife and a child, they said. The accident took place on the state highway when the car was hit by the loaded truck, said Superintendent of Police of Anand district Ajit Rajiani. The bodies of some of the victims were trapped in the mangled remains of the vehicle (a van) and they were taken out after cutting the car, the police said.

The impact of the collision was so strong that the car was dragged for around 15 feet and it got enmeshed into the truck, the police said. Police took the help of a crane to separate the two vehicles, a Tarapur police station official said. **PTI**

Post-jab ...

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Such people can explore legal options. In such cases, the liability will be of the vaccine-maker, an official said.

The Government on Tuesday said deaths reported post-vaccination standing at 488 were a small percentage of the number of doses given, but this did not mean they were due to vaccination.

"We ascertain if it is a minor adverse event or it is a serious or severe adverse event. Then it is monitored and causes are ascertained. The vaccines approved by us, their safety parameters are very good. When 23.5 crore doses were given, the AEFI deaths were 0.0002 per cent which comes to 488 deaths which does not mean these deaths were because of vaccination," Lav Agarwal, joint secretary in the Health Ministry had said.

Post relaxations, people in need of money rush to shops to sell jewellery in Indore

Indore: Following the relaxation of Covid-19 curbs, people in desperate need of money have been rushing to the bullion market to sell their jewellery in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, traders claimed on Wednesday. The number of persons wanting to sell their valuables exceeds those who want to purchase new jewellery, they said.

"The local administration has allowed the bullion market to operate since Monday. However, we are observing that of every 100 customers, 60 are those who came to shops to sell their jewellery," said Avinash Shastri, secretary of Sona Jawahrat Vyapari Association. Most of these customers are from middle and lower-middle class backgrounds, who were in urgent need to money, because they had either exhausted their savings in Covid-19 treatment, had lost their jobs due to the lockdown or their salaries were slashed amid the crisis, he said.

The trade is gradually picking up pace in Sarafa Bazar, which has around 1,000 shops, after the restrictions were eased, Shastri said. Indore district has recorded over 1.52 lakh Covid-19 cases, including 1,374 casualties. **PTI**

Covid: At least half of judges should sit on alternate days to hear those in distress, says SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has said that non-listing of plea for regular bail impinges upon liberty of the person in custody and advocated that under the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, at least half of the judges should sit on alternate days so that hearing is accorded to those in distress.

Expressing "shock" that a bail plea filed in the Punjab and Haryana High Court was not listed for hearing for over a year, the apex court said denial of hearing is an infringement of right and liberty assured to an accused.

"Even during the pandemic, when all courts are making attempts to hear and decide all matter, non-listing of such an application for bail defeats the administration of justice," said a vacation bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and V Ramasubramanian.

"Under the prevailing pandemic, at least half of the judges should sit on alternative days so that hearing is accorded to the person in distress," the bench said in its order passed on Tuesday.

The top court was hearing a plea against an order by which the request for hearing of an application for bail, pending since February 28 last year, was declined by the high court.

"Normally, we do not interfere with an interim order passed by the high court but we are constrained to pass the present order as we are shocked to see that the bail application under section 439 CrPC is not being listed for hearing for more than one year," the bench said.

Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) deals with power of the high court and trial court regarding bail.

"The accused has a right to hearing of his application for bail. In fact, the denial of hearing is an infringement of right and liberty assured to an accused," the bench said.

It said that non-listing of application seeking regular bail, irrespective of the seriousness of offences attributed to the accused, impinges upon the "liberty of the person in custody".

"Therefore, we hope that the high court will be able to take up the application for bail at an early date so that the right of the accused of hearing of application for bail is not taken away by not entertaining such application on the mentioning memo," it said. The bench, which disposed of the plea, noted that registrar general of the high court would bring its order to the notice of the competent authority to take remedial steps at the earliest. **PTI**

Rare white deer spotted in Assam's Kaziranga National Park

Nagaon: Spotting of a rare white hog deer in Kaziranga National Park has created widespread interest among wildlife conservationists and nature lovers with many flocking to the world heritage site to catch a glimpse of the animal.

After spotting the deer, locals had informed nature photographer Jayanta Kumar Sarma who managed to capture the white deer on his camera in the Burapahar Range of the park.

Sarma spotted the animal at a grassland near the 12 line area of Anguri Tea Estate under the Kaliabor Sub-division in Nagaon district on Monday. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Kaziranga

National Park (KNP) Ramesh Gogoi said that this particular white deer was seen for the first time in the park a few days ago, and it sometimes comes out of the park and wanders with other brown deer to feed on grass, he said.

The white colour of the deer is a purely genetic matter, caused due to mutation of the gene, and it is not a different species of the deer family, the DFO said. Out of the total 40,000 hog deer in Kaziranga, one or two such kinds of uncommon white hog deer can be found, Gogoi added.

The park is thronged by domestic and international tourists in large numbers for its famed one-horned rhinos. **PTI**

Covid drugs used to treat...

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They are formulating children-specific protocol to set up oxygen plants and establishing more testing labs.

According to the Central guidelines, once vaccines are approved for children, those with comorbid conditions having more severe manifestations of Covid-19 and poorer outcomes should be a priority group for immunisation.

About the treatment of children, the guidelines said most drugs used in adults such as ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, favipiravir and antibiotics such as doxycycline or azithromycin have not been tested on children for prevention or treatment of Covid infection among them. "Therefore, these are not recommended in children."

Stating that there may be intermittent surges in the number of coronavirus cases, the guidelines said, "A combined effort from the private and public sector is needed to handle any surge (in cases) in the future after the withdrawal of the lockdown, school reopening or as a third wave over the next three to four months. The basic principles of equity and dignity of care should be followed."

The guidelines said estimates for additional bed capacity for pediatric care may be calculated based on peak daily cases in different districts during the second wave of the Covid-19 infections.

From this, projections for pediatric cases and the number of admissions required can be derived, it said. "It is desirable to augment the existing Covid-care facilities to provide care to children with acute Covid. This will need additional pediatric-specific equipment, infrastructure and pediatric formulations."

"Also, an adequate number of trained manpower -- both doctors and nurses -- should be provided. The health authorities should initiate capacity building programmes for appropriate pediatric care. In standalone paediatric hospitals, separate arrangements, for example, separate beds for paediatric Covid care need to be set up," the guidelines said. It is desirable to designate specific areas in the Covid facilities for pediatric care and parents should be allowed to accompany the child there.

"For children with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome who test negative for acute Covid, care has to be provided by the existing pediatric facilities. These facilities also need augmentation, especially HDU and ICU services," it said. Noting that a majority of children have asymptomatic or mild illness and can be managed at home by parents, it said treatment for symptomatic patients include paracetamol for fever and monitoring conditions such as measuring respiratory rates, difficulty in respiration, oral intake and oxygen saturation.

"In a community setting, ASHA and MPW should be involved for management of children at home and also monitor to assess the need for referral and admission," the guidelines said.

Don't come...

From Page 1

In a sequence of events a delegation of 50 BJP MLAs led by Bengal Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari on Monday met the Governor asking for his intervention to stop the ongoing attacks on the saffron workers in the State. In private the BJP leadership said their workers were being hounded out of their houses and tortured everywhere.

"What they are doing to the communists they are doing to the BJP workers... their goons are killing, raping and looting our workers whereas their police force are slapping false cases and putting them to jail... the worst part of it is the leaders and MLAs are not being allowed to visit the affected areas... if this is not fascism and State repression then what is... but they must understand that we are not CPI(M)... we will hit back organisationally and politically... we will not let Mamata sit in peace... just wait and see," said a BJP MP. Hitting back at Dhankhar for "doing what no Governor has done since Independence", TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Shekhar Roy said "a Governor meeting the NHRC chairman on the issue of his State is unprecedented, crooked and condemnable... he has denigrated the high post he is in... he has sent a bad precedence making it the blackest day in Indian federal politics... As Governor he has crossed the constitutional barriers... the TMC strongly condemns this act..."

Another Trinamool MP Saugato Roy quoted Article 163 of the Constitution saying "there should be a council of ministers to aid and advise the Governor... he has no power to act outside this advice... He cannot see central ministers or NHRC on State affairs."

BJP gains 6 prominent...

From Page 1

The saffron brigade, as of now, is on a sticky wicket with its former alliance partner, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), tying up with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), in an apparent attempt to woo the Dalit voters of the State - which is 32 per cent of the State's total population. What is more, the farmers, which also form a considerable voter base in the State, are also at swords' points against the party for introducing the contentious farm bills.

