

OPINION 6
CAN ISRAEL BE LED BY
A FRAGILE COALITION?

WORLD 8
COURTS CANNOT
APPOINT PM: OLI

SPORT 12
BUFFON RETURNS
TO PARMA

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SIDDHANT
RELIVES
CHILDHOOD
10 VIVACITY

3rd Covid wave in 2 weeks! Maha scrambles for cover

Delta+ may unleash
tragedy soon unless
Covid-appropriate
behaviour is followed:
Maha Task force

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra on Thursday began to gear itself for Covid-19 "third wave", which the State Task Force apprehended might be unleashed in the State by a high virulent strain Delta Plus in the next "two to four weeks" if the pandemic-appropriate norms were not followed by the people.

A day after the State Covid-19 Task Force made a presentation before Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray about the possible break out of "third wave" in Maharashtra, the State administration began to mobilise medicines and health equipment to be sent across to both rural and urban areas. This followed a directive it received from the Chief Minister himself.

At Wednesday's meeting, the State Task Force warned the Chief Minister that the cases would double in the coming weeks after a possible advent of third wave in the State. "Uncontrolled crowds and the



People walk past the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj train Terminus after it rained in Mumbai on Thursday

refusal by the people to follow Covid-19 norms, coupled with the advent of Delta plus variant might trigger a third wave of pandemic in the State," a senior official who briefed the chief minister about a possible third wave said.

The task force told the CM that the lower middle class of people who were not affected of the first and second waves of Covid-19 would be hit by the third wave of the pandemic. It advised the Uddhav to increase

testing, strengthen infrastructure and increase vaccination.

Quantifying the impact of the "third wave", the task force officials told the CM that the State would have to contend with 8 lakh "active" cases, out of which 10 per cent would be children.

There were as many as 19 lakh Covid patients in the State during the first wave, while the number of patients jumped to 40 lakh during the second wave. The number of patients

would be doubled during the third wave.

"The children would not be majorly affected by the third wave. The children make up for more than 3.5 per cent of the patient pool in the State," a senior official said.

The impending Covid-19 "third wave" should be seen in the context of the five-level relaxation plan announced by the state government and its decision to relax restrictions in 18 tom 36 districts of the State.

Class 12 evaluation on 30:30:40 formula

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday cleared the air on the cancelled Class 12 CBSE Board exams' evaluation criteria saying that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will be adopting a 30:30:40 formula for evaluation of marks based on results of Class 10, 11 and 12 respectively and the results will be declared by July end.

The Government informed the Supreme Court that 30 per cent marks will be based on Class 10 board exam, another 30 per cent from Class 11 and 40 per cent marks based on the performance in the unit, mid-term and pre-board tests of Class 12. The Supreme Court accepted the formula of CBSE and CISCE to evaluate the Class 12 students, whose board examinations were cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.

The components adopted by CISCE for arriving at the evaluation formula is — marks percentage in Class X board examinations, the project and practical work in the subjects, the performance of the candidates in the school examinations in the subjects in Classes XI and XII, measured through their best marks obtained in the two years (referred to as raw marks) and the best performance of the school in the last six years.



The Supreme Court also directed the boards to incorporate provisions for disputes resolution in their assessment schemes themselves for those students who may be dissatisfied with the marks awarded in the Class 12 board results. CBSE later announced that for such students exams will be conducted on physical mode and the candidates will have to register accordingly.

A special bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshari said, "After perusing the scheme presented by the concerned Boards, prima facie, we have no hesitation in accepting the same and permit the Boards to proceed on that basis".

The CBSE said that for evaluating Class XII students, after their board examinations were cancelled for the academic year 2020-21, it has entered

into consultative process with stakeholders to know the factual position of the students and the schools. The board said that consultation process was held with principals of affiliated schools, feedback was obtained from 229 Sahodaya School Complex comprising 7,734 schools and 13-members committee of experts.

It said that theory paper evaluation formula will be of 30 per cent weightage, to be given to Class X marks, 30 per cent weightage to Class XI marks and 40 per cent weightage to Class XII marks obtained in unit test/mid-term/pre-board exams.

The CBSE said that 20 marks will be given for practical in Class-XII and the result will be declared by July 31. The CBSE scheme further elaborated that for Class X 30 per cent marks based on average

theory component of best three performing subjects out of main five subjects will be taken.

For Class XI, 30 per cent marks based on theory component of final exam will be taken and for Class XII 40 per cent marks based on unit test/mid-term/pre-board exams will be taken.

"The marks of practical/internal assessment of Class XII will be on actual basis as uploaded by the school on the CBSE portal," the CBSE said, adding that the total marks awarded should be in consonance with the past performance of the school in Class-XII board examinations.

The board said that each school shall form a result committee comprising five members (principal of the school as chairperson, two-senior most teachers of the school, teaching class-XII and two teachers from neighbouring senior secondary school teaching class-XII) and it may decide weightage to be given to each exam based on credibility and reliability of the assessment.

It said that the marks of Class XI and Class XII component will be awarded at school level; they will strictly not be comparable across schools due to variations in the quality of question papers, the evaluation, standard and processes, the mode of conduct of exams.

More fatal fungus Candida auris' threat looms large

Covid crisis is ideal condition for outbreak of deadly fungus

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

After mucormycosis or black fungus, another multi-drug resistant similar infection candida auris is looming large amidst Covid-19 pandemic.

Health experts have sounded alarm that Covid-associated fungus Candida auris cases are worsening in India even as it has spread across the globe—from neonatal unit in Venezuela to a hospital in Spain and Brazil where cases of drug-resistant super fungus were reported on Wednesday, leaving the exhausted authorities a worried lot.

According to the researchers, death among candidemia patients infected by C auris can reach 60 per cent.

This can happen for some people because fungus enters



the bloodstream and causes a systemic infection known as candidemia.

They warned that there was enough evidence that suggests that the ongoing Covid-19 crisis may provide ideal conditions for outbreaks of C. auris in hospital ICUs, thus leading to adverse outcomes and additional strain on healthcare resources. The death rate is quite high, they said.

The Covid-19 conditions in Brazil have opened the door for the emergence and spread of a relatively new fungus that is quickly showing signs of becoming a drug-resistant "superfungus," as reported by a study published in the

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,97,61,523 (+61,934)
DEATHS:	3,83,515 (+1,584)
RECOVERED:	2,85,72,139 (+87,539)
ACTIVE:	7,94,155
MAHA:	58,44,710 (+9,830)
K'TAKA:	27,90,338 (+5,983)
KERALA:	27,73,944 (+12,469)
TN:	23,97,864 (+9,118)
DELHI:	14,31,868 (+158)

Journal of Fungi. India had for long been hotbed for the deadly fungus.

In fact, before the SARS-CoV-2 spread its tentacles, C. auris was already considered a major global health threat due to high rates of drug resistance and ease of transmission in hospital settings.

Amid LJP crisis, girl says rebel MP Prince raped her

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the raging war in the Lok Janshakti party (LJP), MP from Samastipur Prince Raj is facing a sexual assault charge from a woman who has filed a three-page police complaint and also narrated her side of the story before the media. Prince is not available for comment so far.

Prince Raj is cousin of Chirag Paswan who is engaged in a bitter battle with his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras for taking control of the party. Prince and three other MPs sided with Paras to oust Chirag from the post of party president and leader in the Lok Sabha.

On the other hand, Chirag has expelled them from the party.

The Police said they are verifying facts and an enquiry is being conducted. A First Information Report (FIR) will be registered once the preliminary probe is over.

A police officer said a three-page complaint has been



filed by a woman with Connaught Place police station. She has alleged that Prince mixed intoxicants in water and raped her after she passed out.

Pashupati Kumar Paras new LJP chief: Sources

Patna: Lok Janshakti Party MP Pashupati Kumar Paras, who recently staged a political coup and deposed nephew Chirag Paswan as the party chief, was on Thursday declared elected, unopposed, the new national president of the outfit.

Centre plans statute for OTT, news portals self-regulation

To address issues of sensitive video content, fake news

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a move aimed at providing a level-playing field in the media, the Modi Government has decided to bring in an over-arching statute that will provide for self-regulation in digital media including Over-the-top (OTT) platforms and news websites to address issues of sensitive video content and fake news.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) on Thursday issued a notification amending the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 providing a statutory mechanism for redressal of grievances/complaints of citizens relating to content broadcast by television channels in accordance with the provisions of the Cable Television Network Act, 1995.

Now, the broadcaster will have to establish a self-regulating body to redress citizens' grievances. Besides, they will



have to ensure that programmes are not violative of the programme code or advertising code. According to the new amendment, the Centre may prohibit the transmission or retransmission of any such channel or programme if they fail to act despite the complaint.

"... Programme of any channel is not in conformity with the programme code, it may, after giving an opportunity of hearing to the cable operator, and by an order in writing, prohibit the transmission or re-transmission of any such channel or programme in accordance with the provisions of section 20 of the Act," the notification said.

"Where the Central Government is satisfied that the

advertisement of any channel is not in conformity with the advertising code, it may, after giving an opportunity of hearing to the cable operator, and by an order in writing, prohibit the transmission or re-transmission of any such channel or programme in accordance with the provisions of section 20 of the Act," it said.

Any person aggrieved by the content of a programme of a channel as being not in conformity with the programme code or the advertising code may file his complaint in writing to the broadcaster.

A broadcaster shall establish a grievance redressal mechanism and appoint an officer to deal with the complaints received by it.

BJP factions stick on their guns on BSY's leadership

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The political crisis in Karnataka continues to simmer with the pro-Yediyurappa and those wanting to unseat him as Chief Minister refusing to walk midway for the reconciliation during their discussion on Thursday with the visiting BJP general secretary Arun Singh.

Singh, who is also Karnataka BJP in-charge, interacted with both sides to elicit their views on a range of issues, including alleged interference in Ministries by Yediyurappa's son Vijayendra who is also BJP State vice-chief, Covid-19 management, allocation of portfolios, and the larger issue of change of guard in the State.

According to sources, around 30 legislators from both sides met Singh on Thursday.

Sources said Social Welfare Minister B Sriramulu put forth his demand for the post of Deputy Chief Minister. The supporters of the mining baron were confident that the party will concede his demand "in right time".

Singh is understood to have not given audience to MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal one of the most vocal critic of the

Chief Minister who had early this year alleged that BSY was "blackmailed" by a sleaze CD to allocate Cabinet portfolios. Yatnal was instead asked by Singh to meet him in the national Capital.

Adani loses \$9bn in 3 days in worst ever wealth rout



New Delhi: Billionaire Gautam Adani's dream run up the global wealth rankings is faltering after a media report raising questions about some offshore investors triggered a rout in his conglomerate's six listed stocks.

The 58-year-old tycoon lost more money this week than anyone else in the world, with his personal fortune tumbling by about \$9 billion to \$67.6 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index based on Wednesday closing prices.

Just days ago, he was closing the gap with Mukesh Ambani as Asia's richest man.

C'garh CM unveils ₹5,220 crore development projects

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

As the second wave of Covid-19 abates, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has unveiled development works worth more than ₹5,220 crore for different districts through nine virtual programmes.

On June 18, Baghel will inaugurate and do bhumi puja of development projects worth ₹111 crores for Korba district and worth ₹122.96 crores for Janjgir-Champa district, an official communication said on Thursday.

The virtual inauguration programmes started from June 8.

That day, Baghel inaugurated development works worth about ₹400 crores in



Balod district and gifted new works worth ₹287.87 crores in Durg district.

On June 9, development works worth ₹270 crores were unveiled for Mahasamund dis-

trict and worth ₹295 crores for Balodabazar-Bhatapara district.

Development works worth about ₹225 crores were unveiled for Kaberdham district on June 10, and worth

₹358 crores for Gariaband district and ₹556 crores for Rajnandgaon district on June 11.

Projects worth ₹271.51 crore were presented to Dhamtari district and worth Rs 276.12 crores to Mungeli district on June 12.

This was followed by ₹172.65 crores worth of projects for Bemetara district, worth ₹120.09 crores for Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district and worth ₹561.32 crores for Raipur district on June 13, worth ₹308.31 crores for Raigarh district on June 14, worth ₹283.70 crores for Jashpur district, worth ₹247.91 crores for Sarguja district and worth ₹76.52 crore for Balampur-Ramanujan district on June 15.

Surajpur and Korea districts got development works worth ₹16 crores and ₹244 crores respectively on June 16. Projects worth ₹50 crores have been inaugurated and launched for Sukma and Bijapur districts.

Haryana CM gives Covid package of ₹1,100 crore to needy

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a bid to provide relief to the poor and needy people affected due to Covid-19 pandemic, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday announced an economic package of more than Rs 1,100 crore.

The announcement was made by the Chief Minister during a press conference held to mark the completion of 600 days of BJP-JJP led State Government tenure in Haryana.

Accompanied by his entire Cabinet, Khattar while making a series of announcements said that in view of the financial constraints faced by the labourers working in the unorganized sector, a relief package of Rs 600 crore will be given to 12 lakh such families of the state. Under the ambit of this package, a financial assistance of Rs 5,000 will be given to all such families in the state.

The Chief Minister said that to ensure that the labourers of the unorganized sector have easy access to the scheme, a portal has been designed and the registrations on the portal will start from June 18.

600 DAYS OF KHATTAR GOVT



A relief package of Rs 150 crore will also be provided to small shopkeepers, who belong to BPL families.

The Chief Minister also announced a financial aid of Rs 5,000 per family to the families of Corona warriors like ASHA workers and employees of NHM. Under this, a financial burden of about Rs 11 crore will be borne by the government.

He said that the State Government is steadfast to provide relief to consumers of

electricity during the ongoing Corona-crisis and the Electricity Department has decided that surcharge will not be levied on electricity bills till June 30.

Apart from this, the State Government has announced to provide relief to the traders as business activities are affected due to Corona pandemic.

The consumers whose average electricity bill for the months of April, May and June is 50 per cent less than the average electricity bill for the

months of January, February and March, their fixed charge of Rs 10,000 will be 100 percent waived off. Those consumers whose fixed charge ranges from Rs 10,000 to Rs 40,000, they will get a rebate of up to Rs 10,000 and a rebate of 25 per cent will be given on electricity bills having fixed charges of more than Rs 40,000.

The relief provided in power bills would cost Rs 80 crore to the state exchequer, the Chief Minister added.

Providing relief to the peo-

ple of the state in property tax, Khattar said that it has been decided to waive off the entire property tax for the first quarter of the year 2021-22. With this, a financial burden of about Rs 150 crore will be borne by the Urban Local Bodies Department.

The Chief Minister further said that Motor Vehicle Tax for the first quarter of the year 2021-22 will not be levied on vehicles carrying passengers. Due to this, the financial burden of about Rs 72 crore will be

TOTAL FINANCIAL RELIEF PACKAGE ANNOUNCED BY CM

Categories	Financial Assistance announced
Unorganized Labour	₹600 crore
Shopkeepers and small businessmen	₹150 crore
Property Tax Exemption	₹150 crore
Relief in power tariff	₹80 crore
Motor vehicle tax	₹72 crore
Ex-gratia grant on Death, Treatment and Hospitalization	₹50 crore
ASHA and other health workers	₹11 crore
Total	₹1,113 crore

borne by the Department. Also, the fitness date of vehicles has been extended till June 30.

Taking another favourable decision for the people of the

state, he said that the government has also given permission for registration of fourth floor in big cities.

The Chief Minister said

that the State Government had earlier announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh on the death due to COVID of a family member falling between the age group of 18 years to 50 years of BPL families. The benefits of this scheme were given to 46 families by transferring an amount of Rs 2 lakh each to their accounts through DBT, thereby initiating the scheme on Thursday. Besides, Rs 5,000 per family were transferred directly to the bank accounts of 2,755 BPL families, who have COVID affected family members in home isolation.

Khattar said that the State Government has borne the entire cost of the Covid affected patients of BPL families and will continue to do so in the future as well.

Haryana reports 38 deaths, 232 Covid cases

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Thirty eight more fatalities were reported due to Covid-19 in Haryana as 232 fresh cases surfaced on Thursday. According to the health bulletin, the death toll reached 9147 while the total case tally was 766838 in the state. 546 people recovered from the virus in the last 24 hours taking the total recoveries to 754464.

In the last 24 hours, a maximum of six deaths were

reported in Panipat. No case was reported in Jhajjar. There were 3227 active cases in the state, the bulletin stated. Over 96 lakh samples have been tested in Haryana till date.

HP REPORTS 10 DEATHS, 292 FRESH CASES

Himachal on Thursday reported ten Covid-19 related fatalities and 292 fresh cases. According to the health bulletin, the death toll has reached 3408 while the Covid-19 case-load stands at 199699. In the

last 24 hours, a maximum of four fatalities were reported in Kangra, which also reported the highest number of 84 cases. There were 3430 active cases in Himachal. 585 people recovered in the last 24 hours and the total recoveries were recorded at 192841, the bulletin stated.

AT 32, UT SEES LOWEST CASE IN OVER 3 MONTHS

Covid pandemic's downward trend continued in Chandigarh on Thursday as 32 fresh cases were recorded, the

lowest in the past three and half months. However, there was no respite in the number of fatalities in the city as three more people lost their lives to the

contagion. Chandigarh has been registering a decline in infections since May 9 as the city had registered the highest single-day spike of 895 cases.



Mark RaGa's birthday through social work: Jakhar urges party cadre

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Congress wanted the party cadre to celebrate the birthday of former party's national president, Rahul Gandhi, that falls on June 19, by undertaking social work initiatives across the State.

"In view of unbearable pain and difficulties endured by citizens during the second COVID wave, Rahul Gandhi, this year, has decided to not celebrate his birthday. He has also appealed to the partymen to avoid any ostentatious activity like cake-cutting, sloganeering, and putting up banners or posters to instead utilize the resources to provide help and succour to those in need and those who have lost their source of livelihoods to the COVID onslaught," said Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar on Thursday. Jakhar has also appealed to

the entire Congress leadership to distribute medical kits, masks, sanitizers, and ration kits to celebrate Rahul's birthday. The leaders could also visit affected families who have lost their loved ones to Covid to provide relief and a healing touch to them, he added.

As a part of the same, Punjab Youth Congress has announced to give scholarships to the children affected by corona to mark Rahul Gandhi's 51st birthday.

"Punjab Youth Congress would provide scholarships to the children affected during the corona times across the State for which a list has been prepared," said Punjab Youth Congress president Brinder Singh Dhillon. He said that 250 children from all over the State would be provided a scholarship facility for which district-level functions would be organised.

Chandigarh adviser Manoj Parida transferred to head central body

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Senior Indian Administrative Service officer Manoj Kumar Parida was on Thursday appointed as Chairman, National Authority of Chemical Weapons Convention, in the rank and pay of Secretary to the Union Government, under the Cabinet Secretariat.

Parida had joined the UT Administration on December 26, 2018, as Adviser to the Administrator, UT. After a stint of nearly two and a half years with the Chandigarh Administration, he has been transferred to Delhi.

The 1986-batch AGMUT officer is among six IAS officers who have been given new

responsibilities after the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet gave its approval in its latest meeting on Thursday.

In his statement, Parida said, "I am happy to get a chance to serve in the Government of India at Secretary Level. But I am happier that at least Corona is under Control in Chandigarh when I am leaving."

MLA Sukhpal Khaira formally merges his outfit with Congress

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Two weeks after his homecoming in the Congress party, the former Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Vidhan Sabha and founder-president of the Punjab Ekta Party Sukhpal Singh Khaira on Thursday formally merged his two-year-old political outfit with the ruling Congress.

Elected legislator on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ticket from Bholath, Khaira met

the Congress' former national president Rahul Gandhi, along with AAP's two other "rebel" MLAs — Jagdev Singh (Maur) and Pirmal Singh (Bhadaur) — at Gandhi's Delhi residence. The state party affairs in-charge Harish Rawat, and general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala were also present.

While describing his decision to join AAP as "biggest mistake", Khaira claimed that more legislators and leaders

from the Aam Aadmi Party are expected to join the Congress soon.

Khaira's Delhi visit and meeting with Rahul Gandhi came at a time when the Congress high command is struggling to defuse the prevailing crisis within the Punjab party unit.

The meeting came just days before the interim president Soni Gandhi had invited Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, firebrand

leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, besides other senior leaders in Delhi on June 20 to work out a compromise and end the factionalism.

The meeting with Rahul Gandhi, who has been closely monitoring the prevailing situation in Punjab party unit, has put a final stamp of approval on the induction of three AAP MLAs in the Congress. They are yet to be formally inducted into the party.

On June 3, a day before

Capt Amarinder was to meet the three-member panel constituted to resolve the factionalism, the Chief Minister had re-inducted Khaira even before a formal go-ahead from the central leadership.

Khaira had left the Congress and joined AAP in 2015 and won from the Bholath seat on AAP ticket in 2017. After differences with the AAP leadership, especially party supremo Arvind Kejriwal, Khaira went on to

float his own political outfit in January 2019, ahead of parliamentary polls.

Firebrand Khaira, once the hard critic of Capt Amarinder, has been two-time MLA; while the other two MLAs are the first-timers.

All three have submitted their resignations as the members of the state legislative Assembly to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha — on which the Speaker Rana KP Singh is expected to take a call.

Captain engages in 'lunch diplomacy' with MLAs

Punjab Congress crisis: Sonia to meet sr party leaders on June 20

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

As Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and his proposed deputy Navjot Singh Sidhu continue to write different political scripts, the Congress' interim president Sonia Gandhi is set to meet them on June 20, along other senior leaders from the state, to bring them on the same page.

And to make sure that his critics don't rock his boat before the

party high command, the Chief Minister continued to engage in lunch diplomacy. Meeting the party leaders and legislators for the past two days, the Chief Minister on Thursday hosted a royal luncheon for his Cabinet colleagues, including those who are unhappy with him.

