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## WORLD

## RESPECT LGBT RIGHTS OR LEAVE, EU TELLS ORBAN

PAGE 12

## Twitter locks IT Minister out of his account, he slams violation of Rules

AASHISH ARYAN  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

THE ONGOING tension between Twitter and the Central government ratcheted up Friday after Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology and Union Minister for Law and Justice, was locked out of his official account on the social media platform over a tweet posted by him three and a half years ago.

Sources in the IT Ministry said Prasad had been denied access to his account between 7.50 am and 8.50 am on Friday.

A spokesperson for Twitter said the action had come after the microblogging platform received a notice of violation of US copyright law by the Minister's account.

Prasad hit back strongly, accusing Twitter of violating India's IT Rules.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## DMCA: Internet copyright cover

THE DMCA is a set of US federal laws that protects the copyright and intellectual property of all content on the Internet. A DMCA violation is made out against a user or website if someone claims that the user or the website posted content that belongs to them or to someone else.



## PHOTO-(C)OP

Wrestling star Sushil Kumar, accused in a case of murder, while being moved from Mandoli jail to Tihar in Delhi on Friday. PTI

## Eye on cases of Delta-plus variant, Maharashtra tightens unlock rules

VISHWAS WAGHMODE  
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

WITH MAHARASHTRA reporting at least 20 cases of Delta-plus variant of the coronavirus, including a death in Ratnagiri, the state government announced stricter unlocking rules on Friday.

On June 4, the government had announced a five-level unlock plan based on positivity rate and occupancy of oxygen beds — with Level-1 having the most relaxations, and Level-5 the most restrictions.

But according to the new order, the first two levels, which allowed shops to remain open till night, have been scrapped. All districts will have to implement



Details of vaccination timings displayed at the Laparo Obeso Centre in Pune. Arul/ horizon

at least Level-3 or above restrictions. The new rules will come into effect from Monday.

"Even if the bed occupancy and positivity rate is within the limits, we don't want to take a

## PHASE-3 TRIALS BEGIN ACROSS COUNTRY

## Serum to apply for DCGI approval for clinical trial of Covovax vaccine in children

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS  
PUNE, JUNE 25

EVEN AS the Phase-3 trials of Covovax, the Indian version of US-based Novavax Inc-developed vaccine began on June 18, Serum Institute of India (SII) authorities said they will also apply for permission from the Drug Controller and General of India (DCGI) to conduct a clinical trial of the same among paediatric population.

Covovax is the second Covid-19 vaccine candidate, which is being developed and manufactured at Pune-based SII.

Adar Poonawalla, CEO of SII, tweeted on Friday: "A new milestone has been reached.



Auto riders are vaccinated in Thane on Friday. Deepak Joshi

This week we began our first batch of Covovax (a Covid-19 vaccine developed by Novavax). Excited to witness the first batch of Covovax being manufactured at our facility in Pune,

Poonawalla tweeted saying that this vaccine has great potential to protect our future generations below the age of 18. Trials are ongoing, he said, congratulating the team at SII.

SII has already manufactured Covishield vaccine in technical collaboration with AstraZeneca and Oxford University. Poonawalla had also earlier tweeted that they hoped to launch Covovax by September this year. Earlier, US-based biotechnology company Novavax had announced a license agreement with SII for the development and commercialisation of NVX-COV2373, its Covid-19 vaccine candidate, in low and middle income countries and India.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## THE CITY

## NO FURTHER RELAXATIONS FOR PUNE DISTRICT

PAGE 5

chance due to the Delta-plus variant which is more transmissible. So now, Level-3 and above restrictions will be applicable in all districts till the situation improves," said Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte, who issued the new order.

Till June 20, Level-1 restrictions were in place in 15 districts and two municipal corporations, and Level-2 in four districts and four municipal corporations.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Delhi O2 audit splits SC panel, triggers firestorm

SOURAVROY BARMAN  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

AN INTERIM report of a subgroup, constituted by the Supreme Court last month for the oxygen audit of Delhi, has set off a political firestorm by questioning the Delhi government's demand for liquid medical oxygen (LMO) during the peak of the second Covid-19 wave.

The report, submitted to the Supreme Court, also led to division within the 5-member subgroup with two members, Delhi Principal Secretary (Home) BS Bhalla and Max Healthcare Clinical Director (Internal Medicine) Sandeep Budhiraja, lodging their dissent, even skipping one of its sittings. They flagged their objections in two separate notes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## MONEY LAUNDERING PROBE

## On 'Rs 4-cr money trail', ED searches Nagpur home of Anil Deshmukh

Former minister's personal assistant and personal secy questioned

KHUSHBOONARAYAN  
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh's residence in Nagpur in connection with its money laundering probe against him.

Sources said the ED has established a money trail of Rs 4 crore, allegedly paid by about 10 bar owners in Mumbai to Deshmukh over three months. Based on the new findings, the ED carried out searches at four locations, including Deshmukh's residence, and the premises of his personal assistant Kundan Shinde and personal secretary Sanjeev Palande.



Security outside Maharashtra ex-Minister Deshmukh's home in Nagpur on Friday. PTI

Later in the day, both Shinde and Palande were taken to the ED's office at Ballard Estate in Mumbai for questioning. The anti-money laundering agency has recorded the statements of over 10 bar owners in connection with the case.

On April 25, the ED had also searched the Nagpur residence of Sagar Bhatnagar, a close aide of

Deshmukh who is also a director of several firms controlled by Deshmukh's family.

The ED probe into Deshmukh's financial transactions is in line with the CBI probe into former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh's allegations of corruption against the NCP leader.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Didn't give up demands, foolish to expect Art 370 will be back: Omar

PVAIDYANATHAN IYER  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

IT WILL be foolish to demand restoration of Article 370 — provision in the Constitution of India that provided Jammu and Kashmir a special dispensation, and was abrogated on August 5, 2019 — from the current government, said former Chief Minister of J&K and vice president of the National Conference.

Speaking to *The Indian*

Omar Abdullah after Thursday's talks with the PM in New Delhi. Anil Sharma

Express a day after the Prime Minister's meeting with 14 senior leaders from J&K, Omar Abdullah said, "It took the BJP 70 years to fulfill its political agenda for (Article) 370. Our struggle has just started. We don't want to fool people by telling them we will get 370 back in these talks. It will be foolish to expect 370 will be back — there has been no indication it will be restored by the current government."

In the meeting that lasted for CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Pimpri-Chinchwad and Pune among top 4 in list of 'smart cities' using data for governance delivery

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD has bagged the second spot in a list of Indian 'smart cities' that have successfully implemented governance through institutionalised use of data, according to an official assessment released on Friday. Pune is at the fourth spot on the list, in which Surat has bagged the top spot, and Bhopal comes third.

As many as 42 in a list of 100 'smart cities' have been certified as having put in place systems to use data-based evidence for governance delivery, under the second round of the 'Data Maturity Assessment Framework' by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

"Surat is the best performing city... due to their efforts of deploy-



The PMHQ, lit up. Pune is at the 4th spot. Express

ing a dedicated team of data experts and incorporating various technological advancements, such as establishment of SuratILab, an advanced innovation lab for uncovering modern solutions for improved service delivery," said the report.

According to the report, the western region is the best performing. Its regional average score of 45 is much higher than the national average of 32.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Aircraft carrier built in India will be ready next year, says Rajnath Singh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh said on Friday that India's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC), INS Vikrant, is likely to be commissioned next year.

The IAC has been under construction at the Cochin Shipyard for over a decade. Singh visited the site on Friday to review its progress. "Reviewed first-hand the ongoing work on the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, which is India's pride and a shining example of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The IAC has made significant progress. Commissioning of the IAC next year will be a befitting tribute to 75 years of India's independence," he tweeted.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## PAGE 1 ANCHOR

## 21-yr-old from Bengaluru who blew whistle on Olympic qualifier

SHIVANI NAIK  
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

SWIMMER S P Likith heard the official's clipped voice loud and clear. He was telling Likith to write a letter declaring himself "mentally ill and deaf." Minutes earlier, the 21-year-old national 100m breaststroke champion from Bengaluru had been offered a bribe to remain silent on his allegations.

This was one of the many bizarre sequences that played out at an international Olympic qualification meet in Uzbekistan in April, when Likith called out attempts by organising officials to manipulate race timings to aid

the home swimmers. This week, the tournament was declared "invalid" by FINA, swimming's world governing body, and all the scores disappeared from official records.

"Times from a pair of meets in Uzbekistan have been removed from FINA's official rankings after allegations over timing fraud have been levied against that country," reported *swimmingworldmagazine.com*.

The April scandal and a subsequent investigation put the focus on Uzbekistan. The rankings of Uzbek swimmers disappeared from the official listings. A previous event in Uzbekistan also came under scrutiny. The ripple effect impacted the Tokyo

Games qualification timings of some Czech swimmers too, said the report.

It wasn't exactly a whistle that he blew, more a deafening conch, at the April 13-17 Uzbekistan Open Championships. "The first day at the heats, the scoreboard wasn't displaying, and the heat results on the scoresheet were different, up to 5-7 seconds, from the actual timings which everyone was recording manually. But I thought it must be a glitch and they would change it. That didn't happen," recalls Likith, the World School Games bronze medalist of 2012.

"When I complained, they casually told me that this has



Swimmer S P Likith. Express

been happening since 2000-2004. And they have orders to ensure they send 10 Uzbek swimmers to Tokyo," he alleges.

He says the result of the 100m butterfly, with top Indian swimmer Sajan Prakash, was brazenly tampered with. But Likith's first event went without incident. "I didn't face the problem myself. But I saw it happen to others. Many people don't have the courage when it happens to them. I am mentally strong. I knew I could fight for them," he says.

At his second event, the 200m breaststroke, Likith just stood on the diving block, touched the pad, stepped out and dared the organisers to say

he had broken a world record in two seconds.

"That's when the officials told me, this is politics, you don't get into it. They offered me money to shut up. They said 'we have to give an explanation why you didn't swim and just stood there on the block'. So they came up with this idea to get me to give in writing that I was mentally ill and deaf," he alleges.

He admits that he was frustrated at the inaction, and acted impulsively. "When I realised it wasn't a glitch and if I didn't get it out, nobody else would, I got triggered. I've seen many swimmers suppress their anger, which isn't good, and our mouths stay sealed. I did what I

had to do," he says.

Likith says he was not afraid, and would do the same again. "I have nothing to fear. I can stand up for myself. I know what is right, what is wrong. I have parents who gave me a good moral compass and I know they can back me up," he says.

After his return to India, Likith uploaded YouTube videos of the tampered 100m free and breaststroke races, as evidence. "There are many people who deserve to go to the Olympics, and such corruption ruins years of hard work. Parents who put everything into their children's careers. My mother, a homemaker, has woken up at 4.30 am for years to ensure my practice

goes fine. There will be others and they don't deserve this corruption," he says.

This isn't the first time Likith has taken on organisers. "In 2019, at the All India University meet in Punjab... swimmers had the audacity to walk up to officials and dictate what timing they wanted written. They would dive two seconds early, finish fifth, sixth and be awarded first place. I crashed that whole meet," he recalls.

The Sports Minister was forced to intervene, but that didn't shield Likith from the repercussions. "Local swimmers got goons who parked themselves there and wouldn't let me leave

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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Indian Express 4.6



TAMIL NADU: FIRST GRADUATE FROM REMOTE HAMLET, 20-YEAR-OLD BRINGS CLASSROOM TO HER VILLAGE

Going to school in this hilly TN village involves walking through a forest full of wild animals. "I know what it takes to get basic rights. So now, I will educate other kids in Chinnampathy," says Sandhya Shanmugam.



TAKING ON APPLE WITH WINDOWS 11

The Microsoft Store has been revamped on Windows 11



REVIEW: 'RAY'

This Netflix anthology, based on short stories by Satyajit Ray, is a mixed bag

EXPRESS AUDIO

Uttarakhand CM 'crisis', Delta Plus variant; and J&K leaders meet PM

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

What we know about the Delta Plus variant, the constitutional crisis that Uttarakhand could face, and the meeting between the J&K leaders and PM Modi.

FROM PAGE ONE

Aircraft Carrier

At present, India has only one aircraft carrier, the Russian-origin INS Vikramaditya. The Navy said in a statement that the IAC will be "as INS Vikrant in the first half of 2022, which would be the most potent sea-based asset". It will operate MiG-29K fighter aircraft, Kamov-31 Air Early Warning Helicopters, the soon-to-be-inducted MH-60R multi-role helicopter, and the indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters, it said.

"It would offer an incomparable military instrument with its ability to project air power over long distances, including air interdiction, anti-surface warfare, offensive and defensive counter-air, airborne anti-submarine warfare and airborne early warning," the Navy said.

The Navy said Singh expressed satisfaction at the progress of work. "He stated that the IAC has nearly 75 per cent indigenous content - from design to steel used in construction to key weapons - and mentioned that the recent decision to issue the tender for P751 project for six indigenous submarines will give further fillip to indigenous development of niche manufacturing technologies," said the statement.

Singh was briefed about the successful Basin Trials completed in November 2020, the Navy said. He was apprised of the progress on integration of other navigational, communication and operational systems since then, as the IAC prepares for its maiden Contractor/Sea Trials, expected in the coming months.

Singh visited the Karwar Naval Base on Thursday to review the progress of the ongoing infrastructure development under 'Project Seabird', as part of his two-day visit to the Southern Naval Command.

Oxygen audit

In a file noting of the Delhi Home Department, Bhalla Friday highlighted that the "interim report seems to have been sent to Government of India without making the requisite changes, without sharing again with the members of the sub-group, and without their formal approval". He wrote that his "detailed objections/comments have been added at the end of the interim report just for posterity, leaving it to the reader to make the effort, if he/she so decides, to interpret the entire report together and make his/her conclusions. This is unfortunate and unacceptable."

"The interim report, as submitted, does not have the approval of all the members of the sub-group," he wrote.

The other three members of the sub-group are AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria, Jal Shakti Ministry Joint Secretary Subodh Yadav and Controller of Explosives, PESO Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh.

The Delhi government, following approval from Chief Secretary Vijay Dev, also conveyed to the SC-appointed panel that it was "sad and shocking to note that the sub-group arrived at sweeping conclusions... without any audit in the true sense".

As details of the interim report emerged Friday, the BJP and the Congress targeted the AAP government, accusing Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of "lying" during the peak of the second wave. Kejriwal hit back, saying when "you were addressing poll rallies, I spent sleepless nights to arrange oxygen".

A close reading of the report reveals that the differences in the LMO demand for Delhi during the second wave peak, from the last week of April to early May, are due to two separate formulas used by the Centre and the Delhi government.

Under the Centre's formula, 50% of non-ICU oxygen beds are calculated as using LMO. The

Delhi government formula, on the other hand, says all non-ICU oxygen beds use oxygen. The two formulas were discussed during the seven meetings of the panel between May 10 and May 21.

While ICU beds come with oxygen facilities by default, hospitals also have non-ICU beds with oxygen for patients requiring high flow oxygen without associated ICU support. A separate category of non-ICU, non-oxygen beds is also maintained.

The sub-group observed that the Delhi government formula would lead to "overestimation" going by real-life experience of major hospitals including AIIMS.

Countering this, Bhalla said the Centre's formula was wrong because most Covid patients admitted to hospitals required oxygen. "Doubts can be resolved only through on-ground audit, which the sub-group is yet to do," he said. Bhalla, Budhiraja and Chief Secretary Dev pointed out that the sub-group had not factored in the requirement of LMO for home isolation patients, refilers, ambulances and small nursing homes.

Members of the group affiliated with the Central government bodies recommended that Delhi be provided 300 MT daily on assured basis and an additional 100 MT by 4 pm everyday based on requirement, while Delhi insisted on assured daily allocation of 568 MT. A "compromise" was worked out on May 15 to allocate 500 MT daily to Delhi, the interim report noted.

The one major point that the BJP picked to criticise the AAP relates to the LMO consumption demand as on May 12.

The report noted that on May 13, "it was discussed that there is a gross discrepancy (about 4 times) in that the actual oxygen consumption claimed (1140 MT) was about 4 times higher than the versus calculated consumption by formula for bed capacity (289 MT). It was noted that four hospitals in Delhi i.e. Singhal Hospital, Aruna Asaf Ali Hospital, ESC Model Hospital, and Liferay Hospital have claimed extremely high oxygen consumption with very few beds and the claims appeared to be clearly erroneous, leading to extremely skewed information and significantly higher oxygen requirement for the entire state of Delhi. Actual consumptions were estimated by recalculation after replacing the claimed use figures for these 4 hospitals with expected use figures using the calculation formula."

In his dissent note, Bhalla sought to counter it, saying "requirement of oxygen for oxygen cylinders with home isolation patients, refilers and certain other establishments has also to be taken into account. Also, oxygen for non-Covid requirements and some buffer components need to be factored in while calculating the total oxygen requirement of Delhi. It is further an indisputable fact that 214 is not the sum total of hospitals/medical establishments catering to patients suffering from Covid-19. In fact, the figure is more than 260. Therefore, the entire basis of the assessment/quantification of the LMO requirement in Delhi has been made on incomplete data."

After factoring in those aspects, the oxygen consumption was found to be 474 MT, instead of 289 MT as claimed in the report, Bhalla said. The observation made by the Additional Secretary, Department for Promotion of Indian Industry and Internal Trade that "it also appears that Govt of Delhi used a wrong formula and made exaggerated claims on 30th April" too was rejected by Bhalla who said that the "demand for 700MT was fully in line with guidelines of GOL". Bhalla said: "The manner in which the proceedings of the Sub-Group have been conducted suggests that the purpose of proceed-

ings was to justify a pre-conceived and predetermined conclusion and narrative, to recommend a lower quantity of a LMO to Delhi, and to further portray an impression that the assessment by the GNCTD before the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi and the Hon'ble Supreme Court was exaggerated or not genuine."

"In our assessment, these fundamental errors in the approach of the sub-group goes to the root of the matter and was, therefore, highlighted from time to time during the course of proceedings of the sub-group. Unfortunately, the draft Interim Report instead of taking cognizance of the said concerns is proceeding to indicate the quantity of LMO to be allocated to Delhi. This, in our considered view, vitiates the entire exercise," he said.

According to a file noting attached to the interim report, signed by OSD (Health) Ashish Kundra, adverse observations of the drafting cognizance of the said concerns is proceeding to indicate the quantity of LMO to be allocated to Delhi. This, in our considered view, vitiates the entire exercise," he said.

Dev pointed out that SOS calls in Delhi stabilised only after the average daily supply of LMO crossed 550 MT, including over 700 MT on one day. He described the proceedings of the group as "perfunctory desktop exercise, conducted hurriedly, without even conducting an audit of a single institution in the true sense".

Olympic qualifier

the hotel for the next three days," he recalls.

Likith says he watched his father work honestly, and move from being a helper at a transport company to becoming a real estate businessman. "I'd be quiet in Uzbekistan and spoken of it now, everyone would've thought I'm bluffing. There's still no official statement. They declared it invalid and will move on. But the next time swimmers see this happen, they'll know they have a voice," he says. And they won't be threatened to sign an undertaking declaring themselves deaf.

Anil Deshmukh

Deshmukh has denied the allegations.

In his March 20 letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray after he was removed as the Mumbai Police chief, Singh had alleged that Deshmukh had asked police officers, including the now suspended Assistant Police Inspector Sachin Waze, to collect Rs 100 crore, including Rs 40-50 crore each month from 1,750 bars and restaurants in Mumbai.

The ED registered a case against Deshmukh for allegedly obtaining illegal gratification, based on an FIR filed by the CBI in April. The CBI FIR said Deshmukh had used his official position to obtain certain undue advantage and had also influenced transfers and postings in the Mumbai Police, as alleged by Singh.

Waze is being probed by the NIA for his alleged role in the case related to the bomb scare outside Mukesh Ambani's residence and the murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran.

Maharashtra

Sources said the new guidelines have been issued following the Centre's advisory on the Delta-plus variant and the state task force's recommendations.

According to Level-3 restrictions, essential shops and establishments can remain open till 4 pm on all days, while non-essential units can operate till 4 pm on weekdays only. Restaurants can operate at 50 per cent dining capacity till 4 pm and thereafter be open for deliveries only. Local trains will operate only for people in medical/essential services. Private offices can remain open till 4 pm; attendance in private and government offices will be re-

Twitter locks IT Minister out

In a statement first posted on the homegrown microblogging site Koo and later on Twitter, Prasad said Twitter's action was "in gross violation of Rule 4(8) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021", as the platform had failed to provide "any prior notice" before denying him access to his own account.

"It is apparent that my statements calling out the high-handedness and arbitrary actions of Twitter, particularly sharing the clips of my interviews to TV channels and its powerful impact, have clearly ruffled its feathers.

"Further, it is now apparent as to why Twitter is refusing to comply with the Intermediary Guidelines because if Twitter does comply, it would be unable to arbitrarily deny access to an individual's account which does not suit their agenda," Prasad said. "Twitter's actions indicate that they are not the harbinger of free speech that they claim to be but are only interested in running their own agenda, with the threat that if you do not toe the line they draw, they will arbitrarily remove you from their platform," the Minister said.

However, "No matter what any platform does they will have to abide by the new IT Rules fully, and there shall be no compromise on that," he added.

A spokesperson for Twitter said Prasad's account had been "temporarily restricted" due to a notice under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which is a set of US federal laws that protect copyright and intellectual property of content on the Internet.

The said tweet, on which a copyright violation has been claimed, was shared by the Minister on December 16, 2017, and contained a video celebrating Vijay Divas, a commemoration of India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war that led

to the birth of Bangladesh. In the tweet with the video, Prasad had said: "On #VijayDivas, I salute all the martyrs & heroes who fought for the nation and led us to victory in 1971 war." Sources said the video shared by Prasad paid tribute to the Indian Army, in which a composition by A R Rahman had been used as "background music".

"The International Federation of Phonographic Industry, on behalf of Sony Music, which owns the rights to the song, flagged this as a copyright violation," a source close to the development told The Indian Express. A Twitter spokesperson confirmed that it was this tweet on which the DMCA notice had been raised. The tweet remained withheld owing to the notice, the spokesperson said.

According to Twitter, a copy of the DMCA takedown notice, which includes details of the complaint, is sent to the "email linked to the account at the time of removal", so that the account holder gets all the information regarding the takedown notice.

Twitter claims that it also sends the account holder instructions for filing a counter notice to the DMCA takedown notice. Officials in the IT Ministry, however, denied that any such mail from Twitter had been received on any of the email addresses linked with Prasad's account.

DMCA notices are common; they make up one of the biggest chunks of requests received by social media intermediaries annually. Between January and June 2020, Twitter received more than 174,000 DMCA takedown notices, affecting 1.2 million accounts in all.

It complied with 57 per cent of the requests, withholding 1.1 million tweets and 1.6 million pieces of media on the platform.

Twitter has been at loggerheads with the government over making appointments of local

officers in India. While the company has claimed to have appointed a resident grievance officer, a nodal contact person, and a chief compliance officer for India, Ministry officials have maintained that since the appointments are not in line with the requirements of the IT Rules, they will not be considered valid. On Thursday, the Karnataka High Court gave interim relief to Twitter's India head Manish Maheshwari from appearing at a Ghaziabad police station over the controversial video of an assault of an elderly man.

Twitter's action against the Minister's account on Friday triggered bipartisan outrage. Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said that although he would not blame Twitter for action taken on the DMCA request, "however stupid & pointless the request was", he would, as Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, seek an explanation from Twitter India on the locking of Prasad's and his own accounts.

In a tweet, Minister for Civil Aviation and Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri questioned the "deafening silence from the self-styled champions of civil liberties" on the blocking of Prasad's account.

Over the past several days, Prasad has been sharing clips of his interviews to television channels, criticising Twitter for not complying with the IT Rules enacted in February this year. In one clip, Prasad says that Twitter should not "lecture the government on freedom of speech".

The Minister, however, ruled out the possibility that a TV channel or anchor would have raised a copyright violation notice against his account - "in the past several years, no television channel or any anchor" had made any complaints about "copyright infringements with regard to these news clips" that he had shared on social media, he said.

Friday's incident is the second time in less than a month that Twitter has had a run-in with a senior government official. On June 5, the platform had withdrawn - and later restored - the 'blue tick' verification badge from the personal handle of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.

Twitter had then said that it "may automatically remove the blue verified badge and verified status if the account becomes inactive or is incomplete", which happened in the case of Naidu's account.

On the same day, the blue verified badge on the accounts of several senior RSS functionaries and leaders, including its chief Mohan Bhagwat, was also withdrawn and later restored.

A spokesperson for Twitter later said that it could have been done by the algorithm due to the absence of a verified email address or phone number, a profile image, or display name.

"For accounts to be considered active, the user of the account must log in at least once every six months. Apart from that, blue verified badge accounts must also ensure that their account has either a verified email address or a phone number, a profile image and a display name for the account to be considered 'complete'," the spokesperson said.

In January, when it restarted its account verification process after a gap of three years, Twitter had changed the rules for verification. The platform says that it may remove the blue badge and verified status of an account without notice if an account changes its username (@handle), or if the owner of the account is no longer in the position at which they were verified. Twitter has also said that it reserves the right to remove the blue tick from accounts that repeatedly violate its rules and policies.

ity-building sessions on data related areas in addition to the ministry-organised trainings.

As many as 69 cities have deployed sensors for data collection and 63 urban regions have published over 30 datasets on the Smart Cities Open Data Portal.

The gamut of data collection and analysis includes sensors, portals, special algorithms, big data centres, among others. Fifty cities have showcased better citizen engagement through alerts and notifications.