The development came a day after the party's State leadership held a brainstorming session with BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda and Amit Shah to chalk out its strategy for the ensuing Assembly polls in the State, scheduled to be held early next year.

The saffron brigade not only discussed the prevailing political scenario in Punjab, but also deliberated upon the possible alliances, identifying areas to be focused upon, besides holding the ways to respond to the rebellion within the state BJP unit over the farm bills issue.

Sources informed The Pioneer that the BJP high command was unhappy with the party's Punjab leadership, especially for its failure to get in touch with the party workers and the entire cadre at the grassroots causing loss of support for the party.

"Because of this farmers' agitation, it was really hard for the BJP leaders and even workers to move out or hold meetings, even at a small scale. Though several campaigns were started, and programmes were launched to make the farmers, and the people aware of the benefits of the farm bills and other decisions taken by the Central Government, but all that was of no use as these were badly disrupted by the farmers or their supporters,"

Twitter defies...

From Page 1

Prasad further adds that Twitter was given multiple opportunities to comply with the new IT rules, however it has "deliberately chosen the path of non-compliance."

"Twitter fails to address the grievances of users by refusing to set up process as mandated by the law of the land. Additionally, it chooses a policy of flagging manipulates media, only when it suits its likes and dislikes," Prasad tweeted.

Twitter has flagged posts by several ruling Bharatiya Janata Party leaders that accused the Congress of defaming Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Government sources on Wednesday confirmed that Twitter has already lost its status as "intermediary" for failing to comply with the new IT guidelines. Now, Twitter will not be considered as a platform

hosting something that somebody has tweeted, but it will be editorially responsible for the posts. If there is any charge against Twitter, then it will be liable for any punishment under any law, including the IPC. If Twitter decides to comply with the IT rules, it may again come under the legal cover of a third party.

Prasad called it astounding that Twitter, "which portrays itself as the flag bearer of free speech", has chosen the path of "deliberate defiance when it comes to the Intermediary Guidelines." He hit out at the company for "arbitrarily" deciding which posts to mark as "manipulated media."

Prasad defended the new guidelines and said they were brought to counter the menace of fake news. "The culture of India varies like its large geography. In certain scenarios, with the amplification of social media, even a small spark can

cause a fire, especially with the menace of fake news. This was one of the objectives of bringing the Intermediary Guidelines," he said.

The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), a group of digital experts, has cast doubt on the "intermediary" tag itself. Responding to the reports that Twitter has lost its legal protection in India, the IFF said the "intermediary status" is not a registration that is granted by the Government, but "is actually a technical qualification as per criteria under the Section 2(1)(ua)(w) of the IT Act".

"As per Section 79, intermediaries are immune from liability/penalty if they comply with legal takedown requests of user posts from courts & public authorities," it adds. "When companies like Twitter are prosecuted, they will seek protection before courts, which will decide if it is an intermediary, not the government. The IT Act and

Rules do not contain the power for any registration, grant or revocation process or notification of an intermediary status," IFF said.

Prasad said what happened in Uttar Pradesh was "illustrative of Twitter's arbitrariness" in fighting fake news. "While Twitter has been over enthusiastic about its fact checking mechanism, its failure to act in multiple cases like UP (Uttar Pradesh) is perplexing as well as points towards its inconsistency in fighting misinformation," Prasad said. "If any foreign entity believes that they can portray itself as the flag bearer of free speech in India to excuse itself from complying with the law of the land, such attempts are misplaced." The rule of law is the bedrock of Indian society and India's commitment to the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech was yet again reaffirmed at the G7 summit, he said.

Chirag blames JD(U)...

From Page 1

"A conspiracy was hatched behind my back while I was ill," Paswan said. He had recently suffered from typhoid.

The 38-year-old MP from Jamui expressed determination to take on the rival group while also taking swipe at his paternal uncle without using any strong words to attack him.

"I did not feel orphaned when my father died last year. I do feel now," he said, adding that he had expected his uncle to play the role of the family's patriarch but was instead abandoned by him. Paswan recalled his decision to walk out of the ruling NDA in Bihar to take on Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and said many wanted him to opt for a life of comfort and not struggle by allying with him. "For that I would have to bow before Nitish Kumar. I could not do that. My uncle played no role in the election campaign," he said and rejected accusations from the rival group that he took unilateral decisions during the polls.

Chirag has also contested Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's decision to name Paras as the leader of the party in the House, saying it is "contrary" to the constitutional provisions of his organisation.

In a letter written on Tuesday, Paswan also informed Birla of the party's decision to expel five MPs, who have joined hands against him, and urged the Speaker to review the earlier decision and issue a new circular naming him as the LJP leader in the Lok Sabha.

"Since Article 26 of the Constitution of Lok Jan Shakti Party empowers Central Parliamentary Board of the party to decide who would be Leader of our Party in Lok Sabha, hence, the decision of announcing Pashupati Kumar Paras MP as Leader of LJP party in the Lok Sabha is contrary to provision of Constitution of our party," he wrote.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

LOST & FOUND

Original documents of Purchase Agreement dated 25-09-1976 with M/s Ansal Properties and Industries Limited for Property No. 208, Manjusha Building, 57, Nehru Place, New Delhi has been lost near my residence. If someone find it, please send/contact me: Bimleshwari Singh, A-40/3, SFS Flats, Saket, New Delhi-17, Mobile No 9650988866. PD(9012) A

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B) NIRMAN SOUDHA BHUBANESWAR E-mail seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com Bid Identification No.S.E.E.C (R&B) 02/2021-22 No.1228 /Date.11.06.2021/ The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for Construction of Modular OT works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in:https://tendersorissa.gov.in. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 5.00 P.M. of 21.06.2021 to 5:00 P.M. of 06.07.2021. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11:30 A.M. of 07.07.2021 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website. Superintending Engineer Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR

City to get 5,000 health assistants to combat third wave



'Centre has nixed Delhi Govt panel to probe deaths due to O2 shortage'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged that the Centre has denied approval to the committee that was constituted by the Delhi Government to investigate the deaths of Covid patients due to oxygen shortage in the national Capital. Sisodia said, "As all of you know, there was an oxygen crunch during the last wave of Covid-19 in Delhi. There were also some deaths due to lack of oxygen supply. The Delhi Government had announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh for the families of those who lost their lives in the incident. Following the directive of the court, the Delhi Government constituted a committee of health experts to look into the incident and ascertain what led to these deaths."



Government to stop such interference," he stressed. Sisodia appealed to the Central Government to stop their unnecessary intervention. "The people of Delhi want the Government they elected to work without any obstructions but the Central Government has continued to act as an objector against the rights of the people." Responding to Sisodia, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that Sisodia is playing dirty politics on a sensitive matter like compensation for patients who died due to failure of oxygen supply. "The Centre has dissolved a compensation committee formed by the Delhi Government on May 27. The fact of this matter is that the Supreme Court of India had already formed a committee with regards to compensation for oxygen deaths on May 6, 2021 consisting of Dr Randeep Guleria, Dr A Budhiraja and Joint Secretaries from the Centre and the Delhi Government," he added. "The Supreme Court appointed committee had been working for 10 days when the Delhi Government decided to form a separate committee on May 27," he added.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 Amid the potential threat of the Covid-19 third wave, the Delhi Government will train 5,000 youths as health assistants. They will be trained in basic nursing, as paramedics, in giving first aid and in home care operations. During the previous two waves of Covid-19, an acute shortage of medical staff was witnessed. "As you have been observing for the last 10 days, arrangements are being made in Delhi against the possible third wave of Covid-19. In the last few days, I have visited hospitals, and many oxygen plants are being installed, oxygen concentrators, oxygen cylinders, and oxygen storage tanks are being arranged in view of the possibility of a third wave," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said while announcing the

youth training programme. Delhi's IP University and nine medical institutions will provide technical training to these youngsters who will work as assistants to doctors and nurses. "They will work on tasks assigned to them by the doctors and nurses. They will be trained in basic nursing, life-saving first aid, home care and as paramedics too. They will be trained in basics like how to measure oxygen, blood pressure and vaccination. They will also be trained in patient care, diaper changing, catheter insertion, bedpan use, sample collection, how an oxygen concentrator works, how an oxygen cylinder works, how to put on the mask, etc," the Chief Minister said. These youth will be given a salary according to the num-

ber of days they work. So, online applications will be accepted from June 17 onwards. The training programme will start from June 28 onwards in batches of 500 each and every batch will be trained for two-weeks. Kejriwal said, "All those who have passed their class 12th are eligible. They should be 18 years or more of age and applications will be accepted on a first come, first served, basis. I believe this will strengthen our preparation for the expected third wave as manpower will be available in case it does emerge. I again hope that a third wave does not come about, but as per the information from the UK, a third wave has emerged there. So, we should also be fully prepared, keeping in mind the developments all over the world."