Moreover, the meeting came a day before the State Cabinet is set to take up a long list of agendas in a crucial meeting on Friday. The nine Cabinet Ministers

invited for the lunch included Sukhinder Randhawa and Charanjit Singh Channi who have reportedly aired their grievances against the Chief Minister before the three-member panel, set up by the high command to resolve the infighting and power struggle in the Punjab party unit.

Speculations are rife that a Cabinet reshuffle is on the cards, besides significant changes in the party's organizational structure.

The high command is struggling to find out a way to "suitably adjust" Sidhu, who has adopted a rebellious attitude against his own party's Government, especially the Chief Minister, ahead 2022 polls that was harming the party's poll prospects which is facing the anti-incumbency in the state.

Sources informed The Pioneer that the party high command was caught in a catch-22 situation where it was difficult to keep both the warring sides happy as Capt Amarinder has categorically refused the proposal to appoint Sidhu as state party chief while agreeing to re-induct him in the Cabinet or as his deputy. On the other hand, Sidhu has conveyed it to the party high command that he would not be able to work "under Capt Amarinder" while indicating his preference to be appointed as the state party

chief. Moreover, it is unlikely that both the top positions would be given to the Jat Sikhs, and also to the leaders hailing from Patiala.

"Party chief Sonia Gandhi has summoned senior leaders from the State on June 20. Chief Minister, Sidhu, Punjab party president Sunil Jakhar, Cabinet Ministers or even senior leaders like Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa are expected to join the meeting. However, it is yet not confirmed if all the leaders would sit face to face to resolve the prevailing crisis.

The three-member committee comprising Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, former MP JP Agarwal, and party's state affairs in-charge Harish Rawat, had submitted its detailed report recommending to contest the 2022 polls under Capt Amarinder's leadership.

The party had recommended to "suitably accommodate" Sidhu, while also pressing upon the urgent need to adjust all the sections of the society at top positions within the party or the government.

It has been learnt that Sonia Gandhi has already gone through the report and would take a decision only after personally interacting with all the leaders. It has also

been learnt that the party supremo has getting an independent survey done in Punjab, however, it was not exactly known whether the survey is to access any leader's popularity or the performance of the party and the government.

Sidhu has resigned from the State Cabinet in July 2019 and maintained a distance from the party activities since then. It was only the previous year, when the farmers' agitation was on its peak, he made a comeback in the state political scene, and participated in Rahul Gandhi's tractor rally. Subsequently, he started attacking his own party's government and the Chief Minister over the several issues.

As Rawat made strenuous efforts to break the ice between Sidhu and Capt Amarinder, the two leaders attempted to resolve their differences over tea on March 17 this year, but all in vain.

The relationship took a bad hit after the Punjab and Haryana High Court quashed the SIT probe into the Kotkapura firing incident on April 9, that followed sharp attacks by Sidhu against the Chief Minister for purportedly delaying the justice in the incidents of desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib and the subsequent police firing incidents.

Breaking his silence on Sidhu's

attacks, Capt Amarinder on April 27 dared him to contest from Patiala in the 2022 polls and predicted that he will lose his deposit. Furthermore, he contended that the cricketer-turned-politician wanted to join some other party.

'NO RESOLUTION IN SIGHT'

Indications are that the high command may replace the state party chief Sunil Jakhar — to maintain the equilibrium amongst all sections within the party, and also the state party affairs in-charge Harish Rawat — who himself wanted to concentrate in his home state, Uttarakhand, which is also slated to go to polls along with Punjab.

Rawat, after meeting the party's national president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday, had stated that a comprehensive party revamp was underway and consultations were on.

The party has all along been insisting on putting up a united faced while bringing everyone along, and that was why the delay in taking the final call in the matter.

With the political equations going under massive change in Punjab and new alliances evolving, the party high command is engaged in a complex balancing act.

PSPCL suffered ₹25 cr loss due to heavy storms

PNS ■ PATIALA

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited, the state's power utility, has assessed a financial loss of around Rs 25 crores as a series of heavy storms hit different parts of Punjab on June 10, 11 and 13 causing massive damages to the state's power transmission and distribution infrastructure.

PSPCL chairman-cum-managing director A Venu Prasad on Thursday said that more than 15,000 workers have, so far, addressed more than 1.8 lakhs power complaints affecting more than 50 lakh consumers across Punjab, mainly from Patiala, Kapurthala, Faridkot, Bathinda, Gurdaspur, Khanna, Ropar, Mohali, Sangrur, Barnala, due to destruction caused by heavy storms in the past two weeks.

The storms resulted in breakdown of around 900 of 11 kV and 66 kV feeders damaging around 20 66 kV towers, more than 13,000 poles, around 2500 transformers and more than 100 kms of conductor, besides other associated equipment and accessories.

Prasad said that with the continuous 24x7 monitoring, systematic patrolling of feeders and clearing of lines, PSPCL has been able to restore power supply of majority of the affected area within 72 hours. PSPCL consumers, especially in rural areas, also came forward to help PSPCL in all possible ways, he added.

Government of India
Ministry of Textiles

Appointment of Consultant(s)
under National Technical Textiles Mission

Last date of application: **17 July 2021**

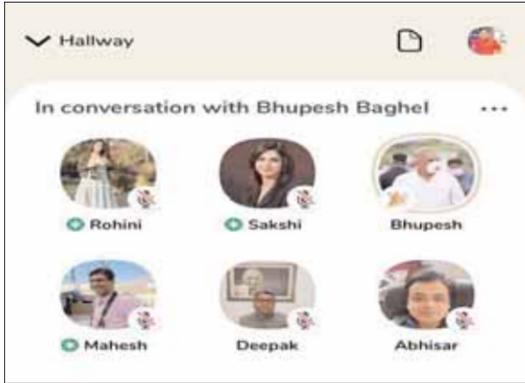
Interested candidate may refer detailed advertisement on www.texmin.nic.in.

DAVP 41101/11/0003/2122

Dictatorship will be defeated in 2024, says Bhupesh Baghel

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

In a strong attack on the Modi government, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said on Thursday that "dictatorship" will be surely defeated in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The people of the country are very intelligent and they will soon respond to the dictatorial attitude in the country, the Congress veteran told the media to mark the completion of two-and-a-half years of his government. The results will be seen in 2024, he said, referring to the year when the next parliamentary battle is scheduled. "Dictatorship will surely be defeated," he said. He added that now if someone raises his voice against the "dictatorship", all investigating agencies start investigations against that person. The Chief Minister spoke glowingly about his own government's achievements. Speaking to hundreds of people on



social media app Clubhouse, he fielded a series of questions by senior journalists on the Naxalite problem in Chhattisgarh, development in the state and the political scenario in the country. He said so far development works of

Rs 5,220 crores have been initiated in 18 districts of the state through virtual programmes. He said Chhattisgarh is the only state to buy cow dung from cattle rearers and turn it into vermi-compost.

Baghel emphasised that the Chhattisgarh government strengthened the rural economy during the pandemic and it was supporting the poor through schemes such as Nyay Yojana, MGNREGA and Godhan Nyay Yojana. On the toolkit issue that has led to a FIR against BJP leaders including former Chief Minister Raman Singh, he said "truth cannot be curtailed" and action will be taken after investigation. He said those against whom a FIR has been registered are unable to answer the charges. They have gone to the court as they know they will be in trouble if they say something. They got a stay on technical grounds. "Very soon investigation will be conducted and action will be taken based on the outcome of the investigation." The Chief Minister asserted that there was no sign of economic slowdown in Chhattisgarh despite the pandemic.

Ahead of Covid third wave, hospitals to be upgraded



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

All government hospitals in Chhattisgarh are being upgraded and equipped with all kinds of facilities, an official communication said on Thursday. Baghel has told all the District Collectors to submit within 15 days an action plan for upgrading the hospitals and health centres. He said this work should be given top priority so that the state fights with full force if a third wave strikes. The Chief Minister said that in the last six months, facilities such as ICU, oxygen related equipment, beds and ventilators in these hospitals have been enhanced and upgraded

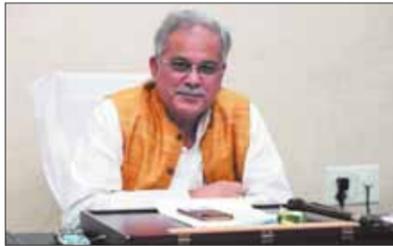
all district and block-level hospitals, making them fully-equipped with all kinds of facilities, an official communication said on Thursday. Baghel has told all the District Collectors to submit within 15 days an action plan for upgrading the hospitals and health centres. He said this work should be given top priority so that the state fights with full force if a third wave strikes. The Chief Minister said that in the last six months, facilities such as ICU, oxygen related equipment, beds and ventilators in these hospitals have been enhanced and upgraded

to provide better Covid treatment. The number of doctors in community health centres has also been significantly increased in view of the need to further strengthen health management. All the government hospitals should be equipped with operation theatre, labour room, laboratory, ICU, ventilators, blood bank and free medicines. Moreover, post graduate doctors of paediatrics, gynecology, anaesthesia, pathology, medicine and surgery should be appointed in these hospitals, the communication said.

Godhan Yojana supporting dairy business: CM Baghel

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has said that the Godhan Nyay Yojana is providing support to dairy business also. People are very excited from the benefits of the scheme, he said, and added that people with dairy business say their income has increased due to the sale of cow dung, he said. Many dairy farmers have started buying milch cows, building sheds as well as buying motorcycles to increase their dairy business with the extra income earned from selling cow dung, an official communication on Thursday quoted Baghel as saying.



Vishnu Prasad, who has a dairy business in Chirmiri, told the Chief Minister that he earned an additional profit of Rs 1.33 lakh by selling 650 quintals of cow dung. This helped him buy two milch cows, taking his cow tally to 17. Shivcharan of Korea has bought two bullocks and a motorcycle in instalments with the Rs 48,000 he

made by selling cow dung. Gita Devi, a resident of Vishrampur, said she was building a new shed for cows with the money earned through the Godhan Nyay Yojana. Baghel said the Yojana has given new life to cow rearing. Unregulated cattle grazing has ended in the state and this has ensured safety of crops.

Congress continues protests against fuel price hike



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Congress in Chhattisgarh on Thursday continued protests against the Narendra Modi government for hiking fuel prices. PCC chief Mohan Markam expressed his grouse against the Central govern-

ment by touring villages in his legislative area Kondagaon in an auto-rickshaw. He tweeted that this was his way of denouncing the anti-people policies of the Modi government. "The prices of essential commodities have also risen due to the hike in fuel prices, causing problems for the com-

mon man," he added. Raipur West legislator Vikas Upadhyay and his supporters pushed motorbikes and carried empty LPG gas cylinders on the busy roads of the capital. The Congress activists tried to proceed towards the BJP office here but were intercepted by the police near Lalgaon Mall.



Issue White Paper on economic situation: BJP



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday asked the Chhattisgarh government to issue a White Paper on the economic situation of the state. The demand was made at a joint conference by the party on completion of two-and-a-half year rule of the Baghel government on June 17. Former Chief Minister Raman Singh

said the state's total expenditure is Rs 80,126 crores while the revenue expenditure is Rs 70 crores. The 88 percent of the expenditure is expended on grants, subsidy and payment of loans. This is the reason for the bankruptcy of the state government, he said. Singh the Congress had no achievement since taking office. The revenue deficit of the government is the highest since the inception of the state.

Covid recovery rate in C'garh is 97.5%

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Covid positivity rate in Chhattisgarh has almost remained stable in the past week at 1.4 percent while the recovery rate has touched 97.5 percent. The number of Black Fungus cases rose to 327 on Thursday. A total of 41,073 tests confirmed 573 Covid positive persons. The number of patients discharged from hospitals is 1,152 while the active cases total 11,126. The average recovery in the state stands at 97.52 percent except Bijapur district with 87%, Harsha Puranik, Joint Director (PR), told the media on Thursday. Chhattisgarh has reported 327 mucormycosis cases. The number of patients discharged is 50. The death toll has risen to 23 and comorbidities have been blamed for 20 fatalities.

Be ready for floods, Sahu tells officials



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu on Thursday ordered Home Guard officials to ensure necessary preparations for rescue and relief in flood-prone districts during monsoon. He was addressing a review meeting for the preparedness of the flood disaster management in the districts, an official commu-

nication here said. Sahu said that necessary improvements should be made in the system based on past experiences and various issues must be discussed with the district Collectors. He directed the officials to be in constant touch with the Collector and the Water Resources Department before filling the reservoirs and releasing water in case of overflow.

Students to get marks for plantation

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Plantation Incentive Scheme will be undertaken across the state in schools. School students and Eco Clubs in schools will play key roles. The students taking care of planted saplings will get marks or points. The School Education department on Thursday issued directives to all district education and district mission coordinators for organizing plantation events in each school, an official communication stated. The responsibility has been fixed on District Mission Coordinators at elementary level and Additional District Education officers and District Education Officers at secondary school level.

Maj Gen does bhumi puja for Sainik Circuit House



STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Major General S. Mohan, SM, VSM and General Officer Commanding (Central India), on Thursday performed bhumi puja for a

Sainik Circuit House here. This happened at the Directorate of Chhattisgarh Sainik Welfare and District Sainik office. He also planted saplings. The Gen then addressed the families of martyrs, ex-servicemen,

family members of World War II veterans and employees of the Directorate and District Sainik Welfare Office. He promised that the grievances of the soldiers would be resolved at the earliest, an official communication said.

FIR against yoga guru Ramdev

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police have registered a FIR here against yoga guru Baba Ramdev on charges of spreading false information about medicines used by doctors to treat Covid-19, police said on Thursday. The case was filed on Wednesday against Ramkrishna Yadav alias Ramdev on a complaint by the state unit of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Senior Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Yadav said. Ramdev has been booked under Sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) and others of the Indian Penal Code as well as the Disaster Management Act, he said. The Chairman of the Hospital Board IMA (Chhattisgarh), Dr Rakesh Gupta and IMA Raipur President Vikas Agrawal were among the doctors who lodged a complaint last month. They said that over the last one year Ramdev has been spreading propaganda against medicines used by the doctors, the government and frontline organisations vis-a-vis Covid, the FIR said.

Directive to monitor water-borne diseases

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has called for continuous monitoring of pure drinking water supply during monsoon to prevent water-borne diseases. Principal Secretary (Health) Dr Alok Shukla has issued a circular to all district Collectors on what needs to be done, Harsha Puranik, Joint Director (PR), told the media on Thursday. The circular states that during monsoon



maximum cases of vomiting, enteritis, typhoid and jaundice are reported across the state. As preventive measure, regular monitoring of the water supply has to be done, she said. Other steps include repairing damaged water pipelines, chlorination of tube wells used for drinking water and testing for coliform bacteria in the water supply system. The Health Department and civic bodies have been told to take daily samples from the water treatment plant, storage tanks and individual houses for quality tests, she added.

No relief for 10K encroachers in Aravali forest

Apex court refuses to stay order for removal of encroachments in Faridabad's Aravali forest area

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

"We want our forest land to be cleared," the Supreme Court made it clear on Thursday as it refused to stay its direction asking the Haryana Government and the Faridabad Municipal Corporation to remove all encroachments, consisting around 10,000 residential constructions, in the Aravali forest area near Khori village.

The bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari asked the State and the civic body to comply with its June 7 direction in this regard, observing "land grabbers cannot take refuge of rule of law" and talk of "fairness". The Bench had also sought the compliance report from the State government officials after removing all encroachments from forest land near Khori village in Faridabad district with-



in six weeks. During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing, advocate Aparna Bhat, appearing for the petitioners who have sought a stay on demolition of these struc-

tures, said there are around 10,000 families in the village. "Please don't give us numbers. It makes no difference. We want out forest land to be cleared," the bench said,

adding, "We have given enough time. The notification was issued but you continued there at your own risk." "This is forest land. This is not ordinary land," the bench

observed. Bhat argued about rehabilitation and said that the State authority has not taken up the issue of eligibility and identification process has not been done. The bench referred to its April 5 order, passed in a matter related to the issue, and said the civic body will take steps in accordance with law. "You have to evict them in accordance with law. You have to give benefit of scheme (of rehabilitation) to those who are eligible," the bench told the counsel appearing for the municipal corporation. The bench, while asking whether the petitioners have given additional documents to the corporation for verification, observed that enough time was already given earlier. "Look at these people and their situ-

ation. They are migrant labourers. There are children," Bhat said and also referred to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. "That is for the state to do. We are only concerned with vacation of forest area. We have given enough time earlier," the bench observed. The apex court observed that people there can produce their documents for identification and rehabilitation to the corporation. When Bhat referred to global guidelines for non-eviction during pandemic, the bench said, "We are not concerned with global guidelines. This issue is going on for long." The bench said that no indulgence can be shown at this stage. It noted that petitioners were obligated to produce documents before the corporation

for the rehabilitation scheme and they have failed to do so. The bench said that clearance of encroachment on forest land would be done by following the due process of law. It said that larger issues related to the matter are pending and it would take up the plea on July 27. The Judges also rejected Haryana Government's arguments of violence, stone pelting during demolition attempts. "You know what you have to do. We don't want to say on this. We want our order to be complied with," the bench said. It had said that Superintendent of Police, Faridabad, shall be personally responsible for ensuring adequate logistical support and police protection to the officials of corporation.

Post-Covid syndrome grips more than 23% patients: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

It's almost three months that Rajeev Chaudhary (54) has been declared Covid-19 negative. But he is still reeling under the post-Covid syndrome, which the doctors call 'long Covid'.

"My sugar level has shot up. I feel fatigued whole day as if there is no strength in my body. At times, I feel very depressed while anxiety lingers on," the Delhi government official shares the trauma he's going through daily.

Chaudhary is not the only one who is grappling with post-Covid health issues. According to a study, among all patients infected with the coronavirus disease, more than 23 percent continued to suffer from one or more health issues even a month after being diagnosed with Covid-19.

Patients with such post-Covid conditions are variously referred to as having long-haul Covid, long Covid or post-acute sequelae of Covid-19 (PASC), said the study by an NGO FAIR Health which had analysed private health care claim records for nearly 2 million people diagnosed with Covid last year. The people in the study ranged in age from babies to the elderly; some 53 percent were female and 47 percent were male.

The five most common post-Covid conditions across all ages were pain, breathing difficulties, hyperlipidemia, malaise and fatigue, and hypertension. Pain, breathing difficulties and intestinal issues were the top conditions among the paediatric population (0-18). More than 25 per cent young individuals aged between 19 and 29 showed cardiac inflammation post-Covid. As per the study, 50 per cent patients hospitalised with

Pvt hospitals start inoculating people with Sputnik jabs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Russia's Covid-19 vaccine — Sputnik V — is finding takers in the private sector with hospitals like Indraprastha Apollo, Fortis Healthcare and Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital starting administering the jab to people.

Dr Reddy's Laboratories has started inoculation with Sputnik V, as part of the soft launch in India after it obtained regulatory clearance from the Central Drugs Laboratory. In April, Sputnik V received an emergency use authorization in India.

Reddy's administered the first dose of the vaccine in India in Hyderabad under a limited pilot on May 14. The vaccine is currently priced at \$12.9 (Rs948) plus tax for one dose in India. This price is expected to reduce after local supply commences.

Dr Reddy's Laboratories co-chairman and managing director G V Prasad said: "With the rising cases in India, vaccination is our most effective



tool in our battle against Covid-19.

Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram and Fortis Hospital, Mohali, have decided to launch it as part of a limited pilot roll-out from June, 19 2021. The two-dose vaccine will be available at two hospitals -. In the coming days, the vaccine will be available at more Fortis hospitals across 11 cities as part of the phase-wise pilot project.

Dr Ashutosh Raghuvanshi, MD and CEO, Fortis Healthcare, said, "Till date, our units were only providing Covaxin and

Covishield. We are the first to provide a third vaccine option, at Fortis Memorial Research Institute and Fortis Hospital Mohali, with the dual objective of expanding and scaling up the vaccination drive and lowering the infection risks to future mutations of the virus."

Sputnik V has been developed by Russia's Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology. Hyderabad-based Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has partnered with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) for the roll out of the two-dose vaccine in India.

Covid-19 infection developed a post-Covid condition, while among the symptomatic patients not hospitalised, 27.5 per cent developed long Covid. However, post-Covid symptoms were also present among 19 per cent patients who remained asymptomatic.

Further, anxiety was associated with the highest percentage of patients after Covid-19 in all age groups. It was fol-

lowed by depression, adjustment and tic disorders.

"The odds of death 30 days or more after initial diagnosis with Covid-19 were 46 times higher for patients who were hospitalised with Covid-19 and discharged than patients who had not been hospitalised. Among Covid-19 patients with preexisting conditions, intellectual disabilities were associated with the

highest odds of death 30 days or more after initial Covid-19 diagnosis," said the study.

Dr Pankaj Solanki from the Dharamveer Solanki Multispecialty Hospital in Delhi said that these cases need to be addressed on urgent basis and the Government should also focus on working on their rehabilitation through multi-disciplinary post-Covid clinics.

63% drop in domestic air traffic in May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There was a 63 per cent drop in domestic air traffic in May compared to April as the Covid-19 second wave ravaged the entire country. In numbers, around 21.15 lakh domestic passengers travelled by air in May compared to 57.25 lakh who travelled in April.

According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), 78.22 lakh people travelled within the country by air in March. Air India, GO FIRST (previously known as GoAir), Vistara and AirAsia India carried 4.29 lakh, 1.38 lakh, 97,000 and 64,000 passengers respectively in May, the data showed.

It was due to the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic that had badly hit the country and its aviation sector. While IndiGo carried 11.69 lakh passengers in May, a 55.3-per cent share of the domestic market, SpiceJet flew 1.99 lakh passengers, accounting for a 9.4-per cent share of the market, according to data shared by the DGCA.

The occupancy rate or load factor of the six major Indian airlines was between 39.3 per cent and 64 per cent in May, it stated. The occupancy rate at SpiceJet was 64 per cent in May, the DGCA noted.