On Friday, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Puri, presented awards in various categories to cities and states to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the launch of PMAY-U, AMRUT and Smart Cities Mission.

The Centre also unveiled the 'Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework' (CSCAF) 2 awards, which were launched in September, 2020 to assess what "climate actions" are being taken by smart cities. The framework consists of 28 indicators of 96 data points. The top nine cities that have been awarded four-star ratings are Surat, Indore, Ahmedabad, Pune, Vijayawada, Rajkot, Visakhapatnam, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Vadodra.

Covovax

When contacted, SI authorities told The Indian Express that initially they would apply for approval to conduct clinical trials of the Covovax vaccine in the 12-18 age group and then in the age group below 12 years.

Meanwhile, SI together with the Indian Council of Medical Research, had planned the Phase-2/3 observer blind randomised controlled study to determine the safety and immunogenicity of Covovax (SARS-CoV2 recombinant spike protein nanoparticle vaccine (SARS-CoV2rS) with Matrix-M1 adjuvant in Indian adults. After the placebo arm of the trial was done away with, the Phase-3 clinical trial began on June 18 with the first dose being administered to a volunteer participant from Pune.

The trial would test Covovax and Novavax in 1,400 volunteers above 18 years of age across 20 sites, and four in Pune have commenced the recruitment process and administering the dose. These include Sahyadri, Noble, D Y Patil hospitals and KEM hospital at Vadu.

Dr Abhijit Kadam, Scientist C, coordinating principal investigator from ICMR National AIDS Research Institute, said researchers across these sites are in the process of recruiting volunteers for the Phase-3 trial, which commenced on June 18. According to authorities at D Y Patil Medical College and Hospital, at least 100 participants have already enrolled and were administered the first shot of the Covovax vaccine, while Noble Hospital authorities said at least 49 participants were enrolled.

At KEM Hospital, Vadu, authorities said the clinical trials have begun here. "We started the bridging study yesterday and have enlisted 20 participants so far," the authorities said.

Recruitment will be completed in the next one or two weeks, and after the first dose, there will be a 21-day interval for the second dose. Then there will be the crucial immunogenicity check.

There are two groups of which one will get Covovax and the other Novavax. Novavax had also published results of the UK

Phase-3 study, which had assessed the efficacy of the vaccine NVX-COV273 during a period with high transmission and with the UK variant strain circulating widely. The results had found that its Covid-19 vaccine was 89.7 per cent effective in preventing the infection.

FULL REPORTS ON www.indianexpress.com

Didn't give up demands, says Omar

more than three hours Thursday. Omar Abdullah was one of the five persons who could not speak, the other four being Nirmal Singh, Tara Chand, Ghulam A Mir and Ravinder Raina. He described the meeting as a "beginning". "It is a first step, and it will be a long road to rebuilding trust and confidence," he said.

Significantly, he said, the PM himself talked about Assembly elections, expediting the delimitation exercise, restoring the elected government to J&K and statehood. "He said he was very keen to have a meeting after the polls to the District Development Councils. He made it a point to mention that this was the largest physical meeting he has had after the onset of Covid last year," Abdullah said.

When asked if the National

Conference had given up on its demand for restoration of Article 370, Abdullah emphasised that not putting this across at Thursday's meeting did not mean the National Conference had abandoned it. "We will do it legally, peacefully and constitutionally. We are fighting tactically... it is being fought in the Supreme Court where we stand a maximum chance," he said.

In all fairness to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, neither of them put any conditions to the talks, Abdullah said. "There were no pre-conditions to talks. We did not have to surrender any of our demands. They didn't rebuke us for all that we said or demanded," he said.

After August 5, 2019, there was a complete breakdown in communication between the

Union Government and mainstream political parties, Abdullah said. "We had two basic aims: one, to understand from the Government of India what they had in mind and the idea of a roadmap ahead; two, we also wanted to put our points across. What NC and PDP told the PM and the HM was no different from what we said in Srinagar, which is, what they did was wrong, and a large percentage of the population was unhappy," he said.

Explaining his apprehensions about the delimitation exercise, Omar Abdullah said, "Why shouldn't this exercise for J&K be undertaken with the rest of the country. Why treat us differently when the entire objective of August 5, 2019, was to bring J&K at par with the country?" As things stand now, the

delimitation exercise for the rest of the country will be based on the latest 2021 Census and be ready by 2026, whereas for J&K it will be based on the 10-year older Census 2011. "The political side to delimitation is what is creating uncertainty... The re-jigging of seats - where will they be added," Abdullah said, adding that Home Minister Amit Shah did seek to allay these concerns explaining how the software was objective.

While the three leaders of the NC - Associate Members in the Delimitation Commission - did not attend its meeting on February 18, they may participate whenever it is called next. "Doctor sahab (NC President Farooq Abdullah) has been authorised by the party to take a call at the appropriate time on this," he said.

Corporation.

Pimpri, Pune

There are 26 cities in the western region, of which 10 cities have been certified.

In the second round of the assessment, for 2019-20, it was found that 100 city data officers have been appointed with 13 permanent nominations for leading and performing data-led activities. A total of 61 cities have appointed personnel to help coordinate data activities for their respective departments, as per guidance of CDO. Twenty cities have conducted their own capac-

ity-building sessions on data related areas in addition to the ministry-organised trainings. As many as 69 cities have deployed sensors for data collection and 63 urban regions have published over 30 datasets on the Smart Cities Open Data Portal.

The gamut of data collection and analysis includes sensors, portals, special algorithms, big data centres, among others. Fifty cities have showcased better citizen engagement through alerts and notifications.

On Friday, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Puri, presented awards in various categories to cities and states to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the launch of PMAY-U, AMRUT and Smart Cities Mission.

The Centre also unveiled the 'Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework' (CSCAF) 2 awards, which were launched in September, 2020 to assess what "climate actions" are being taken by smart cities. The framework consists of 28 indicators of 96 data points. The top nine cities that have been awarded four-star ratings are Surat, Indore, Ahmedabad, Pune, Vijayawada, Rajkot, Visakhapatnam, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Vadodra.

FULL REPORTS ON www.indianexpress.com

# 3 MAHARASHTRA

**AFTER ED RAIDS ANIL DESHMUKH'S RESIDENCE**

## Central agencies being misused to target political opponents, we will fight back: NCP

**MANOJ MORE**  
 PUNE, JUNE 25

EVEN AS the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday raided the Nagpur residence of former state home minister Anil Deshmukh, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said this was a "new pattern of misusing central agencies to harass political opponents".

"This is a new pattern of misusing central agencies to harass political leaders... Earlier, Anil Deshmukh's family was harassed by central agencies... This is nothing new to us, central agencies have been used in the past too against our leaders. It is being done out of sheer frustration. We are not worried about this. Even people don't take them seriously," said Pawar in Pune on Friday.

His daughter and Baramati MP Supriya Sule said the country has never seen such blatant misuse of central agencies as was being done by the BJP-led central government.

"The BJP all the time accuses the Congress of committing excesses during the Emergency. What we are witnessing today has probably never been seen or heard. This is the first time I am witnessing this kind of misuse of central agencies against political opponents. This is the new SoP which the BJP has come up with, it seems to be the BJP's style of operation," Sule said in Pune on Friday, adding that the NCP will fight back.

Sule said Maharashtra has never experienced misuse of power to meet political ends. "Maharashtra has had a political culture... it does not involve harassing opponents for political gains," she said.

The NCP leader said the country was facing one of its biggest challenges of tackling the Covid-19 pandemic but the BJP-led central government was busy in "vendetta politics". "Instead of effectively tackling Covid-19 and focusing its attention on rising unemployment and healthcare issues, the central government is busy misusing central agencies and playing vendetta politics," she said.

State NCP chief Jayant Patil



NCP chief Sharad Pawar with party leaders Dilip Walse-Patil, Vandana Chavan and Prashant Jagtap at the NCP headquarters in Pune. Arul Horizon

said, "The raids are being conducted because they could not find anything during the investigation. Now, they are trying to dig up some 10-year-old cases to frame Deshmukh."

Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said, "We have been saying repeatedly that the government is misusing central agencies to harass its opponents unnecessarily. If there is any fit case, the ED and CBI should investigate, such as the Ayodhya land scandal. In fact, the BJP national executive should pass a resolution recommending CBI probe into the Ayodhya land issue."

Slamming the ED raids, state Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant said, "What is the ED trying to search for while raiding the residence of Anil

Deshmukh when no financial transaction has taken place? Both Param Bir Singh and Sachin Vaze never said money was given and therefore no financial transaction had taken place. Why are the central agencies not raiding Param Bir Singh? All the investigating agencies are being misused by the central government."

BJP leader Sudhir Mungantiwar, meanwhile, claimed that after the arrest of former police officer Sachin Waze, several skeletons had come out of the closet. "No one should give this a political colour. Even during the Congress' regime, its leader Suresh

Kalmadi was raided by CBI and subsequently arrested. Did anyone accuse the Congress of misusing central agencies... the central agencies should be allowed to do their work... they have been conducting investigation only after facts emerged," he said.

Pravin Darekar, opposition leader in the state Legislative Council, said, "These raids have nothing to do with the central government. They are part of the investigation. Such raids used to take place even during Congress regimes."

Referring to protests by NCP workers in Nagpur, he said, "Holding protests is not an appropriate thing to do."

**All parties, including Cong, needed to create alternative front: Pawar**
**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
 PUNE, JUNE 25

NCP CHIEF Sharad Pawar on Friday said if an alternative has to be created against "those in power at the Centre", then it should be formed by bringing together all other parties, including the Congress.

"For the last six months, farmers' organisations have been protesting in Delhi. It is a non-political agitation. There was a thought on the strategy to raise the issue in the Parliament.

Thus, few organisations and some political parties came together without bringing their political thoughts. They discussed preparing a white paper and presenting it to the Union government," Pawar told mediapersons.

The NCP chief said, "The discussion in the meeting was not on a Third Front but I expressed my opinion in the Rashtra Manch that if an alternative has to be created to those in power at the Centre, then it should be with the Congress, along with other political parties."

**Exciting Investment Opportunity at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia**

**Request for Qualification for Development of 3- & 4-Star Hotels**

One of the eight wonders of the World and one of the World's greatest 100 places to visit declared by TIME, Statue of Unity, Kevadia has emerged as an International class Tourist Destination with the peak daily tourist footfall recorded as high as 35,000. With a view to further quality stay facilities at Kevadia, Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL) is inviting Developers / Operators of Star hotels to develop hotels on DBFOT basis. SSNNL intends to pre-qualify and short-list suitable Applicants (who will be eligible for participation in the Bid Stage subsequently).

**Opportunities:**

- Proximity to Statue of Unity (the tallest statue in the World)
- Excellent connectivity (by Sea-plane, broad gauge railway and four lane road) and onsite infrastructure
- Tourist friendly State with excellent law and order
- Estimated footfalls of more than 2.50 Million per year at the SoU with a plethora of existing and upcoming attractions
- Long Term Lease of 99 Years

Category	Approximate Plot Area*	Tender ID
Four Star	2-3 acres	468705
Three Star	1-2 acres	468677

\*Note: Area subject to modification

Request for Qualification Document including the technical specifications eligibility criteria etc. can be downloaded from <https://www.ssnnl.in/procure> starting 24/06/2021. The Pre-Application Conference is scheduled on 08/07/2021. Interested Bidders may contact on [dgmcpssnnl@gmail.com](mailto:dgmcpssnnl@gmail.com) for any further details

INF/498/21-22

### RESTORATION OF SERVICE OF SPECIAL TRAIN BETWEEN DAUND AND INDORE

Railways have decided to restore the service of special train between Daund and Indore on existing route / timings and with the same composition as per details below:

Train No	Daund ⇌ Indore
02943	Daund - Indore Special Train Journey Commencing on from 29.6.2021 till further advice.
02944	Indore - Daund Special Train Journey Commencing on from 28.6.2021 till further advice.

For detailed timings and halts please visit [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in) or download NTES App.

#### RESERVATION

Bookings for Special Train no 02943 on normal charges will open on 26.06.2021 at all PRS centers and on website [www.irct.co.in](http://www.irct.co.in).

Only passengers having confirmed tickets will be permitted to board this special train adhering all norms, SOPs related to COVID-19 during the boarding, travel and at destination.

**CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
[www.cr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.cr.indianrailways.gov.in)  
 centralrailwayindia | Central\_Railway  
 RailMadad Helpline 139

**IRCON INTERNATIONAL LTD.**  
 (A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
 Website: [www.ircon.org](http://www.ircon.org), CIN- L45203DL1976G01008171

e-Tenders are invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the following works:

i. e-Tender No.: IRCON/ELECT/5037-5038/NCR/TC O.P.C. BEC RC 1/07/30 Dated: 21.06.2021 "Design, Manufacturing & Supply of Overhead Protection Conductor (OPC), Buried Earth Conductor (BEC) and Return Conductor (RC) for Delhi - Ghaziabad - Meerut RTTS Corridor of NCR/TC (Package - 19, Lot 1)".

Estimated cost of the work | INR 1,16,21,050/- (inclusive of all applicable taxes except GST)

Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission | 05.07.2021 up to 1500 Hrs IST

International e-Procurement Notice (International Competitive Bidding)

ii. e-Tender No.: IRCON/ELECT/5037-5038/NCR/TC LIGHT WT SECTION INSULATOR/07/01, dt: 24.06.21 "Design, Manufacturing & Supply of Light Weight Section Insulator for Lot-1 and Lot-2 work of Delhi - Ghaziabad - Meerut RTTS Corridor of NCR/TC (Package-19 Lot 1 & Lot 2)".

Estimated cost of the work | EURO 273,734/- (inclusive of all taxes excluding Custom Duty and GST)

Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission | 05.07.2021 up to 1700 Hrs IST

For further details, visit website <https://tenders.gov.in/procure/app>. Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. CGM/Elect., C-4 District Centre, Saket, New Delhi-110017

**भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक**  
**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA**  
[www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)

Department of Supervision  
**C-8, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra, Mumbai 400 051**

Directions under Section 35A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 - Shri Anand Co-operative Bank Limited, Chinchwad, Pune, Maharashtra - Extension of Period

The Reserve Bank of India vide directive DCBS.CO.BSD-I/ D-16/ 12.22.474/ 2018-19 dated June 21, 2019 had placed the Shri Anand Co-operative Bank Limited, Chinchwad, Pune, Maharashtra under Directions from the close of business on June 25, 2019 for a period of six months. The validity of the directions was extended from time-to-time, the last being up to June 24, 2021.

2. It is hereby notified for the information of the public that, the Reserve Bank of India, in exercise of powers vested in it under sub-section (1) of Section 35 A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, hereby directs that the aforesaid Directions shall continue to apply to the bank till September 24, 2021 as per the directive DOR.MON.D-18/12.22.474/2021-22 dated June 22, 2021, subject to review.

3. All other terms and conditions of the Directives under reference shall remain unchanged. A copy of the directive dated June 22, 2021 notifying the above extension is displayed at the bank's premises for the perusal of public.

4. The aforesaid extension and /or modification by the Reserve Bank of India should not per-se be construed to imply that Reserve Bank of India is satisfied with the financial position of the bank.

(Monisha Chakraborty)  
 Chief General Manager

Mumbai  
**"Don't get cheated by E-mails/SMS/Calls promising you money"**

### ICC THE INDIAN CARD CLOTHING COMPANY LIMITED

Registered Office: "Katarinya Capital", A-19, Vidyut Nagar Society, Lane No. 5, Koregaon Park, Pune - 411001; CIN: L29261PN1955PLC009579; E-mail: [investor@cardindia.com](mailto:investor@cardindia.com); Website: [www.cardindia.com](http://www.cardindia.com); Telefax: +91-20-26151618

#### AUDITED STANDALONE FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31-MARCH-2021

(Rupees in Lakhs)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended			Year Ended	
		31-Mar-21 (Audited)	31-Dec-20 (Un-Audited)	31-Mar-20 (Audited)	31-Mar-21 (Audited)	31-Mar-20 (Audited)
1	Income from Operations (Net)	1,501.13	1,240.25	1,387.51	4,530.85	5,128.04
2	Total Income from Operations (Net)	1,591.49	1,381.21	1,402.59	4,837.31	5,285.50
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	95.99	130.57	(188.71)	(41.15)	(640.58)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	112.07	136.36	(116.39)	(18.53)	(316.30)
5	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	87.38	116.93	(140.51)	(88.84)	(417.70)
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprehensive profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive Income (after tax)	92.77	114.95	(143.59)	(81.33)	(428.93)
7	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value Rs. 10/- each)	594.11	594.11	455.11	594.11	455.11
8	Other Equity (excluding revaluation reserve) as shown in the balance sheet of previous year.	-	-	-	6,676.10	5,446.26
9	Earnings Per Share (before and after extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each) (not annualised):					
	(a) Basic	1.67	2.35	(3.09)	(1.70)	(9.18)
	(b) Diluted	1.67	2.35	(3.09)	(1.70)	(9.18)

#### AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31-MARCH-2021

(Rupees in Lakhs)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended			Year Ended	
		31-Mar-21 (Audited)	31-Dec-20 (Un-Audited)	31-Mar-20 (Audited)	31-Mar-21 (Audited)	31-Mar-20 (Audited)
1	Income from Operations (Net)	1,762.30	1,484.46	1,615.78	5,464.45	6,130.87
2	Total Income from Operations (Net)	1,867.83	1,625.43	1,631.21	5,786.86	6,291.14
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	57.12	85.33	(249.92)	(204.58)	(738.44)
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	73.04	91.12	(177.61)	(181.96)	(414.15)
5	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	57.47	70.88	(200.22)	(244.36)	(510.24)
6	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprehensive profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive Income (after tax)	70.40	96.44	(186.19)	(199.84)	(496.76)
7	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value ₹10/- each)	594.11	594.11	455.11	594.11	455.11
8	Other Equity (excluding revaluation reserve) as shown in the balance sheet of previous year	-	-	-	6,556.13	5,430.86
9	Earnings Per Share (before and after extraordinary items) (of ₹10/- each) (not annualised):					
	(a) Basic	1.09	1.48	(4.13)	(4.42)	(11.12)
	(b) Diluted	1.09	1.48	(4.13)	(4.42)	(11.12)

Note: The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Audited Standalone and Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2021 are available on the websites of Stock Exchange(s) at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and also on the website of the Company i.e., on [www.cardindia.com](http://www.cardindia.com).

For THE INDIAN CARD CLOTHING COMPANY LIMITED  
 Sd/-  
 Sanjeevkumar Karkamkar  
 Director  
 DIN : 00575970

Place : Pune  
 Date : 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

**26th June**  
**Rajarsi**  
**Chhatrapati**  
**Shahu Maharaj**  
**Birth**  
**Anniversary**

**Salutations to the**  
**Great Social Reformer!**

**Ajit Pawar**  
 Dy. Chief Minister

**Balasaheb Thorat**  
 Minister, Revenue

**Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray**  
 Chief Minister

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Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Government of Maharashtra

DGIPR/2021-22/954

8 sandalwood trees stolen from High Explosives Factory

Pune: As many as eight sandalwood trees were chopped down and stolen from the premises of the High Explosives Factory (HEF) in Khadki. Ketan Patange, a junior workers manager who is also the head of the security section of the HEF, has lodged the first informa-

tion report in this case at the Khadki police station. According to the FIR, eight sandalwood trees, estimated to cost Rs 7 lakh, located in the mag-

azine region inside the HEF, were chopped down and stolen between 6 pm on June 19 and 6 am on June 20.

2 held for trying to extort Rs 50 lakh from businessman Pune: Pune City Police's Crime Branch has arrested two persons, Ajuharuddin Shaikh (24) and Santosh Suresh Devkar (32), for allegedly demanding extortion money of Rs 50 lakh from a businessman. Police said the complainant, who owns a construction com-

2 held for trying to extort Rs 50 lakh from businessman

pany, received a phone call on June 16 from a person who threatened to kill the businessman and his family unless he paid them Rs 50 lakh. After the businessman approached the police for help, they asked him to maintain contact with the extortionist. As per

police instructions, he called the accused to Aundh. While the accused, identified as Shaikh, was taking the money from him, he was arrested by a police team. Shaikh told the police that he demanded extortion money from the businessman as per the instructions of his aide Suresh Devkar, who used to work as a driver for the businessman. Devkar quit his job in 2016 and later decided to extort money from the businessman through Shaikh to repay a loan, said police. He has also been arrested.

Woman who posted online advt for renting out apartment cheated of Rs 1.64 lakh Pune: A 53-year-old woman who had posted an advertisement on real estate portals, seeking to rent out her apartment in Pune, was duped of Rs 1.64 lakh by an online fraudster who pretended to be a potential tenant. The person contacted the woman on her cell phone number, which she had posted along with the advertisement on May 27. He told the woman that he wanted her apartment on rent and was willing to pay the expected deposit and rent amount. He said he would transfer the money to her account through an online wallet. The woman and her son then received some QR codes on their cell phones. Some time after they scanned these QR codes as per the instructions of the man, Rs 1.64 lakh was transferred from their bank accounts to some other accounts without their consent, through multiple online transactions.

Aspire Home Finance Corporation Limited

MOtilal Oswal Tower, Rahimtullah Sayani Road, Opposite ST Depot, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400025. Email: -info@ahfcl.com CIN :- U65923MH2013PLC248741

POSSISION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/IES) Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & in compliance of Rule 8(1) of Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice/s on the date mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s)/date of receipt of the said notice/s.

Table with 5 columns: Sr No, Loan Agreement No./Name of the Borrower/Co Borrower/Guarantor, Demand Notice date & Amount, Date of possession Taken, Description of the Property/ies mortgaged.

Place : Maharashtra Date : 26.06.2021 Sd/- Authorized Officer, (Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd.)

Aspire Home Finance Corporation Limited

MOtilal Oswal Tower, Rahimtullah Sayani Road, Opposite ST Depot, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400025. Email: -info@ahfcl.com CIN :- U65923MH2013PLC248741

DEMAND NOTICE

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13 (2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act) read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (the said Rule) in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the said Act read with Rule 3 of said Rule, the authorized officer has issued Demand notices under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-borrowers, Guarantor(s) to repay the loan amount mentioned in the respective demand notices issued to them. In connection with above notice is hereby given once again to all the parties to pay within 60 days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest from the date(s) of Demand Notice till the date of payment. The detail of the Borrower(s) amount dues on date of Demand Notice and Security offered towards repayment of loan amount are as under:-

Table with 5 columns: Sr. Loan Agreement No./Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s)/ Co-Applicant Name, Demand Notice Date and Amount, Description of secured asset(s) (Immovable Property/ies).

If the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to AHFL as aforesaid AHFL shall proceed against the above secured assets Under Section 13(1) of the Act and the applicable Rules, entirely at the risk of the said Borrowers as to the cost and consequences. The said Borrowers are prohibited under the Act from transferring the aforesaid assets, whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of AHFL. Any person who contravenes or abates contravention of the provision of the said Act or Rules made there under, shall be liable for imprisonment and / or penalty as provided under the Act.

Place : Maharashtra Date : 26.06.2021 Sd/- Authorized Officer, (Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd.)

MAHARASHTRA POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD Sub Regional Office Pune-1

NOTICE FOR ONLINE ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEARING

Environmental Public Hearing in respect of M/s. Nira Bhima Co-operative Sugar Factory Ltd., Shahajinagar, Po. Redney, Tal. Indapur, Dist. Pune, regarding expansion in existing capacity of distillery project from 30 KL per day to 105 KL per day in existing project complex of 3,500 TCD sugar Factory, 18 MW Co-Gen Plant and 30 KLPD Distillery, at Sahajinagar, Po.Redni, Tal-Indapur, Dist-Pune was schedule on 02/07/2021 at 12:00 noon. However, due to Covid -19 epidemic, it is decided to conduct online public hearing as per the orders of District Collector, Pune and Chairman of the public hearing. In view of above the said public hearing will be conducted on 02/07/2021 at 12 noon through video conferencing (ZOOM APPLICATION). The link of the public hearing as below:-

https://zoom.us/j/91652384478?pwd=dHplYkxkNkZuJVVWRGKOjsRUc2c3cyUT09 Meeting ID: 916 5238 4478 Password: 02072021

Citizens can participate in the public hearing through their mobile phone (By installing Zoom app) or computer (by visiting the web site https://zoom.us/join) by using given meeting ID and password. Suggestions, objections and statements regarding the proposed public hearing can sent to sropune1@mpcb.gov.in

Sd /- (Pratap Jagtap) Sub Regional Officer, Pune-1 Maharashtra Pollution Control Board

Balaji AMINES LIMITED CIN: L24132MH1989PLC049387 Registered Office: 'Balaji Towers', S.No. 9/1A/1, Hotgi Road, Asara Chowk, Solapur : 413224, Maharashtra Website: www.balajiamines.com Email: cs@balajiamines.com; Ph: 0217-2451500

NOTICE

(For the attention of Equity Shareholders of the Company) Sub : Mandatory transfer of Equity Shares of the Company to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF)

This notice is published in pursuance to the provisions of Section 124(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the act") read with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 ("the Rules") and subsequent amendment thereto, the dividend declared during the FY 2013-14, which remained unclaimed for a period of seven years will be credited to IEPF on or before 03rd December, 2021. The Corresponding Shares on which dividend was unclaimed for seven consecutive years will also be transferred as per the procedure set out in the rules. In Compliance with the IEPF Rules, the Company has communicated individually to the concerned Shareholders and details of such shares liable to be transferred to IEPF are also available at the web link: http://balajiamines.com/investor-relations. The concerned shareholders, holding shares in physical form and whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF, may note that the Company would be issuing duplicate shares certificate(s) in lieu of the original share certificate(s) held by them for the purpose of transfer of shares to IEPF as per Rules and upon such issue, the original share certificate(s) held by them for the purpose of transfer of shares IEPF as per rule upon such issue, the original share certificate(s) which stand registered in your name will stand automatically cancelled and be deemed non-negotiable. Shareholders may note that both the unclaimed dividend and the shares transferred to IEPF including all the benefits accruing on such shares, if any can be claimed back by them from the IEPF Authority after following the procedure prescribed by the Rules (refer the IEPF website http://iepf.gov.in) and no claim shall lie against the Company. Shareholders are requested to claim the final dividend declared during the FY 2013-14 and onwards before the same is transferred to the IEPF. In case the Company does not receive any communication from the concerned shareholders by 3rd December, 2021 the Company shall with a view to complying with the requirements set out in the Rules, transfer the shares to IEPF by the due date as per procedure stipulated in the Rules. For any queries on the subject matter, you may email us at cs@balajiamines.com or contact the Company's Registrar and Transfer Agents at Venture Capital and Corporate Investments Pvt. Limited, 12-10-167 Bharatnagar, Hyderabad-500018, Ph: 040-23818475/476; Fax: 040-23868024; email: info@vccilindia.com

Place : Solapur Date : 25.06.2021 For Balaji Amines Limited Sd/- D. Ram Reddy Managing Director

The Indian EXPRESS Classifieds FROM ANYTHING TO EVERYTHING.