DELHI UNLOCKS



Visitors at Humayun's Tomb which opened for the public during the unlocking process, in New Delhi on Wednesday
 Ranjan Dimri



A bird's-eye view of a Delhi Metro train running on a track after the ease in Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, in New Delhi on Wednesday
 PTI

New mayors for Delhi's three municipal corporations



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 The three Municipal Corporations elected mayors and deputy mayors on Wednesday. Raja Iqbal Singh, Mukesh Suryan and Shyam Sunder Aggarwal have been elected as Mayors of north, south and east corporations respectively. Raja Iqbal Singh and Archna of BJP were elected unanimously for the posts of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of North Delhi municipal corporation respectively on Wednesday. Iqbal Singh is

his priority to save Delhi from the third wave of Covid-19. He said that stress on making the Corporation self-reliant for the proposed ongoing projects would be given a boost. The newly elected EDMC mayor thanked the party leadership and said that he will work to make the civic body self-reliant. Besides, Beer Singh Panwar (Ward No 35-, Dilshad Garden); Himanshi Pandey (Ward No-13,) Kishan Kunj; and Mohini (Ward No-34, New Seemapuri) were also elected unopposed as the members of the Standing Committee. BJP councillor from Sagarpur Mukesh Suryan was unanimously elected to the post of Mayor in the house meeting. After taking over the new assignment, Suryan said that in view of the financial challenges being faced by the SDMC due to Covid pandemic and lockdown, we need to focus on a better revenue generation plan to deal with the situation and try to make the South Corporation self-sustainable. The newly elected Mayor also stated that we all will work together to provide all modern amenities in SDMC localities.

FIR against Instagram account for 'promoting religious enmity'



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 The Special Cell of Delhi Police has registered a First Information Report (FIR) against an unnamed man for allegedly hurting the sentiments of various religions and trying to stir communal disharmony among the people through his post on social media giant Instagram. Police said that the FIR was registered on Tuesday after a complaint over an email was received by the cyber crime unit (CyPAD) from Manjeet Singh Chugh, a resident of Delhi's South Extension area. According to the FIR, an Instagram account, '@valorous.hindu.21' posted objectionable content related to three Gods of different religions which the complainant came to know through a message which he received on his

WhatsApp on June 7. "There are four Instagram accounts including '@valorous.hindu.21' which contain vulgar, abusive and objectionable content against various religions," stated the FIR. "Police have registered an FIR under section 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and further investigation is going on," said a senior police official. Last week, a Delhi Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) politician, Manish Singh, had filed a complaint with Delhi Police against Instagram for the alleged offensive portrayal of Hindu deity Shiva in one of its GIFs.

Judo coach arrested in Chhatrasal Stadium brawl case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 32-year-old judo coach in connection with a brawl at the Chhatrasal Stadium involving Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in which a 23-year-old wrestler had died and two of his friends were injured. A Crime Branch team arrested the judo coach, Subhash, a resident of Kirari Suleman Nagar area. Police said that Subhash is working as a physical training instructor in a Government School in Rohini sector-7. Police said 11 people, including Kumar, have been arrested so far in connection with the incident. According to a senior police official, on June 15, around 9 PM, Subhash was apprehended from his residence. "During interrogation, Subhash revealed that he had gone to the stadium on the day of incident at around 11:30 PM with one Kala". Kumar and his associates allegedly assaulted wrestler Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends Sonu and Amit Kumar on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over a property



dispute. Dhankar, 23, later succumbed to injuries. The wrestler was arrested, along with co-accused Ajay Kumar, on May 23 from outer Delhi's Mundka area. On Friday, the district court extended Kumar's judicial custody till June 25 in connection with the case. The two-time Olympic medallist faces charges of murder, culpable homicide and kidnapping. Police have called Kumar the "main culprit and mastermind" behind the alleged murder and said there is electronic evidence in which he and his associates could be seen beating Dhankar with sticks. A video had surfaced on social media purportedly showing Kumar and his associates allegedly hitting a man with sticks. On May 31, police had suspended Kumar's arms licence.

Cars to drive through MLCP at T3 arrival for three days

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

All private and commercial vehicles would drive through the Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) area for three days starting Thursday between 4 PM and 7 PM. This temporary shift of cars from Lane 3 of Terminal 3 forecourt to the MLCP area has been decided due to the planned maintenance works at the forecourt area of T3. Under this plan, all private vehicles will be allowed a free period of three hours to pick the passenger and exit the MLCP parking area at Terminal 3. The vehicles will be moved to MLCP Level 1 and Level 2 for the passengers to be picked up. However, the commercial vehicles will be charged as per the current parking rates in Lane 3. Passengers and their family members reaching the airport will be guided through signage and barriers at the entry to Lane 3. In addition to the Traffic Authorities, DIAL will also deploy Raxa Guards, who will help direct these vehicles to reach the MLCP. Passengers can also get updates through Delhi Airport's social media handles.

Man arrested for killing his wife

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police has arrested a 25-year-old man on Wednesday for allegedly killing his wife and later misleading the investigators by cooking up a false story to portray it as a work of a thief in outer Delhi's Ranhola area. The accused has been identified as Vikas. Police said that he killed his wife Priyanka as his wife objected to his extra marital relationship with his sister-in-law. The couple also shared differences over taking care of their infant. According to Parvinder Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer district, on Tuesday, the accused had an argument with his wife during the day and to teach her a lesson, he bought a cutter knife and stabbed her the same night. After killing her, Vikas through his known person made a PCR calling that a thief entered a house in Ranhola area and committed murder. On reaching the spot, the victim's body with stab injuries on her neck was found lying on a bed in a pool of blood," said the DCP.

PIC TALK



Chirag Paswan's supporters protest against party leader Pashupati Kumar Paras in New Delhi on Wednesday
 Ranjan Dimri

G'gram to begin Sputnik V trial soon

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

The Gurugram health department will start trials of Russia's coronavirus vaccine Sputnik V within two-three days at a private hospital of the district. After the trial, Sputnik V will be officially launched by the Haryana Government, a senior official of the district health department said. With this initiative, Gurugram will become among the first districts in Haryana, where the Russian-made vaccine's trial will begin. A senior health official requesting anonymity said that the trial of the Sputnik V vaccine will first be conducted on at least 400 staffers of a private hospital. "Sputnik V will be made available in Gurugram through the State Government. However, the supply chain and mechanism of vaccination will be followed accordingly," he said. The official further said a training session of health workers related to the Sputnik V vaccination and its uploading process on the CoWIN app has

already been completed. And from now on the Sputnik V vaccine option is also available on the CoWIN-app.



SOUTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR LOCAL BODIES
 (TOLL TAX DEPARTMENT)
 14th Floor, DR. SPM CIVIC CENTRE
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 E-mail ID: tolltaxsdmc@gmail.com (Ph: 011-23226422)
 No: ADC/TT/HQ/2021/D-265 Dated: 14/06/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide orders dated 10.08.2020 and Commission For Air Quality Management (CAQM) have directed for cashless collection of ECC and Toll Tax from specified commercial vehicles entering Delhi. It has also been directed that commercial vehicles without valid RFID Tags & sufficient recharge be not permitted to enter into Delhi w.e.f. 01.07.2021.

Therefore, Owners/Drivers/Transporters of all specified commercial vehicles entering Delhi which enters into Delhi from any of 124 entry point are required to be equipped with RFID Tags with sufficient recharge to facilitate the Cashless Transaction of Toll Tax & ECC.

For purchase of RFID Tags a number of points of Sale are running at various Toll Plazas. But still it has been observed that a number of specified commercial vehicles entering Delhi Borders are not equipped with RFID Tags with sufficient balance thereby violating the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India & CAQM.

Transport Unions/Vehicle owners/Drivers are hereby informed that they may get their vehicle equipped with RFID Tags and get the Tag recharged at Points of Sale (POS) located at various Toll Plazas or online by the following process:-

1. Download "MCD-Toll" mobile app from playstore; enter mobile no; you will receive OTP; enter OTP; your page will open; recharge using credit/debit card or Net Banking.
2. Go to www.eccagsdmc.com and then follow the same procedure.

Addl. Dy. Commissioner
 (Toll Tax)

Ro No. 19/DPI/S/2021-22

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's 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 of 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 Gupta and Dr J P Muliylil, 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

alleged dissent.