The occupancy rates for IndiGo, Vistara, GO FIRST,



Air India and AirAsia India were 51.2 per cent, 40.9 per cent, 63.3 per cent, 39.3 per cent and 44.4 per cent respectively, it added. India resumed domestic passenger flights on May 25 last year after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus pandemic.

June and July, 2020, had seen 19.8 lakh and just over 21 lakh domestic flyers, respectively, as per DGCA data. As the second wave unleashed its ferocity, the numbers first dropped to 57 lakh in April and then crashed to 21.1 lakh in May, 2021 — a figure seen in the first two months after domestic flights' resumption on May 25, 2020.

Indian airlines are allowed to operate a maximum of 50 per cent of their pre-pandemic domestic flights. The DGCA data mentioned that in May, IndiGo had the best on-time performance of 98.7 per cent at four metro airports -- Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

Vistara and AirAsia India were at the second and third positions at these four airports in May with 98.1 per cent and 97.4 per cent on-time performance respectively, the DGCA said.

Covid 3rd wave unlikely to hit kids much, says survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The possible third wave of Covid-19 is unlikely to affect children much, according to a multi-centric community based serosurvey study conducted by AIIMS, Delhi, thus contradicting apprehensions that a future Covid-19 wave may disproportionately hit kids.

The survey revealed that infection rates among kids and adults in five cities in different parts of the country, in both rural and urban areas, were similar. The data also showed that irrespective of the age groups, rural sites had lower sero-positivity compared to the urban sites.

Citing the findings, the researchers associated with AIIMS in Bhubaneswar and Gorakhpur, apart from Delhi, JIPMER, Puducherry, Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad and Agartala government medical college and WHO have ruled out the possibility that Covid-19 surges ahead are likely to hit children harder than before.

Blood samples were collected from 4,509 individuals, 700 aged 2-17 years and 3,809 aged 18 and above between March 15-June 10 to check for the antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 for the study.

Of the participants tested from Delhi, Faridabad, Bhubaneswar, Agartala and Gorakhpur, 55.7 per cent kids

and adolescents had antibodies against the COVID-19 virus, while in adults the seroprevalence was found to be 63.5 per cent.

"Hence, it is unlikely that any future third wave by a prevailing COVID-19 variant would disproportionately affect children two years or older," the report has said.

Within the rural sites, children had slightly lower sero-positivity compared to adults. However, this differential prevalence was not observed in the urban sites.

It was also seen that the prevalence in children was slightly more among female participants compared to male (58.6 per cent versus 53.0 per cent) but there was no statistically significant difference in sero-positivity between male and female.

The researchers found that children aged 2-4 years and 5-9 years had almost identical sero-positivity rate (42.4 per cent and 43.8 per cent) which was lower than the rate observed for children aged 10-17 years (60.3 per cent).

The higher seropositivity rate in children aged 10-17 years may be reflective of their higher mobility and independence compared to the younger children, the study noted adding that as reported in the literature, a large proportion of children (50.9%) had an asymptomatic COVID-19 infection.

Left pans move to corporatise ordnance factories

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Left parties and their trade unions on Thursday condemned the corporatisation plan of Ordnance Factories under the Defence Ministry. CPI general secretary D Raja and CITU general secretary Tapan Sen said this is a clear move to sell the factories under Company Law and later sell to private players.

"Some 44 Ordnance Factories operating under Ordnance Factories Board under Ministry of Defence will be split in seven pieces and seven corporations will be formed under Companies Act. More than seventy five per cent requirements of our defence forces are being successfully and timely produced and supplied by our Ordnance Factories with incomparable efficiency and assured quality."

Country's Ordnance Factories network is an unquestionable example of "Atmanirbhar Bharat", the phrase being so much noisily

touted by the Modi Govt, in the respective areas of production and services. There is absolutely no valid rationale for such drastic alteration of the existing structure of the Ordnance Factories network," said Sen in a detailed statement, supporting protest of the factory staff on June 19.

"And present move for corporatisation of Ordnance Factories, that too being pushed through in the midst of 2nd wave of pandemic, is in gross violation of the understanding and assurances given by the Government to the united platform of Defence workers' federations in the face of their decision to go in for indefinite strike from 12th October 2020," said Sen.

CPI general secretary Raja termed the corporatisation as "ill-designed move."

"At least five ministers in the past including late Manohar Parrikar, former defence minister of the BJP government had given written assurances to the work force that the Ordnance Factories would not be corporatised."

CRPF issues Covid norms to protect its personnel

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

With varying protocols being adopted by different States for management of Covid-19 and allowing persons in their respective jurisdiction, the CRPF has issued a detailed set of guidelines for its personnel entering or reporting from leave from minimum

seven days quarantine in case of negative test report and for positive cases, action as per existing guidelines.

The move comes after the status of Covid-19 was reviewed by the CRPF directorate and it was observed that the number of patients and positivity rate has declined considerably and the overall situation has improved and the

overall situation has improved. However, due to caution, care has been maintained in the CRPF for consolidation of the whole process of Covid-19 management.

The State governments are following different practices in respect of persons coming to respective State jurisdiction.

In Jammu and Kashmir, there is a provision for manda-



tory antigen test and no quarantine is required if the test report is negative. In Punjab, five-day mandatory quarantine is in place. In Rajasthan, no quarantine is required if a

negative RT-PCR report of not less than 72 hours is there or institutional quarantine for 15 days or till a negative test report is received. In Rajasthan, no RT-PCR test

report or quarantine is required if an individual is vaccinated with both the doses of vaccine 28 days prior to arrival in the State.

Likewise, in Delhi, no quarantine/restriction is in place for inter-State movement. In Haryana and Chandigarh, no institutional quarantine is required for asymptomatic passengers.

In view of the differing Covid protocols in vogue across the States, the CRPF issued the detailed instructions for strict compliance.

The CRPF has directed that if the test report is negative or where the test is mandatory as per local administration norms, the personnel will undergo seven-day quarantine at respective unit/establishment locations.

Govt extends validity of motor vehicle documents

Uniform pollution certificate for all vehicles across India, PUC to have mobile number of vehicle owner

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday extended the validity of motor vehicle documents like

driving licence (DL), registration certificate (RC) and permits till September 30, 2021, in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) also notified to make the PUC (Pollution Under Control) certificate for all vehicles uniform across the country and also to link the PUC database with the National Register.

Keeping the Covid protocols in mind, the MoRTH said

it has advised the enforcement authorities that the validity of fitness, permit (all types), licence, registration or any other concerned document(s) may be treated to be valid till September 30, 2021.

"This covers all documents whose validity has expired since Feb 1, 2020, or would expire by September 30, 2021. This will help out citizens in availing transport related services, while maintaining social distancing," it said.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Thursday. Stalin, who recently led his party to a big win in the Assembly polls in his State, is on a visit to the national Capital. Pioneer photo

RESCHEDULING/REGULATION OF TRAINS

Northern Railway will undertake the construction work of Foot Over Bridge at Bhodwal Majri yard between Ganaur and Samalkha stations on Delhi Sabzi Mandi-Ambala Cantt. Section. To execute this work, 4 hours (0.20 - 4.20 hrs.) Power and Traffic Block will be taken on 20.06.2021. Consequently the following trains will be affected as under:-

RESCHEDULING OF SPECIAL TRAIN	
02422 Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Express Special Train will depart from Jammu Tawi at 20.30 hrs. instead of 18.15 hrs. on 19.06.2021.	

REGULATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS	
Train No. & Train Name	Time/Period of Regulation
04554 Daultapur Chowk - Delhi Jn. Himachal Exp. Spl.	Train commencing its journey on 19.06.2021 will be regulated for 60 minutes between Ambala - Panipat section.
02312 Kalka - Howrah Jn. Netaji Express Special	Train commencing its journey on 19.06.2021 will be regulated for 30 minutes between Ambala - Panipat section.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or 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., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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Bengal Gov meets Prez over law & order in State

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Camping in New Delhi for the past two days apparently to seek a redress for the deteriorating law and order situation in Bengal, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday lodged his first complaint with President Ram Nath Kovind drawing his attention towards how human rights was being violated in the State, post polls.

The Governor who reportedly met the President for about 45 minutes submitted a note detailing his observations on the deteriorating law and order and human rights, State repression of opposition workers, persecution of them by the ruling Trinamool Congress and what he called a "stunning silence" of the powers that be towards the on-going bloodshed and loot.

In the note the Governor has raised the issue of a prejudiced administrative system where the police and the administration allegedly worked to further the interests of the ruling political party.

The Governor is also reported to have given detailed

reports on every district and sub-division where such violence was taking place and the places he recently visited to acquire a firsthand experience of the alleged torture being perpetuated on the people, requesting presidential action.

Dhankhar who also met Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday evening had on Wednesday called on National Human Rights Commission Chairman Justice Arun Mishra seeking his intervention in the present state of affairs in the State.

Sources said that the Governor briefed the Home Minister about the "retributive violence" being perpetrated on the people in a planned manner with the State Government turning a blind eye on the situation. He is also known to have raised issue of latest "sectarian" attacks that took place at Chandannagore in Hooghly district and Tiljala area right in the heart of Capital Kolkata.

Earlier Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari too had complained about a Basirhat-Dhulagarh like com-



munal attacks being organized in these two places.

On whether Dhankhar had suggested any "constitutional measures" was not clear but TMC leaders in Kolkata said that the party was prepared of any such step with a minister from North Kolkata adding "whole State will erupt if the Centre dares impose Article 356."

The Governor who was on a 3-day trip to the national Capital earlier met Union Ministers Prahlad Singh Patel and Prahlad Joshi before tweeting "... had useful interaction with Union Minister of Coal and Mines and Parliamentary

Affairs..." Sources reporting on the "useful interactions" said talks also featured on investigations into the multi-crore coal scam from Bengal --- involving some of TMC's top leadership.

Earlier complaining on the alleged "retributive post poll violence" Dhankhar said how the State Government was turning a blind eye to the incidents

that had rendered thousands of people homeless and properties worth cores looted and destroyed.

Later before flying to Delhi he wrote to Chief Minister how despite four Cabinet meetings having taken place in the past six weeks ... not a single word was been spent on the post poll violence ... and no minister or officer visited the affected areas

and no compensation was declared."

"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 its work ... the police and the Home Department must rise above partisan politics ... (or else) I shall not overlooked the matter," the Governor said.

BJP creating 'perspective' for ulterior motive: Didi

Kolkata: Bengal Chief Minister on Thursday chose to ignore Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's visit to Delhi saying "speech is silver and silence is golden."

Instead of directly attacking the Governor --- a usual tactic that she would adopt for the past couple of years --- Banerjee focused on the "political gimmicks" of the BJP to create a "perspective" for some ulterior motive.

She would not refer to the Governor but say "you can rebuke a child into silence but you cannot make a person with bad eyesight to see reasons." Pointing at the alarming

state of affairs in the BJP-ruled States she said how the saffron party was not bothered about the situations in UP, MP, Gujarat etc where "people are dying like animals and their bodies floating in the rivers."

Refuting charges of post-poll violence Banerjee said, "as journalists you must have better information about the so-called violence ... but have you seen violence anywhere? ... some incidents happened during election, but at that time, the Election Commission was in charge ...," reminding how the BJP was "trying to create a perspective... But it is not true..."

I don't support violence and I have asked my police to take stern action against those who will try to break law and order in the state."

In an apparent reference to the Governor's visit to Delhi she said "whatever you are witnessing now is nothing but their (BJP leaders) gimmick. It is a part of their pre-planned move after facing a defeat in the poll which they cannot accept."

She said instead of disturbing Bengal "they (BJP) should look at UP, MP and Gujarat where the law and order situation is deteriorating every day." PNS

Kerala HC rejects PIL challenging reform moves in Lakshadweep

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Thursday dismissed a petition filed by a local activist challenging the Lakshadweep Administration's reform measures including the move to introduce Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation 2021 which envisages development of towns on uninhabited islands and the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act (PASA).

A bench consisting of judges S V Bhatti and Murali Purushothaman ruled that the so called IDAR 2021 was a mere draft of the administrative reform proposal and not a final order.

Discontentment was brewing in the archipelago in the Arabian Sea for the last two weeks over the move by the administrator of the Union Territory to bring in reforms in the islands and make the atolls as developed as Maldives. The public interest litigation challenging the move by the administrator was a reflection of the public ire towards the reforms.

The judges observed that the observation of the legality of the draft regulation which was under the active consideration of the administration was completely premature. Because of the draft administrative reforms which were opposed by the inhabitants of the islands, the BJP unit is getting isolated. Every day hundreds of party workers are leaving the Hindutwa brigade for good though there are hardly 150 party activists in the islands.

Earlier in the day, Aisha Sultana, a struggling film artist, who had accused the Centre of using bio weapon against the Lakshadweep population, was granted interim anticipatory bail by a single judge bench of the Kerala High Court. Judge Ashok Menon while disposing of a petition filed by the artist asked her to appear before the Kavaratti Police for interrogation on June 20 in connection with a notice served on her under Section 41A of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Maha deaths drop to 636, cases down to 9,830

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 deaths dropped to 636 in Maharashtra on Thursday, even as the infections came down to 9,830 in the State. A day after Maharashtra logged 1,236 deaths and 10,107 fresh cases, the daily deaths came down by nearly half, while the infections dropped marginally by 277.

With 636 deaths reported on Thursday, the Covid-19 toll in the State jumped from 1,15,390 to 1,16,026.

With 9,830 fresh infections, the total infections in the state rose from 59,34,880 to 59,44,710.

As 5,890 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year increased from 56,79,746 to 56,85,836. The recovery rate in the state dropped from 95.7 per cent to 95.64 per cent. The total "active cases" in the state climbed from 1,36,661 to 1,39,960. The fatality rate in the state went up from 1.94 per cent to 1.95 per cent.

Pune with 18,887 cases continued to be remain first in the state in terms of maximum number of "active cases" in the state, while Mumbai with 18,417 stood second, followed by Thane (14,088), Kolhapur (13,485), Sangli (11,490), Ratnagiri (7483) Satara (7298), Sindhudurg (5581), Ahmednagar (4829) and Raigad (4810), Nagpur (4742) and Nashik (4355).

Class 12 students who wish to take exams can appear as situation gets normal: CBSE exam controller

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following the Supreme Court's acceptance of the CBSE and CISCSE class 12 board results' evaluation formula, the CBSE Controller of Examinations Sanyam Bharadwaj explained the 30:30:40 formula for the marking criteria for Class 12 exams, saying "40 per cent marks will be based on Class 12 pre-boards, midterm exams, and unit test, 30 per cent marks will be based on Class 11 final exams, and 30 per cent marks will be based on best of best-of-three Class 10 marks."

Bharadwaj said, "CBSE is also developing a software on the basis of which schools can calculate marks for Class 12 exams." He mentioned that the students who wish to take exams can appear once the situation get normal. "The process of exams for students who want to take will be initiated after results," he said adding the Class 10 Board results will be declared by July 20.

On its part, the CICSE mentioned that performance of the candidates in the school examinations in the subjects in Classes 9 and 10, measured through their best marks obtained in the two years (referred to as raw marks) and the best performance of the school in the last six years will be evaluated. "The first two factors measure the subject proficiency of the candidates, while the last is a measure of the general quality of the schools the candidates are appearing from," CISCSE official statement said. The assessment scheme released by the board includes

student's marks in Class 10 board exams, project, practical work in subjects, best marks obtained in school exams in Classes 11 and 12, and best performance of the school itself in the last six years. The CISCSE arrived at this after considering data from 2015 to 2020.

The CISCSE's Class 12 ISC result formula was devised by a committee of three experts who are statisticians and "six in-house members". The panel analysed data for one lakh students from across 1,200 schools for the Class 12 ISC result and 2.2 lakh students from 2,500 schools for the Class 10 ICSE exam. The evaluation formula, however, has evoked mixed reaction from experts with some hailing the criteria while others terming it to be unfair move for students who will step into their higher education system.

"In my opinion, more weightage should have been included for internal exams conducted in class 12 as students become serious about academics after joining class 12. They tend to take class 11 less seriously as it is not a Board class. Also including weightage for class 10 is not very wise as it includes many subjects which students don't pursue at the senior secondary level and has no relevance at this stage," said Meenu Kanwar, Principal of the Amity International School Mayur Vihar, New Delhi.

However, Vikas Ojha, Principal of Foundation School, Buxar, appreciated the decision taken by the CBSE on the evaluation process given the odd prevailing circumstances that has affected the education system equally. "We seek world peace (but) if someone shows us an aggressive attitude, we will respond," Singh said, adding the "new roads will help secure international borders".

India will retaliate strongly if provoked, Rajnath warns China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As face-offs continue at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday cautioned China that India is a peace loving nation but will hit back strongly if provoked. He also paid tributes to the 20 Indian army personnel including the commanding officer who were killed in a brawl with the Chinese troops in the Galwan valley a year ago.

Dedicating 12 strategically important roads built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to the nation in the north east, particularly Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, on Thursday, Rajnath said India is a priest of world peace but any serious disturbance to peace and tranquility in border areas would have adverse implications.

"We seek world peace (but) if someone shows us an aggressive attitude, we will respond," Singh said, adding the "new roads will help secure international borders".

The defence minister said, "Last year in Galwan Valley, our soldiers displayed exemplary courage and valour in line of duty. I salute all brave soldiers who laid down their lives fighting for the nation". Highlighting the significance of the 12 roads including 10 in Arunachal Pradesh and one each in Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, he said they will not only give a boost in connectivity but would facilitate faster movement of troops along the international border.

He made these observations in an event organized in Lakhimpur district of Assam. The defence minister dedicated the roads virtually in the presence of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh chief ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma and Pema Khandu respectively.

Army takes stock of LAC, LOC situation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Army top brass on Thursday began a three-day brainstorming session to review the situation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh and the Line of Control (LOC) and its operational preparedness to meet any challenge.

Incidentally, the Army Commanders' Conference comes a year after the Galwan Valley clash in Eastern Ladakh.

The face-offs began in May last year from the Pangong Tso (lake) in Ladakh. The Chinese stopped an Indian patrol leading to a scuffle in which several soldiers from both the sides received injuries. Soon, stand offs erupted at some other points including Hot Springs, Gogra and the Depsang valley.

Amit Shah launches helpline for cyber fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday launched a national helpline (155260) and reporting platform for preventing financial loss due to cyber fraud.

The national helpline and reporting platform provides a mechanism for persons cheated in cyber frauds to report such cases to prevent loss of their hard earned money.

"The facility empowers both the banks and the police, by leveraging new-age technologies for sharing online fraud related information and taking action in almost real time. The loss of

defrauded money in online cheating cases can be stopped by chasing the money trail and stopping its further flow before it is taken out of the digital ecosystem by the fraudster," the MHA said in statement.

Currently, the helpline and its reporting platform has all the major public and private sector banks onboard. The notable ones include - State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Union Bank, IndusInd, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis, Yes and Kotak Mahindra Bank. It also has all major wallets and merchants such as PayTM, PhonePe, Mobikwik, Flipkart and Amazon linked to it, said MHA.

Trees worth ₹1,50,000 cr looted from Kerala in last 2 years: Environmentalist

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Trees, some of them are known as Royal Trees, worth ₹1,50,000 crore have been looted from Kerala during the last two years alone, according to leading environmentalist John Peruvanthanam who knows the forests of the State like the back of his hand.

Sir, as he is known across Kerala had toured the districts from where he got information about the illegal tree felling braving his own life and what he saw was massive robbing of forests by the axis consisting of politicians-bureaucrats and timber mafia.

"Rose Wood, which is also known by the name the Royal Tree, costs more than ₹20 lakh per cubic feet. Thousands of such trees have been chopped away by this cartel. Most of the trees cut down were taken away from the country in cargo aircraft and ships. These are used in the construction of castles, palaces and ranch houses in Europe and USA," said John Peruvanthanam, the unofficial forester of the State.

He said that trees which were more than 1000 years old were cut down and taken away by the mafia. The environmental and ecological values provided by these trees were thou-



sand fold more than the ₹1,50,000 crore that the exchequer lost by the illegal felling of these trees. This is the biggest anti-national activity scene in Kerala," he said.

Kerala's Leader of Opposition V D Satheshan made a startling disclosure on Thursday that the bureaucrat-politician-forest poachers cartel has swindled the entire forest in the State.

"They have cut down all rare species of trees from areas where there was semblance to green cover in the State. We understand that forest land in eight districts were slaughtered by the Pinaryi Vijayan Government that has been ruling the State since 2016," Satheshan told reporters after leading a team of Opposition party leaders to areas which were cleared off forests by the timber mafia.

The opposition party leaders visited the entire forest ranges in the State from trees were cut down indiscriminately."

Central BJP leaders arrive in Agartala to meet rebel MLAs amid speculation of them joining TMC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an urgent bid to avert a TMC overreach in Tripura, BJP rushed Party leaders including its General Secretary BL Santosh to Agartala who on Thursday held marathon meetings with party MLAs to work out a reconciliation between the Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb and the Dissident groups in the State.

BJP State president Dr Manik Saha, accepted "differences" saying "we are a family, and in a family it happens sometime and has been sorted out." He, However, skirted answer to the query on TMC's attempt to poach BJP MLAs in Tripura.

BJP is apprehending that Mukul Roy back in the ruling TMC fold in West Bengal may organise defections of MLAs from the faction-ridden BJP in the state. BJP's fears are not unfounded as it was Roy in the BJP who had facilitated defections of six Congress MLAs to the BJP in 2016. BJP central leadership rushed Santosh and its organisation secretary for the Northeast, Ajay Jamwal, to Agartala a day before and met with Chief Minister and MLAs including 'rebels'.

Santosh reportedly held a closed door one-to-one meeting at Agartala with several BJP leaders to understand the differences and address the grievances and differences.