BUSINESS POULTRY

Pune Broilers Traders' Association Rate On 26.06.2021 For Live Big Birds Rs.123 Live Tandoori Birds Rs.124 Momin Poultry (Asif Momin) 26336349. 00902868795-1

Pune District Broiler Traders Association Rate on 26.06.2021 For Live big birds Rs.131 Live Small Birds Rs.128 Contact: 9309113062 0090285085-56

Vencobb today's ex-shop delivery rate at Pune Rs 98 per kg. Contact (9522) 22872417, Pune (9520) 24269414. 0090284455-1

NECC suggested farm-gate price for 100eggs on 26.06.2021 in Pune without tray is Rs.550/- (Rupees five hundred and fifty only) Phone:NECC 24270724, 26336377, Dealer: 24332689, 24455130, 24265787. 0090284331-86

Pimpri Chinchwad Broilers Traders Association Rate On 26.06.2021 For Live Big Birds Rs 127 Live Small Birds Rs 126 At Taqdeer Broiler (Siraj) Shaikh 982291357, 7720080489, 0090286498-1

CHANGE OF NAME

I,Jc-802040F Exsub/AEC Bikash Kar D-801 Laxminagar Dhanori pune 411015 hereby declare that my wife's actual date of Birth is 02May 1961 and name is Mamata Bikash Kar whereas it was published wrongly in my service records as Date of Birth 23 November 1960 and name Mamata Mishra, which has been published vide Gazette no-P-2033652 dated 19-25 November 2020 0090286896-1

I, Kendre Rohini Baliram Spouse of No.15798448M Rank L/NK Kendre Baliram Balaji residing Post Kurula,Tq.Kandhar, Kurja Nanded Maharashtra.States my name is incorrect in my husband Aram record before was Jaybhaye Rohini Namdev now changed to Kendre Rohini Baliram as per affidavit No 712/2021 Dated 16 June 2021. 0090286894-1

I No 15394161K HAV Baharul Islam Choudhury resident of Vill post-Ujankupa pt-II Dist-Hailakandi Assam In in my army records my wife name mistakenly mentioned as Hena Begum Choudhury and my son's name is mentioned as Md Jaharull Hassan Chis correct name is Md Jaharul Hassan Choudhury. Please correct name in my service records. 0090286897-2

Change of name & DOB

I,Parab Arun Hari Army No.14250282A, Rank-HAV Suryakant Jagannath Tamhankar Ganeshnagar, Wagholi, Tal-Haveli, Dist-Pune 412207, In Army Record My Wife's Name- Rajni & DOB 14/10/1966 is Wrongly written Actually Correct Name as per Aadharcard & Pancard is Rajani Suryakant Tamhankar & DOB- 01/06/1967, vide Affidavit No- 272/2021,Date- 11/02/2021. 90286889-1

I,Vidya, wife of NO. JC289151P, Rank- NB SUB (OPR), Name - Yejare Deelip Pandurang, hereby declare that my name has been changed from Vidya to Vidya Deelip Yejare as per affidavit no. 32243/21. 0090286892-1

MATRIMONIAL

I have changed my old name Sumit Sunil Kulkarni to my new name Tobirama Hashirama Senju vide Affidavit number No. 2559/2021 dated 25-06-2021. 0090286899-1

I, No. JC289151P, Rank - NB SUB (OPR), Name - Yejare Deelip Pandurang, hereby declare that the name of my daughter has been changed from Aaradhya Deelip Yejare as per affidavit no. 32244/21. 0090286891-2

My name has wrongly recorded in my daughter Aarya Bagde passport as Amit Bagde but my true & correct name is Amitabh Ravindra Bagde. Aadhar no 93954438609. 0090286891-1

MARRIAGE BUREAU

KERALITE Mumbai Nair boys 34, PG, Pooruruttathi, 7 Lac PA., 37, BE, PG Thiruvathira, 10 Lac PA. 30, Aswathy, BE, MBA, Pune. Contact: Smitha Matrimonial and House Servant Agency. 9867770184. 0070743471-1

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CENTRAL RAILWAY SOLAPUR DIVISION E-TENDER NOTICE No. 13/2021 SUR/MECH/HUT DATE : 24.06.2021

No further relaxations for Pune, same set of Covid lockdown rules stay in place

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
PUNE, JUNE 25

THERE WILL be no further relaxations in lockdown norms for a few days in Pune district, the state government said on Friday.

"The number of patients and the positivity rate has reduced. However, experts have predicted an increase in patients in the coming days. Thus, the administration has decided to continue with the existing lockdown norms," said state Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil after reviewing the Covid-19 situation in the district.

"There is a third wave of coronavirus infections in other countries. There is fear of the same in our country, according to experts. The administration is preparing to handle the situation but local residents should not move out unnecessarily... and many have been found to be moving out," said Walse-Patil.

He said increasing crowd at weddings was a cause of concern and police have been asked to strictly implement rules of limited attendance at such functions.

In accordance with earlier orders, most activities in the city have been allowed, but Covid-appropriate behaviour has to be followed and only limited number of people are allowed at events.

The PMC had reimposed the weekend lockdown and no non-essential activities or services are allowed on weekends.

Meanwhile, Baramati MP Supriya Sule said the Covid-19 review meeting for Pune district was chaired by Walse-Patil as Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who usually holds the review meeting, had a scheduled meeting somewhere else.

Sule said everyone should take the pandemic seriously and everyone should behave responsibly.

"We need not celebrate if there is a decrease in the number of patients. It's a virus and it is going to mutate. Everyone needs to continue taking care of themselves," she said.

8 villages in Baramati taluka declared containment zones till July 7

MANOJ MORE  
PUNE, JUNE 25

EIGHT VILLAGES in Pune district's Baramati taluka have been declared containment zones till July 7 following a sharp rise in Covid-19 cases in the last one week. Only essential services will be allowed in these villages till then.

"The cases in these villages have doubled in a week," said Block Development Officer Dadasaheb Kamble. "After 15 days, we will review the situation. If cases do not rise further, we will lift the containment measures," he added.

"Though cases are coming down in urban areas, there is an increase in rural areas. We have instructed officials to ensure that the containment plan is strictly adhered to by the residents," said Kamble.

Officials said since February this year, Baramati had started witnessing an increase in cases of coronavirus infection. "Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar had instructed officials to implement stringent restrictions allowing only hospitals and medical stores to remain open..." they said.

The villages which have been declared as containment zones include Katewadi, where the Pawar family lives, Sawal, Pandare, Shirsuphal, Manjanagar, Margaon, Malegaon Budruk and Undhwadi/Kathepathar. Officials said each of these villages has more than 10 active cases. The total population of these villages is estimated to be around 7,000.

Kamble said Baramati taluka has 118 villages. "Of these, at least 24 villages currently have no active Covid-19 cases. However, we don't have a single village where no case was found in the last 15 months," he said.

# Maharashtra crosses milestone of 3 crore Covid vaccine doses

## Over 42 lakh vaccinated in Pune district, 50 lakh in Mumbai

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS  
PUNE, JUNE 25

MAHARASHTRA HAS become the first state in the country to administer 3 crore vaccine doses against coronavirus. The state crossed this milestone at 2 pm on Friday, said Dr Pradip Vyas, additional chief secretary (health).

As many as 4,176 sites across the state conducted vaccinations on Friday, of which 3,661 were in government facilities while 515 were private ones, Dr Vyas told The Indian Express. Vaccine doses were given to 4.8 lakh beneficiaries by the end of the day.

Till date, as many as 3,00,27,217 vaccine doses have been administered, of which 2,42,37,793 are first doses of the vaccine.

Across the state, a total of 1.6 crore beneficiaries above 45 have got the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine while 37.69 lakh have got

### PANDEMIC IN NUMBERS

<b>17</b> Number of Covid-19 deaths reported in Pune on Friday.	<b>1,139</b> Number of fresh coronavirus cases reported on Tuesday.
<b>17,693</b> The death toll so far in district.	<b>10,455,45</b> The total positive cases so far in the district.

both doses.

In the 18-44 age group, a total of 45.85 lakh beneficiaries have got the first vaccine dose while 2.47 lakh have got both doses. A total of 12.6 lakh beneficiaries in the category of healthcare workers have got the first dose while 8.25 lakh have got both doses.

As many as 20.77 lakh frontline workers have got the first vac-

cine dose while 8.87 lakh have got both doses, according to state Health department data.

In an online address on Friday, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope said it was essential to get vaccinated and appealed to local residents to get the jab.

"We have a capacity to administer 10 lakh vaccine doses per day... if the Centre gives us enough doses, we can complete giving the

job to another six crore people within two months," he said.

But even for those who have been vaccinated, it was crucial to maintain Covid-appropriate behaviour, said Tope.

"This is a must despite the vaccination and it includes wearing masks, maintaining social distance and hand hygiene," he urged.

**Pune administrators over 42 lakh doses, Mumbai over 50 lakh**

Pune district administration has given over 42 lakh Covid vaccine doses while Mumbai has crossed the milestone of 50 lakh vaccine doses. On Friday, 1.39 lakh vaccine doses were administered in Pune district.

According to state Health department data, as many as 18.87 lakh persons above 45 have got the first vaccine dose while 4.97 lakh have been administered both vaccine doses in Pune.

In the age group of 18-44 years, Pune has been able to administer the first Covid vaccine dose to more than 10.32 lakh beneficiaries while 25,179 have got both doses.

There are 1.54 lakh healthcare workers who have got the first vaccine dose while of these, 1.03 lakh have got both doses. Among the frontline workers, 2.41 lakh beneficiaries have got the first vaccine dose, of which 1.06 lakh have got both vaccine doses.

After Mumbai and Pune, Thane has administered the highest number of vaccine doses, 23.46 lakh, followed by Nagpur (15.5 lakh), Kolhapur (12.95 lakh) and Nashik (12.6 lakh) in the state.

"We have got 1.74 lakh Covishield vaccine doses and 7,000 Covaxin doses and they have been distributed to Pune Rural, PMC and Pimpri-Chinchwad accordingly," said Dr Sanjay Deshmukh, assistant director (Medical), Pune circle — which includes Pune, Satara and Solapur.



## LAST-MINUTE RUSH

Shoppers throng Laxmi Road ahead of the weekend lockdown, in Pune on Friday. Ashish Kale

## Stock in 4 dams supplying water to Pune higher than in June 2020

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
PUNE, JUNE 25

THIS JUNE, four of the five major dams providing drinking water to Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad have more water stock than they had in the same period of 2020.

As of Friday, the collective water stock in Khadakwasla, Panshet, Varasgaon, Panshet and Pavana dams stood at 10.81 TMC (thousand million cubic feet). During the same period of 2020, the collective stock was 7.85 TMC.

Pune district has seen heavy rain in June. Till June 23, the district had recorded 240 mm of rain, which was nearly 100 per cent above normal for the monsoon onset month here.

"The catchment areas have recorded steady and continuous rainfall till last week. In addition,

### RESERVOIR STATUS IN PUNE (IN TMC AS OF JUNE 25)

RESERVOIR	2021	2020
Khadakwasla	1.1	1.2
Panshet	3.95	2.19
Varasgaon	2.66	1.75
Temghar	0.53	0.15
Pavana	2.95	2.56

Source: Irrigation Department, Maharashtra

the dams had reserve stocks which is why the water stock this year is higher," said an official in charge of the reservoir at the Irrigation department.

The catchment areas of Temghar and Pavana dams have so far received above normal rainfall for June.

The rainfall since June 1 at the catchment areas in the district

range between 250mm and 530mm.

Currently, Khadakwasla dam holds 55 per cent of its capacity, whereas stocks in Panshet and Pavana were over 30 per cent of the total capacity.

Varasgaon and Temghar dams had over 20 per cent and 14 per cent of their stock, respectively, as on Friday.

## Cloud over vaccine approval: Students who got Covaxin worry about overseas study plan

SAMRIDDIH SAKUNIA  
PUNE, JUNE 25

NIKHIL PATIL (21), an engineer from Gujarat's Vadodara, felt relieved when in May he managed to book a vaccination slot after trying for over a dozen times. A few weeks earlier, Patil had secured an admission in Canada's University of Windsor for a post-graduate course in industrial engineering and wanted to ensure that he was fully vaccinated when he applies for visa.

However, Patil, like thousands of other Indian students going abroad for studies and vaccinated with Covaxin, is facing a dilemma. Patil was administered the first jab of Covaxin, the

Covid-19 vaccine developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, which is still waiting for an approval from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Last week, the latest bid by Bharat Biotech's US partner Acugen to obtain an emergency use authorisation was rejected by the US Food and Drug Administration.

The lack of approval from WHO means that most countries will treat those administered with Covaxin as "non-vaccinated". They will have to follow the quarantine rules of the respective country they are travelling to, and may require to receive another vaccine, which is approved in that country.

Akarsh Thodupunuri, a grad-

uate from Hyderabad, too rushed to take the vaccine to make sure that he is fully vaccinated before he travels to his college in Canada in August.

"I took Covaxin as only it was available at that time. Little did I know that this decision would jeopardise my career," said Thodupunuri.

While some students can afford to bear the expenses of quarantine facilities abroad, some had to postpone their plans to next year. The WHO and the Centre are yet to offer a positive reply on the Covaxin issue.

Seafarers, who sail to different countries, are facing similar problems as well.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Some SPPU colleges seek nod to wind up professional courses

ALIFIYA KHAN  
PUNE, JUNE 25

AS THE management council meeting of Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) takes place on Saturday, it will decide on the fate of several colleges that have sought permission from the university to shut down courses or even the entire institution.

Among those that have sought permission to close down are Dr D Y Patil College of Engineering and Innovation, Malav, which runs two courses of BE (mechanical) and BE (civil), Vikhe Patil Foundation's Pravara Centre for Management Research and Development, off Senapati Bapat Road, which has an MBA course with an intake capacity of 120 students, the Bachelor of Architecture course at Pravara Rural Education Society's College of Architecture, Mohu, Vidya Pratisthan's Indapur College of Architecture and the BE degree in electronics and telecommunication at Gopinath Munde Institute of Engineering Education and Research, Nashik.

Over the past few years, colleges and institutes offering professional courses have been consistently closing down across the

country, with Maharashtra having a high number of closures as well. The increasing number of vacant seats in engineering, MBA and architecture colleges due to low demand from students has led to this scenario.

Data from the state CET cell shows nearly 45 per cent seats in first-year engineering courses have remained vacant, with over 95 per cent of vacancies in private unaided engineering institutes. Last year, of 55,000 vacant engineering seats, more than 54,000 were in private institutes.

On an average, at least 50 engineering colleges have been applying for closure every year, which prompted even the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to stop offering permission to new engineering colleges from 2020-21.

State CET cell figures show that the sheen of MBA is wearing off as well with one in every three available MBA and MMS seat finding no takers in academic year 2020-21.

Experts said an overall trend of decreasing demand from students for such courses besides loss of family income or jobs due to the pandemic might have led to the situation where colleges find no takers for courses and are now unable to sustain them.

## Auto-rickshaw driver, 4 others arrested for robbing passenger

Pune: Five persons, including an auto-rickshaw driver, have been arrested for robbing a passenger. Police said the passenger, Vijay Gurav (29), came to Pune from Kolhapur by bus and took an auto-rickshaw from Malhadhaka junction to go to his house in Wagholi around 4 am on Wednesday.

The auto-rickshaw driver and

his accomplices allegedly took Gurav to another place. They allegedly dragged him out of the auto-rickshaw and robbed him of cash, his mobile phone and tourist bag, all worth over Rs 3,000, and escaped from the spot. Gurav approached the police, who launched a search for the accused and nabbed five of them. **ENS**

**योजना तथा वास्तुशास्त्र विद्यालय, विजयवाड़ा**  
**School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada.**  
An Institute of National Importance, Ministry of Education Gov. of India  
Sy.No.4/4, ITI Road, Vijayawada-520008. Ph: 0866-2469-446, 447, 449. Fax: 0866 2469451, website: www.spav.ac.in  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
No. 12/SPAV/H-M/2020-21 15.06.2021  
Sealed tenders are invited for providing Mess/Canteen services at SPA, Vijayawada. For further details please visit website: [www.spav.ac.in](http://www.spav.ac.in)  
Registrar

**TSIIC**  
**TELANGANA STATE INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION LIMITED (TSIIC), GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA UNDERTAKING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**  
RFP No. 2, Dt: 26.06.2021  
TSIIC invites proposals from eligible firms for undertaking the project "Setting up of Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) based Oxygen Generating Plants along with establishment of Medical Oxygen supply lines at public health facilities across the state of Telangana on "Turnkey" basis and thereafter Operate & Manage the established facilities for three years".  
RFP document can be downloaded from the website: [www.tsiic.telangana.gov.in](http://www.tsiic.telangana.gov.in)  
Proposals shall be submitted on or before 08.07.2021, 3.00 pm at following address: The Chief Engineer, TSIIC, 6th floor, Parisrama Shavan, Fateh Maidan Road, Basheerabad, Hyderabad, Telangana 500004. Phone No: 040-23237672  
Sd/-  
R.O. No.: 13224-PPIC/ADVT/1/2021-22 Vice Chairman & Managing Director  
Date: 26.06.2021

**GOVT. OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**NORTH EASTERN RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KEONJHAR**  
"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works under Periodical Maintenance  
Identification No. Road Online NCB No. 314  
No. 2769/Date: 24.06.2021  
1. Name of the work : Periodical maintenance such as renewal coat with SDBC of five years completed PMGSY Roads in the District of Keonjhar.  
2. No. of work : 06 (Six) Nos.  
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure in NIT.  
4. Class of Contractor (Eligible) : As per Annexure in NIT.  
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure in NIT.  
6. Other details :  
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of tender On-line for bidding Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O S.E.N.E.R.W. Circle, Keonjhar Technical Bid Financial Bid  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Superintending Engineer, North Eastern Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar Road Online NCB No. 314 Dt. 02.07.21 at 11:00 A.M. Dt. 15.07.21 up to 5.00 P.M. Dt. 19.07.21 at 11:00 A.M. Will be later  
• Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
Sd/- P.K. Misra  
Superintending Engineer,  
N.E.R.W. Circle, Keonjhar  
OIPR-25048/11/0019/2122

**OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA**  
**NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR**  
**INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)**  
File No. B-I-Home-Puri-71/2015 Lr. No.23602 Dt. 23rd June, 2021  
**Invitation for Bids**  
**Bid Identification No. OSD (B) — 04 / 2021-22**  
1 The OSD (Buildings) Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the work "Construction of Court Guest House at Puri" amounting to Rs.16,90,00,000/- (Approximate) as detailed below.  
2 Nature of work : Building work  
3 No. of work : 01 No.  
4 Bid Cost. : ₹ 10,000/-  
5 Class of Contractor : Super Class  
6 Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From dt. 02.07.2021 to 17.00 Hours of dt. 22.07.2021  
7 Date of Opening of Bid : Dt. 23.07.2021 at 11:30 AM.  
8 The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: [tendersodisha.gov.in](http://tendersodisha.gov.in). Any addendum/ corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.  
Sd/-  
OSD (Buildings),  
Odisha, Bhubaneswar  
OIPR-34117/11/0019/2122

# 6 EXPRESS NETWORK



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

JAMMU AND Kashmir L-G Manoj Sinha had a hectic day on Thursday, juggling personal and professional responsibilities. While the all-party meeting of political leaders from Jammu and Kashmir called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was under the spotlight through the day, Sinha had another important engagement – wedding of his son – later in the evening. The all-party meeting scheduled early afternoon went on till the evening, just in time for Sinha to rush to his Delhi residence and get ready as the host of the wedding ceremony. True to his understated style, the wedding was a close family affair with virtually no political heavyweights – either from the Centre or Jammu and Kashmir or even bureaucrats – in attendance. The wedding was held under Covid protocols, with only family members in attendance.

## EMERGENCY POTSHOT

ON THE anniversary of the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a shot at the Congress on Twitter. Using the hashtag #DarkDaysOfDemocracy, the PM tweeted that the Emergency period “witnessed a systematic destruction of institutions” and added that it was how “Congress trampled over our democratic ethos”. He said “we remember all those greats who resisted the Emergency and protected Indian democracy” and asked the people to “pledge to do everything possible to strengthen India’s democratic spirit, and live up to the values enshrined in our Constitution”. He also shared a link to a BJP post calling the Emergency an “unbelievable phase in India’s democracy”.

## FOR A CAUSE

ALONG WITH doing its usual duties during the pandemic, the Railway Protection Force has devised a plan to take care of the so-called Covid orphans. The RPF has a special plan to reach out, secure and rehabilitate children orphaned by Covid. It has not only asked its own staff to look out for such children in nearby areas, it is also sensitising passengers about it. One nodal RPF personnel for each child is being made responsible from the time the child is secured to the time of his or her rehabilitation.

## NARADA SCAM

# Top court annuls HC refusal to accept replies by Mamata, Bengal minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

THE SUPREME Court on Friday annulled the Calcutta High Court order refusing to accept the affidavits filed by the West Bengal government, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and state Law Minister Moloy Ghatak in the Narada scam case and directed the High Court to consider the plea afresh.

“We request the High Court to first decide the aforesaid applications of the petitioners herein, for taking the counter affidavit/affidavits in response on record, before proceeding to decide the merits of the case,” a bench comprising Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari held.

“We may further add that to avoid any prejudice to be caused to any of the parties, the order



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee; Law Minister Moloy Ghatak



dated 09.06.2021 shall stand annulled and the High Court shall decide the matter de-novo. It goes without saying that after deciding the aforesaid applications of the petitioners, the High Court shall decide the further course of action and proceed with the matter accordingly,” the court said.

On May 17, the CBI had moved the High Court seeking recall of a special CBI judge’s or-

der granting bail to four TMC leaders in the Narada case and sought the transfer of the case from the CBI court to the High Court itself.

In an order on June 9, the High Court had refused to accept the affidavits by Banerjee and Ghatak since the arguments by the state had concluded. The HC had remarked that the state had taken a “calculated risk” by choosing not to put its stand on

record earlier and the court did not allow the government to file the affidavit later.

However, the state and both Banerjee and Ghatak argued that filing the affidavit became necessary because the CBI alleged the presence of the CM and the law minister as grounds for transfer of the case and for nullifying proceedings before the special CBI judge.

As per the Supreme Court’s Friday order, the HC will now have to hear the plea de-novo, or as if it is being argued for the first time. If the affidavits are allowed to be taken on record, then CBI will get a fresh chance to refute the stand.

A fresh application will have to be moved before a five-judge bench of the High Court headed by acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal, seeking permission to file an application.

Justices Saran and

Maheshwari asked if the Bengal government had waived its right of filing an affidavit since it only brought up the applications on June 7 and 9, although the hearing began on May 17. However, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, who appeared for Banerjee and Ghatak, argued that there is no practice in the Calcutta High Court requiring parties to file an application seeking permission to file an affidavit.

“CBI filed its affidavit on 2nd of June, without taking liberty and introduced completely new facts,” senior advocate Vikas Singh argued on behalf of West Bengal.

Appearing for the CBI, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said that the agency will oppose the plea seeking permission to file the affidavit and in case the HC allows the parties to file affidavits, then the agency would seek an opportunity to argue against them.

## Rahul spends another day meeting Punjab leaders; no way forward yet

KANCHAN VASDEV  
CHANDIGARH, JUNE 25

AICC LEADER Rahul Gandhi continued his meetings with leaders from the Punjab unit of the party for the fourth day on Friday. During the course of the day, Rahul met leaders believed to be close to CM Amarinder Singh. There are no meetings scheduled for Saturday, sources said.

Those who met Rahul included seasoned politician of the state Congress like Local Bodies Minister Brahm Mohindra, former minister Rana Gurjit Singh, Health Minister Balbir Sidhu, Education Minister Vijay Inder Singla, MLAs Balwinder Singh Laddi Sherowalia, Lakhbir Singh Lakha, Sukhwinder Singh

Danny. Rahul also met political secretary of the Chief Minister Capt Sandeep Singh Sandhu. He is also general secretary in-charge of PPCC.