Regarding social media reports on Covaxin containing calf serum, it clarified that the

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 Khera 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 coordinator of Digital Communications and Social Media at AICC, had tweeted the RTI response to applicant Vikas 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.

Taking 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 clotted 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.

save the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attempts that are facilitating the virus and costing people's lives. Rahul had earlier also accused the Centre of hiding actual figures of Covid-19 deaths in the country.

He also tagged a media report that the government doubled the gap between the two doses of Covishield without the agreement of the scientific group that it claimed had recommended the increase.

allegedly developed jab does not contain newborn calf serum at all and that the calf serum is not an ingredient of

the final vaccine product. Bharat Biotech, on its part also echoed similar points.

The Health ministry said

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the Congress of "communalising" 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, saying the Opposition 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

and which vaccine?" As against Congress "disinformation", the BJP spokesperson said India is the fastest vaccinating country and that the efforts should be applauded.

Patra said the Congress is lowering the name of India and is only known for creating vaccine hesitancy and its wastage. He said Congress-ruled Chhattisgarh said no to Covaxin, Rajasthan threw vaccines into "garbage" and Punjab indulged in "profiteering".

all other impurities," the Ministry said.

These cells are then washed with water, chemicals to make them free of the newborn calf serum. The vero cells are then infected with coronavirus for viral growth and in the process they are completely destroyed.

"In the final vaccine formulation no calf serum is used," the Ministry said. Bharat Biotech also clarified that the usage of new

born calf serum was 'transparently documented' in several publications in the last nine months. The company had mentioned the same when it published animal trial study documents - which involved trials on hamsters and monkeys; in pre-clinical safety and immunogenicity study reports; in studies on neutralisation of the UK variant, the South Africa variant, the Delta variant among others.

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 month 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 digi-

tal 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 oper-

ation 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 Profiler 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.

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Rajnath for respect for sovereignty as China muscled 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,



India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. Brunei is the Chair of the ADMM Plus forum this year.

Refraining from naming China, Rajnath talked about the Indo-Pacific region stressing the need for rule-based order and stressed on "peaceful resolutions of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws."

"India has strengthened its cooperative engagements in the Indo-Pacific based on converging visions and values for promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Premised upon the centrality

of ASEAN, India supports utilisation of ASEAN-led mechanisms as important platforms for implementation of our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific," he added.

Highlighting India's concerns over maritime security challenges, he noted that developments in the South China Sea attracted attention in the region and beyond. It was in obvious reference to China's aggressive behaviour in the critical waterways.

"Maritime security challenges are a concern to India. The Sea lanes of Communication are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region," he stressed.

He hoped that the Code of Conduct negotiations will lead to outcomes keeping with international law and do not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of nations that are not party to these discussions.

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 and no correspondence was made with the revenue authorities regarding payment of stamp duty for the purpose of purchasing immovable properties for which loans were obtained, thereby making the loans unsafe/unsecured, it said.

Further, all the above loan accounts that were used for transferring funds to the said trust, were found to be non-performing asset (NPA).

It was further observed that without following KYC norms and other RBI guidelines, the said loans were sanctioned and disbursed at the instruction and for gains by Patil, the agency alleged.

Patil was produced before the Special Court for PMLA cases in Mumbai on Wednesday. The court granted his custody till June 25.

CBI case against pvt firm for cheating bank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case against a private company Ruchi Global Limited and its directors for cheating a consortium of banks led by Bank of Baroda to the tune of ₹188.35 crore. The accused firm is registered in Mumbai and has a corporate office in Indore (Madhya Pradesh). The firm and the accused directors cheated the banks between January 1, 2016 and December 2017.

Maritime museum to come up at Lothal soon

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 edutainment 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 Saragvada 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 Prahlad 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 tenders and project management consultancy.

NMHC would be developed in an area of about 400 acres with various unique structures such as the National

Maritime Heritage Museum, lighthouse museum, heritage theme park, museum-themed hotels, maritime-themed eco-resorts and maritime institute among others which would be developed in a phased manner.

The unique feature of NMHC is the recreation of ancient Lothal city, which was one of the prominent cities of the Indus valley civilization.

"NMHC is to be developed as a first of its kind in the

country dedicated to the legacy of the maritime heritage of India, to showcase India's rich and diverse maritime glory," Mansukh Mandaviya, the Minister of MoSPW said during the signing ceremony.

The museum is set to be completed in three years from the date the project commences.

As a part of the museum, 14 galleries have been proposed to exhibit the evolution of India's maritime heritage during various eras.

Key galleries include mythologies and wilderness of Indian Ocean, Harappans: The Pioneer Master Seafarers, Indian Ocean: an Interactive Sphere, India's contact with the Roman World: The Quest for the Spice, Trade, Commerce and Cultural Interaction with China and South-East Asia.

Artefacts from Lothal and Dholavira will also be displayed at the NMHC complex.



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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 substantively, 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

PTI

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 Latorre and Salvatore Gironi, 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 Ajeesh 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 mariners' 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 Jayapalayan, 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 Ajeesh 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 Yousuf Ali, a Gulf-based businessman, paying ₹1 crore to save Becks Krishna, a Thrissur 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 ingenuous tribals

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

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 instance, 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-notify these tribes and replace the derogatory law on April 31, 1952. *Adivasis* 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 *adivasis* 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 sops here and there, the condition of tribals is 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 *adivasis* 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 feed 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 *adivasis* 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 vandalised. 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 course, you haven't heard or 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



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

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 the exploitation doesn't end, 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 down. 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 PREY ON MISERY

Sir — As per reports, a housing society in Mumbai's Kandivali 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. "If the vaccine is found to be spurious, the people who got vaccinated will have a medical emergency to deal with. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate the whole episode so that such fraudulent activities are not repeated at other places," the complaint stated.

The HHRWA had organised the camp through a person who claimed to be a sales representative of a private hospital in Andheri. As many as 390 members received the jabs 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're 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 Vineet Saran quashing a sedition 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 Jairam 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 Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal, along with JMU 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 protestors, 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 lab's 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 bodies 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

SOUNDBITE

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 Mom 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 respective 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:
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FIRST COLUMN

ITALY'S EXIT WILL HIT CHINA'S PLANS

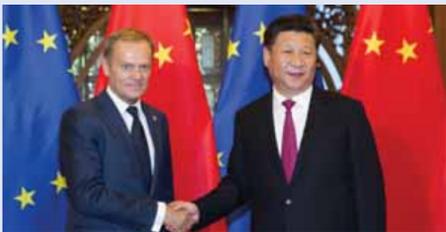
Europe took a long time to see through Chinese strategy of gaining control of strategic assets



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 lop-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 subsidized 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-fore-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 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 skilful 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 understood these limitations and worked around them. There is indeed a lot to learn from how they made-it-happen for others to make-it-happen.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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 legal & 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 fundamentally childish 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 unpick 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).

BIDEN, PUTIN PLUNGE INTO HOURS OF TALKS

AP ■ GENEVA

Two great powers

With stern expressions and polite words before the cameras, President Joe Biden and Russia's Vladimir Putin plunged into hours of face-to-face talks on Wednesday at a lush lakeside Swiss mansion, a highly anticipated summit at a time when both leaders say relations between their countries are at an all-time low.



President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin arrive to meet at the Villa la Grange on Wednesday

Biden called it a discussion between "two great powers" and said it was "always better to meet face to face." Putin said he hoped the talks would be "productive."

The meeting in a book-lined room had a somewhat awkward beginning — both men appeared to avoid looking directly at each other during a brief and chaotic photo opportunity before a scrum of jostling reporters.

stout Russian leader — moments earlier when they posed with Swiss President Guy Parmelin, who welcomed them to Switzerland for the summit.

Biden nodded when a reporter asked if Putin could be trusted, but the White House quickly sent out a tweet insisting that the president was "very clearly not responding to any one question, but nodding in acknowledgment to the press generally." Putin ignored shouted questions from reporters, including whether he feared jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Biden and Putin were expected to meet for a total of four to five hours of wide-ranging talks.

The two leaders did shake hands — Biden extended his hand first and smiled at the

For months, they have traded sharp rhetoric. Biden has repeatedly called out Putin for malicious cyberattacks by Russian-based hackers on US interests, for the jailing of Russia's foremost opposition leader and for interference in American elections.



US President Joe Biden and Russia's President Vladimir Putin pose for the media at Villa La Grange for the US-Russia summit in Geneva, Switzerland on Wednesday

otherwise.

In advance of Wednesday's meeting, both sides set out to lower expectations.