BJP General Secretary had discussion with MPs Pratima Bhowmik and Rehati Tripura, Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Debbarmar and dissident MLAs. Tripura BJP in-charge Vinod Kumar Sonkar, who was also to arrive here, had to cancel his visit on account of a family issue. Dissident MLAs like Sudip Roy Barman, Ram Prasad Paul, Ashish Das, Sushanta Choudhury and Ashish Kumar Saha went to the party office to meet Santosh.

Sources said he also met Deputy Chief Minister, two MPs, four Ministers and the MLAs who were called in six separate groups. Dissidents demanded replacement of state president Dr Manik Saha, expansion of Cabinet and certain changes in the organisation.

BJP leaders here, however, denied rebel activities in Tripura BJP saying senior leaders are in the state to discuss assembly poll preparations which are though two-years ago.

Raj district second in country to build over 93K houses under PM Awas Yojana

Jaipur: Notwithstanding the difficult times brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the tribal-dominated Dungarpur district in Rajasthan has scripted history by becoming the first place in the state and second in the country to build 93,128 houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

The Dakshin Dinajpur district in West Bengal occupies the top position in the national list, while Hooghly in the

same state is placed third. As per the list released on Wednesday, Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon is placed fourth, followed by Kanker in the same state.

The list took many parameters into consideration and declared Dungarpur as the first district in Rajasthan to build over 93,000 houses under the PM Awas Yojana in the last one year, officials confirmed. District Collector Suresh

Kumar Ola said that different teams under Anjali Rajoriya, Chief Executive Officer, Zila Parishad, Dungarpur, worked hard at the ground level to accomplish the feat.

Rajoriya said that as many as 1,00,054 houses were approved under the scheme in the district of which 93,128 were completed.

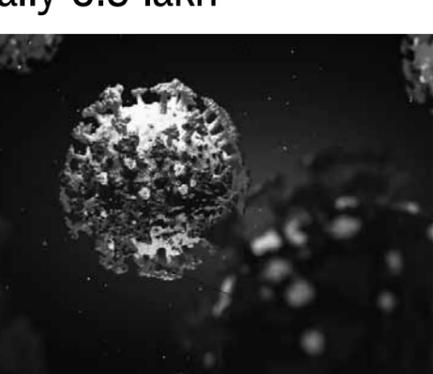
Officials said that besides fighting the Covid crisis, the district officials also focused on

ensuring that people do not migrate for employment and have their own roofs over their heads before the monsoon set in. Keeping this in mind, they monitored the construction works across the district and ensured that the set goal was achieved. They also ensured the generation of a significant number of man hours for the jobs besides creating employment opportunities under MNREGA. IANS



Visitors at Bada Imbarara that reopened after some ease in Covid 19 lockdown, in Lucknow on Thursday

Active Covid cases drop below 70k in Andhra, tally 8.3 lakh



IANS ■ AMARAVATI

Active Covid cases dropped below the 70,000 mark to reach 69,831 on Thursday in Andhra Pradesh, even as 6,151 new Covid infections have been reported.

With the new cases, Andhra Pradesh's Covid tally crossed 18.3 lakh.

On a positive note, 7,728 more people recovered from the disease in the past 24 hours, increasing the total number of recoveries over 17.5 lakh.

Bucking the daily trend of an average 10,000 recoveries, the southern state witnessed fewer recoveries on Thursday.

East Godavari district reported the highest number of cases at 1,244, followed by Chittoor (937), West Godavari (647), Prakasam (554), Kadapa (478), Krishna (424), Anantapur (359), Guntur (331), Nellore (274), Srikakulam (264), Visakhapatnam (237), Kurnool (203) and Vizianagaram (199). Except for Krishna and Vizianagaram, all other districts in Andhra Pradesh have now reported more than 1 lakh Covid cases, however, Krishna district is also inching towards the 1 lakh mark, just shy of 3,000 cases.

With 1.02 lakh more tests conducted in the past 24 hours, the total number of tests carried out in Andhra Pradesh has crossed the 2.08 crore-mark.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

India-Pak thaw?

Both countries would prefer to keep taking small steps that would not alter the *status quo* on their core stands

India and Pakistan have taken another tentative step away from the precipice of a bilateral freeze with both sides clearing the assignment visas of diplomats and High Commission staff pending because of a two-year stand-off. This will help staff on both sides to resume work and both Missions will get back to their sanctioned strength. The numbers were reduced after relations soured, with Pakistan demanding the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K's) special status by India in August, 2019. Pakistan even recalled its High Commission and India asked the neighbour to reduce its Mission strength by half. This is the latest in a series of measures taken in recent months to reach a point from where a bilateral thaw could be achieved if both sides so wished. The year began with speculation about the mediation of the United Arab Emirates between the two countries. It acquired the halo of truth in late February when both armies agreed to adhere to the 2003 ceasefire pact at the Line of Control. The Emirati Foreign Minister has separately met his counterparts in India and Pakistan as well. A sense of calm simultaneously entered the bilateral space.



For instance, India allowed Pakistan Prime Minister's plane to fly through its airspace while on its way to Sri Lanka. The Pakistan Army chief suggested in March that both sides should bury the hatchet and move ahead. The Indian Prime Minister greeted his Pakistani counterpart on Pakistan Day. A Covid-infected Prime Minister Imran Khan received speedy recovery wishes

from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Khan offered anti-Covid medical equipment to India.

It is much too early to read any long-term messaging from these developments. The basic issues remain where they are, both stands as frozen as ever. India will not revoke its decision on J&K and Pakistan has shown no inclination to withdraw its demand either. India continues to insist on Pakistan discouraging cross-border terrorism even though Islamabad blatantly denies involvement in spite of concrete evidence. Both sides, however, need respite from their individual sources of stress. Pakistan faces the blacklist threat from the Financial Action Task Force because of relentless pressure from the US and India. With the US leaving Afghanistan and much of the Taliban leadership living in Pakistan, it has its hands full on that front. The least it wants at this juncture is further escalation of tension with India. New Delhi, on the other hand, has been engaged in a stand-off with China in Ladakh for over a year and would not want the other border with Pakistan to become a hotspot. For their own reasons, both countries would prefer to keep taking harmless steps that would not alter the *status quo* on their core stands but ease day-to-day tensions and extend the fragile peace. These measures will at best test the flexibility of both sides to create conditions in the future to discuss the broader bilateral issues.

PICTALK



Women work in a paddy field, in the absence of their family members who are staging a protest in Delhi against the new farm laws, during the monsoon season at Daun Kalan village in Patiala

Battle lines drawn

UP is going to witness a multi-cornered fight in the Assembly poll, where Yogi and Akhilesh will be the main contenders

The BSP chief Mayawati's decision to join hands with the Akali Dal in Punjab and her description of the SP as an expert in "narrow politics" — whatever it may mean — is full of portent for Uttar Pradesh (UP) politics ahead of the Assembly poll next year. By aligning with the Badals, Mayawati has shown that she may not be game for any alliance in UP with the Congress. Similarly, by unleashing a vituperative attack on the SP and calling it an expert in despicable manipulations, malice, and casteism, she has virtually shut the door on any SP-led broad-based anti-BJP tie-up. This has not come as a surprise to anyone. Except for making occasional noises on Covid mismanagement and the law and order situation under the Yogi Adityanath Government, the BSP supremo never indicated that she was eager to be part of the Opposition game plan to dislodge the BJP-led Government. With Mayawati out of the way, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav has limited options. Already there are talks that the SP can join hands with the AAP and also rope in the RLD and farmer leader Rakesh Tikait as well as Dalit leader Chandrashekar Azad. So far there is no clarity if the Congress could be part of any such alliance. If that happens, then the



Congress will have to swallow its pride and accept a smattering of seats and sacrifice its mission to revive the party in India's most politically-important State.

While the BSP and the Congress seem to be preparing to ferry their own boats, Asaduddin Owaisi is all but ready to join the battle for UP after grabbing five seats in the Bihar Assembly elections last year and sabotaging the prospects of the RJD on at least 11 seats, much to the delight of the BJP. In December, Owaisi announced that the AIMIM would contest the Assembly elections in UP. Owaisi is trying to go to the polls with Om Prakash Rajbhar, whose SBSP has considerable following among the Rajbhar, Pal and several backward castes in the politically-significant Bundelkhand region. A former BJP ally, Rajbhar is the sitting MLA from Zahoorabad constituency in UP's Ghazipur district. By every indication, UP is going to witness a multi-cornered contest where Yogi and Akhilesh will be the main contenders. In addition to the caste factors, the ongoing farmers' agitation will also play a key role in the polls, and Tikait will be a key player in Western UP. If the Centre does not concede the demand of the farmers, then the region could see major political churning and bring together the Jats and Muslim voters on one plank. This could be deadly for the BJP. The Government has already started making the right noises and resumed offers for dialogues with the growers. But more than anything, the pandemic will be the key factor that could decide the outcome of UP polls. If the third wave of the outbreak hits UP before the polls, Yogi will face an unenviable task in managing the electoral challenge.

Can Israel be led by a fragile coalition?



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Will Bennett be able to stay afloat or go down the quicksand of a hopelessly divided Knesset? His ousted rival Netanyahu has not thrown in the towel yet

Israel has got a new Prime Minister after 12 years, an exceptionally long period in the history of the Zionist country with splintered politics. Not even David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, had served so long continuously in any of his two stints i.e. 1948-54 and 1955-63 as did Benjamin Netanyahu in his second innings before being ousted by Naftali Bennett recently. Interestingly, both Netanyahu and Bennett came from the prestigious Israeli commando unit Sayeret Matkal also called Unit 269. Its motto — "Who dares, wins" is likely to play out in Israeli politics in the days ahead. The fragile coalition of Yamina, Yesh Atid, New Hope, Blue and White, Yisrael Beiteinu, Meretz and Labour parties forming the 36th Government is an audacity of hope that might go down the quicksands of a divided Knesset anytime. With Likud still the single-largest party, only one vote (60-59) differentiates the ruling "Parliamentary Grouping" from the Opposition.

Way back on May 17, 1999 Netanyahu was dislodged from the prime ministerial post for the first time. His then rival was an Israeli Defence Forces' General whose moving eulogy on Netanyahu's late brother Yonatan Netanyahu (1946-76) formed a part of the school curriculum in Israel. Yonatan was martyred in Operation Thunderbolt, or Israel's daring commando mission to rescue Israeli passengers from the hijacked Air France flight from Entebbe Airport in Uganda on July 4, 1976. The author of the eulogy was Ehud Barak, the man who became the 10th Prime Minister of Israel, by defeating Netanyahu convincingly.

For a brief period between 1996 and 2001, Israel had experimented with direct prime ministerial elections in a bid to arrest political instability. It was, however, soon junked after Ehud Barak's incumbency lasted less than two years, due to vicissitudes of Israeli politics, despite the fact that the Knesset completed its normal four-year term. Exactly 20 years later, it was interesting to find Netanyahu pitching for a revival of the system. He argued it could



bring political stability in Israel by shielding the Government from the Knesset's longevity. However, the failed idea, found little favour with Knesset committees mostly in the hands of Netanyahu's opponents.

Despite Netanyahu's best efforts a motley "Parliamentary grouping" has been able to dislodge him from the Prime Minister's post. His 12 years in the august office from March 31, 2009 have finally come to an end. Will this be a political requiem of 71-year-old Netanyahu, as many people feel and want? The man himself disagrees. Son of a centenarian and historian father, the late Bentzion Netanyahu, he perhaps feels life and history will both be on his side.

Naftali Bennett, the new Prime Minister of Israel, has impressive credentials. A commando by training, he served in reserve duty of the Sayeret Matkal. In 1999, he founded a high-tech company Cyota, specialising in information security. He also served as CEO, of Soluto, which he later sold for around \$100 million.

In 2005, destiny brought him close to Netanyahu, when the latter was Leader of Opposition in the Knesset. He became the head of



WITH BENNETT BEING PRO-SETTLEMENT, HE IS LIKELY TO FOLLOW A HAWKISH POLICY VIS-A-VIS WEST BANK. THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION, DEFUNCT ANYWAY SINCE 2007, AFTER FATAH AND HAMAS IRRETRIEVABLY SPLIT, WILL ELUDE THE LIBERALS AGAIN

Netanyahu's general staff, and helped him formulate the education reform plan. Soon after Netanyahu came to power in 2009, Bennett was appointed as Director-General of the Yesha Council, an umbrella organisation of municipal councils of the Jewish settlement in West Bank. He led a fight to lift the freeze on fresh settlement activity of Jews in West Bank. The Jews view the West Bank (or river Jordan) as Judea-Samaria of the Old Testament. The same year he co-founded the 'My Israel Movement' which fought campaigns to boycott Israel, post-Zionist movements, and the boycott of Israel. His entrepreneurial achievements catapulted his name to the pages of Forbes magazine in 2012. In November, 2012 he was appointed as the chairman of the HaBayit HaYehudi, the national religious party. In 2013- in the elections to the 19th Knesset, he led his party to a historic tally of 12 seats. This time Netanyahu appointed him as the Minister of Economy, Minister of Religious Services and Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs. In elections to the 20th Knesset (2015), Bennett's party won eight seats. He was made the Minister of Education and

Minister of Diaspora Affairs in the 34th Government.

Did Bennett realise that he would come to lead the 36th Government? The credit greatly goes to the fissiparous politics of Israel, which can throw up impossible coalitions as the current one. The true credit goes to Yair Lapid, a former journalist and boxer, who leads the Yesh Atid party, who convinced Bennett to form an anti-Netanyahu coalition that can seize power. While Lapid is avowedly secular, Bennett is a demonstratively religious Jew. Contrary to speculation Mansour Abbas has not become a Deputy Prime Minister. His United Arab List itself is a divided house on joining the Government. This was apparently after the Bad Press they got in the neighbouring Arab countries on their plans to join the Government.

With Bennett being pro-settlement, he is likely to follow a hawkish policy vis-a-vis West Bank. The two-State solution, defunct anyway since 2007, after Fatah and Hamas irretrievably split, will elude the liberals again.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RIGHT TO PROTEST

Sir — There is a difference between the constitutionally-guaranteed right to protest and terrorist activity, said the Delhi High Court, as it granted bail to three student activists arrested more than a year ago in connection with riots in northeast Delhi that followed protests against the controversial citizenship law. The three students from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), were arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and for this the court was sharp in its criticism of the Delhi Police. It noted that the UAPA, an anti-terror law, could not be casually applied to petty criminal acts or protests by citizens.

In its anxiety to suppress dissent, in the mind of the State, the line between the constitutionally-guaranteed right to protest and terrorist activity seems to be getting blurred. The High Court remarked that the chargesheet lacked any specific, particularised, factual allegations that would make out the ingredients of offences under the UAPA. In the absence of an actual case against the offenders, the process then becomes the punishment. Scathing judgments by courts are notable, but unfortunately not a solution to the problem. It is time to uphold the right to protest else, India will no longer remain a true democracy.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

LOOK OUT FOR CHIRAG

Sir — Blood is thicker than water is a well-known saying. This aptly suits the country's political system. Both at the national and the regional level fathers, sons, daughters, uncles and nephews have influenced India's politics from a long time. Earlier, politics wasn't a profession; it was a passion. The decline in political discourse of the country began with the onset of dynastic politics. Not that the political families always prospered in the process as affection and amicability often gave way to bad blood, betrayal and belligerence. Chirag Paswan will know better because he is "shell shocked" by the action of his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras who "rebelled" against his nephew for "disrespecting"

Let masking-up become a habit



The gradual recession of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic should not make us complacent and we must not let our guard down. Vaccination is a time-consuming process, a fact that should persuade us to continue to adhere to Covid-19 appropriate behaviour. As it is the experts are warning that there will be a third wave of the Coronavirus outbreak as has been in other countries like the UK. So if we have to prevent the third wave or at least delay it till the maximum number of citizens are inoculated we need to adhere to all Covid protocols in all seriousness. Wearing masks is a non-pharmaceutical intervention being made worldwide for the containment of the pandemic. It is a proven fact that it saves

lives. A naked face or a face without a mask is an open invitation to the virus. Masks should be of high quality and worn properly. All sorts of masks are now available in the market; they are bought and used for whatever they are worth which is not much. Only those masks that really serve the purpose of preventing the transmission of the virus should be allowed to be sold.

The Government can incentivise the production of good quality masks and subsidise them. Better still would be the procurement and distribution of masks free of cost to citizens by the Government. However, the way many people still wear masks underlines the need for greater awareness of how to wear the masks properly. A mask below the nose, the mouth and the jaw is not a protective armour against the virus. The intended purpose is served only when a mask fully covers the nostrils and the mouth and fits tightly. Properly worn, good quality masks go a long way towards halting the spread of the disease. We must all make mask-wearing a habit till the pandemic comes to an end.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

him. Disgruntlement with Chirag's style of functioning had come to the forefront when a couple of BJP's senior leaders switched sides some time ago. Instead of introspection, the young leader's detached look appeared to have surprised his supporters. Nothing succeeds like success, and failure is an orphan. The BJP's poor showing in the Assembly elections seem to have emboldened his rivals in the party. All this said, all is not lost for Chirag. He has a long political journey ahead. Bihar politics is most likely to open up sooner than later. Nitish Kumar cannot hold his own forever. Chinks in his armour have repeatedly been exposed. Lalu Prasad is still in the background. Undoubtedly, Tejashwi and Chirag are the men to look out for.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

A GOOD DECISION

Sir — The Central Board of Secondary

Education (CBSE) has decided to go for a '30:30:40 formula' — 30 per cent from Class 10 Board, 30 per cent from Class 11 exam, and 40 per cent from Class 12 assessment — to tabulate Class 12 results this year, the Board informed the Supreme Court which gave its green signal. The Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) has also decided to go for a similar formula as the CBSE, except they have decided to take the average of the last six years.

The apex court said there was no question of rolling back the decision of not holding exams. Students who are not satisfied with the result will be given an opportunity to appear in examinations when conditions are conducive for it. This is a good decision and a fair one for all. This is the best the powers that be can do right now.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

SOUNDBITE

We did our best to keep away the supporters who came to take part in the function. We even closed the gates of our party office.



Kerala Leader of Opposition — VD Satheesan

Would like to see the cessation of hostilities be maintained in order to give space for the relevant parties to work out arrangements to stabilise the situation.

United Nations Secretary-General — Antonio Guterres

Whatever my equity is today, is mainly due to the success of my social entertainers, which made me connect to the people of India.



Actor — Ayushmann Khurrana

Both India and New Zealand have got very strong pace-bowling attacks. India has got a more balanced attack because they have better spinners.

Former Australia captain — Ian Chappell

Met Dharmendra Pradhan and proposed a revival plan for the PCPIR project in AP. This plan will pave the way for all round industrial development coupled with employment in the region.



Andhra Pradesh Industries Minister — Mekapati Goutham Reddy

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

FIND INDIA'S PLACE IN THE WEST

World leaders want to shift from a China-dictated supply chain and find new allies. This is our chance



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A couple of high decibel global events in picturesque locales dominated headlines in the past few days while India grimly remembered one year of a brutal military ambush in the north-eastern frontiers by China. This sets the stage in more ways than one for a focused coalition of open dialogues between some of the richest and largest democracies in the world. One of the first few events in these series was the new US president meeting old allies and not-so-friendly regimes at various platforms like G7 and NATO besides holding bilaterals on crucial world issues. This also signifies US' rekindled interest in multilateral platforms and re-claiming its seat on the global stage. The world economies have undergone a significant change ever since the G7 started meeting formally in the 1970s. A couple in the G7 have lost their largest-economy status and new ones like India and China have moved in. China has galloped to being an extremely voracious market for many European luxury products, cars, etc., building significant interlocked linkages with these economies. It has also leapfrogged on the global technology arena with its gigantic manufacturing units cornering a significant share of the global supply chain for technology equipment. Heady with its recent wealth and technology prowess, China has



also moved its military units to strategic locations in its neighborhood while using its debt-trap diplomacy on weaker nations as the 'velvet glove on an iron fist'. The post-2008 financial crisis world, lulled by the need for large, addressable markets and money for spending, has been ignoring most of these strategic moves until 2020, when suddenly a microbe jolted everyone out of their dream. Citizens around the globe experienced their worst nightmares played out with the Covid pandemic raging and bringing nation after nation down. The only exception was China (from where the microbe originated), which in just two months was able to bring its economy back on track while continuing with its technology and military maneuvers on the global stage.

However, the world has perhaps learnt a lesson and despite ambivalence among some open democratic countries, the majority are willing to collaborate and work towards a new order. This is where India bruised by China in the middle of the pandemic has a huge opportunity. The key narrative emerging from the recent global meetings of world leaders has been to move away from a China-dictated supply chain and find new allies and friends. Strategically the Indo-Pacific region therefore gains prominence in all top leader's dialogues. India has a geographical advantage of being right in the middle of this theatre of global attention and action. The coming together of US, Japan, Australia and India aboard the Quad focusing on a peaceful Indo-Pacific is a challenge to China's aggressive military moves in that region. India has to move aggressively on QUAD, bringing the other three allies on same page on shared issues of concern. India currently is one of the largest vaccine makers in the world and what most leaders agree is the world is as weak today as the last unvaccinated person. The aim to put a job on every shoulder cannot be achieved without India playing a significant role in the process. This is also a huge money-making opportunity for the country while creating a specialisation in the emerging threat of biological hazards preventive care. India has to negotiate with the big pharma for manufacturing opportunities simplifying regulations for setting up global units in the country in order to ease the manner of doing business while working towards the dream of becoming the pharmacy to the world.

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

Steering the boat safely amid Covid

India needs to prepare well for a competent and concerted response that can anticipate, avert or attenuate future public health emergencies



K SRINATH REDDY

Several States in India have started to open up, with their respective lists of permitted and restricted activities. While there is concern about the undercounting of cases and deaths in some States, the overall trend of a receding second wave is not being disputed. The frenetic rush and public anguish, which marked the frequently futile search for hospital beds that became the painful images of the second wave are no longer the dominant themes of Indian or international media reports. That, in itself, provides assurance that the second wave is ebbing.