Rahul met leaders close to Amarinder

Mandi Board chairman Lal Singh and Rajya Sabha MP Shamsher Singh Dullu were also among those who met him.

The meetings went on till late in the evening.

A few party leaders, who met Rahul on Friday said the AICC leader appeared to have already made up his mind on sorting out the crisis in Punjab Congress.

During Friday’s meetings, a number of leaders are learnt to have expressed their reservations against giving a leading role to Sidhu in the party organisation.

A senior leader is learnt to have told Rahul that the way Sidhu had spoken against his own party government had sent a wrong signal.

According to sources, he also raised the way Sidhu spoke about the party using him as a showpiece, adding that someone needs to ask Sidhu if the Congress in Punjab was winning for all these decades because him.

“The issue that Sidhu’s mother lost twice from Dakala, an Assembly segment before the reorganisation of segments, was also raised,” a leader said.



President Ram Nath Kovind Friday boards a special train for Kanpur from Safdarjung railway station in New Delhi. He will visit his birthplace in Uttar Pradesh where he will interact with his old acquaintances from school days and the early days of his social service. This is the first time in 15 years that an incumbent President is travelling by train. The train made two stopovers, at Jhijhak and Rura of Kanpur Dehat, before arriving at Kanpur Central station in the evening. There, the President was received by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Governor Anandiben Patel. PTI

## HOMeward BOUND

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M C Josephine had made the controversial remarks during a live phone-in programme on a Malayalam TV channel

and told Josephine about alleged harassment she was facing from her husband and mother-in-law. Josephine was heard asking the woman “did you complain to the police.” When the woman said she had not disclosed the matter to anyone so far, Josephine replied, “ennal pinne anubhavi-

## Opposition leaders had demanded Josephine’s resignation

cholu (then, you suffer)”. Her reaction created widespread outrage across the state at a time when Kerala has been debating the alleged dowry harassment death of a 24-year-old woman in Kollam early this week. Opposition leaders demanded Josephine’s resignation and the Congress announced an open protest against her.

The CPI (M) also distanced itself from the senior leader. After the meeting of the party state secretariat, CPI (M) state secretary A Vijayaraghavan told the media that Josephine’s reaction did not go down well with society at large. “The secretariat dis-

cussed the issue and Josephine expressed her willingness to resign. She has apologized for remarks,” said Vijayaraghavan.

In another audio clip which surfaced in the media on Friday, Josephine was purportedly heard admonishing a woman complainant who said she was the victim of an alleged marriage fraud. “I don’t have time to listen to your old saga and you are to be beaten,” a voice purported to be Josephine is heard saying.

Josephine was appointed the women’s commission chairperson during the last CPI (M) regime.

In 2019 when then CPI (M) legislator P K Sasi faced charges of sexual misconduct, Josephine had defended her party colleague saying that the panel cannot take a case in the issue. She went on to say that CPI (M) has its own way of dealing with such cases.

## Conveyed pain to BJP top brass: Karnataka minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU, JUNE 25

SIGNALLING THAT rumblings within the ruling BJP in Karnataka were still not over, Tourism Minister C P Yogeeshwar, who is said to be disgruntled and had allegedly put forward the case for replacing Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, on Friday said he has “written the exam” and was waiting for the “results”.

The minister was referring to his meeting with BJP’s national general secretary in-charge Arun Singh, who was on a three-day visit to Karnataka recently, amid speculation about leadership change in the state.

## Covid test kit for Rs 50 launched by IIT-Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

MINISTER OF State for Education Sanjay Dhotre Friday launched an “affordable” and “accurate” Rapid Antigen Test kit for Covid developed by IIT-Delhi. Priced at Rs 50, the indigenously developed and manufactured kit has been developed by IIT-D’s Centre for Biomedical Engineering (CBME), led by Professor Harpal Singh.

“IIT-Delhi disrupted the RT-PCR market with a Rs 399 probe-free RT-PCR kit launched in July 2020. Over 8 million high quality PPE kits have been supplied so far, using the technology developed at IIT Delhi,” IIT-D Director V Ramgopal Rao said in

a Facebook post.

At the launch Friday, Dhotre congratulated the institute. “I am confident that this technology will revolutionise the Covid test availability in the country. I am glad to know that the kit has been developed entirely using the internal resources at IIT Delhi,” he said.

He also complimented researchers Harpal Singh and Dinesh Kumar. “IIT Delhi has filed a patent application for the developed technology and awarded licence to two companies in the country for its commercial rollout. M/s Dia Sure Immunodiagnostic LLP is now entering the market with this kit, fixing the cost at Rs 50 per test,” the institute said.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE

481 DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN  
NEW CASES: 48,587  
ACTIVE CASES: 5,95,782  
TOTAL VACCINATION: 30,79,48,744

DAILY DEATHS 1,188 | TOTAL DEATHS 3,94,498 | WEEKLY CFR 1.41% | OVERALL CFR 1.34%



TESTS TODAY: 19,23,583 | TOTAL TESTS: 40,14,92,031  
WEEKLY POSITIVITY: 2.93% | OVERALL POSITIVITY: 7.52%

## STATES REPORTING MOST CASES

STATE	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	TOTAL VACCINATION
■ Kerala	11,546	1,00,632	10.40%	1,30,32,265
■ Maharashtra	9,604	1,20,715	4.12%	2,97,23,637
■ Tamil Nadu	5,755	47,318	4.10%	1,39,88,481
■ Andhra Pradesh	4,458	47,790	5.42%	1,43,51,320
■ Karnataka	3,310	1,07,218	2.74%	2,08,74,135

## STATES REPORTING MOST DEATHS

STATE	TODAY’S DEATHS	TOTAL DEATHS	WEEKLY CFR	OVERALL CFR
■ Maharashtra	518	1,23,521	4.55%	2.10%
■ Tamil Nadu	150	32,051	0.94%	1.38%
■ Kerala	118	12,748	0.85%	0.47%
■ Karnataka	114	34,539	1.20%	1.26%
■ Odisha	40	3,854	0.61%	0.45%

Note: Data as on June 25; vaccination numbers as of June 24; Deaths include those from previous days.

## In the works: web of oxygen plants in districts of every state

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

WEEKS AFTER the second Covid-19 wave led to a surge in demand for medical oxygen, an infrastructure of oxygen plants, deep inside districts and remote locations, is fast emerging across states.

The Centre is aiming at 1500 such plants by August-end, more or less translating to two such plants in every district of the country, officials said.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) was entrusted the task of building the civil infrastructure (the rooms) for the plants, and two other agencies, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC), too were brought in for the works.

The money has been sanctioned from the PM-CARES Fund and there is scope for additional sanction for laying pipelines from the oxygen plants to hospitals.

Equipping district hospitals with their own oxygen-generation plants is integral to the Empowered Group’s plan and this will go a long way in battling any other wave of the pandemic should that arrive. In the long-term plan, every district has to be equipped with hospitals getting oxygen from their own plants.

“All stakeholders have been deployed to get the job done. We expect it to be complete by August-end. We have even spoken to the Air Force for transporting the plants to remote locations

## PLANTS READY SO FAR

GUJARAT: 14 plants	WEST BENGAL: 3 plants
ANDHRA PRADESH: 13 plants	KERALA: 5 plants
HARYANA: 13 plants	RAJASTHAN: 7 plants
BIHAR: 5 plants	PUNJAB: 11 plants
MAHARASHTRA: 7 plants	TAMIL NADU: 9 plants
	KARNATAKA: 2 plants

wherever needed,” Giridhar Aramane, head of the Empowered Group and Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, told The Indian Express.

The NHAI has completed works for setting up 125 Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) oxygen plants across the country.

Works are in progress at another 121 sites. In 270 locations, the process of identifying land to be in progress, according to official data. According to NHAI, Gujarat is leading with 14 works for oxygen plants already completed, six under construction and tentative identification of 18 other locations – it will eventually have 38 such plants.

Work has been completed at 13 locations each in Andhra Pradesh and Haryana.

In Bihar, work is in progress at 29 locations while it has been completed at five sites. The state has identified a few more locations. When complete, Bihar will have a web of 36 such plants.

Maharashtra, among the

worst hit by the pandemic, is likely to have 41 such plants.

So far, seven are ready, and work is in progress at another seven locations. The state government is finalising 27 other locations. Delhi does not have any plans lined up for these plants. Officials said being the Capital, its hospitals already have oxygen plants. The progress is fast, depending on the swiftness with which states provide land.

In West Bengal, for instance, only three works have been completed so far and no other site has been identified yet by the state government.

Kerala, on the other hand, has already got five plants while works are being completed at four more places. The state has identified another five locations where work will begin.

Rajasthan will have a total of 19 such plants, seven of which stand completed. Punjab has already got works for 11 plants completed.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



# 7 EXPRESS NETWORK

## BRIEFLY



Gogoi with his wife and son on Friday.

## ASSAM

### NIA court gives 2-day parole to Akhil Gogoi

**Guwahati:** An NIA court Friday granted two-day parole to Independent Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi on humanitarian grounds to visit his mother and son. NIA Special Judge Pranjal Das, granted him parole for 48 hours which he can take as per his convenience. The court, however, allowed Gogoi to visit only his ailing mother in Jorhat and his son, who has recently recovered from Covid-19, in Guwahati. Gogoi's lawyers had also sought permission for him to meet the people of Sivasagar. The court, however, forbade him from doing this citing the pandemic. **PTI**

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Wife castrates, kills imam over 2nd wedding

**Muzaffargarh:** An imam in a village here was castrated and beaten to death by his wife for planning another marriage, police said on Friday. The incident took place in Shikarpur village on Thursday evening when Hazra injured Maulvi Wakil Ahmad, imam at a mosque in Bhora Khurd Village. She told police that her husband was planning another marriage and an argument over the issue turned violent, leading to his death. The victim's body has been sent for a post-mortem examination. **PTI**

## HARYANA

### Two jawans killed in freak road accident

**Chandigarh:** Two Army jawans of a Mahar regiment battalion were killed when their stationary taxi was hit from behind by a trolley on NH-9 in Rohtak on Friday. The car had five passengers apart from the driver. The five jawans were returning to their unit in Punjab's Fazilka in a taxi they had hired from New Delhi. At the time of the accident, their vehicle was stationary due to a flat tyre when a trolley hit their vehicle from behind. Another jawan was injured in the mishap. The trolley driver managed to escape from the spot. **ENS**

## MAHARASHTRA

### Tugboat owner faces culpable homicide charge

**Mumbai:** A case of culpable homicide has been registered in Mumbai against the owner of the Varaprada tugboat that sank in the Arabian Sea during last month's cyclone Tauktae, in which 11 persons were killed, an official said on Friday. Barge P305 and Varaprada - both support vessels working for the state-run ONGC's offshore oilfields near Mumbai had borne the brunt of cyclone Tauktae, which made landfall on Gujarat coast on May 17. Nobody has been arrested in this connection so far and the probe is underway. **PTI**

## LAKSHADWEEP

### Sedition case: HC grants bail to filmmaker

#### SHAJU PHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 25

KERALA HIGH Court on Friday granted bail to filmmaker Aisha Sultana, who is facing charges of sedition over her remark that the Central government had used a "bio weapon" against Lakshadweep.

Sultana, who has become a face of Lakshadweep's protests against a slew of draft proposals mooted by Administrator Praful K Patel for the "development" of the islands, had alleged that Centre had used Covid-19 as a "bio weapon" against the people of the archipelago.

Granting bail to Sultana, a bench of Justice Ashok Menon said prima facie, the offences alleged by the prosecution are not attracted. "The ingredient for establishing the offence of sedition under Section 124-A IPC is the doing of certain acts which would bring the Government established by law in India into hatred or contempt etc. In this case, there is not even a suggestion that the applicant did anything as such against the Government of India."

Referring to the penal provision of IPC Section 153-A (promoting enmity and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), slapped against the filmmaker, Justice Menon said that "it is

doubtful whether the penal provisions of S.153-A would be attracted in this case".

The court said the petitioner has opposed the newly introduced reforms by the Administrator and has sworn allegiance to the people of Lakshadweep in their protest to the reforms. "There is no apparent indication in her statement, which amounts to imputations or assertions prejudicial to the national interest, nor does it propagate any class of persons against another group of persons."

With regards to the sedition charge, the court said, "Prima facie, the applicant did not have a malicious motive to subvert the government established by law by merely using the strong word 'bio weapon' to express her vehemence in disapproval of the subject under discussion. Her intention is explicitly in criticism of the modification of the SOP, introduced by the Lakshadweep administrator."

Sultana had made the comments during a debate on Malayalam channel MediaOne TV on the recent reforms and change of Covid-19 SOPs. She said, "I can clearly say that the Centre has used bio-weapon in the island..."

She later clarified that what she intended to say was that the Centre was using administrator Patel as a "bio weapon" on the islands.

## ISRO CONSPIRACY CASE

### Interim bail for Kerala ex-DGP Siby Mathews

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 25

RETIRED DGP Siby Mathews, who is arraigned as the fourth accused in the CBI case pertaining to conspiracy behind the ISRO spy case, on Friday got interim bail from the district sessions court here.

When the spy case emerged in 1994, Mathews, then a DIG, had led the probe initiated by Kerala police and had arrested former ISRO scientist Nambi

Narayanan.

In a related development, the High Court on Friday extended the interim bail granted to P S Jayaprakash, the 11th accused in the case. He was a deputy central intelligence officer. The court posted the petition for further hearing to July 2.

Last month, the CBI's Delhi unit had registered the FIR against 18 people, all of them retired from Kerala police or the Intelligence Bureau, on charges of framing Nambi Narayanan in the spy case.

### Held for posts on CM, TN man booked under Goonda Act

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, JUNE 25

CHENNAI POLICE on Friday invoked the Goonda Act against social media commentator Kishore K Swamy, who was arrested from his residence on June 14 for allegedly defamatory posts against Chief Minister M K Stalin and the veteran DMK leaders, late CN Annadurai and M Karunanidhi.

Swamy, who is a vocal supporter of BJP-RSS camps and the previous AIADMK government, was sent to judicial custody till June 28 shortly after his arrest, where he was arrested again in two more complaints of harassment. On Friday, the Chennai city police commissioner invoked the Goonda Act against him on recommendations from the Central Crime Branch.

Police said there were several complaints of harassment against Swamy. He has been arrested twice earlier - in October 2019 on charges of abusive posts on women journalists, and in July 2020, for similar charges of harassing women. He was released on bail in both cases.

Besides individual complaints against Swamy's posts targeting women, a petition filed by Tamil Nadu Women Journalists Forum before the then Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami in 2020 said Swamy had been targeting women journalists on Twitter.

"He was already booked under Sections 153, 505(1)(b) and 505(1)(c) and was remanded in judicial custody till June 28," said an officer. After his arrest on June 14, BJP state vice president, K Annamalai, had tweeted in Swamy's support saying the arrest was a move to suppress freedom of speech and expression.



## ENHANCED PINAKA ROCKETS TEST FIRED

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test fired the extended range version of indigenously developed Pinaka rocket from a multi-barrel rocket launcher (MBRL). The system has been developed by two Pune-based DRDO facilities. The tests were conducted on Thursday and Friday at the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, in which 25 enhanced Pinaka rockets were launched in quick succession against targets at different ranges. DRDO said that all the mission objectives were met during the launches. The enhanced range version of the Pinaka rocket system can destroy targets at distances up to 45 km.

Courtesy DRDO

## LAC STANDOFF

### India, China agree to soon hold military talks for early resolution

#### SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

INDIA AND China Friday agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the "remaining issues" along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh.

At the 22nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), held virtually, the two sides agreed to hold the next (12th) round of the Senior Commanders meeting at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement from all the friction points along the LAC.

The last WMCC meeting took place on March 12.

A statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said on Friday that the two sides had a "frank

exchange" of views on the situation along the LAC in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas.

"Both sides agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the remaining issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh keeping in view the agreement reached between the two Foreign Ministers in September 2020.

"In this regard, the two sides agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through the diplomatic and military mechanisms to reach a mutually acceptable solution for complete disengagement from all friction points so as to ensure full restoration of peace and tranquility to enable progress in the bilateral relations. They also agreed that in the interim, the two sides will continue to ensure stability on the ground and prevent any untoward incident," the

statement said.

The Indian delegation was led by the Additional Secretary (East Asia) from the Ministry of External Affairs. The Director-General of the Boundary & Oceanic Department of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the Chinese delegation.

India had Thursday blamed China's actions of amassing a large number of troops close to the border and attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the LAC last year for the continuing military standoff in eastern Ladakh, and asserted that these acts were in violation of bilateral agreements.

India's comments on the border row had come a day after China said its military deployment in the region is a normal defence arrangement aimed at "preventing and responding" to

"encroachment and threat" on Chinese territory by "relevant country".

"It is well recognised that it has been the Chinese actions over the last year, including amassing of a large number of troops close to border areas in the western sector and trying to unilaterally alter the status quo along the LAC, which have seriously disturbed peace and tranquillity in the border areas," the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said at a media briefing.

"These acts are in violation of our bilateral agreements, including the 1993 and 1996 agreements that mandate that the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control and that two sides will keep their military forces in the areas along the LAC to a minimum level," Bagchi said.

### Payal Rohatgi held for 'abusing' society chairman

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AHMEDABAD, JUNE 26

POLICE ARRESTED Bollywood actor Payal Rohatgi in Ahmedabad Friday after she was booked in an FIR for allegedly using derogatory language against her residential society's chairman and others.

An FIR was registered as per the complaint of chairman of Sundarvan Epitome Society, Dr Parag Shah. "...On June 20, we had an annual general meeting in which Rohatgi appeared without invitation to which we objected... To this, Rohatgi replied in an indecent language and threatened to kill me. She then started recording video on her mobile phone to threaten the society members and after they objected, she started abusing them as well," said Shah in his police complaint.

"We traced the boy to his relative's house in Jalandhar in Punjab. In his statement to the police, he denied having converted to Islam and said that he had left home after his uncle thrashed him. He also accused his uncle of harassing him to take his share of the parental property of eight big has land," said SSP (Bulandshahr) Santosh Kumar Singh.

On Friday, police got the boy's statement recorded before a magistrate. Police said that during medical examination, doc-

### UP cops to act against 'missing' boy's uncle under conversion law

### Dalit boy traced to his aunt's house in Punjab, denies he converted to Islam

#### MANISH SAHU

LUCKNOW, JUNE 25

THE BULANDSHAHR police here decided to take action against a Dalit man for filing a false case under Uttar Pradesh's anti-conversion law.

Police said that the 46-year-old had got an FIR registered on Thursday alleging that his minor nephew, who had gone missing for the second time in a month, was converted to Islam by a group of "unidentified people".

During their investigation, however, the police traced the boy to his aunt's house in Jalandhar, Punjab. The boy, who was staying with his uncle after his parents died seven years ago, denied that he had converted to Islam and told police that he fled from his uncle's home as he used to regularly harass and beat him.

"We traced the boy to his relative's house in Jalandhar in Punjab. In his statement to the police, he denied having converted to Islam and said that he had left home after his uncle thrashed him. He also accused his uncle of harassing him to take his share of the parental property of eight big has land," said SSP (Bulandshahr) Santosh Kumar Singh.

On Friday, police got the boy's statement recorded before a magistrate. Police said that during medical examination, doc-

### Pakistan continues to be on FATF 'Grey List'

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

THE FINANCIAL Action Task Force (FATF) has refused to take Pakistan out of the 'Grey List' yet again. On Friday, it said Pakistan had failed to take appropriate action against UN-designated terrorists such as 26/11 accused Hafiz Saeed and JeM chief Masood Azhar.

Although the global anti-money laundering and terror financing body has acknowledged some progress made by Pakistan, it said the country should continue to work to address its strategically-important deficiencies.

FATF president Marcus Pleyer said the decision was taken at the conclusion of the virtual plenary of the Paris-based organisation. Pakistan continues to remain on "increased monitoring list", Pleyer said at a virtual press conference. "Increased monitoring list" is the another name for the Grey List.

Pleyer said Pakistan has now completed 26 of the 27 action items given to it in 2018. The FATF has asked Pakistan to take action against UN designated terrorists, he said.

The UN designated terrorists based in Pakistan include Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Azhar, Lashker-e-Taiba founder Saeed and its "operational commander" Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi. All three are most wanted terrorists in India for their involvement in numerous terrorist acts.

On June 4, in a follow-up report published on Pakistan, the FATF had said, "Overall, Pakistan has made notable progress in addressing the technical compliance deficiencies identified in its MER and has been re-rated on 22 Recommendations."

Pleyer said the Pakistan government has failed to check risk of money laundering, leading to corruption and terror financing.

"The FATF encourages Pakistan to continue to make progress to address as soon as possible the one remaining Combating the Financing of Terrorism-related item by demonstrating that Terror Financing investigations and prosecutions target senior leaders and commanders of UN designated terrorist groups," an FATF statement said.

### In UP, bank guard shoots at customer after row over mask

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

LUCKNOW, JUNE 25

A BANK guard was arrested for allegedly shooting at a 28-year-old customer following a row over the man not wearing a face mask in Bareilly district on Friday, said police.

However, guard Keshav said he had accidentally opened fire on Rajesh Kumar during the brawl inside the bank premises, they added.

Police said the condition of Rajesh, who had been admitted to hospital, was stable. Bareilly SSP Rohit Singh Sajwan said Keshav had been arrested and will be sent to judicial custody.

"Following a complaint, we have lodged a case under IPC

section 307 (attempt to murder) against the guard," said Sajwan.

Circle Officer (City-1) Yatendra Singh Nagar said, "The customer was shot at on the left thigh, just above the knee. He is fine now."

Speaking to local reporters, Rajesh's wife Priyanka Rathore alleged that her husband got into an argument with the security guard over not wearing a mask inside the bank

### Environment Ministry to deploy LiDAR survey reports for boosting groundwater in forest areas

#### EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JUNE 18

UNION ENVIRONMENT Minister Prakash Javadekar Friday released LiDAR-based reports mapping out the water requirement within forest areas in 10 states. These reports will be used to augment groundwater in forest areas so that animals don't venture out in search of water, Javadekar said.

The LiDAR (light detection and ranging) technology was used to create 3-D images of the project areas to recommend soil and water conservation structures. The surveys were carried out at forest areas in Assam, Bihar, Chhatisgarh,



Javadekar releases the survey reports on Friday. PTI

Goa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura.

Javadekar said that the project,

awarded to WAPCOS, a PSU under the Jal Shakti Ministry, is "a first of its kind and a unique experiment using LiDAR technology which

will help augment water and fodder in jungles areas thereby reducing human-animal conflict".

"The survey will help us in identifying areas which need groundwater recharge which will in turn help local communities. We have partnered with 26 states to pilot this project," the minister said. Four more states will submit their reports by July 15th, while the rest will submit their reports by September, said Environment Ministry officials.

The soil and water conservation structures will help in catching rainwater and prevent stream run-off, which will help in recharging groundwater, said the officials.



## The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# J&K Round One: Delhi

Valley leadership should go into a huddle and ponder some questions, rather than seek answers from Centre



HASEEB A DRABU

## BUILD ON BEGINNING

Centre and J&K leaders, Centre more than J&K leaders, must ensure Thursday's meeting leads to structured engagement

THE FIRST JAMMU & Kashmir all-party meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his seven years in office, his first engagement with leaders of mainstream Kashmir parties since the revoking of special status of J&K in August 2019, marks an important and welcome political moment. The meeting ended without "outcomes", expectedly so. But a way forward can be carved out from here. From the statements and tweets of the participants, it seems the Modi government has a plan: Delimitation, assembly election, restoration of statehood. Though the timeline is still not clear, Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have indicated that delimitation is a priority. The J&K leaders appear to be in general agreement with the broad contours, though some might want the ordering to be different — statehood or elections first, delimitation last. There is also a sense that participation in the exercise is in their own interest. The regional leadership seems to have come to terms with the reality that restoration of the special status of J&K cannot be negotiated with a government that had made revocation of Article 370 a key ideological project. If at all there is a reversal, it will come through the courts.

That the J&K leaders decided to attend this meeting despite their public humiliation over the last two years — of the 14 present in the room, at least six, including three former chief ministers, were detained for extended periods — is a measure of their investment in, and commitment to, the political mainstream. An acknowledgement of this by the host may have been statesmanly. It was not forthcoming on Thursday. But the government must at least make clear that this was not a one-off event to grab a headline or photo-opportunity, that it is listening now to those it had earlier derided and sought to sideline in "Naya Kashmir". It must commit to a structured process of continuous engagement. After August 2019, there is a terrible trust deficit vis a vis the intentions of the Centre. Those whose co-operation Prime Minister Modi now seeks have taken an enormous political — and security — risk, both in Delhi and in Kashmir, and it is his government's responsibility to walk the extra mile, especially as it still holds all the cards.

There are some overarching takeaways from Thursday's meeting. One, the Kashmir problem needs a political solution, not administrative quick fixes entrusted to an unaccountable bureaucracy. Two, new leaders cannot be created overnight, there is no going back to a clean slate in politics. Three, there is a huge difference between political rhetoric and political reality. It is too early to say how Delhi's latest political outreach to J&K will play out. Both sides, the Centre and Kashmir's mainstream leadership, have travelled far from August 5, 2019, but there is a long distance still to be covered. Thursday's meeting was the right and necessary step to take, but the state has seen too many fresh starts lead nowhere. The Centre and Kashmir's leaders, the Centre more than Kashmir's leaders, must build on this beginning.