Even so, Biden said it was an important step if the United States and Russia were able to ultimately find "stability and predictability" in their relationship, a seemingly modest goal from the president for dealing with the person he sees as one of America's fiercest

adversaries. "We should decide where it's in our mutual interest, in the interest of the world, to cooperate, and see if we can do that," Biden told reporters earlier this week. "And the areas where we don't agree, make it clear what the red lines are."

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that no breakthroughs were expected

Putin: Russia, US to return ambassadors to posts

AP ■ GENEVA

Russian President Vladimir Putin says he and US President Joe Biden have agreed to return their ambassadors to their posts in a bid to lower tensions.

Putin made the announcement at a news conference following a summit on Wednesday with Biden in Geneva.

The return of ambassadors

in which he informed Putin that he would be expelling several Russian diplomats and imposing sanctions against dozens of people and companies, part of an effort to hold the Kremlin accountable for interference in last year's presidential election and the hacking of federal agencies.

Putin and his entourage arrived first at the summit site: Villa La Grange, a grand lakeside mansion set in Geneva's biggest park. Next came Biden and his team. Putin flew into Geneva on Wednesday shortly before the scheduled start of the meeting; Biden — who was already in Europe for meetings with allies — arrived the day before. After the meeting concludes, Putin is scheduled to

follows a diplomatic tug-of-war that saw deep cuts in diplomatic personnel.

Russia's ambassador to the US, Anatoly Antonov, was recalled from Washington about three months ago after Biden described Putin as a killer.

US Ambassador to Russia John Sullivan left Moscow almost two months ago after Russia suggested he return to Washington for consultations.

hold a solo news conference, with Biden following suit. The White House opted against a joint news conference, deciding it did not want to appear to elevate Putin at a moment when the US president is urging European allies to pressure Putin to cut out myriad provocations.

Biden sees himself with few peers on foreign policy. He traveled the globe as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was given difficult foreign policy assignments by President Barack Obama when Biden was vice president. His portfolio included messy spots like Iraq and Ukraine and weighing the mettle of China's Xi Jinping during his rise to power.

Israeli airstrikes target Gaza sites, first since cease-fire

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli aircraft carried out a series of airstrikes at militant sites in the Gaza Strip early Wednesday, the first such raids since a shaky cease-fire ended the war with Hamas last month.



Israeli police work at the site of a vehicle attack near Hizmeh Junction in the West Bank on Wednesday

The airstrikes targeted facilities used by Hamas militants for meetings to plan attacks, the Israeli military said, blaming the group for any act of violence emanating from Gaza. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

On Tuesday, hundreds of Israeli ultranationalists, some chanting "Death to Arabs," paraded in east Jerusalem in a show of force that threatened to spark renewed violence. Palestinians in Gaza responded by launching incendiary balloons that caused at least 10 fires in southern Israel.

flags as they danced and sang religious songs.

The march posed a test for Israel's fragile new government as well as the tenuous truce that ended last month's 11-day war between Israel and Hamas. Palestinians consider the march, meant to celebrate Israel's capture of east Jerusalem in 1967, to be a provocation. Hamas called on Palestinians to "resist" the parade, a version of which helped ignite last month's 11-day Gaza war.

At one point, several dozen youths, jumping and waving their hands in their air, chanted: "Death to Arabs!" In another anti-Arab chant, they yelled: "May your village burn."

With music blaring, hundreds of Jewish nationalists gathered and moved in front of Damascus Gate. Most appeared to be young men, and many held blue-and-white Israeli

In a scathing condemnation on Twitter, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said those shouting racist slogans were "a disgrace to the Israeli people," adding: "The fact that there are radicals for whom the Israeli flag represents hatred and racism is abominable and unforgivable."

The crowd, while boisterous, appeared to be much smaller than during last month's parade. From the Damascus Gate, they proceeded around the Old City to the Western Wall, the holiest place where Jews can pray.

Biden ambassador nominees include envoys to Israel, Mexico

AP ■ GENEVA

President Joe Biden on Tuesday unveiled picks for nine ambassadorial postings, tapping career diplomats steeped in foreign policy experience — as well as political allies and aviation hero "Sully" Sullenberger.

The picks include former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar as ambassador to Mexico and former Deputy Secretary of State Tom Nides as ambassador to Israel.

Retired airline pilot C B "Sully" Sullenberger, most famous for negotiating the emergency landing of US Airways Flight 1549 on the Hudson River with no fatalities, has been named to serve as US representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

The announcement comes as Biden is on the tail end of an eight-day European trip that included stops in the United Kingdom for a meeting of the Group of Seven leaders and Belgium for a gathering of the 27 NATO countries and the US-EU summit.

The trip culminates in Geneva on Wednesday with a highly anticipated meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin, where the leaders are to discuss rising tensions between their countries. As a candidate, Biden declined to rule out appointing political donors to ambassadorships or other posts if he was elected. But he pledged that his nominees, regardless of their contributor status,

Junta troops burn Myanmar village

AP ■ BANGKOK

Government troops in Myanmar have burned most of a village in the country's central heartland, a resident said Wednesday, confirming reports by independent media and on social networks. The action appeared to be an attempt to suppress resistance against the ruling military junta.

The attack is the latest example of how violence has become endemic in much of Myanmar in recent months as the junta tries to subdue an incipient nationwide insurrection. After the army seized power in February, overthrowing the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, a nonviolent civil disobedience movement arose to challenge military rule, but the junta's attempt to repress it with deadly force fuelled rather than quelled resistance.

Photos and videos of devastated Kinma village in Magway region that circulated widely on social media on Wednesday showed much of the village flattened by fire and the charred bodies of farm animals. One report said the village had about 1,000 residents. A villager contacted by phone said only 10 of 237 houses were left standing. The villager, who asked that his name not be used because of fear of government reprisals, said most residents had already fled when soldiers firing guns entered the village shortly before noon on Tuesday.

He said he believed the troops were searching for members of a village defense force that had been established



Smoke rises from smoldering houses in Kinma village, Pauk township, Magwe division, central Myanmar on Wednesday

to protect against the junta's troops and police. Most such local forces are very lightly armed with homemade hunting rifles.

The village defense force gave residents advance warning of the troops' arrival, so only four or five people were left in the village when they began searching houses in the afternoon. When they found nothing, they began setting the homes on fire, he said.

"There are some forests just nearby our village. Most of us fled into the forests," he said. The villager said he believed there were three casualties, a boy who was a goat-herder who was shot in the thigh, and an elderly couple who were unable to flee. He believed the couple had died but several media reports said

they were missing. Asked if he planned to go back to the village, he said: "No, we dare not to. We think it isn't over. We will shift to other villages. Even if we go back to our village, there is no place to stay because everything is burnt."

The village defense forces are committed to forming a future opposition federal army, and some have allied themselves with ethnic minority groups in border areas that have been fighting for decades for autonomy from the central government.

Most of the fiercest fighting takes place in the border regions, where government forces are deployed in areas controlled by ethnic groups such as the Chin in the west, the Kachin in the north and the Karen in the east.

The incident in Kinma attracted special attention because the Burman, or Barmar ethnic group, the country's power-holding majority, is predominant in the Magway region and it is unusual for them to be targeted for such severe measures.

The army burned many villages of the Muslim Rohingya minority in 2017 in a brutal counterinsurgency campaign in the western state of Rakhine that drove more than 700,000 to seek safety across the border in Bangladesh.

There is widespread prejudice against the Rohingya and few in Myanmar protested the army's treatment of them, though international courts are now considering whether it constituted genocide.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to report the loss of 200 shares of M/s ESCORTS LIMITED in Folio No. ESC0104681 standing in the name of ARUN KUMAR and SONALI KUMAR. The shareholders have applied for the issue of duplicate shares to M/s Escorts Limited, 15/5, Mathura Road, Faridabad-121003 to whom objections, if any, may be conveyed within 15 days of the publication of this Notice.