However, it would be unwise to assume that the turbulent waters of the second wave have stilled and the boat is set on a safe course ahead. We still need to see whether there will be a rebound when the lockdown eases. There are already reports of people rushing to tourist spots and holiday resorts. Malls and restaurants are crowded. These represent the more affluent sections, but the signals they send can misguide the rest of the population. Desire to live life to the full is understandable after lockdowns but wisdom must caution against abandonment of safeguards against a virus which still poses an active threat. Common sense tells us that if some careless revellers start prancing around when the boat has just left the rough sea, it can still capsize, putting everybody in danger.

Even as we steady the boat, when it sails out of choppy waters, we must watch the charts and study the signals to see when it might be rocked again by a third wave. Considerable speculation has already commenced in the media about the timing and contours of such a wave. Predictions have been made, by mathematical modellers and some epidemiologists, that we may be rocked by the third wave in November this year. While the accuracy of such predictions is uncertain, since they are based on several assumptions, we do need to be well prepared to meet such a threat whenever it arises.

Several elements will determine the severity of a third wave: the nature of variants in circulation; the number of persons who have acquired immunity from vaccination or recent infection; the number of susceptible people who are available for the virus to infect and cause symptomatic illness; adherence of people to public health advisories on wearing masks and avoiding crowds; ability of public authorities to prevent super-spreader events and the preparedness of our health systems to ensure timely case detection, supportive home care or assured hospitalisation with competent service provision.

Our surveillance systems must be sharpened, to detect the levels of circulating variants and emergence of new forms. Case detection will need to be based on both testing and clinical features gathered by healthcare teams visiting homes. False negative results from tests can be compensated by adding clinical criteria (syndromic surveillance, as used for other infectious disease outbreaks). Genomic analysis of 5-10 per cent of all positive test samples would be needed, with higher levels of scrutiny for virus samples recovered from international travellers. Since testing would pose more challenges in rural areas, symptom-based surveillance and contact-based quarantine would have to be followed, along with the use of rapid antigen tests for spot diagnosis and mobile laboratories to carry samples for RT-PCR testing to authorised laboratories.

Home care would be appropriate and ade-



OUR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS MUST BE SHARPENED, TO DETECT THE LEVELS OF CIRCULATING VARIANTS AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW FORMS. CASE DETECTION WILL NEED TO BE BASED ON BOTH TESTING AND CLINICAL FEATURES GATHERED BY HEALTHCARE TEAMS VISITING HOMES

The writer, a cardiologist and epidemiologist, is president, Public Health Foundation of India. The views expressed are personal.



quate for 80-85 per cent of all symptomatically infected cases. Primary health care teams must be trained in providing supportive care and monitoring. Symptoms, pulse oximetry readings, temperature should be part of daily monitoring of such home-managed persons. If the person is a diabetic, blood sugar too should be monitored with a glucometer. Telemedicine facilities should be scaled up and standardised, to support home management. Prior planning should be done to ensure timely transfer of a person under home care to an intermediate or advanced care facility when the need arises.

Sub-district, district and medical college hospitals should be equipped to handle a possible surge of the third wave. It is difficult to predict how severe it would be, as it depends on the behaviour of the virus and its different variants, as well as the behaviour of people in adhering to public health advisories on masks, ventilation and avoidance of crowding. However, strengthening of the healthcare infrastructure and health workforce at various levels of care is long overdue. This is an opportunity to reduce the existing disparities of healthcare provisions between states and districts as well as between urban and rural areas.

There is speculation in the media that children will be more affected in a third wave. It is possible that more children will be exposed in an open society than during the first wave when they

were mostly sheltered or even during the second wave when they were still partly guarded. Numbers of susceptible adults may also decrease by that time as several of them would have been vaccinated or infected by then. Nevertheless, adults will still be far more likely to have severe infection than children where the vast majority will have asymptomatic or mild infections. Even so, expanding hospital services for children, including intensive care capacity, will still serve a useful purpose by strengthening paediatric care for many serious illnesses.

Vaccination must be speeded up, with accelerated domestic production and international procurement. The number of vaccination centres must be increased. Vaccination in rural areas will require careful planning of logistics, sensitive communication for confidence building, support for overcoming technology barriers to registration and availability of close-to-home vaccination centres. The Delta variant poses challenges with high infectivity and capacity for vaccine evasion, at higher levels than the wild virus or the Alpha variant. However, there is reassuring evidence that the variant responds well to two doses of all available vaccines. So, we need to provide both doses of vaccines to vulnerable persons, identified by age and co-morbidities. Even pregnant women now need to be regarded as candidates for priority vaccination.

The period of relative calm will also give us time to build partnerships between and among government services, local bodies, non-governmental organisations, school personnel, trade unions, industry representatives, community groups and citizen volunteers. Capacity-building for concerted action among these groups will give us the collective strength to respond more effectively to the third wave. Whether to promote Covid-appropriate behaviour or to reduce vaccine hesitancy, local networks in the community are vital. Community based surveillance systems can also give early alerts of rising cases.

We should also utilise this opportunity to enhance health and nutrition literacy to increase immunity. Healthy diets and physical activity are vital for both innate and adaptive immunity to fight the virus and also for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases which are the predominant co-morbidities that predict poor outcomes in Covid infection. Promotion of healthy living habits using the Covid platform, will help foster future health and well-being.

We need to prepare well for a competent and concerted response that can anticipate, avert or attenuate future public health emergencies. By being forewarned and forearmed, we can restrict the third wave to a ripple rather than a tidal wave.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WE AGREED TO TASK EXPERTS IN BOTH OUR COUNTRIES TO WORK ON SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT WHAT IS OFF-LIMITS. — US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN



WE NEED TO THROW OUT ALL INSINUATIONS, SIT DOWN AT THE EXPERT LEVEL AND START WORKING IN THE INTERESTS OF THE US AND RUSSIA. — RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

Covid orphans must be a priority care group

There is a need to remove bottlenecks and unburden the courts so that the process of providing permanent care facilities for orphans is speeded up

The period between April 1 and June 5 found 30,071 children in need of care of protection as 26,176 of them lost either parent, 3,621 children lost both parents and 274 children were abandoned. Many of them are 'Covid Orphans'. Of them 15,620 are boys, 14,447 girls and four transgenders; 11,815 are in the 8-13 age group and 5,107 in the 4-7 age group. Nearly all of them are in the care of a guardian, a family member or a surviving parent while the rest are in shelter homes, orphanages or with 'special adoption agencies.'

The number of out-of-home care children in need of care and protection in India is estimated to be about 2.4 crore and the number is continuous-



SUBHASH C PANDEY

The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The views expressed are personal.

ly on the rise. Several financial support measures have been announced for orphaned children from the PM Cares Fund, Ministry of Women and Child Development and by States. However, the issue remains that these orphans' needs in terms of permanent homes and settlement have to be taken care of as a priority.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 is primary legislation for ensuring the safety, security, dignity and well-being of children. The orphans need to be produced before Children Welfare Committees (CWCs) which decide whether the child can be kept with the extended family, in foster care with support or at State-run centres. The Act also lays down procedures



for their adoption. However, in practice, it has been found that the courts are heavily clogged with arrears and the adoption proceedings take years. In 2015, the Government instituted a centralised online system CARINGS (Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System) to facilitate adoption primarily to check abuse of adoption proceedings by NGOs. Only prospective

parents registered on CARINGS portal managed by Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA) can adopt children. CARA prefers orphans under kinship care, with shelter homes being the last resort. A child under two years is considered 'legally free' to be adopted if no one approaches the shelter home for two months. The waiting period is four months for older children. As many as 5,693 children were adopted in 2010 and 5,964 in 2011. After the institution of CARA and CARINGS in 2015, the pace of adoption has distinctly slowed down to 1881 in 2015-16, 3,210 in 2016-17 and 2,160 in 2020-21. The pandemic has slowed down the adoption process further as it also affected functioning of courts.

There is a bias towards adoption of infants. Over 80 per cent of adoptions are of children below two years. Litigation and challenges end up delaying the adoption process. In the last three years, 174 cases ended in disruption — termination of adoption proceeding before finalisation — and five cases ended in dissolution — termination after finalisation.

Hundreds of adoption cases are still pending in courts. An amendment to the concerned Act to transfer powers vested in courts to District Magistrates in order to speed up adoptions process is awaiting Rajya Sabha approval. The amendment also seeks to give a prominent role to District Magistrates in superintendence of Child Care Institutions, mostly run by

NGOs supposedly under the oversight of the Social Welfare Department. It is found that the NGOs are interested in getting funding without properly providing even basic facilities of food, hygiene and sanitation. There have also been serious complaints of abuse of inmates in some of NGO-run facilities.

The 2015 law had ushered in the concept of foster care in India in which the child is placed with a caregiver running a residential child care facility or in a private home of a foster parent. They receive financial support from Government.

The system provides personalized parental care in a family-like environment to a group of unrelated children in a community setting. It is considered suitable for street chil-

dren who pass through a weaning period prior to their placement in individual foster care or any other form of family-based care. In the broader interest of these children, there is a case for evolving newer, more flexible mechanisms that are less stringent than full-scale legal adoption or a formal foster-care arrangement. One mechanism is that of sponsorship charities run by NGOs, which can be adopted by the Government to connect a donor/sponsor with a particular child. It allows for financial and emotional support without the legal implications on succession. Not only the childless seeking adoption but persons of means with children can come forward under a Government-managed system to support children.

Courts cannot appoint PM: Oli

Oli heading minority Govt after losing trust vote in House

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Thursday defended his Government's controversial decision to dissolve the House of Representatives and told the Supreme Court that it is not up to the judiciary to appoint a premier as it cannot undertake the legislative and executive functions of the state.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari, at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, dissolved the lower house for the second time in five months on May 22 and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19.

Prime Minister Oli is heading a minority Government after losing a trust vote in the House.

On June 9, the apex court issued a show-cause notice to the Office of the Prime Minister and the President's Office to furnish a written response within 15 days.

Furnishing a written reply to the Supreme Court on Thursday as demanded by the Constitutional Bench, Oli said the court cannot appoint a Prime Minister as it cannot undertake the legislative and executive functions of the state.

The apex court received Oli's response via the Office of the Attorney General.

"The Court's duty is to interpret the Constitution and the existing laws, it cannot play the role of the legislature or the executive bodies," 69-year-old Oli said in his response.

"Forming governments on the basis of parties is the fundamental characteristic of the parliamentary system and the Constitution does not imagine party-less practices," he added.

Oli also defended the involvement of the President in this whole issue, saying Article 76 of the Constitution grants the sole right to appoint a Prime Minister to the President only.

"Appointment of a Prime Minister is absolutely a political and an executive process," he underlined.

"As per Article 76 (5), there is no such provision of a person gaining or losing a vote of confidence in the House being examined by the legislature or the judiciary," he said.

On May 21, Nepali



Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba had submitted signatures of as many as 149 lawmakers before President Bhandari, requesting her to appoint him the new prime minister as per Article 75 (6). As many as 29 members of the Madhav Nepal faction of the CPN-UML had provided their signatures showing support to Deuba.

However, Oli too laid claim to the government, saying he had support of 153 lawmakers including 32 lawmakers belonging to Janata Samajwadi Party.

But President Bhandari said both claims by Oli and Deuba were insufficient. Soon after the move, the Oli government recommended the dissolution of the House and midterm elections for November.

As many as 30 writ petitions, including by the Opposition alliance, have been

filed in the Supreme Court against the dissolution of the House, which they said was "unconstitutional".

The Supreme Court has started hearing on the case. Regular hearings on the case will resume from June 23.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 last year after President Bhandari dissolved the House and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10 at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, amidst a tussle for power within the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

In February, the apex court reinstated the dissolved House of Representatives, in a setback to embattled Prime Minister Oli who was preparing for snap polls.

Oli repeatedly defended his move to dissolve the lower house, saying some leaders of his party were attempting to form a "parallel government".

Biden, Putin discuss ambassadors, nuclear weapons and more

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Presidents Joe Biden and Vladimir Putin of Russia spent more than three hours discussing issues Wednesday at their summit in Geneva.

They ticked through their respective lists so quickly and in such "excruciating detail," Biden says, that they looked at each other and thought, "OK, what next?"

The most pressing issues the leaders discussed:

AMBASSADORS
Biden and Putin agreed to return their respective ambassadors to Washington and Moscow in a bid to improve badly deteriorated diplomatic relations between their countries.

Russia's ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov, left Washington in March amid a row after Biden called Putin a killer in a television interview and imposed new sanctions on Russia over its treatment of opposition figure Alexei Navalny.

John Sullivan, the U.S. Ambassador to Russia, flew out of Moscow in April after public suggestions from Russian officials that he should leave to mirror Antonov's departure. Both ambassadors were present at Wednesday's summit.

Putin also said the Russian foreign ministry and the U.S. State Department would begin consultations on other vexing diplomatic issues, including the closures of consulates in both countries and the employment status of Russian citizens working for U.S. Missions in Russia.

A senior Biden administration official said Sullivan is likely to return to Moscow next week. A different senior administration official said both governments had begun discussing consulate and local



staff issues and the hope was an agreement could be reached in the next two months.

Neither administration official was authorized to comment publicly by name and both spoke on condition of anonymity.

CYBERSECURITY
No breakthroughs on this issue were announced, but the leaders agreed to at least talk about what has become a major source of conflict between the U.S. and Russia.

Biden said he and Putin agreed to have their experts work out an understanding about what types of critical infrastructure would be off-limits to cyberattacks. He said the U.S. Presented Russia with 16 specific types of infrastructure, including energy, elections, banking and water systems, and the defense industry.

The agreement comes amid a flood of ransomware attacks against U.S. businesses and government agencies, including one in May that disrupted fuel supplies along the East Coast for nearly a week. The disruption was blamed on a criminal gang operating out of Russia, which does not extradite suspects to the U.S.

Other serious incidents include the SolarWinds intrusion discovered last year in which hackers, believed by

U.S. Authorities to be Russian, penetrated multiple U.S. Government networks and prompted Biden to impose additional U.S. Sanctions against Russia.

Biden said the U.S. and Russian governments would follow up on certain criminal cases, an apparent reference to cybercriminals operating with impunity from Russian territory.

Putin agreed there is mutual interest in the subject. Biden also made an implicit threat against Russia, saying the U.S.

Has "significant cyber capability" it could use against Russia if it were to interfere with U.S. Critical infrastructure.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Biden and Putin instructed their diplomats to begin laying the groundwork for a new phase of arms control.

The "strategic stability dialogue" would be a series of discussions designed to set the table for a negotiation by sorting out what exactly should be negotiated. More broadly, it would aim to reduce the risk of war between the world's two largest nuclear powers.

Biden said the goal is to work with Russia on "a mechanism that can lead to control of new and dangerous and sophisticated weapons that are coming on the scene now, that reduce the time for response, that raise the prospect of accidental war." He said this was discussed in detail.

No date was announced for the start of talks.

The basic idea is to identify and sort out the many areas of disagreement over what a future arms control treaty should address. It also would address ways to avoid unintended or accidental moves that could trigger war.

UK Parl panel warns of China's 'bullying' in multilateral arena

PTI ■ LONDON

There is evidence of China's increasing use of "aggressive" means to "coerce" states to back their position or their candidates towards a steady acquisition of key official positions in multiple multilateral organisations, a report by an influential UK parliamentary panel warned on Thursday.

The House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) said its evidence spoke of an increasingly "bullying" stance of China in its dealing with organisations such as the United Nations and World Health Organisation (WHO). In its 'In the room: the UK's role in multilateral diplomacy'

report, the committee calls upon the UK to take a more proactive role in combating the influence of countries who seek to manipulate and undermine multilateral organisations and mobilise the soft power of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to strengthen democracies.

"The report found evidence of China's increasing use of aggressive means, including exploiting bilateral economic leverage, to coerce states to back their position or their candidates and then using the organisations to shift policies away from the cooperation the organisations were created to promote," the FAC notes.

Editors of Hong Kong newspaper arrested under security law

AP ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong police used a sweeping national security law Thursday to arrest five editors and executives of a pro-democracy newspaper on charges of colluding with foreign powers — the first time the legislation has been used against the press in yet another sign of an intensifying crackdown by Chinese authorities in the city long known for its freedoms.

Police said they had evidence that more than 30 articles published by Apple Daily played a "crucial part" in what they called a conspiracy with foreign countries to impose sanctions against China and Hong Kong.

Iran nuclear deal hangs in balance as Islamic Republic votes

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers hangs in the balance as the country prepares to vote on Friday for a new president and diplomats press on with efforts to get both the US and Tehran to reenter the accord. The deal represents the signature accomplishment of the relatively moderate President Hassan Rouhani's eight years in office: suspending crushing sanctions in exchange for the strict monitoring and limiting of Iran's uranium stockpile.

The deal's collapse with President Donald Trump's decision to unilaterally withdraw America from the agreement in 2018 spiralled into a series of attacks and confrontations across the wider Middle East. It also prompted Tehran to enrich uranium to highest purity levels so far, just shy of weapons-grade levels.

With analysts and polling suggesting that a hard-line candidate already targeted by US sanctions will win Friday's vote, a return to the deal may

be possible but it likely won't lead to a further detente between Iran and the West.

"It's certainly not as complex as drafting a deal from scratch, which is what the sides did that resulted in the 2015 deal," said Henry Rome, a senior analyst focusing on Iran at the Eurasia Group.

"But there's still a lot of details that need to be worked out." He added: "I think there's a lot of domestic politics that go into this and an interest from hard-liners, including the supreme leader, to ensure that their favoured candidate wins without any significant disruptions to that process."

The 2015 deal, which saw Iranians flood into the streets in celebration, marked a major turn after years of tensions between Iran and the West over Iran's nuclear programme.

Tehran has long insisted that its programme is for peaceful purposes. However, US intelligence agencies and International Atomic Energy Agency say Iran pursued an organised nuclear weapons programme up until 2003.

Israeli officer charged in killing of autistic Palestinian

Jerusalem: Israeli prosecutors on Thursday charged a border police officer with reckless manslaughter in the deadly shooting of an autistic Palestinian man in Jerusalem's Old City last year.

The indictment came just over a year after the shooting of Eyad Hallaq. Hallaq's family had previously criticized Israeli authorities' investigation into Eyad's killing, and had called for much tougher charges. The officer, who remains unidentified in the indictment submitted to the Jerusalem District Court on Thursday, was charged with reckless manslaughter, and if convicted could face up to 12 years in prison.

Palestinian teen shot by Israeli troops in West Bank dies

Jerusalem: The Palestinian health ministry said Thursday that a Palestinian teenager who was shot by Israeli troops in the West Bank a day earlier has died of his injuries.

The Israeli military said Wednesday that a soldier stationed near a wildcat settler outpost near the West Bank city of Nablus saw a group of Palestinians approaching, and that one "hurled a suspicious object at him, which exploded adjacent to the soldier."

The army said that the soldier fired in the air, then shot the Palestinian who threw the object.

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The Executive Engineer, Unit No-2 (Sujalam Sulajam) 2nd floor, State Water data centre building, Sector-3 Gandhinagar PIN-380003, Gujarat State Invites on line tender (E-Tendering) for following works (TPI works) in two bids system from experienced and resourceful agencies as under.

Sr No	Name of work	Estimated cost (Rs. In crore)	Qualification of bidder
1.	Third party inspection for the service of project management, Design review, Construction supervision and inspection & testing of materials, machinery, Equipments for lift irrigation M.S. Pipeline project for transmission of 50 cusecs of water from Matpur village taluka-Patan to Dharoi Extended branch 485 near Bhramanwada village taluka- Unjha Dist-Mehsana	Rs. 38.03 lacs	(1) As per Eligibility criteria (2) Rs.0.38 lacs (3) Rs.1770/- (4) 18 month (5) 7.62 lacs

1. Date of uploading :- 17/6/2021
2. Last date for downloading tender document and On line submission of tender Date : 6/7/2021 upto 18.00 hrs.
3. Physical submission of tender of Tender fees, EMD & Other document Only by speed post / R.P.A.D/courier - from Dt. 7/7/2021 to 14/7/2021 upto 18.00 Hrs
4. The EMD exemption certificate will not be accepted.
5. The EMD less than 180 days validity will not be accepted and offer will not be considered.
6. The details of above tender will be available on www.statetender.com www.gwrdc.gujarat.gov.in and www.gwrdc.nprocure.com The tender will be accepted only on line.