## SHOT WITH CAUTION

Vaccination is necessary, but must not be forced. State must use its power to include, not use strong arm as blunt instrument

WITH THE SECOND wave of the pandemic abating, states have either relaxed the nearly-two-month long lockdown or are framing guidelines to ease the restrictions. The safety imperative has led some authorities to make vaccination a prerequisite for the resumption of business operations. On Thursday, for instance, the Gujarat government issued an ultimatum to "managers, owners and staff of business establishments" to either get vaccinated or pull down the shutters. Mandatory vaccination policies are also in place in some parts of UP and the Northeast. Rules such as these — implemented in other parts of the world as well — do militate against the earlier consensus on the primacy of personal choice in an inoculation project. But the pandemic — in which no one is safe till everyone is safe — is making experts look at ethical questions from a different perspective. It's arguably a difficult terrain, particularly given the unanimity on the perils of excessive state power.

In April, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) held that "mandatory vaccination interferes with a person's right to integrity". Nevertheless, it argued, "such interference may be justified if considered necessary to control the spread of infectious diseases". On Thursday, the Meghalaya High Court evoked a different principle to rule against such vaccinations. "Vaccination by force or being made mandatory... vitiates the fundamental purpose of the welfare attached to it," it said. Both verdicts speak the language of persuasion and reiterate the importance of accessible information and informed consent. While the ECHR talks of incentives to marginalised groups, the Meghalaya court has asked all shops, business houses, and commercial vehicles to put on display the Covid-19 vaccination status of their employees at a "conspicuous" place.

Very often, vaccine hesitancy is a manifestation of the people's lack of trust in the health system. Ensuring ease of access to the shots is one of the proven ways to overcome this challenge. During the early days of the second wave, industry and business associations had suggested their willingness to inoculate workers at the level of the shop floor. Now that the shortage of vaccines has been overcome to an extent, there is a case to take up this suggestion. Governments may still need to resort to disincentives. But the state's main concern should be inclusiveness, not using its strong arm as a blunt instrument.

## BREAKING BAD

Silicon Valley pioneer John McAfee was also a presidential hopeful and outlaw

JOHN MCAFEE WAS not pleased when a Hollywood project about his life was announced with Michael Keaton in the title role. His own choice, he said in an interview some years ago, was Bryan Cranston, who played chemistry teacher-turned-drug lord Walter White on the acclaimed TV show *Breaking Bad*. It's clear why the former software mogul thought Cranston would do justice to the role — like White, McAfee's is a story of astonishing twists and turns. Except that Walter White was a fictional creation, while McAfee, who died at 75 this week, only seemed like he belonged in fiction.

Born in the UK and brought up in the USA, McAfee survived an abusive childhood and the suicide of his father to pursue a promising academic career, which was cut short when his PhD in mathematics was terminated due to allegations of sexual misconduct. Drug addiction and alcoholism followed, even as McAfee turned his considerable skills to programming. In 1987, he created his eponymous antivirus software and helped launch the multi-billion dollar antivirus industry.

After selling his firm in 1994 and losing much of his fortune in 2008's financial crash, McAfee moved to Belize. Here, his property was raided on suspicion of manufacturing drugs and he gained notoriety for his alleged relationships with underage girls. He fled on becoming a "person of interest" in a neighbour's murder in 2012 and returned to the US in 2015, where he began promoting cryptocurrencies and tried to run for president in 2016. By 2019, McAfee was once again on the lam, pursued by US authorities for tax evasion. He was eventually caught in Spain in 2020 and was set to be extradited to the US, when he died in a Barcelona prison. If the last decades of McAfee's life showed how far the mighty can fall, its abrupt end only leaves troubling questions about the nature of their legacies.

EVEN THOUGH CONVENING the J&K All Party Meet (APM) was a climbdown for the BJP and a compulsion of the Union government, it was conducted and concluded exactly the way they wanted it. It is a lesson in realpolitik of how a tactical move — meeting leaders including former chief ministers and deputy chief ministers and prospective chief ministers — has been converted into a strategic initiative which will resonate much beyond the boundaries of the Union Territory and indeed in the country. Round one: PM Modi and HM Shah.

The Valley-based political leadership seemed to have come with more expectations from the media than from the meeting. Perhaps rightly so. This is evident from the noise that they made outside of the meeting hall which was not even heard inside, if it was whispered in there, that is.

In doing so, what could have been an occasion, if not an opportunity, to start the process of setting a relevant agenda for Kashmir was converted into an excuse to live in the past. In the absence of a proactive and collective political strategy what was put on display was a totally reactive and deeply fragmented political thinking. The end result being that having come down from the pre-1953 position to the pre-2019 position, they found themselves pleading for administrative and police cadre restoration.

The mainstream leadership of the Valley misread the APM as a goodwill gesture and treated it as an event. It was a statement underlying which were some honest admissions — President's Rule, which cannot be a long-term solution, is not even a short-term option in Kashmir now. For the better part of two years, the central leadership is fully aware that the delivery on the ground has not been any better than in the past, resulting in changing horses mid-course.

Even though the word on the streets of Srinagar is that pandemic management has been better than most elected governments

in other parts of the country, a peaceful and developmental environment in the Valley has yet not been enabled. It is not only very fragile, it is also very taut. This despite the skill and strength with which the aftermath of abrogation was handled.

More importantly, regional parties with all their ideological and political warts are not dispensable. The new political outfits have not made any serious dent, let alone changed the narrative, which is what was expected of them. The fact is that the BJP, a party which has decisively changed the narrative on Kashmir in the rest of the country, has not been able to change the narrative about Delhi in Kashmir. This big admission is the subtext of the PM's evocative phrase, as both the "doors", *dil ki aur Dilli ki*, have indeed grown, not just in the Valley but also in Jammu and among the Kashmiri Pandits.

Seen thus, the Valley's political class should have used the meeting to identify the common areas of concern and agreement rather than delve on differences between the two sides which are all too well known to bear repetition in such a forum. At the end of the day, the Centre has got a tacit buy-in on the delimitation exercise from the political class of the Valley. In being co-opted, they have chosen to risk their political survival for electoral salvation in the face of new kids on the block who have the potential to queer their political pitch.

Given that in the Valley the news of the APM and its deliberations was greeted with a big yawn, the Valley leadership, bruised if not battered, would do well to go into a huddle and move from shrillness to substance by pondering over a few questions rather than seek answers and assurances from the Centre.

Why should any way forward have to be located in the past? Why should a solution for the present and the future always have to be status quo ante? It seems to have been forgotten that every political accord, agreement or settlement, be it in 1952 or 1975, has been,

with the benefit of hindsight, seen as a compromise, if not a sell-out. Also, all these have been the outcomes of a certain political context, and of a set of international and domestic compulsions at that point of time, none of which are relevant at present. For instance, had the pre-1953 arrangement been a workable political model, it would not have collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions within 18 months of it being agreed upon. The chinks in the arrangement were revealed on May 14, 1954 when the first and most debilitating Constitutional Application Order was issued. The creativity of the constitutionalists has always been underestimated by politicians.

At inception, the legislative relationship was designed to prevent Indian laws from directly applying to J&K. Yet, over the last 70 years, even before the abrogation, all laws had been extended. And post 2019, all these have been now repealed and homogenised. In view of this erosion and subsequent abrogation, is it better to seek a repeal, which has been sought for the better part of 70 years now, with no avail? Or is it more meaningful to propose a framework of democratic accommodation of local aspirations, as distinct from electoral appeasement of land and job reservation, which will give Kashmiris a chance to live as citizens and not feel like subjects? In evolving this, the emerging global reality and the extant domestic ideological consensus has not only to be comprehended but contended with.

If this is not done, it will not be long before the Valley-based political parties will be forced to repeat what the godfather of mainstream politics in Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, said about the period of 1953 to 1975 — "siyasi awaragardi" (political vagabondry). That is history. Let that not be repeated.

The writer is a former finance minister of Jammu & Kashmir and was formerly with the PDP

## THE GREAT KERALA INEQUALITY

Dowry deaths reveal unaddressed gender question in the state



NEETHA N

THE RECENT SERIES of alleged suicides by young women, due to dowry-related violence, and the intensity of violence each had to encounter reveal cracks in the social and economic fabric of Kerala. The state government has finally taken note of the growing dowry deaths, following the recent unfortunate suicide of a 24-year-old BAMS (Ayurveda) student. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has announced a round-the-clock police helpline for women to report dowry harassment, domestic violence and other gender crimes. The government has promised to strengthen domestic conflict resolution centres in all districts. One cannot resist asking, however, whether such measures can address the increasing trend of violence against women.

Kerala's development experience is marked by very high social and human development indicators, with the state listed first among others, even in the most recent NITI Aayog's ranking of states. Female literacy rate in Kerala is among the highest, more than 95 per cent, and the state has a better sex ratio compared to most states. Kudumbashree, the women's collective, has gained international attention and is widely accepted as a model of women's empowerment. The critical contribution of women as frontline soldiers during the pandemic, be it ASHA, anganwadi workers/helpers, community-level volunteers, nurses and doctors headed by a woman health minister, has also been noted.

But crimes against women are increasing in the state, as per the latest NCRB data.

Though dowry deaths are small in number — six cases in both 2019 and 2020 — cases of cruelty by husbands or relatives, which could be seen as a proxy for dowry-related violence, are substantial (2,715 cases in 2020 as per provisional figures), second only to molestation.

Kerala's development achievements are largely attributed to progressive social and political movements. But none of them took the gender question seriously, though poor women were central to many of these struggles. While basic socio-economic problems of class and caste were addressed, gender-based exploitation remained unaddressed.

With the flow of remittance-income and the expansion of the middle class, controls on girls and women were redefined. Though girls are allowed to pursue their education, marriage prospects are given priority over economic independence. The increased demand for teachers in the "marriage market" and the restrictions on women's economic choices or their withdrawal from education or employment after marriage are all indications of a gendered social fabric. The average Keralaite has no shame in declaring how much a man has been able to wrangle from the wife's family in a marriage. Girls' families also take pride in their ability to get their daughter "married off" to a man, whose social and economic status meets up to their expectations, even if it leads them into a debt trap. Expenditure on weddings has increased over time, with gold being an important part of the exchange.

Women may not face much discrimina-

tion as children, but the process of preparing them to graduate to the role of a wife begins early. A girl's higher education is usually dependent on marriage prospects. The withdrawal over time from the economic sphere completely or partially — as is clear from the poor work participation rates of women (20 per cent as per 2018-19 PLFS) — is also one reason for increased dowry demands. Even when women earn, they rarely have an equal role in decision-making; many women consider agreeing to male decisions as a part of their responsibility.

The hypocrisy of an average Malayalee is noteworthy. On the one hand, he/she will be socially and politically conscious and may appear as a progressive individual in his/her public life. But when it comes to his/her personal life, none of these values are respected and practised, as aptly portrayed in a recent Malayalam film, *The Great Indian Kitchen*.

Unless larger public action is directed at improving women's status at an overall level, through promoting women's equality in various fields of life, ad hoc measures may not result in change. It is important to equip girls to take a stand against dowry and marriage systems, as well as question women's subordination at large. For this, a relook at the curriculum (which was mentioned by the chief minister in his press meet) remains critical alongside ensuring forums to raise gender issues as well as avenues for debates and discussions.

The writer is professor at the Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi

## JUNE 26, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

HUANG IN DELHI

THE CHINESE FOREIGN minister arrived in Delhi to a warm welcome, the first visit by a Chinese leader in 21 years. The External Affairs Minister P V Narasimha Rao and two officials of the ministry received Huang who is in India on a five-day official visit. On his arrival, the Chinese foreign minister said he was looking forward to having "sincere, frank and friendly" discussions with the Indian leaders and to "explore together ways to further developing the relations between the two countries". In an interview shortly before he said: "In recent years, the relations between the two nations have developed

well and that's a source of joy for us.

APPLE DOES BETTER

APPLE, INDIA'S FIRST telecommunication satellite, was speedily moving towards its geostationary orbit over Sumatra as a fitting finale to the mission control scientists' grand efforts to tactfully maneuver the surviving solar panel generating power for the mission. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has congratulated ISRO scientists for removing the snag.

CONG (I) FLIP FLOP

THE CONGRESS (I) general secretary,





"Balochistan is the bellwether of Pakistan's power politics. Political instability that brews in that province is usually not confined there for long but spills over into the rest of the country as the first sign of an approaching national crisis."

— DAWN, PAKISTAN

# The authoritarian instinct

The characteristics in the Congress that led to the imposition of Emergency are alive and kicking



Prakash Javadekar

IT HAS NOW been 46 years since the darkest day Indian democracy has ever seen — the beginning of Emergency. The Emergency and its withering assault on democratic principles is a black day not only for Indians but for anyone who values the rule of law, rule of the people and constitutionalism.

There were many evils inflicted upon our nation during the Emergency. The blow it dealt to our Constitution and our institutions is too well documented to be repeated here. Let alone other fundamental rights, even the "right to life" was taken away from the people.

However, while many of these facts are well established, the problem is that the mentality that led to the imposition of Emergency still persists in the topmost echelons of the Congress party.

When India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dismissed governments in Kerala and Punjab, this mindset was there for everyone to see. During a debate on India and China in the 1960s, when questioned about leadership, no less a figure than the Prime Minister himself said that questioning the preparedness against China would be akin to lowering the morale of the nation. Privileging one family over others, too, began with Nehru, when Indira Gandhi was made Congress President in 1959.

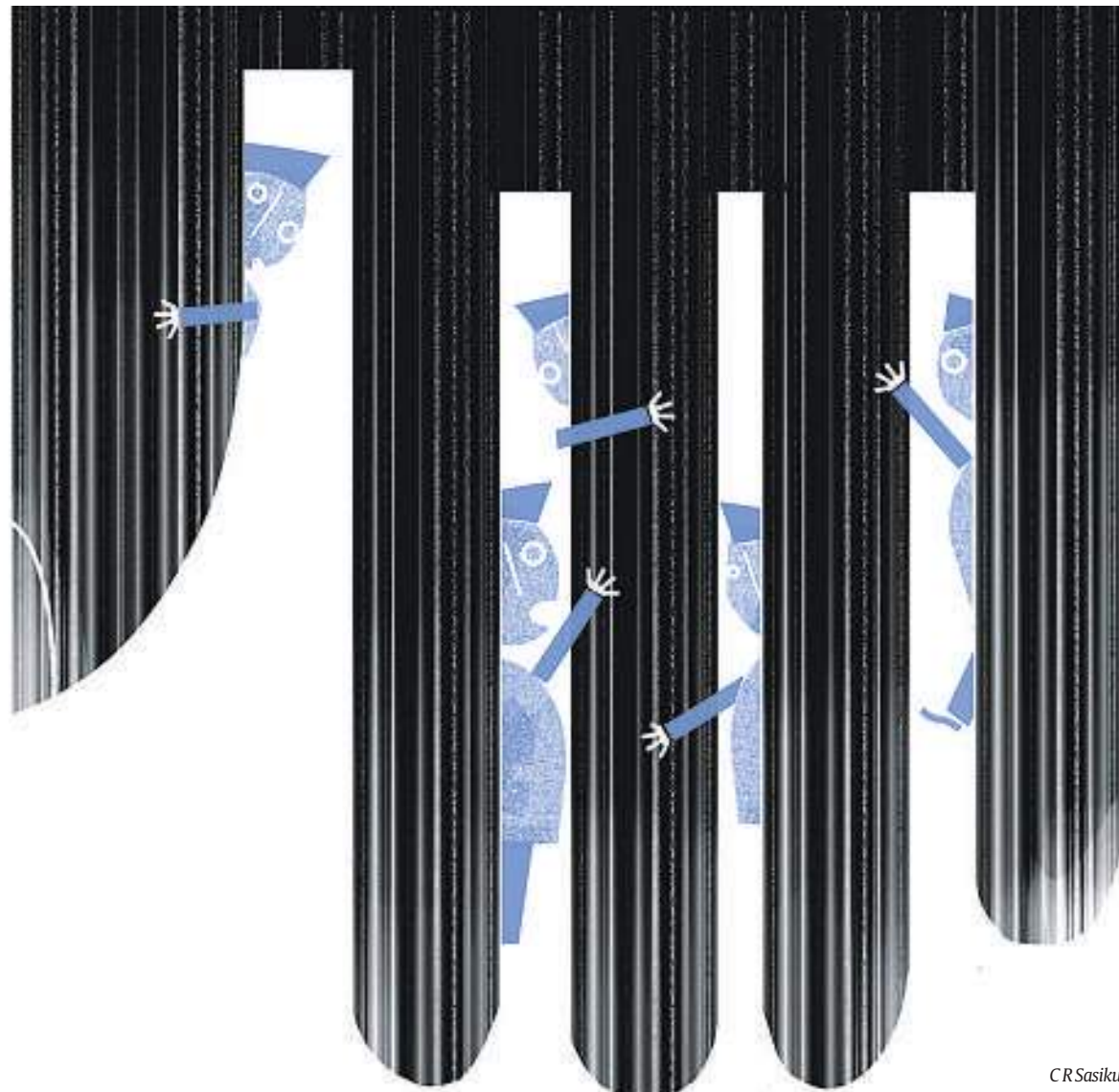
Time and again, many national and regional leaders who did not toe the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty's line were humiliated and the party became the sole property of one family. Be it Morarji Desai, K Kamaraj, Atulya Ghosh, Charan Singh, Devi Lal, Babu Jagjivan Ram, people were pushed aside to make way for one-family rule over the party, which eventually made way for an attempt at one-party rule over the country.

Everyone knows how Sitaram Kesri was forced to make way for Sonia Gandhi and, later, how Jitendra Prasad was targeted for fighting the election for Congress president, though he had every right to contest for the post. In the same vein, every young leader in the Congress who could be seen as a competitor to Rahul Gandhi is being hounded out.

A hunger for the concentration of power has ingrained a disdain in the Nehru-Gandhi family for other democratically elected leaders. When Congress governments were at the Centre, President's Rule was imposed on states a staggering 80-plus times. A corollary of this meant that Raj Bhavans were used as de facto Congress party headquarters. This has happened even as recently as the UPA era.

Even at the Centre, the Congress has always had a "power behind the throne approach", which did not allow a single coalition government that had their "outside support" to finish its term.

The rot perpetuated by Congress's hunger for power spread far and wide, touching even the judiciary. It was the Congress under Indira Gandhi that called for a "committed judiciary" and even went



C R Sasikumar

about creating it. Superseding judges to place pliable people, the punishment of judges like Justice H R Khanna who failed to fall in line, and the case of Baharul Islam who switched between political posts in the Congress and judicial appointments with no compunction are just a few examples. In the Sonia Gandhi era, Chief Justices were randomly transferred, which the late Arun Jaitley described as a calculated attempt to create terror amongst the judges.

The dictatorial instincts of the Congress have not gone anywhere, even when it has been reduced to its lowest ebb. Rahul Gandhi tried to impeach a Chief Justice simply because he would not entertain the Congress's attempts at running a vile political agenda through courts.

Anyone who disagrees with the de facto leadership of a serial electoral failure such as Rahul Gandhi is sidelined, like the case of the recent 'G-23'. The Nehru-Gandhi family uses internal subterfuge as a way of cutting down to size strong regional leaders of its own party in Punjab and Rajasthan.

In stark contrast to the Congress's shenanigans is Prime Minister Narendra Modi who puts the nation above everything. This stems from the BJP's political tradition that gave up power but did not go against constitutional principles.

While the Congress puts power over everything else, PM Modi pulled out of a

coalition in Jammu and Kashmir because the coalition partner was stonewalling the DDC polls. This was a case of putting grassroots democracy above political power.

It is under the leadership of PM Modi that a milestone in cooperative federalism has been created with the GST Council, where states are accorded importance. Rules have been amended to ensure the Leader of Opposition gets to attend key meetings involving CBI appointments.

The Congress's treatment of political opponents is well known. Led by Sonia Gandhi, they called a towering figure like Atal Bihari Vajpayee the worst names. On the other hand, PM Modi's emotional speech and tears at the exit of Ghulam Nabi Azad from Parliament is an indicator of the BJP's values.

Key differences between the authoritarian, power-hungry instincts of the Congress and the democratic outlook of anti-Congress forces should not be forgotten.

The characteristics in the Congress that led to the imposition of Emergency are alive and kicking. It's just that they don't have a shot at political power at the Centre, and it is better that way.

Anyone who disagrees with the de facto leadership of a serial electoral failure such as Rahul Gandhi is sidelined, like the case of the recent 'G-23'. The Nehru-Gandhi family uses internal subterfuge as a way of cutting down to size strong regional leaders of its own party in Punjab and Rajasthan. The Congress's own MLAs are quitting it saying that even a dog gets more attention than them from the 'first family'.

The writer is Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change; Information & Broadcasting; and Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises

# 1975 and 2014

There is no defence of Emergency. But actions of BJP government have stifled free speech, made institutional subversion the new normal



Manish Tewari

THE INTERNAL EMERGENCY imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was more than just an error of judgement. She herself admitted as much. On January 24, 1978, at a public meeting in Yavatmal, she apologised for the excesses committed during the Emergency and declared she was taking "the entire responsibility for the same".

She stated that even if others responsible for mistakes and excesses were not willing to own up, she would own the responsibility for those mistakes as well. She, however, did remind the audience that the situation just before the imposition of Emergency was grave, and the survival of the nation was threatened. If things were allowed to continue, the situation that had developed in Bangladesh would have been repeated in India.

Whatever may have been the trigger for that drastic decision, there can never be a defence of the overreaching abridgement of fundamental freedoms and mass incarceration of political opponents and other activists. However, what has been happening since May 2014 is equally reprehensible. India is living in a state of an undeclared Emergency.

The fourth BJP government at the Centre has renewed the project to rewrite the constitutional "idea of India" — a construct that had been incubated in the informed debates in the Constituent Assembly. It was preceded by an over five-decade-long mass struggle for the liberation of our nation from imperialism. A crusade in which neither the BJP (for it was not around then) nor its ideological predecessors had any substantive or significant role to play.

The NDA/BJP regime has perpetrated a full-fledged assault on pluralistic mores that characterise the Indian way of life. Campaigns around "love jihad" and "ghar wapas" have kept social polarisation on a slow but continuous burn. Government apologists even rationalise communal lynchings. A relentless attempt continues to reconfigure not only the way people think but also how they should eat, drink, dress and, of course, articulate their views in the public domain. Freedom of speech and expression has been the most visible casualty. Institutional subversion is the norm. Parliament is treated with contempt, with less-than-autonomous presiding officers trotting out every excuse to ensure that Parliament and its standing committees do not meet virtually during the pandemic. The judiciary is perceived as having buckled under the onslaught of authoritarianism, except for the occasional act of personal courage. Constitutional immorality is the new normal, with nine state governments being toppled in seven years through dubious means.

A subversive narrative cloaked in muscular nationalism has been rolled out, whereby it is now anti-national to question the ruling party, seditious to query the ruling government and downright teacher-

ous to ask hard questions of the national security establishment. Parliament has not been permitted to debate the year-long Chinese aggression.

An architecture of legal amendments has led to laws like the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, Information Technology Act, Foreign Contribution Regulation (FCRA) Act, which have tipped the fine balance of constitutional jurisprudence to the detriment of the individual.

Amendments that designate an individual as a terrorist are draconian, to say the least. Should individuals be legally designated "terrorists" prior to their conviction in a court of law? While the UAPA Act defines the expression "terrorist act", no specific description of the word "terrorism" has been delineated in any central act passed by Parliament so far. The discretion, therefore, is with the central government and the NIA to label any act of terrorism. Post the amendment to the NIA Act in July 2019, there are legitimate apprehensions of the increasing propensity of its serious misuse. The line between the right to dissent and sedition has been ruthlessly blurred. Activists, students, parliamentarians and even spokespersons of political parties are routinely harassed through the filing of multiple FIRs for sedition. Those working among underprivileged, marginalised and minority communities are arbitrarily detained under these recently-reinforced oppressive legal regimens. The case in point being of three young students, who were recently granted bail after a year of detention for protesting the amendments to the Citizenship Amendment Act. They were accused of turning the protests violent and allegedly dovetailing them into the riots that took place while then US President Donald Trump was in Delhi in February 2020. After perusing the material on record, the court observed: "We are constrained to express, that it seems, that in its anxiety to suppress dissent, in the mind of the State, the line between constitutionally guaranteed right to protest and terrorist activity seems to be getting somewhat blurred. If this mindset gets traction, it would be a sad day for democracy."

This is exactly the mindset that the current dispensation has sought to perpetuate. Whether in its handling of the farmers' protests, whereby lakhs of agitating farmers are sought to be labelled Khalistanis for the misguided actions of a few or in their obtuse battle with Twitter primarily because the ruling dispensation finds it difficult to handle the severe public backlash on social media for its criminal mishandling of the second wave of Covid-19.

With large sections of the media already neutered and the rest sought to be reined in through delegated legislation targeted at social media intermediaries and courageous outliers in the electronic media, an Orwellian state has been created. Every person has been coerced to install a censor in his head for the fear that any honest opinion can lead to punitive action, ranging from trolling to spine-chilling reprisals under a repressive legal panoply. If this is not an undeclared Emergency, what else would you call it?

The writer is a lawyer, Congress MP and former I&B minister



Sushil Kumar Modi

# A story that needs to be retold

Indira Gandhi subverted Constitution during Emergency. But the people won

ON THE MIDNIGHT of June 25-26, 1975, the President of India on the advice of Indira Gandhi and without the approval of her Cabinet, signed a proclamation to "declare that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by internal disturbances". What was the need for a second Emergency when an Emergency due to the Indo-Pak war was already in existence since 1971? Was the security of India really threatened due to internal disturbances?