LOST & FOUND
To be known that I, Malini Kumar, D/O of Late Ashok Kumar, R/O B-522 Safderjung Enclave, 3rd Floor, 9811934909, am the owner of plot C 586 Sushant Lok 1, Gurgaon, Haryana. Plot Size 215 sq sqs. My original documents of the said plot have been misplaced. FIR lodged at Sarojini Nagar Police Thana vide LR No. 393963/2021. Dated 15/06/2021. Time 6pm.
Documents Lost:
1. CONVEYANCE DEED: Vaseeka Number 18347. Dated 11.2.2021.
2. POSSESSION LETTER FROM ANSALS
Any persons claiming rights, interest, misuse will be penalized. If found, said documents must be returned to above mentioned.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Anita Chhabra W/o Late Shri Guru Dutt Chhabra R/o 1342, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, have lost my Lease deed of Shop No 11, Outram lines, Kingsway Camp New Delhi Dated 05-03-1986

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H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, & Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U04101UR2001SGC025866. Website: www.uttarakhandujvnyut.com
प.सं. 440
Corrigendum-1 दिनांक 15.06.2021
Refer NIT No. 01/UJVN/EE/Test/GV/2021-22 invited by Executive Engineer (Test), UJVN, Ganga Valley, Haridwar uploaded at e-portal. In place of Earnest Money Deposit -A Bid-Security Declaration certificate shall be submitted by bidder in prescribed Proforma as uploaded in TS. Other conditions shall remain unchanged. For further details, please visit-portal "uktenders.gov.in"
Executive Engineer (Test)
" Avoid wasteful use of Electricity "

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is hereby informed that we Sandeep Gupta & Satish Chand Gupta S/o Sh. Babu Ram Gupta, R/o - 3424, Gali Bajrang Bali, Sitaram Bazar, Delhi - 110006, have found our property documents of the Address, Commercial Unit No. C-25, Aggarwal Cyber Plaza, Plot No. C 4, 5, 6, Netaji Subhash Place, District Centre, Wazirpur, Pitampura, Delhi - 110034, which includes, Buyer and Promoter Agreement dated 16.09.2005, Maintenance Agreement dated 16.01.2006, payment receipts of instalments, possession letter and other property related documents, which were lost earlier and the said incident was informed in general public, vide Public Notice dated 27.05.2017, in "JANSATTA" and "THE INDIAN EXPRESS" newspapers. Further an article lost e-complaint was also registered, vide LR No: 477758/2017, dated 03.04.2017

UK PM's ex-aide reignites row with release of expletive-laden WhatsApp messages

London: Dominic Cummings, the former top aide of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, on Wednesday reignited an ongoing row over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic as he shared expletive-laden WhatsApp messages believed to be from his former boss in which the premier brands his health secretary "hopeless".

Johnson's former Chief Strategy Adviser, who left Downing Street unceremoniously last year, has previously made withering attacks on UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock and claimed the minister should have been sacked for 15-20 things, including "for lying" to people.

Following Hancock's own evidence before a parliamentary committee to deny all the allegations, Cummings took to his blogpost to brand the Cabinet minister's parliamentary evidence as an attempt to rewrite history. "Number 10/Hancock have repeatedly lied about the failures

last year," he writes in his blog. In screenshots of WhatsApp messages he has shared alongside, the Prime Minister appears to call Hancock's efforts "totally f***** hopeless" in response to a message from Cummings and in others seems to consider replacing him.

The 7,000-word blogpost dubs Hancock's version of events as "fiction" and criticises "systemic incompetence" surrounding the UK Prime Minister.

Downing Street has refused to be drawn into the latest WhatsApp messages row, with the UK Prime Minister's official spokesperson saying Johnson continued to have "full confidence" in Hancock.

"I am not planning to engage with every allegation put forward, the Prime Minister has worked very closely with the Health Secretary throughout and will continue to do so," the spokesperson said. PTT

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found dead at H.No. 17, Behind Harijan Basti dated 12.06.2021. In this regard a DD No. 19A, dated 12.06.2021 has been registered at P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi. The description of the dead person is given as under Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 30-35 years, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Hair: Small Black, Wearing: Yellow, White & Black Colour Check Shirt and Black Colour Pant. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.
SHO
P.S. Kanjhawala, Delhi
DP/869/RD/2021 Ph : 011-25951486, 8750870324

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of Rashtriya Suraksha party. The office of the party located at III-H-2, Nehru Nagar, Ghaziabad-201001. This Party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951. Names/address of the office bearers of the Party are as follows: President/Chairman : Ramanuj Singh General Secretary/Secretary : Neelmani Shrivastav Treasurer : Ankur Chaudhary If any one has any objection to the registration of Rashtriya Suraksha Party they may send their Objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I Suman, R/O 79 Bhim Basti Jonapur, Mehrauli, Delhi have disowned my son Yograj & his wife Gulshan from all my movable & immovable property.

LOST & FOUND

I, Raj Singh Yadav S/o Suresh Singh Yadav R/o 4082, Gali Mandir Wali, Sadar Bazar, Delhi-110006 have lost the Share Certificate of my Father (Named - Suraj Singh Yadav).
Company Name - TATA STEEL LTD
Folio No. Certificate No. Distinctive No.
SIS0120754 06173003 229058011-229058060 R04371694, 317358780-317358779 R04371695, 317358780-317358780
Total Number of Shares-71@10/-Each. Finder Please Send at above address.

CSST/Project Metro Railway, Kolkata

for & on behalf of The President of India invites e-Tenders against Open Tender due to open on 23.07.2021 at 15:30 hrs. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Name of Work : Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Optical Fibre Communication (indoor & outdoor) in section Noapara - Bimanbandar along with IP Based Bandwidth Address (PA) system, CCTV etc. at Dum Dum Cantonment, Jessore Road and Biman Bandar Stations in connection to extension of Metro Railway from Noapara to Biman Bandar. Tender Value : Rs. 9,13,97,155.80. Completion Period: 12 months. The tender can be viewed at website:https://www.ireps.gov.in the tender/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate in e-Tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-Tender.
Tender Notice No.:S&T/Work_14-2021 Dated : 15.06.2021
Metro Railway, Kolkata

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

mean insulating our planet against the next pandemic, ensuring we focus on a sustainable lifestyle that stops ecological degradation, strengthening cooperation in furthering research as well as innovation."

Indian economy suffered its worst contraction in four decades as coronavirus-induced lockdowns stalled businesses and economic activity.

While attempts were made to control the spread of infections and healthcare infrastructure built to treat the ill, the government implemented huge reforms across sectors - from mining to space, from banking to atomic energy.

"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 is 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. So, even within the products made in India, buyers can identify products that have higher local content and take

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) complaint 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



सत्यमेव जयते
Department of Commerce
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Government of India

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

FIANS ■ 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 scorchers 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 ₹1449.30. 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 ₹1,394.

Adani Total Gas has gained 86.09 per cent in the last three months, as per Trendlyne data.

While Adani Enterprises and Adani Ports have been the flagship companies, it is Adani Green Energy which is the star in the portfolio of the



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 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.

On the other hand, Nestle, NTPC, ONGC, Bajaj Finserv Hindustan Unilever and Infosys were among the gainers.

"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. But, Fed maintaining an accommoda-

tive 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.

Chice Broking 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 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 trading sessions over Wednesday.

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 commerce ministry.

Imports too rose by 98.33 per cent to USD 19.59 billion during the period, the data showed.

Exports of sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products are recording healthy growth rates.

The exports grew by 52.39 per cent to USD 7.71 billion during the first week of this month and by about 40 per cent to USD 6.35 billion during the second week of this month, according to the data.

Exports during Apr-May this fiscal year jumped to USD 62.89 billion, as against USD 29.41 billion in the same period last year.

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.

India's fuel demand rebounds in June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fuel demand rebounded in the first half of June as easing of coronavirus lockdowns helped sales but the consumption was still lower compared to last year. While petrol sales rose by 13 per cent during June 1-15 over the same period of last month, diesel consumption was up 12 per cent, according to data compiled by state fuel retailers. This is the first monthly increase since March. Fuel demand had recovered to near-normal levels in March before the onset of the second wave of Covid-19 infections led to the reimposition of lockdowns in different states, stalling mobility and muting economic activity.

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.

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 ₹1200 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, 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.

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 9 million are employed in low-skilled services and BPO roles, according to Nasscom.

PTI

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 Gorakhpur-Kochuveli-Gorakhpur Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05115/05116 Chhapra -Delhi-Chhapra Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05018/05017 Gorakhpur-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
05029/05030 Gorakhpur-Pune-Gorakhpur Special Express	30.06.2021 to till further advice
05022/05021 Gorakhpur-Shalimar-Gorakhpur Special Express	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.

1324/21
RailMadad Helpline No. 139
Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in & Download Railmadad app.
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Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male **Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: about 30-35 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Crushed, Built: Medium, Wearing: Green coloured lower, printed t-shirt and red coloured slipper in feet, has been found dead on 14.06.2021 from Train accident at Pole No. 2/16G to 2/18G, Under Akshardham Flyover in Track, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for 72 hours at the Mortuary of GTB Hospital Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 02A, dated 14.06.2021 U/S 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.: 8750871314
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) for financial norms under ICPS and other-relevant details.