No/INF/VPN/2020/G/430

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Email Id : bharat.garg@emaar-india.com, Website : www.emaar-india.com

AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021 (Rs. in million)

S. No.	Particulars	Year ended 31 March 2021	Year ended 31 March 2020
1	Total Income from Operations	19,441.41	34,552.56
2	Net (Loss) for the year (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(3,334.08)	(5,040.98)
3	Net (Loss) for the year before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(2,293.06)	(1,530.54)
4	Net (Loss) for the year after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary Items)	(2,293.06)	(1,530.54)
5	Total Comprehensive (Loss) / Income for the year (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the year (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(2,282.41)	(1,530.18)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1,693.87	1,303.24
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	(37,589.15)	(35,315.81)
8	Net Worth	(35,865.28)	(34,012.57)
9	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	67,869.43	63,843.76
10	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares	-	-
11	Debt Equity Ratio	(1.89)	(1.88)
12	Earning / (Loss) Per Share (in Rupees) (Basic & Diluted)	(14.84)	(11.74)
13	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-
14	Debt Redemption Reserve	738.13	738.13
15	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	0.27	0.32
16	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	0.66	0.79

Notes:
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of annual financial results filed with stock exchange under regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulation, 2015. The full formats of annual financial results are available of the website of the stock exchange www.bseindia.com and on the Company's website www.emaar-india.com.
2. The above financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at their meeting held on June 16, 2021.
3. Ratios have been computed as follows:
(i) Debt Equity Ratio = Paid up debt capital/equity, where:
* Equity represents issued, subscribed and paid up equity share capital and other equity
* Paid up debt capital represents long-term (including current maturities) and short-term borrowings excluding deferred payment liabilities and lease liabilities.
(ii) Debt Service Coverage ratio = Earnings before finance costs, tax and depreciation and amortization expense/finance costs + principal repayment of term loans during the year
(iii) Interest Service Coverage ratio = Earnings before finance costs, tax and depreciation and amortization expense/finance costs
(iv) Net worth represents total equity.
(v) Paid up equity share capital represents issued, subscribed and paid up equity share capital.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of Emaar India Limited
Sd/-
Hadi Mohd Taher Badri
Director
DIN - 08101869

Date : June 16, 2021
Place : Gurugram

UJVN Limited
H.O.: "LUJWAL", Maharanji Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephone: 0135-2763808 & Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC023666
Website: www.ujvn.com

पत्रांक: 445 Date Extension Notice- 01 दिनांक: 17.06.2021

Due to unavoidable reasons the Date of Submission & opening of the e-NIT No. NCB/01/EE/PCM-DKP/TN/2021-22 & NCB/02/EE/PCM-DKP/TN/2021-22 invited by the office of the Executive Engineer Project Civil Maintenance-Dakpathar is being extended as below:
Last Date & Time for submission of bids on the portal upto 17:00 hrs of 05.07.2021
Date & Time of Opening of bids on the portal at 11:00 hrs of 06.07.2021
Information regarding Addendum/Corrigendum/Cancellation etc. of tender may be obtained from the website.
Full & Further Details of tender can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://uktenders.gov.in".

Executive Engineer (PCM)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

कार्यालय नगर निगम, भरतपुर
क्रमांक: -ज.नि.प./निर्माण/2021-22/101-106 दिनांक: 09.06.2021

ई-निविदा सूचना 06/2021-22

नगर निगम, भरतपुर द्वारा नगर निगम, भरतपुर में उपर्युक्त श्रेणी में एवं अन्य विभागों के "A" & "AA" श्रेणी में पंजीकृत संवेदकों से निर्भरित प्रश्न में ई प्रोक्वायमेंट प्रक्रिया से वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर अनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा की महत्वपूर्ण बातें एवं विवरण वेबसाइट <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> एवं <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यों की संख्या: 7 कार्यों
कार्यों की कुल लागत: 323.28 लाख

वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> से निविदा आमंत्रित करने की समय व तिथि: दिनांक 16.06.2021 से 05.07.2021 तक एवं साथ 6.00 बजे

वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> से अनलाइन निविदा उपलब्ध करने की अंतिम समय व तिथि: दिनांक 06.07.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे

नगर निगम में प्रोसेसिंग शुल्क निविदा शुल्क की वृ.टी. आर. सिस्टम एवं अमानत राशि का चोपणा पत्र का मूल स्टाइम पीनिक रूप से जमा करने की तिथि: दिनांक 07.07.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे

निविदा खोलने की समय व तिथि: दिनांक 07.07.2021 दोपहर 12.00 बजे

NIT Code: DLB2122A1735, UIN No.: DLB2122WS0806736, DLB2122WS0806738, DLB2122WS0806739, DLB2122WS0806740, DLB2122WS0806741, DLB2122WS0806742, DLB2122WS0806743

पत्रा. संख्या: /र/2294/2021-2022 आयुक्त

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that male person namely **Zeeshan, S/o Aash Mohammad, R/o C-117, Holombi Kalan, Metro Vihar, 2nd Narela, Delhi, Age: 28 years, Height : 5'7", Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Normal, Wearing: Black Colour T-Shirt and Blue Lower** has been missing/kidnapped from his home since **07.06.2021**. In this regard a **DD No. 66A dated 08.06.2021** has been registered at **PS Begumpur, Delhi**.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this person please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 SHO
Fax : 011-24368639 PS Begumpur, Delhi
DP/882/RD/2021 Ph. : 011-27579029/8750870323

3 Chinese astronauts enter space station after successful docking operation

PTI ■ BEIJING/JIUQUAN

Three Chinese astronauts on Thursday entered the country's new space station after their spaceship successfully docked with it, just over seven hours after the launch from the Gobi Desert, in a major milestone for the Communist giant's space exploration plans and its bid to

become a leading space power.

According to the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA), Shenzhou-12 manned spaceship successfully docked with the space station core module Tianhe on Thursday afternoon and entered the orbital capsule of the spaceship.

After a series of preparations, the astronauts opened the hatches of the node and the Tianhe module and entered the Tianhe module one by one, signifying that for the first time the Chinese have entered their own space station, the CMSA said.

The trio will carry out relevant work as planned, it said in a statement here.

WESTERN RAILWAY
STORES DEPARTMENT
E-AUCTION SALE DURING JULY, 2021 FOR P-WAY & OTHER VARIOUS SCRAP
SPECIAL ATTENTION : ALL STEEL PURCHASERS & RE-ROLLERS

Public e-auction for disposal of P. way Scrap, Rail Scrap & Other various scrap material will be held in JULY, 2021 as per program given below:-

1st Round	2nd Round	Depot	Depot Officer In-Charge	Contact No.
07/07/2021	23/07/2021	RTM	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager RTM	07922205888 09724093750
08/07/2021	22/07/2021	BVP	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager BVP	02782444360 09724093750
09/07/2021	23/07/2021	SBI	Deputy Chief Materials Manager SBI	07927500080 09724093774
09/07/2021	27/07/2021	BRC	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager BRC	022-23094142 09004499006
13/07/2021	27/07/2021	DHD	Deputy Chief Materials Manager DHD	02673241295 09724090455
15/07/2021	29/07/2021	MX	Deputy Chief Materials Manager MX	022-24929571 09004495750
15/07/2021	30/07/2021	ADI	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager ADI	07922205888 09724093750
16/07/2021	---	RJT	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager RJT	02812476943 09724094770
22/07/2021	---	PRTN	Deputy Chief Materials Manager DHD	02673241295 09724090455
26/07/2021	---	MMCT	Sr. Divisional Materials Manager MMCT	022-23094142 09004499006

For detailed information please contact the concerned Depot/Div. Officers. Note : (1) Railway reserves the right to withdraw any lot from e-Auction. (2) e-Auction will start at as per scheduled time. (3) e-Auction catalogues will be available on www.reps.gov.in e-Auction portal. (4) In case of any assistance required regarding e-Auction, digital signatures, Registration procedure and participation, please contact above mentioned Depot Officers. (5) All payment transactions shall be done through the online payment gateway.
(No.S III/Auction Programme-1/JULY-2021 Dated 15/06/2021)
9198

Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://www.facebook.com/WesternRly) Follow us on: twitter.com/WesternRly

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public at large is hereby informed that Late Sh. Mohammad Usman S/o Late. Mohd. Najib A-191, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110025 was having commercial property in our project Vatika Mindscape, Tower A, flat no. 908 addressing 1000 sq. ft. which his legal heirs (Fahish Usman, Harris Usman, Adil Usman, Mrs. Samina Usman, Mohammed Abdulh Usman, Mohammed Umar Usman) requested the company to be transfer to his daughter (Mrs. Sufia Zafar) Any person having any objection on this please contact the company officer details as under within 15 days after which No Claim would be accepted.
Vatika Limited A-002, Ground Floor, Block A, Vatika INX City Centre, Sector-83, Gurugram Haryana, INDIA- 122012 Contact 09555930930

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all concerned that M/s. Skywards Pvt. Ltd., having its office at F-25, Radehy Mohan Drive, Gadaipur Mehrauli, New Delhi 110030 is the sole, absolute, lawful recorded owner and in actual physical possession of the Land measuring 4 Bighas 16 Biswas, comprised in Kharsa Nos. 1241 Min (3-0), 1250 Min (0-8), 1251 Min (0-8), 1247 (0-4), 1245 Min (0-16), situated at Village Fatehpur Beri, Tehsil Mehrauli, New Delhi, by virtue of a registered Sale Deed as Document No. 5975, dated 30.08.2018. A FIR/NCR dated 04.06.2021 vide No. 370164/2021 has been lodged by the client in respect of the above-mentioned sale deed as the same has been lost/misplaced. My client has the full capacity and right to take any legal action in case the above mentioned sale deed is misused by any person in the future. Any person's, institution or any other association or organisation, having any sort of right, title or interest in the said property under or on the basis of the said lost/misplaced Sale Deeds or otherwise may put forth his claim with the undersigned within Ten (10) days of publication of this Notice.
Rajeev Agnihotri, Advocate
Kh. No. 212, Main Road Chhattarpur, Near Sai Baba Temple, New Delhi-74
Enrolment No. D/1940/2006
Mobile no. 9873800468
Email: agnihotri28@gmail.com

Sensex extends losses

AS FED'S TAPER TALK TRIPS WORLD MARKETS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity benchmarks retreated for the second straight session on Thursday, mirroring weakness in global markets after the US Federal Reserve surprised investors by signalling faster-than-expected rate hikes. A sharp drop in the rupee - which plunged 76 paise against the US dollar - also sapped risk appetite, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 178.65 points or 0.34 per cent lower at 52,323.33. The broader NSE Nifty declined 76.15 points or 0.48 per cent to 15,691.40. Banking and finance stocks accounted for most of the losses, while the IT pack saw brisk buying, fuelled by a weak rupee. IndusInd Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.91 per cent, followed by Dr Reddy's, NTPC, Maruti, Bajaj Auto, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel and HDFC. On the other hand, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints, TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra and HCL Tech were among the major gainers, spurring up to 1.86 per cent. "Domestic equities traded

weak today on account of weak global cues led from the FOMC meeting outcome as investors focused more on the US Federal Reserve raising the country's economic growth forecast while noting its projection to hike interest rates sooner than expected. "The Fed raised the US growth forecast to 7 per cent this year, while officials moved their first projected rate increases from 2024 into 2023 and opened talks about when to pull back on the USD 120 billion in monthly bond purchase program," said Vikas Jain, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said a fast normalisation of the US economy and strong job market can lead to the Fed tapering its bond buying. "This can lead to tightening of bonds yields which will impact the pricing of equity asset," he added. Sectorally, BSE power, metal, realty, industrials and utilities indices ended up to 2.38 per cent lower, while IT, tech and FMCG indices closed with gains. Broader BSE mid-cap and smallcap indices fell up to 1.29 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended on a positive note, while Seoul and Tokyo were in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading with losses in mid-session deals.

Rupee falls for 8th day, slumps 76 paise to 74.08 vs USD

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Declining for the eighth consecutive session, the Indian rupee tumbled 76 paise to close below the 74-mark against the US dollar on Thursday, tracking a strong greenback overseas after the US Federal Reserve surprised the market by signalling rate hikes sooner than expected. At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened weak at 73.65 against the American currency, then lost further ground and finally closed at 74.08, showing a fall of 76 paise over its previous close.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended on a positive note, while Seoul and Tokyo were in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading with losses in mid-session deals.

Microsoft names India-born CEO Satya Nadella as tech giant's new Chairman

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Microsoft's India-born CEO Satya Nadella has been appointed as the technology giant's new Chairman, an additional role in which he will "lead the work to set the agenda for the board."

Microsoft Corp on Wednesday announced that the board's independent directors unanimously elected Nadella to the role of board chair, and unanimously elected John W Thompson as the lead independent director, a role he held previously from 2012 to 2014.

"In this role, Nadella will lead the work to set the agenda for the board, leveraging his deep understanding of the business to elevate the right strategic opportunities and identify key risks and mitigation approaches for the board's review," the company said in a statement.

Nadella, 53, succeeds Thompson, who as the lead independent director, will retain significant authority including providing input on behalf of the independent directors on board agendas, calling meetings of the inde-



pendent directors, setting agendas for executive sessions, and leading performance evaluations of the CEO, the technology giant said. Nadella, who has served as chief executive since 2014, has helped transform the company into a leader in cloud computing in recent years, resulting in blockbuster earnings and a market cap of close to USD 2 trillion, CNN reported. In addition to these role changes, the board declared a quarterly dividend of USD 0.56 per share. The dividend is payable September 9, 2021, to shareholders of record on August 19, 2021. Nadella succeeded Steve Ballmer to become Microsoft's CEO in 2014.

NPPA asks drug makers to ensure GST cuts passed on to consumer

IAN ■ NEW DELHI

In order to ensure the cuts in GST rates of essential Covid-19 drugs and other medications is passed on to consumers, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority has directed all pharmaceutical manufacturing and marketing companies to revise the maximum retail price (MRP) on drugs and formulations immediately taking into effect the reduced tax rate.

The move from the pharmaceutical regulator is expected to ensure that the tax cuts benefits consumers by way of low cost of drugs and medications in the current difficult period of the pandemic.

The office memorandum issued by NPPA said that the change in GST rate has an impact on fixation of MRP of items attracting tax.

As the MRP of drugs and formulations is inclusive of tax, therefore, any downward change in tax/GST rates should be reflected in MRP and the benefit of this reduction should be passed on to the consumers, it said.

BRIEFS

HEALTH MINI PRAISES VACCINATION PERSONNEL

Jaipur: Health Minister Dr Raghu Sharma congratulated officers and employees associated with vaccination on administration of 2 crore vaccination doses in the State under covid-19 vaccination programme. He has called upon the vaccination personnel to work sincerely in future too with the same diligence and enthusiasm and help people in saving from the effects of covid-19 virus.

FOURTEEN CROSS DISABILITY EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES OPENED IN THE COUNTRY

Dr Thaaarchand Gehlot, Hon'ble Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment inaugurated 14 Cross Disability Early Intervention Centres located in 7 National Institutes and 7 Composite Regional Centres under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India through the virtual platform in the presence of Hon'ble Union Ministers of State in the Ministry, Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar, Shri Ramdas Athawale, Shri Rattan Lal Kataria and Secretary, DEPwD, Ms Anjali Bhatwara.

DIRECTOR TOURISM JAMMU CONDUCTES TOUR

Vivekanand Rai (IRS), Director Tourism Jammu today conducted an extensive tour of Patnitop, Sudhmahadev and Mantalai Area. He was accompanied by a team of officers where various Tourism projects undertaken by the Department were inspected. While paying obeisance to the holy shrines of Sudhmahadev and Mantalai he also interacted with local pujaris and tourists and listened to their suggestions for developing these areas. Sudhmahadev located 112 Km from Jammu, houses a highly revered Shiva Temple which is believed to be nearly 3000 years old, having a black marble idol of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati besides a Trishul.

DOORSTEP DELIVERY OF MILK, FRUITS, VEGETABLES

New Delhi: During the Covid pandemic, when buyers are extremely skeptical about buying their groceries physically, doorstep delivery of fruits and vegetables has seen high demands. Supr Daily enables customers to place their grocery orders anytime by 11 pm and get them delivered by 7 am the next day. "Nothing brings us more joy than ensuring the safety of our customers and giving them the convenience to get everything they need, all at one place," said Puneet Kumar, co-founder of Supr Daily.

Flipkart, Amazon challenge court order on CCI probe: Report



IAN ■ NEW DELHI

Walmart Inc's Flipkart and Amazon.com Inc have filed legal challenges against the resumption of an antitrust investigation into their business practices, a global news wire reported.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) launched an investigation in January last year after a complaint accused Flipkart and Amazon of promoting select sellers on their e-commerce platforms and using deep discounts to stifle competition. The companies have denied wrongdoing and near-immediate legal challenges from the pair stalled the investigation for more than a year until a court last week ruled it could resume, having dismissed arguments that the CCI lacked evidence.

The fresh appeal from Flipkart filed on June 16, argues that decision by the Karnataka court to allow the probe to resume was erroneous and must be put on hold, the report said.

Indian IT sector continues to be net hirer, top 5 IT cos to add over 96,000 employees: Nasscom

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT industry body Nasscom on Thursday said the sector continues to be a net hirer of skilled talent, and that the top 5 Indian IT companies are planning to add over 96,000 employees in 2021-22.

The statement comes in the backdrop of a report by Bank of America that said domestic software firms are set to slash 3 million jobs by 2022 as automation gains pace across industries, especially in the tech space.

"With the evolution of technology and increasing automation, the nature of traditional IT jobs and roles will evolve overall leading to creation of newer jobs. The industry continues to be a net hirer of skilled talent, adding 1,38,000 people in FY2021," Nasscom said in a statement.

It asserted that players have robust hiring plans for 2021-22 with the top 5 Indian IT companies planning to add over

96,000 employees.

"The industry is upskilling more than 250,000 employees in digital skills and has hired more than 40,000 fresh digitally-trained talent, indicating at its commitment and investment towards rapid enhancement of workforce capabilities...With one of the strongest deal pipeline, and strong business outlook, the industry is on track to meet its vision of USD 300-350 billion revenues by 2025," Nasscom said.

It added that the industry will continue to be a net creator of jobs and is "committed to people-centric innovation, relentless talent focus", and delivering a superior transformative customer experience.

Nasscom pointed out that the business process management (BPM) sector in India, which has been called out as the sector ripe for automation, employs over 1.4 million people (excluding domestic and in-house) and not 9 million as the said report suggested.



Sebi bans Shri Research Services from securities mkt



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has barred Shri Research Services and its proprietor Gourav Kumar Gour from the securities markets for at least two years and has asked them to refund the money that was collected by providing unauthorised investment tips to investors.

In addition, a penalty of ₹ 5 lakh has been imposed on them. They have to pay the fine within 45 days, Sebi said in its order passed on Wednesday. Sebi noted that Shri Research Services and its sole proprietor Gour carried out investment advisory activities without obtaining a certificate of registration from the regulator. This violated the provisions of Investment Advisers (IA) Regulations.

The regulator said that a total of ₹14.63 lakh was credited in their accounts for the January-July, 2018 period. However, it could not be confirmed whether such amounts were received only from investors for unregistered investment advisory services.

Corporate Affairs Ministry eases rules for board meetings conducted through virtual mode

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Boards of companies can now approve annual financial statements and matters related to mergers, among others, at meetings held through video conferencing and other audio-visual means.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic resulting in the shift from physical meetings to virtual ones, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has amended rules pertaining to 'meetings of board and its powers' under the Companies Act, 2013.

Nangia Andersen LLP Partner Sandeep Jhunjhunwala said the Companies Act allows permitted conducting meetings through video conferencing but key matters such as approving the financial statements, board's report and prospectus required physical meetings.

"Acknowledging the diffi-

culty always caused by the ongoing pandemic, the MCA has eliminated the list of matters that could be conducted through audio-visual means.

"This step would go a long way in ensuring that the hurdles faced by companies are reduced and business can be carried on smoothly with the aid of technology," he noted.

Earlier, the rules specifically mentioned a list of matters that cannot be dealt with by a company's board through video conferencing or other audio-visual means. Approval of the annual financial statements, board's report, prospectus, matters relating to amalgamation, merger, demerger, acquisition and takeover, and holding of the audit committee meetings for consideration of accounts, were not permitted.

With the latest amendment, the list has been done away with.



Khadi sales decline 16 pc to ₹3,527.71 cr in 2020-21: MSME Ministry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Khadi sales contracted by 16 per cent year-on-year to ₹ 3,527.71 crore in 2020-21, as spinning and weaving activities across the country impacted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the MSME ministry said on Thursday. The overall production in the Khadi sector also declined to ₹1,904.49 crore in 2020-21, as compared to ₹2,292.44 crore in 2019-20, it added.

The production and sales in the Khadi sector, however, slightly declined as spinning and weaving activities across the country took a major hit during the pandemic, the ministry said. "The overall production in the Khadi sector in 2020-21 was recorded at ₹1,904.49 crore as compared to ₹2,292.44 crore in 2019-20, while the overall Khadi sales stood at ₹3,527.71 crore as compared to ₹4,211.26 crore in the previous year," it added.

PLI scheme to help India become Aatmanirbhar in APIs: ICRA

IAN ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for key raw materials such as bulk drugs and formulations, with a total incentive outlay of ₹210 billion will help the country become Aatmanirbhar, ratings agency ICRA said.

As per a note by the agency, PLI scheme will reduce import dependence and boost domestic production of high-value products; and increase the value addition in exports.

High value-added pharmaceutical products are generally R&D intensive and difficult to manufacture and these include products such as complex generics, patented products, and biologics among others.

Further, the GoI has also announced the promotion of the bulk drug parks scheme with a financial outlay of Rs 30 billion for three select states, which will provide infrastructure assistance to the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) players.