The immediate trigger for the imposition of Emergency was the judgment of the Allahabad HC on June 12, 1975, which found Mrs Gandhi guilty of corrupt electoral practices and disqualified her from holding public office for six years. On June 23, the Supreme Court Vacation Judge granted a partial stay but without granting her voting rights in Parliament.

Ego shattered, pride beaten, a united Opposition under Jayaprakash Narayan baying for her resignation, a loud media waiting for every opportunity to criticise her, a non-pliant judiciary that struck down bank nationalisation and the privy purses case and clipped the power of Parliament by propounding the basic structure doctrine in Kesavananda Bharati — everyone seemed to be challenging Indira Gandhi's authority. She opted to impose Emergency to silence her critics.

More than one lakh political workers including JP, Morarji Desai, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Charan Singh were arrested under the Defence of India Rules and MISA. Censorship was imposed on the media. The RSS was

banned. All political activities were forbidden. Many newspapers carried blank editorials to protest censorship. One newspaper carried an obituary advertisement that read: "Died, D.E.M. OCRACY, Mother of Freedom, Daughter of L.I. Berty, on 26th June, 1975."

Before the imposition of Emergency, the onslaught on the judiciary had begun. Mrs Gandhi superseded three judges who delivered the judgment in the Kesavananda Bharati case and appointed Justice A N Ray as Chief Justice of India. In another instance, Justice H R Khanna was superseded and Justice H M Beg was appointed as CJ. Fourteen high court judges who were found not to be pliable were transferred.

On June 27, 1975, a declaration was made under Article 359(1) whereby no person could move the courts for the enforcement of Articles 14, 19 and 21. The height of subversion was exemplified by then-Attorney General Niren De stating in open court that during Emergency, even if a person was threatened with death, he had no remedy in law. The Supreme Court overruled nine high courts that had given relief to detenus and held that persons arrested under MISA could not file writ petitions.

During this period, sycophancy was also at its peak. The Congress was sloganeering, "Indira is India and India is Indira". With the entire Opposition in jail and the media gagged, governance through arrest, intimidation and terror became the norm.

The election disqualification case in the Supreme Court was scheduled for hearing from

August 11, 1975. Indira Gandhi was in a tearing hurry to amend both the Constitution and the Representation of Peoples Act retrospectively to legislatively validate her election.

On July 21, Parliament was convened. By passing the 38th Constitution Amendment, imposition of Emergency was made non-justiciable as it involved "waste of public money". On August 4, the Election Law (Amendment) Bill was introduced to retrospectively validate all the corrupt practices due to which Mrs Gandhi's election had been challenged. By the 39th Constitution Amendment, the elections of the Prime Minister, President, Vice President and Speaker could not be called into question before any court. It also added that any order made by any court setting aside an election of these four functionaries would be deemed void.

Another deplorable amendment that eventually lapsed was the 41st Constitutional Amendment that sought to amend Article 361 and give lifelong immunity from criminal prosecution to the Prime Minister, governors and President for all acts done before the assumption of office and during their tenure. This meant that a person committing the most heinous crime could escape the law by becoming a governor even for a day.

The misuse of constitutional powers did not stop there. On August 28, 1976, the 42nd Constitution Amendment was introduced, which provided that the constitutionality of legislation could only be decided by no less than seven judges and any law could be struck down

only by a two-thirds majority. To negate the principle of "basic structure", the Bill provided that any constitutional amendment under Article 368 would be valid. The amendment also increased the tenure of the Lok Sabha to six years.

Thus, all the loopholes were plugged. The rules of the game were changed retrospectively. The outcome of the case in the Supreme Court was a foregone conclusion. Mrs Gandhi was acquitted on November 7, 1975, of all the charges.

Confident of victory, Mrs Gandhi called for early elections to take the Opposition by surprise. But in the 1977 general elections, the Janata Party stormed into power. Indira Gandhi was defeated by the same Raj Narain who had filed the election petition in the Allahabad High Court. Sanjay Gandhi, the illegitimate constitutional authority during Emergency, was also defeated. The Congress was wiped out from the Hindi heartland. The great upheaval of 1975 was finally reversed after the Janata Party introduced the 43rd and 44th amendments and restored the primacy of the Constitution and rule of law.

Forty-six years have passed since that horrid day, but the Emergency is a story that needs to be told and retold. Emergency strengthened democratic ideals of a free press, an independent judiciary and a transparent government. It was the people and their faith in democracy that emerged as the true winners.

The writer is Member, Rajya Sabha and former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FAMILY FIRST

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lessons not learnt' (IE, June 25). It is strange that the Congress High Command is giving ears to someone who has neither political ideology nor standing and will not hesitate to jump, as his short political history shows till now. At the other extreme is the Punjab chief minister who has ably defended his turf against the BJP's onslaught. But then, the Gandhis have never liked any state leader of their party becoming powerful enough to challenge them. As always, fears of the first family triumph over the party's welfare.

Vijai Pant, Hemptur

### HARDER THEY FALL

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Resolve and resilience' (IE, June 25). The manner in which the famed Indian batting catapulted against some good Kiwi bowling in the second innings of the finals of the World Test Championship makes the fan wonder if our batsmen's skills are overrated. New Zealand has shown us how doggedness in cricket is more rewarding than flashes of brilliance.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurgaon

### TALKS AND POLLS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'J&K talks through a wide lens' (IE, June 25). There is no substitute for constructive talks between the Centre and the state leaders as far as bringing Kashmir back to normalcy is concerned. The detention of the mainstream Kashmiri leaders after the abro-

**IDEAS ONLINE**

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gation of special status under Article 370 legitimised the extremist tendencies and separatists. The only hope lies in the devolution of full statehood and free elections.

Vinay Saroha, Delhi

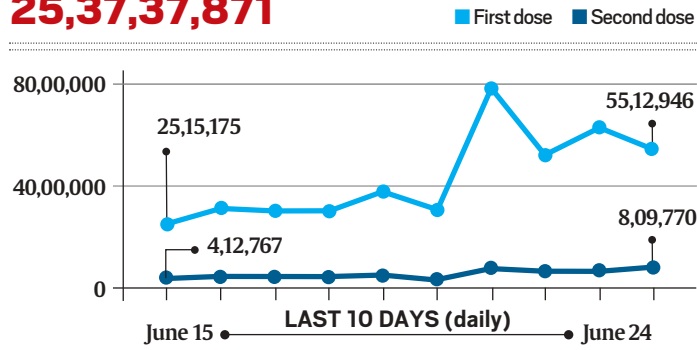
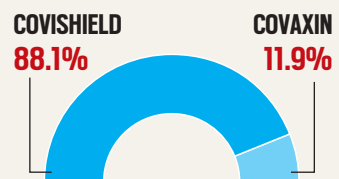
THIS REFERS TO the article, 'J&K talks through a wide lens' (IE, June 25). The political process initiated by the Centre to engage with the mainstream political parties of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir will help the leadership, both at the regional level and in New Delhi, to understand each others' standpoint better. The process of delimitation followed by the assembly election is essential, as an elected legislature and a popular government must fill the political void.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

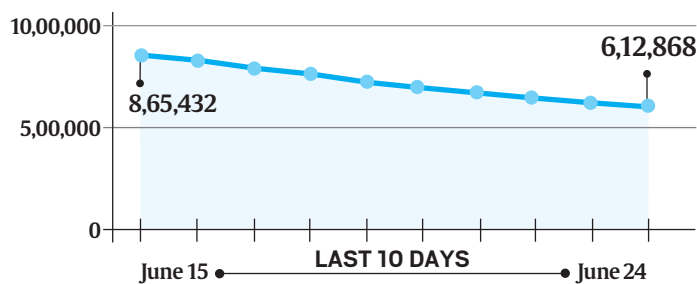


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#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to [explained@indianexpress.com](mailto:explained@indianexpress.com)**CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD****TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA** (at least one dose)  
**25,37,37,871****TOTAL DOSES**  
**30,79,48,744**

(Sputnik V's 53,904 doses not represented in pie)

**DOSES ON JUNE 24 63,22,716****JUNE 23: 69,86,517** (63,30,421 st doses; 6,56,096 2nd)**INDIA ACTIVE CASES** **6,12,868**

Note: The June 24 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on June 25

**INDIA TOTAL CASES 3,01,34,445**

Source: Ministry of Health &amp; Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on June 25

**How to swab your phone screen for coronavirus**

SCIENTISTS HAVE developed a novel method for coronavirus testing that swabs your smartphone screen rather than your nose or throat. Compared to regular PCR testing, the Phone Screen Testing (PoST) method is non-invasive, costs less, and is equally accurate, the scientists have reported in the journal *eLife*.

**PAPER CLIP**

NEW RESEARCH

from the phone screen with regular swabs like the ones used for nasopharyngeal sampling, but embedding them in a saline water solution. "The sample is then subjected to a regular PCR like for clinical samples," lead author Dr Rodrigo Young said, by email.

The study was done on 540 individuals who underwent both PoST and regular PCR testing. PoST detected the virus on the phones of 81.3% to 100% of contagious people with a high viral load.

"If we manage to do periodic mass testing to all people with no symptoms we could theoretically end the pandemic," Dr Young said.

Longer version on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

"... We hypothesised that Covid-19 contagious individuals will regularly deposit aerosols, droplets of saliva, or upper respiratory tract secretions containing shed SARS-CoV-2 virions, over the screen of their phone, which could then be sampled and detected by RT-PCR," the authors write.

PoST involves collecting samples

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For more details: +91-9910812719 | [www.shubhrranjan.com](http://www.shubhrranjan.com)**Before BJP MPs' remarks, statehood movements from North Bengal****SANTANU CHOWDHURY**  
KOLKATA, JUNE 25

TWO BJP MPs from West Bengal recently called for separate states to be carved out in Jangalmahal and North Bengal respectively. While these are individual statements, which the BJP leadership has distanced itself, West Bengal has also seen three full-fledged movements for separate states since independence — all from parts of North Bengal.

A look at the two BJP leaders' remarks and the three statehood movements:

**What the MPs said**

On June 13, BJP MP from Alipurduar John Barla demanded a separate state or a Union Territory in North Bengal, saying the region has lacked development over the years. On June 21, BJP MP from Bishnupur Saumitra Khan demanded that Jangalmahal region (formerly a Maoist belt, not in North Bengal) be made a separate state, contending there have never been serious development there.

The following day, BJP state president Dilip

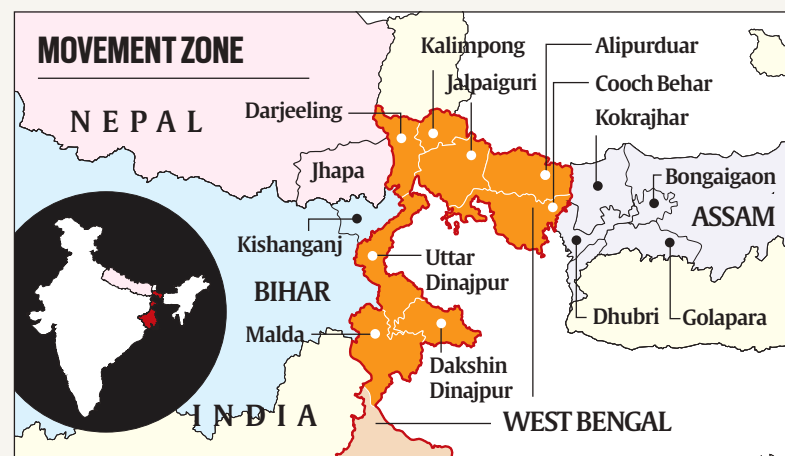
Ghosh clarified: "Some of our leaders have made some statements in their personal capacity. It has nothing to do with our party line or opinion which is against any form of division of West Bengal."

**Gorkhaland movement**

The demand for a separate state for Gorkhas in the Darjeeling hills and parts of the Doars and Siliguri terai regions began as a violent movement in the 1980s, initially spearheaded by Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) founder Subash Ghising. The demand stemmed from allegations that these regions were deprived of basic amenities such as electricity, healthcare, schools, and jobs.

The agitation peaked in 1985-86, with over 1,200 deaths. It ended with the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988, which administered the Darjeeling hills for 23 years with some autonomy.

In 2007, the statehood demand resurfaced after Ghising's former aide, Bimal Gurung, broke away from the GNLF and formed the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. The GJM took over the Gorkhaland movement, spearheading ag-



Statehood demands emerging from North Bengal (shaded differently from the rest of West Bengal) have sometimes sought to include parts from outside the state.

itations in 2011, 2013 and 2017.

In 2011, the Gorkha Territorial Administration was formed for the Darjeeling

and Kalimpong areas, replacing the DGHC. But Gurung resigned from the GTA in 2011 itself, citing interference from the state govern-

**SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER****How shutting parks helps tigers**

Uttarakhand has decided to keep Corbett and Rajaji Tiger Reserves open all year. What were the reasons for shutting them during the rainy season so far, and how does it impact tiger breeding and poaching?



A tiger in Corbett, and the Tiger Reserve during the monsoon (right). Contrary to myth, tigers breed round the year and not just in the rainy season. A G Ansari

**JAY MAZOOMDAAR**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

UTTARAKHAND FOREST Minister Harak Singh Rawat announced on Wednesday that the state's two Tiger Reserves — Corbett and Rajaji — would now remain open for tourism round the year. Until now, the reserves would remain closed to tourists during the monsoon for 4-5 months every year. The statement has sparked a debate with many warning that tourism activities in the rainy season will disturb tigers in their mating season.

Until now, Rajaji's Jhimil and Corbett's Jhirma zones remained open round the year, while the latter's Bijrani zone closed for four months from June 15 to October 15. The rest of Corbett and Rajaji usually remained shut for tourism between June 15 and November 15.

The dates vary due to variation in forest quality, topography and climate. For example, the peripheral forests of Jhirma remain open throughout. Bijrani is not as affected by seasonal streams as the northern parts, say Dhikala, of Corbett and opens a month early. In comparison, meagre rainfall in Rajasthan allows Ranthambore National Park to stay open for 9 months between October and June. And high monsoon in Assam forces Kaziranga National Park to stay practically shut for six months between May and October.

**What about tiger breeding?**

Contrary to the myth, tigers breed round the year. Except when raising a litter, a tigress comes into oestrus every 21 days. Even in the event of stillbirth or premature death of cubs, it comes into oestrus again within a month.

Clearly, such readiness belies every imagi-

nary seasonal restriction, even though extreme winters of the Russian Far East are known to force a semblance of seasonality in the Amur tiger's breeding behaviour.

In India, if there is any seasonal bias for mating, observational evidence suggests it is towards the autumn-spring window. The rainy season is not the best time for tiger breeding.

The elephant, the other iconic species of Corbett and Rajaji, does not seem to particularly prefer the monsoon for species propagation either. While elephant breeding is indeed linked to rainfall patterns — they breed round the year in places where it rains likewise — a high number of births are observed in the winter months of November-January in India, indicating a surge in mating in the pre- and early monsoon months of May-July.

A 2009 paper on reproductive behaviour of elephants in Rajaji noted the "musth" phenomenon in adult male elephants was mostly observed during February to July, which was dominated by dry period and peak breeding season in "largely the warm period" starting May.

**So, why shut reserves?**

It has more to do with humans than tigers (or elephants), really. A tropical forest is least accessible during the monsoons, with lush undergrowth blocking movements and gullies washing away tracks. This is why even the trophy hunters of yore picked the rainy months as the off-season — a window they had to allow the animal population to recover.

In fact, the policy of shutting down a wildlife park is driven by weather across the world. Yellowstone, the first national park in the US, and also the world, shuts every winter in the snow season. Nagarhole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves of Karnataka shut to tourists in

the dry summer season to protect animals from stress and the forests from fire.

In the north, the rainy months are the most challenging. Only in 2019, a monsoon spate in the seasonal Dhangarhi nallah that flows across the Ramnagar-Corbett road swept away a tourist car. Inside Corbett, vehicular access is limited to only three (Dhela, Jhirma and Sultan) of over a dozen tourist accommodations during the rainy season when seasonal nullahs carrying boulders wash away roads and even knock down culverts.

"We walk and use elephants to cross the streams for patrolling and supply ration to the guard posts during the monsoons. While it is possible to upgrade the road to Bijrani across two seasonal streams that do not bring too many boulders, strengthening the road network to access the rest of the park will be a challenge. But everything is possible with big investment and mega machinery," said a forest official who recently served at Corbett.

**Why not invest and stay open?**

It is difficult, although not impossible, due to the topography. A number of southern reserves, including Nagarhole and Bandipur, have invested in such interventions to stay open for tourists round the year. The scale of construction, however, is not comparable to what is required in Uttarakhand's forests.

"We also get a lot of rain here but the gradient is such that water channels here stay narrow and regular culverts do the trick. In Corbett, they will probably need bridging structures spanning several hundred metres. We have to decide if we want all that inside a tiger reserve," said a former top official of the Karnataka forest department.

Besides, tiger breeding is not the only con-

cern. A number of species do breed in the forest during the rainy months and together they maintain the ecological balance, or the food chain, that supports the apex species.

Besides, wildlife deserves a break from noise, light and other pollutions tourism brings to their habitat. And given the logistical challenges it poses, the rainy season is the most convenient period for providing that respite.

A recent study reported high stress induced by tourist vehicles in tigers in Bandhavgarh and Kanha tiger reserves of Madhya Pradesh by comparing a marker in the scat collected during tourism (January-March) and non-tourism (September) months. While a more accurate comparison would be between scats collected from tourism and non-tourism zones the same month (a rainy September could anyway be more relaxing), it is reasonable to assume that a period of low disturbance will anyway benefit wildlife.

**Does opening or shutting parks impact poaching?**

While opening parks to tourists in the rainy months will not hamper the breeding prospects of the tiger, it may yet put the national animal at risk. Unlike the royal trophy hunters who avoided the dirty rainy months, the poacher considers the monsoon an opportunity when guards struggle to patrol much of the reserve. That is why Project Tiger has always emphasised enhanced vigilance during the monsoon.

Uttarakhand has a history of suffering heavy losses to poachers during the rainy season. Diverting the forest staff from 'Operation Monsoon' to tourism duties during these tough months will only make the reserves more vulnerable.

**THIS WORD MEANS: REGISTERED VALUER****The mandate to carry out valuation of an entity****SANDEEP SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

A VALUATION report by a registered valuer is at the heart of the recent controversy surrounding a Rs 4,000 crore share allotment decision by PNB Housing Finance to investors led by Carlyle at a price of Rs 390 per share. While the matter has reached the Securities Appellate Tribunal, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had on June 18 written to PNB Housing stating that the latter's board resolution with regard to the "issue of securities of the company", in its EGM notice dated May 31, is "ultra-vires" of the company's Articles of Association (AoA) and should not be acted upon until the company undertakes a valuation of shares, as prescribed in its AoA, by an independent registered valuer.

**Who is a registered valuer?**

A registered valuer is an individual or entity which is registered with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) as a valuer in accordance with the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation) Rules, 2017. Under Section 458 of the Companies Act, IBBI has been specified as the authority by the central government.

The concept of registered valuer was introduced in the Companies Act in 2017 in order to regulate the valuation of assets and liabilities linked to a company and to standardise the valuation procedure in line with global valuation standards.

Experts say that before the concept of registered valuer became part of the Companies Act, valuation was done in an arbitrary manner, often leading to question marks over the authenticity of the valuation.

**What does the valuation report comprise?**

As per the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation) Rules, 2017, the valuer should, in his/its report, state 11 key aspects including disclosure of the valuer's conflict of interest, if any. Among others it must include: purpose of valuation; sources of information; procedures adopted in carrying out the valuation; valuation methodology; and major factors that influenced the valuation.

**Who can become a registered valuer?**

An individual needs to clear the Valuation Examination conducted by IBBI. The rules state, however, that an individual who has completed 50 years of age and has been substantially involved in at least ten valuation assignments of assets amounting to Rs 5 crore rupees or more, during the five years preceding the commencement of these rules, shall not be re-

quired to pass the Valuation Examination.

The individual should, however, have a postgraduate degree in the specified discipline (relevant for valuation of the class of asset for which the registration is sought) and should have at least three years of experience in the discipline thereafter.

As of March 31, 2021 there were 3,967 registered valuers in the country. Only 40 of them are registered entities; the rest are individuals.

**For what assets can a registered valuer undertake valuation?**

Registered valuer can get themselves registered for valuation of assets such as land and building; plant and machinery; and securities and financial assets. They can get registered for valuation of all three classes, and can undertake valuation of only the assets for which they have got the registration.

ment, and renewed the Gorkhaland agitation.

In 2017, following a 104-day shutdown in the Darjeeling hills and a violent agitation, Gurung went into hiding. He resurfaced last year and extended his support to the ruling Trinamool Congress. Since then, the Gorkhaland demand has fizzled out.

**Kamtapur movement**

This movement came from within the Koch Rajbongshi community, a Scheduled Caste in West Bengal. The proposed state covers seven of North Bengal's eight districts including Cooch Behar, where the movement is centred, as well as Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Dhubri and Goalpara districts in Assam; Kishanganj in Bihar; and Jhapa in Nepal.

The demand was first raised in 1995 following the formation of the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), an armed militant organisation. Its stated aim was to address problems faced by the Koch Rajbongshi

people such as unemployment, land alienation, neglect of Kamtapuri language and identity, and economic deprivation.

The movement fizzled out in the early 2000s due to a leadership crisis and the arrest of several operatives of the KLO and the All Kamtapur Students Union (AKSU).

**Greater Cooch Behar agitation**

The movement was started in 1998 by Greater Cooch Behar People's Association (GCPA) general secretary Bangshi Badan Barman. The proposed state comprised seven districts of North Bengal along with Assam's Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Dhubri.

In 1949, Cooch Behar was merged with India as a C-category state through three treaties. On January 1, 1950, the Centre bifurcated the erstwhile kingdom, with parts going to West Bengal and parts to Assam.

This statehood movement never gained momentum, and there has been no major agitation since 2008 when the Greater Cooch Behar Democratic Party held a fast-unto-death demanding the release of Barman and 55 others who had been arrested in 2005.

# Delta plus found in 48 samples in 10 states, Delta now in 174 dists

## no evidence yet that sub-lineage is more dangerous: govt

**KAUNAIN SHERIFF M**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

THE HIGHLY transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus is present in at least 174 districts of the country — and its sub-lineage, Delta plus, has been detected in 48 samples in 10 states, and Madhya Pradesh (9), and Maharashtra (7).

Dr Singh clarified that there was no evidence currently to suggest that the Delta plus variant was significantly more dangerous than Delta.

Its transmission potential was currently the same as that of Delta, Dr Singh said. And at this point, given the limited scientific evidence and only a small number of cases, nothing can be said on concerns over the additional mutation in Delta plus — K417N — which has been linked with immune escape mechanism and a potential reduction in monoclonal antibody response, he said.

“The second wave is not yet over in the country. We have still got 75 districts that have more than 10 per cent prevalence, and we have 92 districts that have between 5 per cent and 10 per cent prevalence,” Dr Bhargava said.

“These districts are important, and it is possible for us to avert a big third wave provided individuals and the society adhere to Covid-appropriate behaviour, and avoid mass gatherings... Any indicative hotspot that we find, they need to be identified and isolated,” he said.

The Health Ministry categorised the Delta plus variant of the coronavirus as a Variant of Concern (VOC) on Tuesday,

and directed states to take up immediate containment measures in clusters where it had been detected.

Dr Sujeet Kumar Singh, Director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), said that of the 48 cases of Delta plus in 10 states, Maharashtra had 20, followed by Tamil Nadu (9), and Madhya Pradesh (7).

Dr Singh clarified that there was no evidence currently to suggest that the Delta plus variant was significantly more dangerous than Delta.

“Since the Delta variant is already a VOC, its sub-lineage will also be called VOC. I also want to clarify that the Delta plus variant signifies Delta variant with an additional mutation — the ‘plus’ does not signify that it is more transmissible or will cause more severe disease than the Delta variant. When there is any such scientific evidence (on increased transmissibility) we will inform you,” Dr Singh said.

“There are very limited cases of Delta plus variant in India as well as across the globe; therefore, we cannot say that in any of these districts, the Delta plus variant is causing an increasing trend in cases,” he

said.

Dr Bhargava announced that ICMR would, in about a week, come out with results of the effectiveness trial of vaccines against the Delta plus variant.

“Delta plus is present in 12 countries; 48 cases have been detected in India, however they have been very localised. This virus has been isolated and is being cultured. Laboratory tests to check vaccine effect are ongoing and we should have these results in seven to 10 days’ time,” he said.

Dr Singh said that as of June, 174 districts were affected by the Delta variant. “In all of these districts, we continue to monitor the trend... The proportion of cases with Variants of Concern (Delta and Delta plus) has risen from 10.31 per cent in May to 51 per cent on June 20... In some states, the Delta variant has slowly replaced the Alpha variant. This shows that the Delta variant is a stronger variant than the Alpha variant,” he said.

Variants of Concern had been detected in 21,109 sequenced samples in the country, Dr Singh said. According to official data, the prevalence of the Delta variant had gone up from only 10 per cent of samples in March to a staggering 90 per cent in May.

Eight states have reported approximately 50 per cent of the total VOCs in the country: Maharashtra (3,117), Delhi (2,973), Kerala (2,382), West Bengal (1,553), Punjab (1,431), Telangana (1,127), Haryana (945), and Andhra Pradesh (829).