Procedure for applying :

Interested NGOs/VOs may download the Application Form, from official website : www.wcdde.in and submit their application along with requisite documents by email on : 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
DIP/Shabdarth/0101/21-22



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

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



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 application is 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 assists customers in making purchasing decisions while they are engaged with the information.

'Shopping by appointment' is another shopping trend now gaining more popularity. This is already 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 endorsers 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 entertainers that don't need to follow the same, stereotyped 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 vitiates 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 (OTT) 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 pose helps 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

SARAD 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

Sankalp 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 clarion call 'Vocal for Local' and to build an *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, 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, Ramesh Chand 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 richness of tribal lifestyle and 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.

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 start-ups, 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 VDVK 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 procured 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 popu-

lation. TRIFED now plans to expand its operations through the convergence of various schemes of different ministries and departments to launch various tribal development programmes under the *Sankalp Se Siddhi — Mission Van Dhan* banner for expediting its implementation in a Mission mode. Through this mission, the establishment of 50,000 *Van Dhan Vikas Kendras*, 3000 Haat Bazaars, 600 godowns, 200 Mini TRIFED units, 100 common facility centres, 100 TRIFED parks, 100 SFURTI clusters, 200 Tribes India retail stores, e-commerce platforms for TRIFED and Tribes India brands is being targeted.

Munda also inaugurated seven more Tribes India outlets, two in Jagdalpur, three in Ranchi, one in Jamshepur and another at Sarnath. Showcasing tribal products from all over the country, the outlets will have specific GI and *Van Dhan* corners and will display the large variety of GI tagged and natural products from different parts of the country.

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 gifting 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 Boksas tribal artisans at Rishikesh and Meena tribal artisans at Jaipur, were also launched.

Speaking on the occasion, Pravir 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



Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh (HP), flagged off truck-mounted sewer jetting and litter picking machines, provided to 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 jetting vehicle machines costing ₹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 twin-bin dustbins having financial implication of ₹11.49 crore, have been supplied and installed in various parts of HP.

Besides, POWERGRID has also undertaken efforts for skill development for local youth in district Lahaul and Spiti, through infrastructure additions & capacity building in the field of mountaineering & allied activities with the financial implication of ₹32 lakhs. As part of CSR efforts in the state, 4 Medical Mobile units costing ₹1.06 crores to Bilaspur District Authorities, two ambulances in IGMC Shimla and District Hospital, Chamba have been provided in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

NCC as an elective subject

The 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, *Swachhta 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 had 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 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 2013, 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 et al as credit courses under the



CISF organises promotion-cum-pipping ceremony

A promotion-cum-pipping ceremony of other ranks was organized at CISF Headquarters, New Delhi and simultaneously at all the zonal 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 Deep, 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 zonal 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

Sudhanshu 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 *Atmanirbhar 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 e-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.

Pankaj 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

RITES 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 Mehrotra, 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."

Revenue and profit growth
 Q4FY21 total revenue is up by 6.1 per cent to ₹632 crore as 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 17.3 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 consignments 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 ₹91 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.

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, SRBWP, 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 IRSDC, revenue and profit stand at ₹39 crore and ₹5 crores respectively against ₹50 crore and ₹5 crores in FY20.

Growth outlook for FY21
 Commenting on the outlook, Mehrotra said, "We can deliver orders in hand in a timely manner but post-COVID normalcy will set the pace for execution. We are also aligned to seize more opportunities for growth in coming years."

PFC LOGS HIGHEST EVER NET PROFIT

State-owned non-banking financial firm Power Finance Corporation (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 reduc-

tion 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.

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STAR WARS



Hummels own goal helps Les Blues win opening game against Germany

FRANCE OFF TO WINNING START

AFP ■ 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

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.

Hummels turned the ball into his own net in the 20th minute, which ultimately decided the contest.

France also saw Kylian Mbappe and Karim Benzema have second-half goals ruled off-side, while Adrien Rabiot hit the post for Les Bleus.

"It was a clash that could have been a semi-final or a final, so to take three points was important," said France coach Didier Deschamps.

"We played a big game against a very good German team, but we were up to the level and this victory does us good."

The result leaves France second on goal difference in the early Group F table behind Portugal, after the holders' 3-0 win over Hungary earlier in

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 Löw. "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."

He refused to blame Hummels for the own goal, saying: "There is no need to reproach Mats for the own goal. It was difficult for him to clear."

It was a heartbreaking night for Hummels, back to boost the German defence after a two-year exile from International football.

Seven years ago, it was Hummels' headed goal which knocked France out of the 2014 World Cup in the quarter-finals as Germany went on to win the title in Brazil.

Ramsey, Roberts strike in Wales win

AFP ■ BAKU

Aaron Ramsey strike just before half-time and one in injury time from Connor Roberts was enough to give Wales a 2-0 win over Turkey on Wednesday.

Wales almost got off to the perfect start inside five minutes as Aaron Ramsey was played in on goal by Gareth Bale.

The Juventus midfielder though, fluffed his lines completely and hit a close range effort straight at Ugurcan Cakir.

It somehow got worse for Ramsey on 25 minutes however, as he found himself all alone in the area and once again failed to find the back of the net - this time firing an effort well over the bar.

But it was third time lucky for the former Arsenal man as he made a late run into the area, connected with a



Wales midfielder Aaron Ramsey celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal vs Turkey

Bale pass and finished well.

Into the second half and Burak Yilmaz really should have equalised on 55 minutes only to acrobatically volley well over the bar from just six yards out.

Wales had a golden opportunity to double their lead on the hour mark as Bale was fouled inside the area - but the Real Madrid man blazed a penalty high and wide.

Turkey kept coming, pushing for that equaliser and almost got it late on as Merih Demiral headed at goal, only for Danny Ward to dive to his left and claw the ball away.

With just a few seconds left on the clock however, Wales got their second. A clever corner saw Connor Roberts bundle home and confirm a hard-fought win.

MIRANCHUK SHINES In Group B game at St Petersburg,

a special goal by Aleksei Miranchuk allowed Russia to reignite their Euro 2020 campaign with a 1-0 win over Finland, but the game was marred by an injury to Mario Fernandes.

Finland took the lead after just four minutes when Joel Pohjanpallo rose to head home brilliantly, but the goal was later ruled out for offside.

But Russia fought back and went close through Magomed Ozdoev, before Aleksei Miranchuk broke the deadlock with an excellent curling effort into the top corner.

Russia almost doubled their lead when Daler Kuzayev cut inside and fired towards goal but Lukáš Hrádecký denied him with a stunning fingertip save.

Despite Finland pushing for an equaliser, they struggled to create anything of note and the hosts secured all three points - with Group B now wide open.

Arnautovic banned for goal celebration

AFP ■ LAUSANNE

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.

UEFA said Arnautovic had been punished for "insulting another player" and the 32-year-old will miss his side's match against the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Thursday as a result.

European football's governing body had opened an investigation into Arnautovic following the incident in Sunday's 3-1 win over North Macedonia in Bucharest.

The former West Ham United player, who now plays for Shanghai Port in China, netted Austria's third goal in the game



Marko Arnautovic (7) celebrates after the scores against North Macedonia

Coca Cola takes \$4 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.

A well-known fitness enthusiast, Ronaldo set aside two Coca-Cola glass bottles which lay in front of him during a press conference ahead of Portugal's opening Euro match against Hungary here on Monday.

According to media reports, the share price of Coca-Cola, one of the official sponsors of Euro 2020, slipped from \$56.10 to \$55.22 almost immediately after Ronaldo's gesture.

The market valuation of Coca-Cola went from \$242 billion to \$238 billion, a fall of \$4 billion.

On Tuesday, France mid-fielder Paul Pogba also removed a bottle of Heineken beer that had been placed in front of him at a Press conference. PTI

shortpasses

MURRAY IN TEARS AFTER WIN
LONDON: Former world No 1 Andy Murray defeated Benoit Paire 6-3, 6-2 at The Queen's Club grass-court tournament, dispatching the Frenchman in 65 minutes for his first match victory in more than a year.

JAPAN WEIGHING 10K FANS CAP
TOKYO: Japan could allow up to 10,000 fans at sports events ahead of the Olympics, media reported on Wednesday, as organisers weigh how many domestic fans can attend the Games.

MAN CITY VS SPURS IN PL OPENER
LONDON: Premier League champions Man City will start the defence of their title away to Spurs after the fixtures for the 2021-22 season were unveiled on Wednesday.