PUBLIC NOTICE
General public is hereby informed that Mr. Ramesh Kumar Arora So Late Mangat Rai and Mr. Mohan Lal Vohra S/o Mr. Hops Ram are intending to sell Flat on Second Floor without Roof/Terrace rights, (RMS/Southern Part) of property No. 1039/1/14, admeasuring 90 sq. yds, Khata No. 15/14, New Krishna, 115/159M, Ward No. 1, St. John Church compound, Mehrauli, New Delhi 110032, to Smt. Kalu Selvi Madhavan W/o Sh. Madhavan Murthy, to be financed by Mrs. DM Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd. Further it is informed that there are no other legal heirs of Late Sh. Mangat Rai except Mrs. Alshia Rai, Mrs. Oshreen Rai, Mrs. Pooja Rai and Mr. Ramesh Kumar Arora. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 07 days from date of this notice or below address, failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.
RAGHAV TIWARI (Advocate)
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi - 110001
Mob.: +91-9876188282

NORTHERN RAILWAY Tender Notice
The Executive Signal & Telecom Engineer/Const./Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender for the following work:-

Name of work & Place	Modification in Existing SSI westrace (VLM) make of MOZ station i.e.w. doubling work of MTC-MOZ section in DLI Division of Northern Railway.
Completion period	03 (Three) Months from the date of issue of LOA
Approx. Cost	Rs.20.44 Lakh approx.
Earnest Money amount	NIL
Last date of upload and Date of opening of tender	Tender document can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS web site w.e.f. 23.06.2021 to 09.07.2021 at 11.30 hrs. Tender will be opened immediately after close of uploading of tender.
Sale/availability of tender document on Rly. Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 23.06.2021 at 10.30 hrs.
No. 579-Sig-PS-Tender-115 Dated : 17.06.2021	1334/2021

Serving Customers With A Smile

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Follow us on @SCRRailwaysIndia
Details of the Tender Notices of S.C Railway can be seen on our website: www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

Tender No. GTL-EM-01-2021-22
Tender No. GTL-EM-04-2021-22
Date: 16.06.2021

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/Maintenance/Guntakal acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works

1.Tender No: GTL-EM-01-2021-22
Description of work : Guntakal Division: Guntakal-Proposed construction of Divisional Staff Canteen in DPM's office compound - Electrical arrangements.
Approximate Value : ₹. 1235163/-
Closing date and time: 12-07-2021 at 12.00hrs

2.Tender No: GTL-EM-04-2021-22
Description of work : Guntakal Division - Outsourcing for Maintenance of water coolers and AC plants in GTL-DHNE,HX,DMR,RCAD and GY section for a period of two years (24 Months).
Approximate Value : ₹. 6860010/-
Closing date and time: 12-07-2021 at 12.00hrs

For Bidding the tender and other details login to http://www.ireps.gov.in. Corrigendum of tender, if any will be issued online only. Tender Document may be downloaded from to http://www.ireps.gov.in by the tenderers free of cost.
Note: To participate/Bid in this e-Tender, tenderer should have valid DSC (Digital Signature Certificate).
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer, A0593/21 (Maintenance), Guntakal
For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at http://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

CSB Bank
Formerly The Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd.
CSB Bank, Greater Kailash-2 Branch M-17, Greater Kailash-II, New Delhi-110048

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE
CSB Bank Limited, Greater Kailash-2 branch had granted gold loan against pledge of gold ornaments to the below mentioned borrower(s). Notice has been issued to him/them demanding repayment of the amount with interest and charges thereon. Since they have failed to repay the balance outstanding in the respective accounts, we are constrained to recover the amount by sale of gold ornaments in public auction and if the auction does not fetch required amount, bank will proceed with the sale by private treaty/contract. Bank reserves its right to change/extend the date and venue of auction without assigning any reason.

Sl No	Name of borrower	Gross Weight of Pledge Items (in grams)	Overdue Gold Loan Account no.	Amount	Balance as on 17-06-2021
1	Pankaj Mittal	21.3	0296-04192084-000001	70000/-	77406/-
2	Pankaj Mittal	9.2	0296-04192084-000002	25000/-	27731/-

The auction will be conducted at the premises of CSB Bank Limited, Greater Kailash-II branch premises situated at M-17, Main Market, Dohli House, Greater Kailash-II, Delhi-110048 on 25th June 2021. Interested parties may contact the Branch Manager in the above address. Participants should attend the auction along with copy of Pan Card, passport size photo, valid identity proof and address proof on the date of auction.
Place: Greater Kailash-II
Date: 17-06-2021
BRANCH MANAGER

PIONEER AGRO EXTRACTS LIMITED
Reg. Office: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Patna
Patna-801-145025
Website: www.pioneeragro.co.in
E-mail: compliance@pioneeragro.co.in
Telephone: +91-196-234532/53/54
CH-11819P01959P1602975

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that a meeting of the Board of directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Thursday, June 24, 2021, at Chhoti Nohar, Malaspur, Patna, Bihar, India, to consider and approve the audited financial results of the Company for the fourth quarter and financial year ended March 31, 2021.
Notice is further given that Trading Window has already been closed and shall remain closed till June 25, 2021 pursuant to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015.
The Notice of the Board meeting is also available on the website of the Company at www.pioneeragro.co.in and also on the website of BSE Ltd. i.e. www.bseindia.com.
Sd/-
By order of the Board
For Pioneer Agro Extracts Limited
Dikshant Singh Panwar
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer
Place: Patna
Date: 17-06-2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING
General Public is hereby informed that a lady namely Beena, W/o Yash Pal, R/o H.No. C-68, First Floor, Budh Vihar, Ph-1, Delhi, Age: 45 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing: Blue Colour Saree, Black Blouse, Blue Colour Shoes in her feet has been missing from her home since 08.04.2021 at 12.30 pm. In this regard a DD No. 121A dated 08.04.2021 has been registered at P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this lady please inform undersigned.
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/788/RD/2021
SHO
P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27521294, 27521295

SEARCH FOR MISSING
General public is hereby informed that a lady Shivani D/o Jagdish Parshad R/o H.No. I-62, Vijay Vihar, Phase -1, Delhi has been missing since 03.06.2021 from her house at 4 PM. In this regard, DD No.67A, dated 05.06.2021 has been registered at PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing girl, but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing girl is as under:
Name: Shivani, Gender: Female, Age: 21 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing: Black colour lower, white colour t-shirt and shoes on her feet.
If anyone has any information regarding this missing girl, kindly inform SHO/Vijay Vihar, Delhi.
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/880/RD/2021
SHO
P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi,
Ph. No. 011-27061294

ANS INDUSTRIES LIMITED
Regd. Off.: 136 KM, GT Road, VIII & P.O Shamgarh, Karnal (Haryana)
Head Off.: 1442, Ashram, Mathura Road, New Delhi-110014. CIN: L15130HR199AP032362
E-mail : ansagro.limited@gmail.com, Website : www.ansfoods.com

NOTICE
This is to inform you that pursuant to Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, the 29th day of June, 2021 at 3.00 PM. at the head office of the Company inter alia, to consider, approve and take on record the standalane unaudited financial result for the quarter and year ended 31st March, 2021.
This information is also available on the website of the Company and website of BSE.
For ANS Industries Limited
Sd/-
(Manoj Mishra)
Company Secretary
M.No. ACS-18801
Place : New Delhi
Date : 17.06.2021

MODI RUBBER LIMITED
CIN: L25199UP1971PLCO03392
Registered Office: Modinagar - 201204; Dist. Ghaziabad, (U.P.)
Corporate Office: 4-7C, DDA Shopping Centre, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110025; Website: www.modirubberlimited.com
Email: investors@modigrup.net; Phone: +91-11-47107398

NOTICE
Pursuant to regulation 29 of SEBI (LODR) 2015, Notice is hereby given that a 293rd Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 30th June, 2021 at 12.30 PM at Corporate Office : 4-7/C, DDA Shopping Centre, 4th Floor, New Friends Colony, New Delhi- 110 025 to inter-alia approve the following:
1. Audited Standalone and Consolidated Financial Statements of the Company for the year ended on March 31, 2021.
For Modi Rubber Limited
Sd/-
(S K Bajpai)
Place : New Delhi
Date : 17.6.2021
Head - Legal & Co. Secretary



GIVE HIM THE FASHION BOOST HE NEEDS

For Father's Day, designer KUNAL TANNA curates a few quirky, stylish and fun looks. By TEAM VIVA

A father is someone you look up to no matter how tall you grow. Growing up we all have a fixed notion of how dads usually are. Or at least are perceived to be a certain way. In 2020, the pandemic changed everything and saw most dads take on an array of chores. From working from home, lending a helping hand in daily chores to hanging out with the kids and juggling zoom calls at the same time, we have seen new-age dads do it all. While they love chilling in their tracksuits and tees at home, this Father's Day give them the fashion boost he needs. Fashion designer Kunal Tanna curates a few quirky, stylish and fun looks for your lockdown dad! Check it out:

THE SUNDAY BRUNCH DAD

For all the social media dads out there, your Sunday Brunch is incomplete without the perfect Insta pic. So, make brunch fun with this off-white turtleneck knit teamed with a lazy rainy day gray thread textured cardigan style jacket.



THE ZOOM MEETING DAD

A formal shirt and pant have always been the go-to attire for working dads. This time lets up the style quotient and try out some layering. Try on this classic light blue shirt and throw on a comfortable melange beige knit. To add that final dapper look for zoom call meetings, you can layer it with a tone-on-tone thread textured reversible bandi jacket.



THE ONLINE WEDDING BARAATI DAD

Every wedding is incomplete without the *baraat* and its *baraatis*. If your dad was looking forward to attending one such wedding and the lockdown killed his enthusiasm? Then, this salmon and beige patched kurta paired with an asymmetrical overlapped long bandi jacket is exactly what he needs. Complete this look with a contrasting blue jute silk trouser. After all, he needs to make a *dhamakedaar* entry as the online wedding *baraati*.

THE FUN WITH KIDS DAD

With everyone at home, spending time with kids during the lockdown is definitely an unscheduled activity now. If you will be indulging in fun games etc, then your attire needs to be fun too. Opt for this blocky print trousers with a white side seam placket polo tunic. Make sure your kids don't have paint on their hands.



THE DATE NIGHT DAD

If your dad is a true-blue romantic. Then this dark blue shirt tunic with a gray mock layered collar worn with dark blue Matty trousers will set the fashion mood for date night.

THE DAILY CHORES DAD

Sharing household chores has become a norm during the lockdown. Well, you can make running errands look stylish in these beige sketchy checks print polo tunic. Pair it with beige shorts to keep it cool and breezy for everyday chores.



THE KITCHEN KING DAD

Does your dad love to play chef? Then spruce up his look in this blue mesh print tunic teamed with shorts. Also, remind your MasterChef Dad to wear an apron. So, this Father's Day give your #SuperHeroDad the stylish look he deserves.



Being economical in a time of extravagance

Intelligent Variable Transmission (IVT) on the Verna and other Hyundai-Kia cars as well as on the Honda City and Nissan Magnite might prove to be a major ace up the sleeves of the automobile sector



The last few months have not been easy by any stretch of the imagination. And if you own a vehicle, the increased cost of fuel has only added to your headaches. Sure, those of us who have been driving around in the lockdown have found emptier roads than usual, but exactly a ton of places to visit. Then again, some of us have driven around more than most, take me for example, finding myself in a situation where I had to make a few long-distance journeys to Kanpur from Delhi.

At the start of the lockdown, I found myself with a Hyundai Verna IVT, the 'Intelligent Variable Transmission' variant which is what Hyundai-Kia call their Continuously Variable Transmission or CVT. Now, CVTs are not new in cars, and they have been around in two-wheelers for decades. They are perfect in lower power output scenarios, but nowadays, with better machining and easier manufacturing, manufacturers have been fitting CVTs in cars with higher power and torque outputs. Honda, which pioneered the use of CVTs on their two-wheelers (remember the old

Kinetic Honda) brought CVTs onto the last generation of the City and the current generation car gets one as well. As costs for such gearboxes fitted in cars have come down, vehicles such as the Nissan Magnite are also getting CVT boxes. In fact, it may be only a matter of time before CVT gearboxes replace the slow Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) gearboxes.

However, truth be told, I'd never spent time with a CVT vehicle for an extended period or made regular highway runs in such vehicles. But these last three months with the Verna have been illuminating, to say the least. CVTs have their flaws, they are not designed for drivers who push the pedal to the metal. It is not easy to explain the way they work without diagrams, but you can think of two cones at the end of two shafts — one from the engine and the driveshaft that is connected by a band, in-car CVTs this is usually a metal chain and well, the cones move back and forth giving an infinite amount of ratios between the engine shaft and the drive shaft, thus the

name CVT. Well, in practical applications, there are usually a few steps, in the case of the Verna IVT, eight steps which you can consider as 'fixed' ratios. This is best explained by a diagram, and you can watch an explainer I have out on YouTube under my Excuse The Beard series.

Hyundai-Kia have both been really aggressive in pushing their Dual-Clutch Transmissions (DCT) vehicles from the i20 to the Seltos. That is a totally different type of automatic technology where there are two clutches, one for odd gears and one for even (and the reverse) gears. Because of that gear shifts in DCT vehicles is lightning fast and they are far more oriented to the enthusiastic driver. In the i20 DCT I kept over two months earlier this year, it was a blast to drive. The IVT cars are not so much fun to drive, being far more sedate.

However, as petrol prices cross ₹100 in some states and might even cross ₹125 in a couple of months, the IVT comes into its own when it

comes to fuel economy. The Verna I drove delivered over 18.5 kilometres per litre on the highway and even inside the city delivered over 15 kilometres per litre on longer drives. The Verna is not a small car, it is well-equipped and being summer, the air-con was on all the time as was the seat cooling. I did not deliberately drive economically, keeping the car at the speed limit of the expressways, albeit on cruise control and the IVT always kept the 1.5 litres naturally aspirated petrol engine is a very sweet spot. Delhi to Kanpur is near as makes no difference 500 kilometres, and there are some bad patches towards the end. But it was still superb. Put on a podcast, there are some excellent ones to listen to and drive this car, and you'll be surprised. Not just at how nice it is, but also how little fuel it drinks to get the job done.

Dinosaur juice is getting expensive folks, and the IVT on the Verna and other Hyundai-Kia cars as well as on the Honda City and Nissan Magnite might have a major ace up their sleeve.

To look at artist Krishen Khanna's *bandwallahs*, at the Grosvenor online show in London, is to understand both sensitivity and sensibility. The colours, the contours, and the charisma of life are what looks back at you in this series called — *Paintings In My Sitting Room*.

Most of Khanna's work is figurative; he chose to not explore the abstraction that most of his contemporaries were delving into. In an interview with Saffronart, he says, "I used to do abstracts earlier and I have now moved on to human forms. I thought that the person or the individual is being neglected; the person in a particular situation who is influenced by the conditions around. I want to now emphasise the human beings caught up in their particular condition."

Khanna's exploration of *bandwallahs* began in the early 1970s, these members of local brass bands engaged to play at weddings and other public ceremonies caught his eye for their uniforms and their devotion to the occupation. Speaking of how he came to paint his first portraits of these musicians, Khanna explains that once, while driving out of his Delhi studio, the path was blocked by the marching band of a wedding procession. The image of these musicians dressed all in red with their big brass instruments wrapped around them still remains as powerful for the artist today as it was that day in Delhi.

Khanna's suite of works this time range from carefully created controlled compositions to gestural, spontaneous works created last year and this year. Between a few monochromatic drawings and coloured paintings, his deployment of colour and strokes that evoke the human situation is deeply heartwarming. His *bandwallahs* series captures not just the quiet energy of a few musicians. In his many monochromatic works, one sees the energy in the frenzy of lines and tension in the tight compositions, with the overall picture pulsating with the interplay of formal elements. Through a lack of physical detail; Khanna's paintings aspire towards quality of timelessness and universality. As an artist, he defies categorisation as he simultaneously occupies multiple roles — as a narrator, as a formalist, an artist who captures precious moments as a narrative of insight and in-depth understanding.

Timeless pieces

To look at artist KRISHEN KHANNA's *bandwallahs*, at the Grosvenor online show in London, is to understand both sensitivity and sensibility, says UMA NAIR



Using a palette dominated by red, yellow and green, Khanna paints the *bandwallah* as a tragicomic representative of the subaltern and a symbol of urban life in modern India. Though the artist portrays these men in red — practicing, playing or at rest — as cheery, their cheer is only part of their job. Their celebration is not spontaneous; it is just another mode of survival in the city. He propels us to think of the aftermath of the lives of these humble musicians. When on duty, they play into the night and must also play early morning before twilight hours for the departure of the bride to her new home.

Khanna says, "The sitting room is hardly a sitting room per se; my wife Renu reads a lot so has all her books around. It is part library and part studio with furniture that has to be moved from time to time. It is a completely new experience moving away from my usual studio in the basement. I have to look for paints on the ground which

are all mixed up and improvise but it's all a part of the game in the end." "In this current atmosphere, one can become very depressed, but fortunately, for me, there are the *bandwallahs* who are still making noise. When I'm painting them, I have to concentrate fully on them. The *bandwallahs* take prime position in my life right now," he adds.

Khanna is known for his thematic sensibility, ranging from everyday domestic scenes, moments of historical importance, scenes from myths and poetry to portraits of people from his life and his love for literature. He has continually worked with the contrasts between the mundane and the sublime, the ordinary and the epic dimension. Constantly oscillating between the banal and the spectacular, for Khanna, the personal relativity is the fulcrum of his artistic ferment. The closest friend of the progressives still paints and is happy to create in his own home in Gurugram.

TREND BLAZER

SIDDHANT RELIVES CHILDHOOD

Actor **SIDDHANT CHATURVEDI** posted a clip on Instagram that shows him sitting on a swing. Alongside the video, he wrote a poem in Hindi, "Akhri baar jhoole pe kab baithe the? Pedh se jaamun kab tode the? Kaagaz ki plane kab udai thi? X and O kab jeete the? Likhne se zada toh pen-fight mein use hoti thi pen, TV pe dekhte Popeye, Dexter aur Ben-10, geeli rumal ko ghuma ke phatak, kache aam pe namak aur laal mirch ka chatak. Bachpan toh kalpana ko pankh deta hai, aur jaise jaise badey hote hain ye system uss udaan ko jung deta hai."



fairtalk



'Bell Bottom is a solid product and Akshay (Kumar) sir, like in every film of his, is simply outstanding. One has to see the film to understand what he has done. I'm grateful that I have a big film coming out now. It's been a long wait to see my films get a release, but I'm being super hopeful now that the audience will be entertained by them.'

dailytalk



'I see a lot of singers (mostly the forthcoming ones) doing covers and mashups of songs without due credit. I have a sincere request. Please credit the original composers and lyricists, not just the singer. With due respect to the singers: A song is a team effort and crediting just the vocalist or just one person is not right. It is just the right thing to do'

MAYA OPENS UP ON HER ROLE IN LUCA

MAYA RUDOLPH, who features in the voice cast of the forthcoming animated film *Luca*, says an experience from motherhood in real life helped her bring alive her role. "It was pretty easy to relate to Daniela. When your children are pushing boundaries, you want to show them that you love them but you're serious. That can be an incredibly difficult balance, but one that every parent understands," says she.





PITAARA OF WHOLESOME FOOD

UDIT MAHESHWARI invited us over to try the wares of his delivery kitchen. Locked down at home, CHRISTY VARGHESE projected his soul to the chef's base to interact with him and try some delectable dishes, while following COVID-19 restrictions

Chef Udit Maheshwari always wanted to open a restaurant, right from the moment he started training at the Le Cordon Bleu, London. And he was finally able to do so amid a raging pandemic. Not waiting for a more convenient time, he launched Pitaara Kitchen as a delivery kitchen around Diwali, 2020. He plans on converting it into a full-fledged restaurant as soon as the COVID-19 situation subsides.

We decided to project our consciousness to his kitchen with some ahead-of-its-time fictional technology so that we could interact with him while tasting some choice dishes from Pitaara Kitchen. And his offerings were anything but simple.

Right off the bat, the chef presented a set of what looked like purple tinted kebabs. Since we were furnished, we did not wait on customary chit chat and simply picked one up to bite into it. Right from the first bite, we are hooked and we can't help but marvel out loud, "What is this deliciousness?"

The chef laughed and told us this is a starter called the Purple *shikhampuri*. These grated beetroot kebabs were stuffed with hung curd and just melted in our mouth. We were tempted to bite into one, as it tickled our taste buds, and found out that it was better to let the kebab work its magic as it slowly melted and revealed some subtle flavours between our tongue and palate. Along with the creamy, slightly sweet taste there was the slight hint of an intriguing earthy flavour to the

kebabs. Seeing us rubbing our tummy, chef Udit produced a platter of kulchas with a flourish. He announced that these are the Bacon and Kalimpong cheese kulchas. As we munch on one, we catch a whiff of the smoky flavour of the kulchas which were stuffed with desi bacon and indigenous Kalimpong cheese. While serving us a heap of their spicy tomato chutney along with some pudina chutney, the chef shared that these were cooked in the tandoor. We finished them off in a jiffy, and couldn't wait to see what's next in store.

The chef is running a tight ship, and we couldn't help but feel that the Pitaara Kitchen is an extremely successful venture as he seemed to be on his toes all the time. However, for the next dish, he sat down with us and served us some Dogri meat curry and asked his staff to pass on some bajra rotis. He explained that this is a traditional meat curry from the Dogri community of Jammu. The mutton was cooked with some choice spices and had a somewhat sweet taste to it, on account of the sour-dried mango powder it has been finished in, which also lends some viscosity to the gravy.

In between some bites, chef Udit shared, "With the pandemic in full swing, everyone in the food

'With the pandemic in full swing, everyone in the food industry has been forced to focus on delivering. Let's see what the future has in store for us. However, one good thing that has come out of this mess is that everyone is innovating these days'

industry has been forced to focus on delivering. Let's see what the future has in store for us. However, one good thing that has come out of this mess is that everyone is innovating these days."

And we had to agree when we were served the next dish. Aply, and quite simply, named *Tinda!*, it comprised *tindas* (or the Indian squash) stuffed to the brim with cottage cheese and dry fruits. As we dug into the dish with some garlic and kalonji naans, we were thinking that we would never have guessed that this was the humble *tinda* if the chef had not told us. Cooked well in the tandoor, the slight sourness of the vegetable combined well with the stuffing. He encouraged us to try it with the two chutneys and we were overwhelmed by this rich, wholesome dish.

As we smacked our lips, we caught a glimpse of the staff packing some ready to be delivered orders. Spotting us trying to spy, the chef guided us inside and explained that they only use eco-friendly packaging. He further elaborated, "Right from the preparation of the food with ingredients sourced from across India to the delivery, this is our source of innovation. We spare no effort to ensure the wholesome experience of each customer. All members of my staff have been vaccinated, including the people who deliver. And

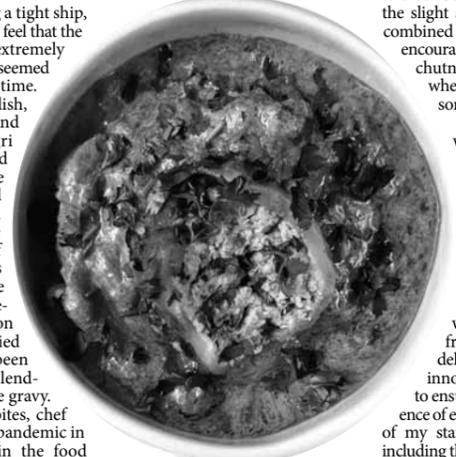
that's right, we don't rely on third parties for deliveries so as to not risk contact with someone who is infected; these are uncertain times after all."