## NOT RAIN WATER

Drainage water overflows at Bhavani Peth, whose residents say they have complained to the PMC about this issue several times. *Ashish Kale*

## KOZHIKODE GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

# Police probe leads to man with CPM links

**SHAJUPHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
JUNE 25

A PROBE into the Monday death of five members of a gang which attempted to rob 2.33 kg of gold smuggled from Dubai to Kozhikode in Kerala has led to a man with links to the ruling CPI(M).

Customs is on the lookout for Arjun Ayanki, who, according to police, had reached the Kozhikode airport to collect the smuggled gold. Arjun is very active on social media as a CPI(M) campaigner and had earlier held the post of unit secretary of the

DYFI, the youth wing of CPI(M), in his native Kannur.

Arjun has gone into hiding but in a Facebook post said that the party was not liable to answer for the personal allegations against him. “I have not been a member of the CPI (M) or DYFI for the last three years. I am engaged in an ideological campaign for the party without expecting any reward. I would prove my innocence,” he wrote.

The gold in question had been smuggled in from Dubai for a gang based in Kozhikode district’s Koduvally by a passenger, even as Arjun allegedly waited outside the airport to collect it. However, another gang from Cherpulassery in

Palakkad district reached the airport to rob the gold.

According to police, the plans of both gangs and Arjun went awry when Customs seized the gold. As Arjun went back empty handed, the Cherpulassery gang began chasing him, but turned back towards the airport after realising that the gold had been confiscated by Customs.

It was during this return journey that one of the three SUVs belonging to the Cherpulassery gang met with an accident, killing five. In Kannur district, political parties allegedly hired gangs for political attacks in the past.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
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# They eloped, asked HC for security; now man shot dead, wife injured

**JIGNASA SINHA**  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

A COUPLE who had approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court for protection after they eloped and got married last August were shot Thursday night in the Dwarka area of Delhi.

Police said six-seven men broke into the couple’s house in Ambrahi village in Dwarka and fired around 10 rounds, killing 24-year-old Vinay Dahiya, a taxi driver, and leaving his wife, 19-year-old Kiran, seriously injured.

In an order dated August 19, 2020, Justice Raj Mohan Singh of the Punjab and Haryana High Court had asked the Sonapat Senior Superintendent of Police to “ascertain the truth in the allegations of the petitioners... assess the threat perception of the petitioners”.

Police said the couple had married on August 13 last year against the wishes of their families, and investigators believe they were the targets of an “honour killing”. Kiran’s mother, police said, had lodged a complaint the same day at Sonapat’s Kharkhoda police station, and an abduction FIR was registered against unidentified persons.

Following the attack, police have detained Kiran’s family members for questioning.

The couple’s advocate, Abhimanyu Kalsy, told *The Indian Express*: “They approached me, alleging that Kiran’s family was not letting them get married and had been giving them death threats.”

Justice Raj Mohan Singh, while disposing the petition, had directed the couple to appear before the Sonapat SSP, noting, “before whom they have statedly moved a representation”. The SSP, the order stated, “would be at liberty to join the petitioners or any other person acquainted with the facts of the case”.

“It would be appreciated if needful in deciding the representation is done within a period of

one month from the date of receipt of certified copy of this order,” Justice Singh stated in his order.

After the attack Friday night, Kalsy said: “No protection was provided to them. In fact, an FIR was lodged against Vinay by the girl’s family who claimed that she was a minor and that he was trying to forcibly marry her. She was 18 when they got married. I later moved a plea seeking quashing of the FIR, which was subsequently done, but no police assistance was provided to them.”

Residents of Ambrahi village said they initially mistook the firing for a cylinder explosion. People found Vinay’s body on the road, and Kiran injured on the terrace of an apartment building. The couple had moved into their new home three-four days ago.

Police said Vinay sustained at least four bullet injuries, while Kiran was shot at least five times.

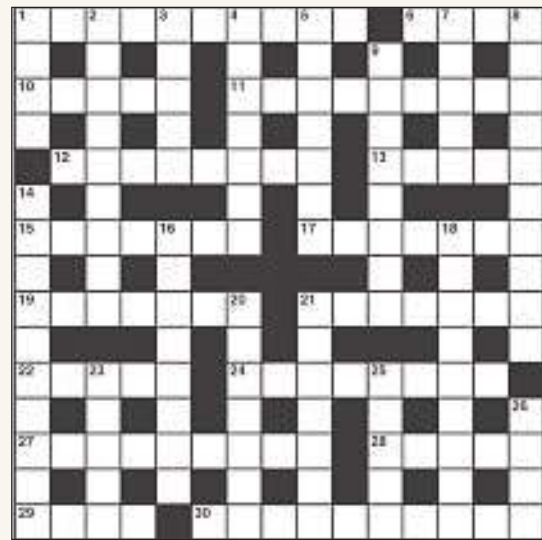
Jyoti, the couple’s neighbour and landlady, said: “I was in my house when I heard the firing. Initially, I thought a cylinder had exploded. I went outside to check and saw Kiran running towards the terrace, and Vinay running downstairs. I immediately went inside and locked the doors. Vinay was later found dead in a narrow lane. The men who came to kill them left shortly after.”

Locals said Kiran had jumped to the terrace of the adjoining building.

Police said they received a call around 9 pm and found Kiran on the terrace of the building and her husband lying near a shop. The couple were rushed to Venkateshwar Hospital where Vinay was declared dead on arrival. Kiran’s condition is said to be critical.

Raguvedra Khurana, also a neighbour, said: “I saw three-four men standing outside the couple’s house on the second floor. The firing lasted almost five minutes. The assailants kept firing while the couple tried to escape.”

## CROSSWORD 4466



### ACROSS

- Secret belief (10)
- Unusually cold part of the earth (4)
- Recorded Edward as missing? (5)
- Crank socially and mechanically (9)
- Antigone’s form of denial (8)
- Short form of summary (5)
- Exacts payment for those in one’s care (7)
- Date and remove (4,3)
- One pair moved out of doors (4-3)
- An idea of self-importance (7)
- Bound to have spirit (5)
- He’s not on speaking terms with his brothers (8)
- On paper it makes things look very black (6,3)
- Did some pressing (5)
- They may be pierced or just pricked (4)
- They’re shameless, producing beer as port (10)

### DOWN

- Is unable to lean over (4)
- Remote and out-of-the-way Parisian building (5,4)
- Country needs aid in getting into shape (5)
- The converse of friends (7)
- Growing source of food and drink (7)
- The words of a song upset Cyril (5)
- Cause a capital loss (10)
- Complete description of a mustang? (8)
- There are terms for this (10)
- He has minor responsibilities (8)
- Give short change - it’s a mistake of sorts (9)
- Sailor comes up a rope - this one? (7)
- A biscuit for the break? (7)
- Cried out for a drink (5)
- Sound fruit (5)
- The odd dose of poetry? (4)

Solutions Crossword 4465: Across: 1 Envious, 5 In bed, 8 Abandoned, 9 Tap, 10 Tiff, 12 Proceeds, 14 String, 15 Ate out, 17 Observer, 18 Afar, 21 Cog, 22 Namesakes, 24 Lathe, 25 Trades. Down: 1 Exact, 2 Via, 3 Odds, 4 Senora, 5 Indicate, 6 Better off, 7 Deposit, 11 Foresight, 13 Entrance, 14 Stoical, 16 Hermit, 19 Roses, 20 User, 23 Kid.

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



## CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

What’s \_\_\_ is what’s \_\_\_ if you do everything else \_\_\_ - Robin Williams (5, 4, 5)

TEORR

\_\_\_\_\_

HOGNUT

\_\_\_\_\_

TILTS

\_\_\_\_\_

AFUFGW

\_\_\_\_\_

SOLUTION: RETRO, STILT, NOUGHT, GURFW. Answer: What’s right is what’s left if you do everything else wrong - Robin Williams

## Difficulty Level 2s

**INSTRUCTIONS**  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

**SUDOKU 4514**

## Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



**SOLUTION SUDOKU 4513**



## TOP OF THE WORLD



Derek Chauvin

USA  
Chauvin could face decadeslong sentence in Floyd's death

FORMER MINNEAPOLIS police Officer Derek Chauvin learns his sentence Friday for murder in George Floyd's death, closing a chapter in a case that sparked global outrage and a reckoning on racial disparities in America. Chauvin, 45, faces decades in prison, with several legal experts predicting a sentence of 20 to 25 years. Though Chauvin is widely expected to appeal, he also still faces trial on federal civil rights charges, along with three other fired officers who have yet to have their state trials. Chauvin was convicted of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and third-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee against Floyd's neck as the 46-year-old gasped that he couldn't breathe. AP

RUSSIA  
Oppn figure says election bid blocked over Navalny support

A RUSSIAN opposition politician said on Friday he had been barred from taking part in a local election because of his support for jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. Ilya Yashin said he had wanted to register as a candidate for an election to the Moscow City Duma, the regional parliament, but was told he could not under a law banning members of groups declared "extremist" from running for office. A court ruling this month outlawed groups linked to Navalny as "extremist". REUTERS

GIBRALTAR  
Voters choose to ease strict abortion law

GIBRALTAR VOTED to ease a strict abortion law, officials said on Friday, after a referendum which some locals said marked a long overdue advancement of women's rights in the tiny British territory. Around 62% of voters who took part backed the change in Thursday's ballot, where turnout was about 52% of the 23,000 odd eligible voters, Gibraltar's parliament said. "Gibraltar does have to keep up with the times, you cannot live in the past," said Jacqueline, a Gibraltar woman who declined to give her last name, on Friday morning. REUTERS

## Death toll in Florida collapse rises to four; 159 still missing

TERRY SPENCER & ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON  
SURFSIDE, JUNE 25

ABOUT 160 people were still unaccounted for Friday after an oceanside condominium building collapsed into a smoldering pile of rubble, and searchers using both heavy machinery and their own hands to comb through the shifting heap of concrete and metal feared the death toll of four could soar.

With scores of firefighters working overnight in Surfside to reach any possible survivors from under and atop the remains of the 12-storey Champlain Towers South, hopes rested on how quickly crews using dogs and microphones could complete their grim, yet delicate task.

"Any time that we hear a sound, we concentrate in that area," Miami-Dade Assistant Fire Chief Raide Jadhav said. "It could be just steel twisting, it could be debris raining down, but not specifically sounds of tapping or sounds of a human voice."

Buffeted by gusty winds and pelted by intermittent rain showers, two heavy cranes began removing debris from the pile using large claws Friday morning, creating a din of crashing glass and metal as they picked up material and dumped it to the side.

Once the machines paused, firefighters wearing protective masks and carrying red buckets climbed atop the pile to remove smaller pieces by hand in hope of finding spots where people might be trapped. In a parking garage, rescuers in knee-deep water used power tools to cut into the building, according to video released by Miami-Dade Fire Rescue. AP



Afghan leader of High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah and President Ashraf Ghani with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell on Capitol Hill. Reuters

## Biden to meet Afghan leaders as US troops leave, fighting rages

JONATHAN LANDAY & STEVE HOLLAND  
WASHINGTON, JUNE 25

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden meets Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and his former political foe, Abdullah Abdullah, on Friday to discuss Washington's support for Afghanistan as the last US troops pack up after 20 years of war and government forces struggle to repel Taliban advances.

The Oval Office meeting may be as valuable to Ghani for its symbolism as for any new US help because it will be seen as affirming Biden's support for the beleaguered Afghan leader as he confronts Taliban gains, bombings and assassinations, a surge



## PRIDE PARADE IN ISRAEL SEES HUGE TURNOUT

People participate in the annual Pride Parade in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Friday. Tens of thousands of people attended the parade in one of the largest public gatherings held since the onset of Covid. Israel fully reopened this spring after carrying out one of the world's most successful vaccination campaigns, but a recent outbreak driven by the Delta variant has raised concerns. Authorities are once again requiring people to wear masks in indoor public places starting Friday AP

## EU to Hungary's Orban: Respect LGBT rights or leave

SABINE SIEBOLD, PHILIP BLENKINSOP & GABRIELA BACZYNSKA  
BRUSSELS, JUNE 25

RESPECT LGBT rights or leave the European Union, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte told his Hungarian counterpart as the bloc's leaders confronted Viktor Orban over a law that bans schools from using materials seen as promoting homosexuality.

Several participants spoke of the most intense personal clash among the 27 EU leaders in years



Orban in Brussels Friday. AP

on Thursday night.

"It was really forceful, a deep feeling that this could not be. It was about our values; this is what we stand for," Rutte told reporters on Friday.

## UK minister 'sorry' after pictured kissing aide in violation of virus protocol

PAUL SANDLE  
LONDON, JUNE 25

BRITISH HEALTH Secretary Matt Hancock apologised on Friday for breaching social distancing guidelines after pictures appeared of him embracing his top aide, and the Prime Minister said he believed the matter was now closed.

Photographs published on the front page of the Sun showed Hancock kissing the woman — a friend hired for a taxpayer-funded role — in his office.

"I accept that I breached the social distancing guidance in these circumstances," Hancock said.

## 'Dragon Man' finding may add species to human family tree

CARL ZIMMER  
JUNE 25

SCIENTISTS ON Friday announced that a massive fossilised skull that is at least 140,000 years old is a new species of ancient human, a finding that could potentially change scientists' view of how — and even where — our species, Homo sapiens, evolved.

The skull belonged to a mature male who had a huge brain, massive brow ridges, deep set eyes and a bulbous nose. It was hidden in an



## BELARUS

## OPPN FIGURE MOVED TO HOUSE ARREST

A Belarusian opposition activist and his girlfriend, who were arrested after their airliner was forced to land in the country's capital of Minsk, have been transferred to house arrest, their lawyer and parents said on Friday. Both the dissident, Roman Protasevich, and his Russian girlfriend, Sofia Sapega, were released from jail as the EU imposed more sanctions on Belarus.

## UK probes new Lambda variant amid Delta surge

46% jump in Delta cases since last week

ADITI KHANNA  
LONDON, JUNE 25

THE NUMBER of Delta variant cases of Covid-19 in the UK have risen by 35,204 since last week to a total of 111,157, representing a 46 per cent increase, health officials said in the weekly report released on Friday. Officials also said they were investigating another variant named Lambda.

Public Health England (PHE) said of the total cases of the Delta variant — first identified in India — 42 belong to the Delta AY.1 sub lineage, dubbed Delta plus in some quarters over fears of its even greater transmissibility.

While the Delta variant now accounts for approximately 95 per cent of cases that are sequenced across the UK, PHE said both doses of a Covid-19 vaccine continue to provide good protection against hospitalisations.

"Through the success of our vaccination programme, data suggest we have begun to break the link between cases and hospitalisations," said Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency.

"This is hugely encouraging news, but we cannot become complacent. Two doses of vaccine are far more effective against Covid-19 than a single dose, so please make sure that you come forward to get your second dose as soon as you are invited," she said. "Whilst vaccines provide excellent protection, they do not provide total protection, so it is still as impor-

EXPLAINED  
New strain spreading in S America

THE LAMBDA variant, considered a "variant of interest" by the WHO, now accounts for over 80% of new Covid cases in Peru, and is also spreading quickly in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Ecuador. While experts say it is possible the strain is more easily transmissible, there is still not enough data to conclude that it spreads more quickly or is more dangerous in any other way.

tant as ever that we continue to exercise caution," she added.

Meanwhile, PHE said it added another variant, Lambda (C.37) to its list of variants under investigation (VUI) on Wednesday due to international expansion and several notable mutations, including L452Q and F490S. The World Health Organisation (WHO) classified Lambda as a "variant of interest" on June 14.

Six cases of Lambda have been identified across the country to date, all have been linked to overseas travel. The earliest documented sample was reported in Peru and Lambda has been sequenced in 26 countries to date.

PHE said it is carrying out laboratory testing to better understand the impact of mutations on the behaviour of the virus. PTI



Brazil's President Bolsonaro

## Bolsonaro: Brazil didn't spend a cent on Bharat Biotech vaccine deal under probe

REUTERS  
BRASILIA, JUNE 25

PRESIDENT JAIR Bolsonaro on Thursday said Brazil never paid for or received any doses of a coronavirus vaccine developed by Indian company Bharat Biotech, in response to allegations of irregularities in a deal that is under investigation.

Federal prosecutors and a special Senate committee are investigating the deal for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin shot, citing the fact that the government struck a speedy agreement when offers from Pfizer in 2020 at a lower price were ignored at the time.

"We didn't spend one cent on Covaxin. We didn't receive one dose of Covaxin. What sort of corruption is this?" Bolsonaro said. The president pledged to take action if any corruption was discovered in his government.

Covaxin has yet to receive approval for public use, although it has received permission to conduct a phase 3 clinical trial via a Brazilian partner company.

On Wednesday, Bharat Biotech said it had yet to provide vaccine supplies to Brazil and has been consistent and transparent in its pricing with all governments.

## First Covid-19 case may have emerged in China in Oct 2019, study suggests

DAVID STANWAY  
SHANGHAI, JUNE 25

THE VIRUS that causes Covid-19 could have started spreading in China as early as October 2019, two months before the first case was identified in the central city of Wuhan, a new study showed on Friday.

Researchers from Britain's University of Kent used methods from conservation science to estimate that SARS-CoV-2 first appeared from early October to mid-November 2019, according to a paper published in the PLOS Pathogens journal.

The most likely date for the virus' emergence was Nov 17, 2019, and it had probably al-



Wuhan earlier this year. Reuters

ready spread globally by January 2020, they estimated.

China's first official Covid-19 case was in December 2019 and was linked to Wuhan's Huanan seafood market.

A joint study published by China and the World Health Organisation at the end of March acknowledged there could have been sporadic human infections before the Wuhan outbreak.

In a paper released in preprint form this week, Jesse Bloom of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle recovered deleted sequencing data from early Covid-19 cases in China.

The data showed that samples taken from the Huanan market were "not representative" of SARS-CoV-2 as a whole, and were a variant of a progenitor sequence circulating earlier, which spread to other parts of China.

The US National Institutes of Health confirmed that the samples used in the study were submitted to the Sequence Read Archive in March 2020 and later deleted at the request of Chinese investigators, who said they would be updated and submitted to another archive. REUTERS

## Fire at Chinese martial arts centre kills 18, mostly children

REUTERS  
BEIJING, JUNE 25

A FIRE tore through a martial arts training centre in China during the early hours of Friday morning, killing 18 people, with one state media outlet saying most of the dead were children who were staying there.

The blaze broke out at 3 am and was later extinguished, the government of Zhecheng county, in Henan province, said on its website. It was unclear what caused the fire, which injured 16 people, four of whom were in serious condition, it said.

Most of the casualties were students aged between 7 and 16 staying on the centre's second floor, the Beijing Youth Daily said in a report that was later deleted from its website.

In a social media post, Zhonghong, a news outlet backed by China's state planner, identified the centre as Zhenxing Martial Arts Centre. Neither Zhenxing or its founder, Chen Lin, answered calls seeking comment.

"My kid is 9 years old, but I know nothing about his current situation. We can't see him or visit him," said Zheng, the father of one of the children admitted to hospital.

## 'WHEN THE KING TRAVELS FOR MILES AND KNOCKS... THEN HIS WORDS ARE RESPECTED AND TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY'

## Bhutan king treks across mountains to hold down Covid fatality count

GOPAL SHARMA & RUPAM JAIN  
KATHMANDU, JUNE 25

WEARING A baseball cap and knee-length traditional Gho robe, carrying a backpack, Bhutan's king has walked through jungles infested with leeches and snakes, trekked mountains and quarantined several times in a hotel in the capital.

For 14 months, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, 41, has been travelling by foot, car and horse to remote hamlets to oversee measures to protect his tiny kingdom of 700,000 from the coronavirus

outbreak that has flared up in neighbouring India.

The nation nestled between India and China in the Eastern Himalayas has a Covid-19 death toll of just one.

"When the king travels for miles and knocks... to alert people about the pandemic, then his humble words are respected and taken very seriously," said Lotay Tshering, the country's Prime Minister.



Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has lunch at a security outpost in Tempaling, Bhutan, in May. Reuters

Tshering, a practicing urologist, often accompanies the Oxford-educated king for trips

near the porous border shared with India, where a second wave of the pandemic more than dou-

bled the death toll over the last two months.

Bhutan became a constitutional monarchy in 2008 when the king relinquished his absolute powers. But loyalty to the royal family still dominates the nation's socio-political landscape.

In recent weeks, the king walked for five days on a trail passing through elevations of up to 4,343 metres to thank primary health workers in remote areas.

The king's office declined a request for an interview but his social media pages on Instagram and Facebook showcase his work and travels during the pandemic.

"Our king's biggest fear is that if the pandemic spreads like a forest fire then our (nation) could be wiped out," said a senior palace official.

A father of two boys, the king checks into a hotel in capital Thimphu to follow quarantine protocols after every trip. Like most of his subjects, he has received one vaccination dose.

"(The king) has been to all high risk border areas time and again to monitor every measure put in place and to ensure best practices are followed within limited resources," said Rui Paulo de Jesus, the World Health Organisation representative in Bhutan.

Bhutan, an ancient kingdom sealed off to foreigners until the 1970s, has just one doctor avail-

able for every 2,000 people.

The borders of the scenic nation are now shut again and domestic lockdowns have been imposed in some areas, while screening and testing for Covid-19 have been stepped up.

Prime Minister Tshering has said Bhutan is looking to mix-and-match vaccine doses because after inoculating 90% of its eligible population with their first dose of the AstraZeneca shot, the nation ran out of supplies.

## SECTOR WATCH PHARMACEUTICALS

# PharmEasy to buy Thyrocare in ₹6,334-cr deal

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

ONLINE MEDICAL store PharmEasy has proposed to acquire diagnostics services chain Thyrocare Technologies in a deal worth Rs 6,334 crore.

API Holdings Ltd (API), the parent firm of PharmEasy, announced the signing of definitive documents to acquire 66.1 per cent stake in Thyrocare from A Velumani and affiliates at Rs 1,300 per share. This stake purchase is valued at Rs 4,546 crore. Besides, API will acquire an additional 26 per cent in Thyrocare via a mandatory open offer and is offering Rs 1,788 crore for the same.

Doco Technologies, a 100 per cent subsidiary of API — founded by Dharmil Sheth, Dhaval Shah, Harsh Parekh, Hardik Dedhia and Siddharth Shah — will be the acquirer and will make an open offer for an additional 26 per cent stake.

Thyrocare shares soared by 6.23 per cent to Rs 1,448.05 on the BSE on Friday.

Velumani will be separately acquiring a minority non-controlling stake of less than 5 per cent in API as part of a series of equity investments by existing and new investors of API. PharmEasy owns online

STAKE BUY OF 66.1% STAKE  
**₹4,546 cr**

■ API Holdings Ltd (API), the parent firm of PharmEasy, announced the signing of definitive documents to acquire 66.1 per cent stake in Thyrocare from A Velumani and affiliates at Rs 1,300 per share. This stake purchase is valued at Rs 4,546 crore.

pharmacy and diagnostics brand, RetailIO, a B2B pharmacy marketplace and seller, and DocOn, a leading consultation and EMR platform.

The company has over 12 million consumers, network of 6,000 plus digital consultation clinics and 90,000 partner retailers across the country. Thyrocare is the largest B2B player in the diagnostics space. Siddharth Shah, CEO, API Holdings said, "We will provide world class customer experience in diagnostics, rivaling our pharmacy experience by ... building on the truly pan-India presence of Thyrocare." A Velumani, Chairman & MD, Thyrocare, said, "I am excited about this relationship, unique in Indian healthcare industry."

## AADHAAR-PAN LINKAGE DEADLINE EXTENDED TO SEPT 30

# Tax relief on ex-gratia for Covid deaths, aid for treatment costs

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

IN LIGHT of the second Covid wave's impact on the economy, the government on Friday announced income tax exemptions for monetary aids received by people for coronavirus treatment. It also gave tax exemption to ex-gratia received by kin of the deceased — if received from employers, the exemption is available without any upper limit, and, in case received from others, the waiver will be available up to Rs 10 lakh.

"In order to ensure that no income tax liability arises on this account, it has been decided to provide income-tax exemption to the amount received by a taxpayer for medical treatment from employer or from any person for treatment of Covid-19 during FY20 and subsequent years," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.

"It has been decided to provide income-tax exemption to ex-gratia payment received by

EXPLAINED

## Easing compliance burden for taxpayers

IN VIEW of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, taxpayers are facing inconvenience in meeting certain tax compliances and also in filing response to various notices. Among a host of due date extensions, the CBDT extended the last date of linkage of Aadhaar with PAN under, which was earlier extended to June 30, 2021 is further extended to September 30, 2021.

family members of a person from the employer of such person or from other person on the death of the person on account of Covid-19 during FY20 and subsequent years.

"The exemption shall be allowed without any limit for the amount received from the employer and the exemption shall be limited to Rs 10 lakh in aggregate for the amount received from any other persons," it added.

Many taxpayers have received financial help from their

employers and well-wishers for meeting their expenses incurred for treatment of Covid-19.

Necessary legislative amendments for the decisions shall be proposed in due course of time, it added.

In view of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, taxpayers are facing inconvenience in meeting certain tax compliances and also in filing response to various notices.

It also extended the due date of various compliances, in-

## OTHER KEY DECISIONS

■ Last date of payment under Vivad se Vishwas (without additional amount) which was earlier extended to June 30, 2021 is further extended to August 31

■ Last date of payment under Vivad se Vishwas (with additional amount) has been notified as October 31

cluding the last date of linkage of Aadhaar with PAN from June 30 to September 30, 2021 as well as last date for payment under Vivad se Vishwas by 2-4 months.