CONCUSSED FAF OUT OF PSL
ABU DHABI: Former Proteas captain Faf du Plessis, who had suffered a concussion during a PSL match, was on Wednesday ruled out of the remaining matches of the T20 tournament.

WILCARD FOR MURRAY, VENUS
LONDON: Andy Murray and Venus Williams, who have seven Wimbledon singles titles between them, have been given wild card entries to this year's championships.

CELTIC VS MIDTJYLLAND IN CL
LONDON: New Celtic manager Ange Postecoglou's first official game will be against Danish side Midtjylland in the second qualifying round of the Champions League. The Hoops will be at home for the first leg on July 20 or 21 before travelling to the MCH Arena a week later.

FEDERER SUFFERS SHOCK DEFEAT
HALLE: Roger Federer suffered a setback in his preparations for Wimbledon after crashing out of the second round of the ATP grass court tourney. He suffered a shock 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 defeat to Felix Auger Aliassime.

ROSE JOINS WATFORD FOR FREE
LONDON: Watford have confirmed the signing of defender Danny Rose on a two-year deal following his departure from Spurs.

MILKHA OUT OF COVID ICU
CHANDIGARH: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh is 'stable' and he has been shifted out of COVID ICU to another section of the PGIMER hospital, a statement from his family said on Wednesday.

BOPANNA-SHARAN IN QUARTERS
HALLE: India's Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan knocked out second seeds Lukasz Kubot and Edouard Roger Vasselin 7-6(11) 6-4 to move to the quarterfinals of the Noventi Open, here on Wednesday.

DUTTE AIMS TO REACH 100M FINAL
NEW DELHI: An Olympic qualifying spot within her grasp, national record-holding sprinter Dutee Chand said her target in the upcoming Tokyo Games is to reach the 100m final with an improved timing. Agencies

Gavaskar expects both Ashwin, Jadeja to play in WTC final

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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.

Gavaskar is part of the match's commentary panel and is currently in Southampton with first-hand knowledge about the pitch and conditions for the match starting June 18.

"In Southampton, it's been boiling hot over the last few days so the pitch will definitely be dry and help spin as the match progresses, so yes both Ashwin and Jadeja will play," Gavaskar said.

Southampton's maximum temperature has been over 25°C for the past few days but there is a forecast of rain from Thursday.

For Gavaskar, it's not just bowling but all-round abilities that give India the kind of balance they need going into a marquee match like this.



Sunil Gavaskar speaking during a press conference

"That (Ashwin and Jadeja together) also gives depth to the batting as well as give a fine balance to the bowling attack. For the series later (vs England) much will depend on the weather and pitch conditions."

While New Zealand will be on a high after their series win against England, Gavaskar doesn't feel that the Indian team is under-prepared either just because it didn't get any practice matches.

"(In) today's tours there are barely one or two practice games before the Test series begins and the Indian team has had intra-squad matches so they have had that practice."

"The team is a good blend of youth and experience and most of the players have been to England several times so they know the conditions and what to expect," said the former India captain.

Spinners script India's comeback

PTI ■ BRISTOL

Spinners Sneha Rana and Deepti Sharma fashioned India's comeback by triggering a batting collapse in the final session but England Women still managed a decent 269 for six on the opening day of the one-off Test here on Wednesday.

Playing a Test match after nearly seven years, India were struggling badly but Rana (3/77) and Sharma (2/50) brought the side back by accounting for two batters each in the final session.

From a comfortable 230 for 2, England were reeling at 251 for six as an old pitch being used for the match assisted the Indian spinners.

The Indian bowlers looked rusty and toiled hard for most part of the day before the spinners came to the party.

For England, Tammy Beaumont (66) looked solid at the top apart from skipper Heather Knight (95), who missed out on a hundred. At stumps, Sophie Dunkley was



Indian players celebrate the wicket of English batter on Day 1 of 1st Test

Eng vs India (Day 2) Live from 3:30 pm IST SONY TEN 1 NETWORK

batting on 12 while Katherine Brunt was on 7.

Knight paced her innings to perfection and notched up her third Test fifty just after tea.

The Indians were sloppy on the field initially as Deepti dropped a straight-forward

went for an unsuccessful review.

But it was Deepti who got the big breakthrough in the form of Knight, who was also trapped leg before. Knight scored her runs off 175 balls with the help of nine boundaries.

Rana soon picked up her third wicket of the day when she induced an edge from Georgia Elwiss to Sharma at slip as England slumped to 251 for 6.

Earlier, England lost Beaumont in the second session but managed to consolidate their position by reaching 162 for two at tea.

After getting rid of Lauren Winfield-Hill (35) in the first session of the day, India toiled hard before Rana picked up her maiden Test wicket.

She got rid of in-form of Beaumont, who was brilliantly caught by Shafali Verma at short leg.

Beaumont faced 166 balls and decorated her innings with six fours en route to her second Test fifty.

I've reached here because of criticism: Rahane

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Ajinkya Rahane doesn't mind a bit of 'criticism' but has never been too overtly bothered by what people think about his game as he goes on with his job of winning Test matches for the Indian team.

Despite his blow-hot-blow-cold form over the last few years, India's Test vice-captain with 1095 runs in 17 games is team's top scorer in the two-year World Test Championship cycle leading to the final against New Zealand.

"It feels special," Rahane said about emerging as the top scorer.

But what about the flak that he has faced because of poor run of scores?

"I'm happy to take criticism. I feel it's because of the criticism I'm here. I always want to give my best whether people criticise me or not."

"For me, it's important to give my best for my country and contribute each and every time be it as a batsman or a fielder," Rahane, who played a massive role as skipper during epic series against Australia, said.

Having played Test cricket for more than eight years, Rahane knows that public opinion is fickle and at



Indian Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane trains during team's practice session

their thing, and that's their job. I cannot control all these things. For me, I always focus on controllables, putting my best foot forward, working hard and following my process and the result follows."

Rahane feels that even if he scores 40 and it proves to be useful for the team's cause, he is more than happy.

"I will be playing my natural game. Winning is really important whether I score hundred or not. I don't want to put too much pressure on myself and even if my 30 or 40 is valuable for the team, I am happy."

The Indian vice-captain in 2019 had played for the Hampshire county and has a better idea about the ground where he has also played two Tests in 2014 and 18, both of which the visitors lost.

"I like to be in the present. I know the conditions. It's about being in the moment, adjusting to the conditions. Also me being the highest scorer doesn't matter now. It's past. I just don't want to put extra pressure and would want to play freely," said Rahane, who has three hundreds and six fifties in this inaugural cycle of WTC.

"I don't really think about criticism. If people criticise me, that's

Smith replaces Kane as No 1 Test batter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Australian skipper Steve Smith replaced New Zealand captain Kane Williamson as the number one Test batsman in the ICC rankings released on Wednesday.

Williamson, who missed the second Test against England due to injury, has slipped five points behind Smith's 891 rating points and is second in the batters' list.

India skipper Virat Kohli climbed to the fourth spot and has 814 points.

Also, Indian wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant (747 points) and opener Rohit Sharma (747 points), have retained their joint sixth position.

up is such that he is not thinking of it as the biggest event.

"It's just a mental thing. If we can switch mentally and adapt, it's important. Yes one off, we have to take it as another game not as a final or anything. We just want to give our best, play good cricket, be consistent in the five days."

7 Oz stars skip WI tour

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

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.

David Warner, Pat Cummins, Glenn Maxwell, Jhye Richardson, Kane Richardson, Marcus Stoinis and Daniel Sams have requested not to be considered for the tours for various reasons while Steve Smith has been rested to fully recover from an elbow complaint which flared during the IPL, Cricket Australia said in a statement.

Cricketer Australia on Wednesday named a 18-man squad for the twin tours. Australia play five T20Is and three ODIs between July 9 and 24. The five-match T20 tour of Bangladesh is yet to be confirmed.

Jason Behrendorff, Moises Henriques and Riley Meredith have all agreed to go for the tour despite also being part of the IPL contingent that recently left



hotel quarantine.

The squad is due to depart for the West Indies on June 28 for five T20Is in St Lucia followed by three ODIs in Barbados. If confirmed, the team will then play five T20Is against Bangladesh.

Squad: Aaron Finch (c), Ashton Agar, Wes Agar, Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey, Dan Christian, Josh Hazlewood, Moises Henriques, Mitchell Marsh, Ben McDermott, Riley Meredith, Josh Philippe, Mitchell Starc, Mitchell Swepson, Ashton Turner, Andrew Tye, Matthew Wade, Adam Zampa.

Travelling reserves: Nathan Ellis, Tanveer Sangha.