As the chef led us back to our table, we saw the next dish already set in place. We helped ourselves to the *Chemmeen manga* (literally translates as 'prawn with mangoes' in Malayalam) curry as he served us some of their in-house Malabar parotta. The prawns cooked in coconut milk curry with pearl onions and raw mangoes brought back some vivid memories of Kerala backwaters. The parottas were not as lumpy as the usual ones served in malayali hotels across Delhi and we delightfully finished the dish. Biting into a soft pearl onion, we couldn't help but wonder whether this was better than *Tinda!* before we remembered the wise man who said that 'Comparison is the root of all misery...'

We were rubbing our tummies in contentment when the chef unveiled the mango tart. And we were left wishing that we should not have scarfed down as much. The thick, luscious mango curd, topped with roasted pistachios, was complemented by the bajra tart shell it was served in.

We stifled several burps as we bid adieu to the chef. We hope that last bit is enough to convey that you should give the Pitaara Kitchen a chance if you would like to treat yourself to some tweaked regional specialities.

(The delivery kitchen caters in and around South Delhi and you can order from <https://pitaarakitchen.in>.)



Nothing that tomato soup can't fix

■ AVNI KAUL

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

While soups are commonly made in our households during the chilly winter months, here are some reasons that will make you roast, stew, and later puree your tomatoes to prepare a bowl of rich, creamy soup every day.

A single bowl of tomato soup consists of several nutrients that include vitamins A, C, E, and K besides important minerals and antioxidants that are beneficial for your overall health.

BONE HEALTH

The vitamin K and calcium in tomato soup help you get healthy bones. Lycopene in tomato soup boosts bone mass which helps countering osteoporosis. Consuming tomato soup daily decreases the blood levels of TNF alpha by approximately 34 per cent. A deficiency in lycopene could increase oxidative stress in the bones and cause unwanted changes in the tissues. You can keep these issues at bay by making tomato soup a daily part of your meal.

DISEASE COUNTERING LYCOPENE

As stated before, tomato soup is rich in lycopene, the pigment that provides the fruit its bright color. Processed tomato has more lycopene than raw ones. Lycopene neutralises the oxidative damage that occurs due to free radicals, a molecule that assists ageing. A diet rich in lycopene helps fight chronic diseases and prevents stroke. A cup of tomato soup gives 13.3 milligrams of lycopene. That's sufficient to keep your body fit.

The high amount of vitamin C in tomato soup gives arterial protection. It bolsters the heart and protects it from problems like blockage of arteries and helps prevent the risk of a stroke. It decreases the deposition of fats in the blood vessels, decreasing bad cholesterol. Tomato soup also helps prevent the clumping of platelet cells in the blood.

BLOOD CIRCULATION

Selenium present in tomato soup improves blood circulation which prevents anaemia which is one of its top benefits. A single serving of tomato soup gives 7 micrograms of selenium, providing 11 per cent of the daily recommended intake.

VITAMINS

Tomato soup is a rich source of vitamins A and C. Vitamin A is needed for tissue development. It activates the genes of the new cells, helping them to grow into mature tissue. A bowl of tomato soup gives nearly 16 per cent of the daily recommended quantity of vitamin A. Vitamin C is needed to maintain healthy tendons and ligaments. Tomato soup gives 20 per cent of the daily recommended quantity of vitamin C, helping you to keep your body healthy.

So, what are you waiting for? Prepare your bowl of tomato soup right away! Having a bowl of tomato soup every day helps to keep the body healthy.

(The author is a nutritionist, wellness coach, certified diabetes educator and the founder of a diet and nutrition brand.)



R E C I P E S



CHEESY POTATO AND QUINOA CAKE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Potato (boiled, grated): 240 gm
- Quinoa: 240 gm
- Green chillies: 10 gm
- Smoked cheese: 80 gm
- Ginger: 25 gm
- Coriander: as per preference
- Crushed chillies: 1 tsp
- Oil: 50 gm
- Black pepper: 1 tsp
- Chaat masala: 2 tsp
- Salt to taste

METHOD

- Wash and boil Quinoa, then cool it down.
- Peel ginger, wash green

chillies, coriander and finely chop them all.

- In a bowl take boiled, grated potato, quinoa, chopped ginger, green chillies, coriander and mix it well with the bread crumbs and other spices.

- Make a round ball of the mixture and stuff the smoked cheese in the middle of the ball.

- Refrigerate for 20 minutes.

- Heat oil in a pan and deep fry.

- Serve hot with mint & tamarind chutney and quinoa salad with fruits on the side.

Courtesy: Michelin Plate Winner chef Dayashankar Sharma, Heritage Dulwich, London.

STRAWBERRY SPONGE CAKE

WHAT YOU NEED

- Butter: 40gm
- Eggs: 2
- Sugar: 45 gm
- Almond powder: 35 gm
- Flour: 15 gm
- Pinch of Salt
- Pinch of baking soda
- Strawberry flour: ¼ tsp
- Raspberry red food colour: ¼ tsp

METHOD

- Add butter to a



CALIFORNIA WALNUT AND CARROT FALAFEL

WHAT YOU NEED

- Chickpeas: 300 gm
- California walnuts (chopped): 100 gm
- Onion: 1
- Medium sized carrots: 4
- Chopped parsley: 2 tsp
- Chopped cilantro (optional): 2 tsp
- A pinch of cumin



- A pinch of salt
- Pepper to taste

METHOD

- Soak the chickpeas for 15 to 20 hours, then drain the water and dry for a while on an absorbent paper.
- Chop the chickpeas until they have a gritty texture.
- Chop onion, parsley, carrots and cilantro into small pieces and add to the chickpeas. Then add cumin,

microwave safe glass bowl.

- Microwave for one minute at 375°C.
- Add the eggs and sugar in microwave safe glass bowl.
- Whisk the mixture till fluffy.
- Add all remaining ingredients to the mixture and mix and fold well.
- Pour it in a cake mould and even the mixture.
- Microwave for four minutes at 375°C.

Serve hot, with fruit coulis.
 Courtesy: Whirlpool, India.



DESSERT COCKTAIL: SPEYSIDE TIRAMISU

WHAT YOU NEED

- Glenfiddich 12-year-old: 60ml
- Chocolate sauce: 15 ml
- Single cream: 15 ml
- Espresso shot: 15 ml
- Caramel syrup/ honey/ maple syrup: 10 ml
- Orange peel/ cinnamon: as per preference

METHOD

- In a shaker glass filled with ice, pour all of the above ingredients and shake well.
- Strain and serve straight up in a coupe/ martini/ margarita glass.
- Garnish with orange peel/ cinnamon.

Courtesy: Angad Singh Gandhi, Glenfiddich India brand ambassador.



AVOCADO AND MANGO URAMAKI

WHAT YOU NEED

For the sushi rice:

- Japanese sticky rice: ½ cup
- Vinegar: 1/5 cup
- Sugar: 1/5 cup
- Salt: 1 tsp

For the sushi rolling:

- Avocado, cut length-wise: 1 bowl

- Alphonso mango, cut length-wise: 1 bowl
- Wasabi paste: 1 tsp
- Sushi nori: 1
- Gari: 1 tsp
- Soy: 2 tsp
- Black sesame seed: ½ tsp
- White sesame seed: ½ tsp

METHOD

For cooking the rice:

- Wash and rinse the sushi rice in running water to extract the excess starch from the rice grains. (process to be repeated five times)
- Boil the sushi rice with water, with the ratio of 1:1 ¼.
- Make the sushi vinegar by mixing vinegar, sugar and salt.
- Once the rice is cooked, mix the rice and sushi vinegar together and keep it covered with a moist

cloth until used further.

For rolling the sushi:

- Place the nori sheet on the sushi mat and uniformly spread a handful of sushi rice on the sheet.
- Sprinkle a mix of white and black sesame seeds on the sushi rice.
- Flip the nori sheet in such a manner that the sushi rice is facing the sushi mat.

- Place the cut alphonso mango and avocado on the nori sheet.

- Gently roll the sushi into a square shape applying even pressure throughout the roll and cut into eight equal pieces with a sharp knife.
- Serve with gari, wasabi and soy.

Courtesy: Masterchef Amit Patra, Edo restaurant, ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru.

6:30 pm vs 9:30 pm vs 12:30 am
LIVE TELECAST ON SONY TEN 2 NETWORK



TWO IN 2 FOR AZZURRI

Mancini's men confirm Euro 2020 knockout berth with 3-0 win against Swiss

AFP ■ ROME



Italy's Manuel Locatelli, right, celebrates with his teammates after scoring his side's second goal during the Euro 2020 group A match between Italy and Switzerland at the Olympic stadium in Rome on Wednesday night

Italy became the first team to reach the knockout stage of Euro 2020 as midfielder Manuel Locatelli scored twice in a 3-0 win over Switzerland in Rome on Wednesday.

The Azzurri, now unbeaten in 29 matches and having won their last 10 games without conceding a goal, sit first in Group A and are guaranteed a top-two finish and last-16 berth. "We played well, we wanted to win at all costs," Italy coach Roberto Mancini told RAI. "They started well, it was not easy to win a second game in five days."

Mancini's men, looking to win Italy a second European title after their sole success in

1968, host Wales in their final group game on Sunday, with top spot up for grabs.

A new star shone for Italy at the Stadio Olimpico, where they had brushed aside Turkey 3-0 in the tournament's opening match last week, as Sassuolo's Locatelli scored twice before

Ciro Immobile's late third. Captain Giorgio Chiellini had an early effort ruled out by VAR for handball, before the 36-year-old defender was forced off with what appeared to be a thigh injury.

But the hosts always looked the more dangerous side and took the lead in the 26th minute.

Locatelli played a wonderful volleyed pass to his Sassuolo teammate Domenico Berardi on the wing, who powered to the byline and picked out Locatelli for a simple tap-in.

The three points and a place in the knockout phase for the fourth straight European Championship were all but secured less than seven minutes after the interval, when a flowing move ended with Locatelli driving a left-footed shot into the bottom corner from outside the box.

Immobile had wasted a couple of earlier chances but did grab his second goal of the tournament in the 89th minute, curling a low effort past Swiss goalkeeper Yann Sommer.

Switzerland will now likely have to beat Turkey in Baku on Sunday to reach the next round.



Outgoing Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos, right, poses with 4 UEFA Champions League and 5 La Liga trophies that he won as a player during his 16 year stay at Santiago Bernabeu

Ramos says goodbye to Real Madrid

AFP ■ MADRID

Sergio Ramos broke down in tears, saying leaving Real Madrid was one of the most difficult moments of his life as he bid farewell on Thursday after 16 years at the club.

Ramos and Real Madrid president Florentino Perez delivered short speeches in a presentation room at the club's training ground, with Ramos' family in the audience.

"The moment has come, one of the most difficult in my life, because you are never ready to leave Real Madrid," Ramos said.

The defender played 671 games for Real Madrid and will be remembered as one of the club's greatest ever players, having won five La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues.

"The fans supported me in the good moments and the bad. I would have liked to say goodbye in the stadium. A wonderful stage is closing, one that has been unique in my life, but an exciting new chapter begins and I go into it with a lot of desire to show

my quality for many years to come." Ramos said he wants to "add more titles" to his record and added "this is not a goodbye but a see you later because sooner or later I will return to Real Madrid."

The 35-year-old, who struggled for fitness and form last season, was unable to agree an extension to his contract and will become a free agent on July 1.

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Ukraine end 6-match losing run

AFP ■ BUCHAREST

Andriy Yarmolenko scored a lone goal and set up Roman Yaremchuk for another as Ukraine defeated North Macedonia 2-1 to boost their last-16 hopes at Euro 2020 on Thursday.



Ukraine's Andriy Yarmolenko, left, reacts after scoring his team's first goal

The West Ham forward grabbed the opener on 29 minutes in Bucharest and then teed up Yaremchuk with a brilliant first-time pass to double the lead five minutes later.

Ezgian Alioski pulled a goal back for North Macedonia just before the hour as he converted the rebound from his missed penalty, while Ukraine midfielder Ruslan Malinovskyi also saw a late spot-kick saved.

Eriksen to have heart defibrillator implanted

AFP ■ COPENHAGEN

Danish star Christian Eriksen, who suffered a cardiac arrest during his country's Euro 2020 opener last weekend, will have a heart defibrillator implanted, the Danish Football Union (DBU) announced on Thursday.

"After Christian has been through different heart examinations it has been decided that he should have an ICD (heart starter)," the Danish football body said in a statement on Twitter.

The device, which is an improved variant of a pacemaker, is "necessary after a cardiac attack due to rhythm disturbances," it added.

DBU provided no details on the potential consequences for the 29-year-old Inter Milan player's future career.

Eriksen "has accepted the solution" and it had also been "confirmed by specialists nationally and internationally who all recommend the same treatment," DBU said.

Buffon returns to Parma after 2 decades

AFP ■ TURIN

Goalkeeping legend Gianluigi Buffon has returned to Parma two decades after leaving the Italian club who were relegated last season.



Goalkeeping legend Gianluigi Buffon as a Parma player

"He is back where he belongs, he is back home. Superman returns," the club said on Twitter along with a short video in which 43-year-old Buffon said: "OK Kyle (Krause) I'm in, I'm back!"

Club owner Kyle Krause replied: "Great news, welcome home."

Buffon holds the record for Serie A matches played with 657, since his first with Parma in 1995 as a 17-year-old. Since then, Buffon has

played just one season in Serie B when Juventus were demoted in 2006-2007 for the 'Calciopoli' match-fixing scandal.

titles with Juventus, as well as five Italian Cups with the club and second-tier Serie B in 2007.

The former World Cup winner announced last month he was leaving Juventus, the club he had played for since moving from Parma in 2001, apart from one season with Paris Saint-Germain in 2018-2019.

He also won Ligue 1 with PSG in 2018-2019 before returning to the Turin giants. He won the UEFA Cup back in 1999 with Parma.

Former Italy captain Buffon is an iconic figure in Italian football, one of the stars of the Azzurri's 2006 World Cup triumph who racked up a record 176 caps for his country. Buffon won 10 Serie A

However, he has never won the Champions League after losing finals with Juve in 2003, 2015 and 2017. Buffon has reportedly signed a two-year deal with the Emilia-Romagna side with a guarantee of being captain and number one goalkeeper and having a role in the club when his career ends.

shortpasses

US OPEN TO ALLOW 100% CROWD
NEW YORK: The US Open tennis tournament will allow 100% spectator capacity throughout its entire two weeks in 2021.

RAFA OUT OF WIMBLEDON, OLY MADRID: Rafael Nadal on Thursday said he's withdrawing from Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics in a bid 'to prolong my career'.

IOA ROPES IN MPL AS SPONSOR
NEW DELHI: The Indian Olympic Association on Thursday roped in mobile gaming platform, MPL Sports Foundation as the principal sponsor of the country's contingent for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and next year's Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

8 DEBUTANTS IN WOMEN'S TEAM
NEW DELHI: India on Thursday named eight Olympic debutants and as many veterans in its 16-member women's hockey squad for the Tokyo Games.

AZHAR SUSPENDED
HYDERABAD: The Apex Council of Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) has 'suspended' its own president, former India captain Mohammed Azharuddin, for alleged violation of its constitution.

GATTUSO LEAVES FIORENTINA
FLORENCE: Gennaro Gattuso and Fiorentina have agreed to part ways, just over three weeks after the former Italy International was appointed as coach at the Serie A club.

JAPAN TO LIFT VIRUS EMERGENCY
TOKYO: Japan plans to lift Tokyo's virus emergency on June 20, a month before the Olympics, the Govt announced on Thursday.

MILKHA 'STABLE AND IMPROVING'
CHANDIGARH: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh is 'stable and improving' under the constant supervision of a medical team at the PGIMER after having recovered from Covid-19, which he contracted last month.

DOCTORS 'KILLED' MARADONA
SAN ISIDRO: A lawyer for a nurse under investigation in the death of football great Diego Maradona said that doctors killed him through negligence.

TOMORI COMPLETES MILAN MOVE
MILAN: Chelsea defender Fikayo Tomori has made his loan move to AC Milan permanent agreeing a four-year deal with the Serie A runners-up on Thursday.

WI RECALL BRAVO, GABRIEL
ST LUCIA: West Indies recall pacer Shannon Gabriel and batsman Darren Bravo for the second Test against South Africa.

India, NZ ready for ultimate Test

Kohli & Kane will fight for a taste of silverware after near misses in recent ICC campaigns



PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

WTC Final (Day 1)
Live from 3:00 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

Virat Kohli carries the expectations of a billion while cricket romantics will pin their hopes on Kane Williamson when India and New Zealand engage in a battle to create a lasting legacy in pristine whites in the inaugural World Test Championship final starting here on Friday.

INDIA-NEW ZEALAND IN TESTS				
Venue	Played	Ind won	NZ won	Drawn
In India	34	16	2	16
In NZ	25	5	10	10
Total	59	21	12	26
Last 5 matches	5	3	2	-

HIGHEST TOTAL		
India	583-7 dec at Ahmedabad	1999-00
New Zealand	680- 8 dec at Wellington	2013-14
TOP SCORE		
India	231 Vinoo Mankad at Chennai	1955-56
New Zealand	302 Brendon McCullum at Wellington	2013-14
BEST BOWLING (I)		
India	8-72 S Venkatraghavan at Delhi	1964-65
New Zealand	7-23 Richard Hadlee at Wellington	1975-76

For the connoisseurs of the glorious game, Test cricket is the ultimate format and despite its aura, the 144-year-old history needed a facelift along with a context which the World Test Championship provided despite various bottlenecks, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

These are 'Gentlemen Cricketers' who have grown on the fans bit by bit with their cricket and their conduct. It's difficult not to love them, especially after their gut-wrenching World Cup defeat at the Lord's two summers back. If Williamson happens to stand with the ICC Test Mace on the Hampshire Bowl balcony, one might just smile and think that perhaps "Nice guys don't always finish last".

For Kohli, India's most successful Test captain, a trophy-less cabinet doesn't do justice to the champion performer that he has been for a decade. Kohli needs a global triumph. Every captain needs it but perhaps the Indian captain wants it more.

Ravichandran Ashwin is unlikely to play a white ball World Cup again and wouldn't mind one bit if he can fool Williamson, Ross Taylor or the dogged Henry Nicholls with a carrom ball or a slider. Ishant Sharma has grown 14 years older since that epic WACA spell to Ricky Ponting and India's senior-most player deserves to win a World Championship as much as anyone else. Man to man, there is very little to choose between the two teams even

It's how history will remember him just like it remembers Dhoni with a lot of respect and utmost fondness for those heroic World title wins. Williamson stands in his way with a bunch of fine cricketers and the most amiable set of players that one would come across in International cricket.

There are a number of cricketers, who wouldn't practically have a shot at any other global trophy and for them it's their 'World Cup' which they want

No surprises in India's playing XI

Southampton: India on Thursday went for tried and tested players, preferring veteran Ishant Sharma over Mohammed Siraj in the playing eleven for the World Test Championship final.

On expected lines, the team picked two specialist spinners in Ravindra Jadeja and R Ashwin, who are also more than handy with the bat.

The three pacers are Ishant, Mohammad Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, leaving no space for the impressive Siraj. Wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant will bat at number six.

A final has its own set of pressures and no one would feel it more than Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill, who would have the hardest job currently in Test cricket.

They would face the most underrated but perhaps the best new ball pair in the business in Boult and Southee, who would make the new ball jag around and the old ball talk.

Kyle Jamieson hasn't played against England in Edgbaston but Williamson knows what kind of a nightmare he was with his steep back-of-length bounce generated from his 6 feet 9 inch frame. If that's not enough, Wagner will pound it in with stuff aimed at rib-cage enticing the batters to go for the hook and pull shots or take it on the body.

TEAMS
India: Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah.
New Zealand: Kane Williamson (C), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Colin de Grandhomme, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner BJ Watling and Will Young.



Indian batswoman Smriti Mandhana plays shot against England during 2nd Day play of the one-off Test between the two sides in Bristol

Indian openers start strong after England post 396-9

PTI ■ BRISTOL

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

Shafali Verma and Smriti Mandhana provided India Women a confident start but the visitors still have a mountain to climb after England Women posted a mammoth 396 for nine in their first innings in the one-off Test, here on Friday.

delight to watch. She raised the team's fifty with one such well-timed shot off Kate Cross.

It was the highest-ever total scored by a team against India in Test cricket and the visitors are still trailing by 333 runs with Verma (35 not out) and Mandhana (27 not out) taking India to 63 for no loss at tea on the second day.

Cross missed a chance to dismiss Mandhana (when on 23) when she dropped the left-hander in her follow through.

Verma was at her usual aggressive self as she cut and pulled in her own inimitable style. The 17-year-old not only presented the straight bat for defence with grace, she also hit a six off Nat Sciver with remarkable ease. It was only the second six hit by an Indian woman in Test cricket.

This was after Indian bowlers were made to put in some hard yards for the second consecutive day.

Mandhana was cautious yet fluent. She got her first boundary when she punched one off Sciver in the cover region. When she got the opportunity, Mandhana did not hesitate to pull. Her elegant drives were a

Debutant Sophia Dunkley (74 not out) led the charge with a resolute unbeaten half-century and two crucial partnerships with tail-enders after England resumed at the overnight score of 269 for six.

Dunkley first added 56 runs for the eighth wicket with Sophie Ecclestone (17) and then forged a 70-run stand with Anya Shrubsole, who punished the Indian bowlers in her career-best 47.

England declared their innings when Shrubsole was bowled by Sneha Rana, who ended up as India's best bowler with a four-wicket haul.