The last date of payment of amount under Vivad se Vishwas (without additional amount) which was earlier extended to June 30, 2021 is further extended to August 31, 2021. Last date of payment under Vivad se Vishwas (with additional amount) has been notified as October 31, 2021.

# Curbs on PMC Bank extended till Dec 31

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) has extended the directions earlier imposed on Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank (PMC Bank) till December 31. The central bank recently gave in-principle nod to Centrum Group to set up a small finance bank to acquire the crisis-hit PMC Bank.

"Taking into account the time required for completion of various activities involved in the process, it is considered necessary to extend the aforesaid Directions.

"Accordingly, it is hereby notified for the information of the public that the validity of the aforesaid Directive dated September 23, 2019, as modified from time to time, has been extended for a further period from July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, subject to review," the RBI said.

As of March 2020, the latest data available, PMC Bank had deposit base of Rs 10,727 crore and loans worth Rs 4,473 crore. The share capital of the bank is Rs 292.94 crore. However, it registered a net loss of Rs 6,835 crore during 2019-20 and has a negative net worth of Rs 5,850.61 crore.

PMC Bank under regulatory restrictions after the RBI found out financial irregularities in its functioning as well as hiding and class-

## RBI notifies criteria for top posts in UCBS

Mumbai: The RBI on Friday prescribed educational qualifications and 'fit and proper' criteria for managing directors (MDs) and whole-time directors (WTDs) of primary urban cooperative banks and barred MPs and MLAs from such posts. The person shouldn't be below 35 years of age or over 70 years, and should have qualifications in finance discipline, it added. PTI

ification of loans given to Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL). The bank has an exposure of over Rs 6,200 crore to HDIL. The RBI has superseded the board of the bank and appointed an administrator in September 2019.

Last year in November, the bank came out with an EoI (expression of interest) to identify a suitable equity investor/group of investors willing to take over management control, so as to revive the bank and commence its day-to-day operations. Bharat Pe and Centrum Group reportedly submitted a joint EoI to the Reserve Bank to collectively take over the troubled PMC Bank.

## 'Higher fuel sales can help govt cut cess without revenue loss'

A rise in petrol and diesel consumption can help the government cut cesses on the fuels by Rs 4.5 a litre without impacting revenue collections of FY21, an Ica report said



**₹40,000 cr**

Estimated revenue for government in FY22 via higher collections of cess, in case of:  
■ 14% rise in petrol consumption  
■ 10% rise in diesel consumption

CONTAINING INFLATION: If the government chooses to forego this additional cess collection of Rs 40,000 crore, it can reduce cesses by Rs 4.5 per litre, and help contain the inflation situation which has breached the RBI's target band in May  
Source: Ica Ratings/PTI

Cess as revenue generating tool: The cess was introduced in early 2020 as a tool of generating additional revenue amid a steep fall in global crude prices

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

COMPANIES WILL be able to continue holding extraordinary general meetings (EGMs) and take key decisions via video conferencing (VC) till December 31, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).

The government had in April last year permitted companies to hold EGMs through VC or other audio visual means in light of the Covid-19 pandemic while also requiring that

## TO KEEP RECORDED TRANSCRIPTS

■ Companies opting to hold extraordinary general meetings through VCs or other audio visual means are required to maintain recorded transcripts of proceedings in such meetings with public companies

such meetings follow prescribed guidelines aimed at en-

uring transparency and protecting the rights of shareholders.

Experts noted that the move to extend this right would help allow companies to make important decisions quickly as companies continue to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The amendment by the MCA is a welcome move in line with the changing times and needs of businesses and professionals. This is one more step towards ease of doing business in India and will help in removing administrative bottlenecks

and result in swift decision making by companies and their boards," said Khazat Kotwal, partner, Deloitte India.

Companies opting to hold EGMs through VCs or other audio visual means are required to maintain recorded transcripts of proceedings in such meetings with public companies, and, additionally being required to host such transcripts on their websites.

Companies are also required to file any resolutions passed in such meetings before the Registrar of Companies within 60 days.

## FM to US investors: Cash in on recent reforms

New Delhi: Continuous reforms make India a great place to do business in, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asserted on Thursday, as she called on American investors to cash in on new opportunities arising out of New Delhi's recent FDI reforms, the roll-out of performance-linked incentive (PLI) schemes and the privatisation policy.

Despite the damage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, India's fiscal situation is under control and expected to improve further, the minister asserted. She was addressing a virtual global investors roundtable, organised by the US-



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the virtual meeting with US investors. via Twitter

India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) late on Thursday. FE

## BRIEFLY

### FAME extended

New Delhi: The government Friday said it has extended the second phase of FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) India scheme by two years till March 31, 2024.

### Bhargava on PLI

Kolkata: The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to ramp up large-scale manufacturing capacity does not compensate for obstacles in an uncompetitive business environment, Maruti Suzuki chairman RCBhargava said.

### NCAER on GDP

New Delhi: The National Council of Applied Economic Research expects the economy to grow 8.4-10.1 per cent for the current fiscal, as against a contraction of 7.3 per cent in the last fiscal.

### PNB HFL meet

New Delhi: At the EGM of PNB Housing Finance Ltd on Tuesday, shareholders passed with requisite majority resolutions on appointment of Hardayal Prasad as managing director and CEO and re-appointments of others on the board.

### ESIC payroll data

New Delhi: Around 10.41 lakh new members joined the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)-run social security scheme in April, official data showed on Friday. PTI

## Fake reviews of goods: UK probes Amazon, Google

REUTERS  
LONDON, JUNE 25

BRITAIN'S COMPETITION regulator started a formal investigation on Friday into whether Amazon and Google may not have done enough to prevent or remove fake reviews. Along with regulators in the United States and the European Union, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has stepped up its scrutiny of big tech firms in recent years.

The British regulator said it will gather more information to decide if the firms may have broken consumer law by taking insufficient action to protect shoppers. Both Google and Amazon said they were continuing to assist the CMA.

CMA action last year over the trading

of fake reviews resulted in Facebook, Instagram and eBay removing groups and banning individuals for buying and selling fake reviews on their sites.

Google said on Thursday it would delay blocking tracking cookies on its Chrome browser following intervention by the CMA. The CMA started its investigation into reviews in May 2020, focusing on the internal systems and processes of several platforms for identifying and dealing with fake reviews.

"Our worry is that millions of online shoppers could be misled by reading fake reviews and then spending their money based on those recommendations," CMA Chief Executive Andrea Coscelli said.

The CMA said it has not reached a view on whether Amazon and Alphabet's Google have broken the law.

## FB rejects talks with Australia publisher, may test online law

REUTERS  
SYDNEY, JUNE 25

AUSTRALIA'S COMPETITION watchdog is looking into a claim that Facebook Inc refused a publisher's request to negotiate a licensing deal, the regulator told Reuters, setting the stage for the first test of the world's toughest online content law.

The Conversation, which publishes current affairs commentary by academics, said it asked Facebook to begin talks as required under new Australian legislation that requires the social media firm and Alphabet Inc's Google to negotiate a content-supply deals with media outlets.

Facebook declined without giving a reason, The Conversation said, even though the publisher was among the first in Australia to secure a similar deal with Google.

## The knockback could present the first test of a controversial mechanism unique to Australia's effort to claw back advertising dollars from Google and Facebook

The knockback could present the first test of a controversial mechanism unique to Australia's effort to claw back advertising dollars from Google and Facebook: if they refuse to negotiate licence fees with publishers, a government-appointed arbitrator may step in.

Facebook's head of news partnerships for Australia, Andrew Hunter, said it was "focused on concluding commercial deals with a range of Australian publishers".

## TAMILNADU SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

E-Procurement Notice  
(One Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)  
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Bid No.: E1/2835/2020 Date: 24.06.2021  
1. The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed below.

2. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures agreed with the World Bank. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, January 2011.

3. Bidders from India, however, be registered with the Government of Tamilnadu or other State Governments/Government of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings. Bidders from India, who are not registered as above, on the date of bidding, can also participate provided they get themselves registered by the time of contract signing, if they become successful bidders. Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section II - Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the World Bank's Guidelines setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

4. The Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation, invites online bids for the construction of works detailed below in the table. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the works indicated therein.

5. Bidding documents are available online on [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) from 24.06.2021 to 27.07.2021 at free of cost.

6. For submission of the bid, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the Certifying Authorities authorised by Government of India for issuing DSC. Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement in this Project, may obtain the same from the website: [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) at free of cost.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of the amount specified for the work in the table below, drawn in favour of The Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation. Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding document and shall have to be valid for 45 days beyond the validity of the bid. Procedure for submission of bid security is described in Para 9.

8. Bids must be submitted online on [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) on or before 15:00 hours on 27.07.2021 and will be opened online on 30.07.2021 at 15:30 hours. Any bid or modifications to bid (including discount) received outside e-procurement system will not be considered. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids.

9. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand drafts towards the cost of bid document and registration on e-procurement website (if not previously registered); (b) original bid security in approved form; and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document with The Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation, Municipal Office Road, Tiruppur-641604, Tamilnadu before the opening of the Bid i.e. before 30.07.2021, either by registered post/speed post/courier or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive and will not be opened.

10. A pre-bid meeting will be held on 06.07.2021 at 15:00 hrs. at the office of The Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of Instructions to Bidders of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.

11. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to this bid.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Bid Security (Rs.)	Cost of Document (Rs.)	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5
1	2nd Call Relaying, Renewal & Restoration of BT Road in Ward No.1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14, Construction of SWD, Culvert & Relaying of BT Surface in Ward No. 3, 7, 10 & 15 in Tiruppur Corporation under Package No-1.	2,49,400/-	Nil	6 Months

DIPR/1850/ITENDER/2021 Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation

**SBI**  
Networking & Communication Department, State Bank Global IT-Centre, Sec-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai-400 614

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
RFP No: SBI/GITC/NW&Comm./2021/2022/775 DATED: 25/06/2021  
Bids are invited by State Bank of India from the eligible bidders for Procurement of dedicated Internet Leased Line (ILL) Connectivity with DDoS Scrubbing Services and High Availability at Data Centres of State Bank of India. For details, please visit 'Procurement news' at <https://www.sbi.co.in> and e-Procurement agency portal <https://tenders.sbi/sbi/>. Commencement of download of RFP: From 25/06/2021. Last date and time for submission of bids: 20/07/2021 up to 15:30 hrs. Networking & Communication Department

## E-TENDERING OF CYCLONE AFFECTED SCRAP OF BUILDING, MACHINERY & OTHERS

On line e-Tender is available on [www.matexnet.com](http://www.matexnet.com) for material of M/s. Ultratech Cement Ltd. from interested buyers for disposal of Cyclone Affected Items Consisting MS, GI Aluminium Scrap, Machinery Scrap, Light Scrap, etc. strictly on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" in possession of M/s. UltraTech Cement Ltd. and lying at following two different locations (i) Narmada Cement Jafarabad Works (NCJW), Village Babarkot, Taluka Jafarabad, Dist. Amreli, Gujarat-365540 and (ii) Gujarat Cement Works (GCW), Village Kovaya, Taluka Rajula Dist. Amreli, Gujarat-365541. Buyers would be able to bid multiple times as per tender condition on the day of e-tendering. Refer terms & conditions mentioned on [www.matexnet.com](http://www.matexnet.com). The contact person is (i) Mr. Alpesh Patel, Mobile No.9428490016, Mr. Bhavesh Joshi - 8347006430 at NCJW JFD site & (ii) Mr. Vinod Sharma, Mobile no.9887482122 / Mr. Dharmendrasinh Vaghela Mobile no.9723553719 at GCW.

Inspection of salvage at Site: 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Except Sunday) (with prior appointment) from 26 June 2021 to 03 July 2021 Till 2:00PM e-tender bidding will be enabled on 05<sup>th</sup> July 2021, from 02:00 PM to 04:00 PM Contact details of M/s Matexnet: 7305081261

## Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department

2nd floor, KHB Complex, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G Road, Bengaluru-560009

Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department, Government of Karnataka is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) an ambitious programme to provide 55 LPCD safe drinking water through functional household tap connections to all the rural households in the state. In this regard comprehensive bulk water supply schemes are proposed to be taken up across the state of Karnataka and the department intends to have an interactive session with the prospective bidders willing to be part of Jal Jeevan Mission. Those interested may send their requests to e-mail [cerws14@gmail.com](mailto:cerws14@gmail.com) and contact 080-22533700 for any queries. The interactive session will be held on 01.07.2021 at 11:00 AM through video conference and the link will be intimated to such of those whose requests are received through mail.

Sd/- Commissioner  
Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation Department  
DIPR/DDU/RO. No. 672/2021-22

**COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE**



## JUDOKA SUSHILA DEVI QUALIFIES FOR OLYMPICS

A 'no-spectator games' remains an option for the Tokyo Olympics, which open officially in just four weeks, the president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee said Friday. The admission by Seiko Hashimoto comes only four days after she announced on Monday that up to 10,000 local fans would be allowed into venues with numbers not to exceed 50% of venue capacity regardless of indoor or outdoor events.

AP

## Out-of-the-box skill

Long-range attempts and goals are rare these days, but when successful provide thrill and great adrenaline rush

## On target from a distance

Goals from long range are as hard as they come, but this European Championship had a fair share of it



**1. PATRIK SCHICK: 49.7 YARDS**  
(Czech Republic vs Scotland)  
Most of the Scots were inside Czech Republic's box when Schick received a pass from deep inside his own territory. He sped just past the half-line and seeing that goalkeeper David Marshall was way outside his cage, unfurled a high chip over his head and into the goal.



**2. LUKA MODRIC: 24 YARDS**  
(Croatia vs Scotland)  
The Croatian talisman got a pass from the left, dropped a shoulder to confuse his marker, shifted the ball a little to the right, and curled an unstoppable shot into the top left corner with the outside of his right boot.



**3. ANDRIY YARMOLENKO: 25 YARDS**  
(Ukraine vs Netherlands)  
Yarmolenko played a one-two on the right and then cut infield before curling a shot into the top corner. Initially, it looked heading wide before bending back into the net past the flailing gloves of the goalkeeper.



**4. MANUEL LOCATELLI: 22 YARDS**  
(Italy vs Switzerland)  
Italy had several shots from close range denied, so Nicolò Barella, from the edge of the box on the right, fed Locatelli with a sumptuous ball, which Locatelli speared straight and firm into the bottom left corner.



**5. MIKKEL DAMSGAARD: 23 YARDS**  
(Denmark vs Russia)  
He was prowling on the edge of the box, almost centrally, when he got a pass. He took a touch, shifted a little to the inside and unleashed a zipping shot that dipped into the top corner.

## BRIEFLY

## Bajrang injures knee during preparatory tournament in Russia

**Kaspiysk:** Forty-two days before his first bout at the Tokyo Olympics, Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia hobbled off the mat, clutching his right knee and forfeited his semifinal in the Ali Aliev wrestling tournament in Kaspiysk, Russia, on Friday. Bajrang suffered the



Bajrang Punia

injury 1 minute and 8 seconds into his last-four encounter against Russia's Abdulmazhid Kudiev. A tournament doctor attended to him but Bajrang, who appeared to be in considerable pain and discomfort, was not able to continue fighting. Bajrang's coach Shako Bentineidis played down the concerns, saying the injury isn't serious. Bajrang, one of India's biggest medal prospects for the Games, has been training in Russia since last month. As a part of his preparations, he took part in the Ali Aliev Memorial, considered one of the biggest tournaments in Russia. He produced a stunning performance to beat Olympic-bound wrestler, Kazakhstan's Dautel Niyazbekov, 9-0 in the quarter-finals. The semifinal between Bajrang and Kudiev began on a lively note with both wrestlers having a go at each other, but a little more than a minute into the bout, the Russian caught hold of Bajrang's right leg and executed two back-to-back two-point throws. While that gave Kudiev a 4-0 lead, it looked like Bajrang injured his knee during one of those moves. The referee promptly stopped the bout and as Bajrang lay flat on his back, writhing in pain, a doctor was called on the mat to treat him. After a brief consultation, the Indian conceded the bout. "He is fine and normal. He has been given pain-killing injection. It does not look serious, he should be okay," Bajrang's Georgian coach Bentineidis told PTI from Russia. **ENS**

## Athletes training abroad exempt from Olympic restrictions

**New Delhi:** India's Olympic-bound athletes, who are training abroad right now and scheduled to reach Tokyo directly from their current bases, will not face the stricter restrictions that have been put in place for those travelling from the country, Deputy Chief de Mission Prem Verma said. While the Indian contingent will be allowed to train during their three-day on-arrival quarantine, they won't be allowed to meet athletes from other countries during the hard quarantine. "Indian athletes preparing for the Games overseas and reaching Tokyo directly would not face the restrictions applicable to those who have been residing in India for 14 days before departure," Verma was quoted. **PTI**

SANDIPG  
JUNE 25

IT TOOK exactly 4.6 seconds for Czech Republic striker Patrik Schick to achieve cult status in European Championship folklore. The time between him receiving the ball inside his own half, rushing towards the half-line and hoofing the ball across 49.7 yards over a frantically back-peddalling Scotland goalkeeper David Marshall, who ended up comically tangled in the mesh, like a captured tiger. It was in a metaphorical sense, his shot to glory. From an anonymous striker in the Bundesliga, rejected numerous times by the heavyweights, the goal instantly made Schick the rising star of Europe, inundated with suitors queuing up and willing to expend any incredulous sum his current employers, Bayer Leverkusen, demand in exchange for his signature.

Even before the Euros has rolled into the knockout stage, Schick strike, the longest-ranger in the history of the continental championships, is being hailed as the goal of the tournament. It's unlikely that the distance he covered would be replicated in this tournament, by even Schick himself. It is hard to attain perfection once, let alone twice. The technical demands involved in such goals are stratospheric. For this precise reason, it's improbable that such long-rangers would turn out to be fashionable in the tournament, even if there is a sudden surge in shies and goals from outside the box, as a shock weapon to catch defending teams off guard.

Since that game, there have been 41 efforts from outside the box in 29 games, of which 12 pierced the nets. The low hitting and conversion rates probably explain why there are fewer shots on goals from outside the box as well as why a minority of the attempts indeed result in a goal. Out-of-the-box hits are rare, out-of-the-box hits that result in goals are rarer. Apart from supreme technique, power, accuracy and split-second decision-making, one needs confidence and ambition too.

Fewer goals though provide as much spontaneous thrill as those from the distance. A dribbler winking past a maze of legs could bewitch you; a winger's welting run from the half-line to the six-yard box could confiscate your breath and give lung spasms; a poacher's strike has a calculated inevitability about it, but long-rangers could make your spine shiver and the hair on the back of the neck do a little dance even when watching it on a loop. A double surge of adrenalin.

## The best from downtown

Not just the Schick goal, but those from Luka Modric, the high priest of long-rangers, Ukraine's Andriy Yarmolenko against the Dutch, or Denmark's Mikkel Damsgaard against the Russians - to name but a few of the pearlys. They go by different names, but adhering to strict rhyme patterns - pearlys (usually volleys and involving acrobatics), screamers (powerful and slamming into the top corner), pile-drivers (flat and straight), daisy-cutters (all along the ground), curlers (those with wicked swerve) or hoofers (ultra-long-range ones that are hit high). Some are synonymous but each has a slightly different connotation. Some have a mix of more than one attribute.

Each remains stamped in memory, even if more beautiful or difficult goals have been

scored in a tournament. Four of the 10 best goals of the group stage were from outside the box, as per a public poll on the UEFA website. Schick's was consensually the first on the list (a hooper), the second was Modric's pearly against Scotland, which was even more difficult to pull off because it was struck with the outside of the boot, so that the ball whirled away before it swirled in, a level of mastery only the best of technicians could master. Yarmolenko's was a textbook curler, from the edge of the box, left-footed, and crashing into the far corner. Damsgaard's was a screamer while his teammate Andreas Christensen's goal in the same game was a stinging pile-driver. As was Italian Manuel Locatelli's second against Switzerland.

## Catching defences cold

An accurately struck long-ranger has many advantages. It could catch a defence cold, especially during defensive transitions, when the goalkeeper and defenders are realigning into shape, and hence are not well positioned to repel the ball. It's so powerfully hit that it gives goalkeepers' less time to respond, one doesn't need to wriggle through congested alleys inside the box. The striker (not the position but the role) is in acres of space and often with a clear sight of goal to fire his shot.

But there are difficulties too. The striker gets just one-hundredth of a second to make up his mind, decide where to shoot and how to shoot, before being converged upon and tackled into submission by defenders. In this age of zonal marking, when no player is left isolated, when teams press and pass in groups, finding space is incredibly difficult.

It's perhaps the reason most long-range specialists are instinctive hitters of the ball. One sees the same names popping up repeatedly in the list of all-time great long-rangers. Modric's name will be mentioned multiple times in any list. As could the names of Schick, Yarmolenko and Gareth Bale. Some are just remembered for the knack of finding the net from back and beyond. Like Spain's Roger Garcia, who during a 12-month period in 2002-03, struck three goals from inside his own half. Or Ronnie Radford, whose goal for Hereford against Newcastle United in 1972 is still considered the best in FA Cup history.

## An art out of favour

But why attempt long-rangers when there are more reliable, less risk-fraught routes, to score goals? Even the best favour the much-trod paths. Of the 778 goals Lionel Messi has scored for Barcelona, only 67 have arrived from outside the box. His great rival Cristiano Ronaldo's tally is 46 of 674 goals.

There has been stigma too - it's viewed as a staple of the lower leagues, needing power than finesse. When placed alongside the greatest swerving volleys, delicate chips and flowing team goals, it's just someone kicking a ball quite a long way, quite accurately. It's discouraged by managers in this era of possession and pressing game when a long-distance punt is considered a careless wastage of possession. A reason, perhaps, 52 of Messi's goals from out of the box have arrived in the last five seasons when Barcelona have completely divorced from tiki-taka.

Yet, when a long-ranger zooms into the back of the net, it produces a surge of thrill unrivalled in football. And as Schick's goal would testify, a shot into footballing folklore.

## Long-distance merchants against stubborn defence

ATTEMPTING GOALS from long range was not an alternative plan for the Danes but their foremost one. Their talisman, Christian Eriksen, is one of its finest purveyors, having netted more goals from outside the box than all but Lionel Messi over the last eight years. Though Eriksen has exited the tournament, that has not derailed their plan. Denmark have a host of other players who could power thunderous shots from distance.

Two of their four goals against Russia came via strikes from outside the box. Three times, their efforts eluded the post by a threadbare margin. Inevitably, their first goal, scored by Denmark's youngest ever scorer at the European Championship, Mikkel Damsgaard (21), was from nearly 25 yards, a shot of shuddering brilliance. The third, by Andreas Christensen, was a belter too. Another, struck ferociously by Pierre-Emile Højbjerg, just about eluded

the far corner. The Premier League faithful would vouch for the long-range effectiveness of both Højbjerg and Christensen.

So, rest assured that they would unleash vicious projectiles against Wales, though the latter's defensive unit would be difficult to break. Unlike Russia, they have an organised and conservative backline, which is difficult to dismember. Their full-backs don't venture up-front - they have quick-heeled wingers for that - and even if they do - quickly track back. They don't necessarily park the bus, but when

defending, they are joined by their attackers and literally block out all lines of attack. They attack the ball relentlessly and do not mind flinging their bodies around either, like typical British sides of the past. Besides, they are a team that's happy without possession, but devastating when counterattacking.

## Record-chasing Italians set to face Austria

**London:** THE ITALIANS have become one of the favorites at the European Championship after winning all three of their games in the group stage, scoring seven goals and conceding none. Those three victories at Euro 2020 extended the teams unbeaten streak under coach Roberto Mancini to 30 games, matching the previous record set in the 1930s.

Austria which has reached the round of 16 at the tournament for the first time, will get its chance on Saturday at Wembley Stadium.

Besides the unbeaten streak Italy will also be trying to set another record. The team has not conceded a goal in 11 matches, a total of 1055 minutes. If Austria fails to score, Italy will surpass the record of 1143 minutes set between 1972 and 1974.

## PLAYING TONIGHT

■ Wales vs Denmark, 9:30 PM  
■ Italy vs Austria, 12:30 AM  
Live on Sony Network

## T20 World Cup likely to be held in UAE from October 17

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

THE T20 World Cup is likely to start on October 17 in UAE, with the final on November 14. The Indian cricket board will be informing the International Cricket Council (ICC) about its decision to shift the 16-nation tournament to the UAE in its next meeting.

Three venues in UAE - Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Dubai - will host the T20 World Cup games, with Oman hosting the qualifiers.

The BCCI wanted to host the T20 World Cup in India but two issues came in the way. It is learnt that they didn't get any tax exemption from the Indian government. Also the BCCI wasn't sure about how keen international players would be to return to India after the IPL was suspended because of Covid-19 cases in the bio-bubble in the beginning of May.

During a virtual meeting with all state associations a few weeks ago, the board members were informed by BCCI office bearers that by shifting T20 World Cup to UAE, the board will save around 41 percent of total earnings. If T20 World Cup happens in India then board will have to pay hefty tax.

The BCCI hadn't received tax exemptions when they hosted T20 World Cup in 2016.

With the new Delta variant being detected in India, the board doesn't want to take any risks.

The BCCI had already planned UAE as back up, with Oman to host the qualifiers. The board last month had even blocked hotel rooms and in conjunction with ICC had approached Oman Cricket Board to come on board.

With T20 World Cup happening almost immediately after IPL, the BCCI feels players transit will be much easier if it's held in UAE. Also, there won't be any issues with quarantine for those players who will be joining their respective national teams after.

# TARAKKI AAPKI, SAATH HUMARA

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