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■ **Anthropology**
by **Ayaz Khan Sir**
18th October, 2021
(Live-Online/Offline classes)



■ **Mathematics**
by **Maneesh Singh Sir**
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■ **Sociology**
by **Raj Kumar Rai Sir**
18th October, 2021
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Press Trust of India challenges new IT rules in Delhi High Court

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Jaishankar travels to Tehran, calls on Iranian President-elect

Page 8



Haiti President Jovenel Moïse assassinated, First Lady injured

Page 13

Hurkacz stuns Federer; Shapovalov wins a marathon, meets Djokovic

Page 15



NEARBY



Rewari farmers join protest in Rajasthan

GURUGRAM
A large number of farmers from Rewari under the aegis of Bawal Khap-84 reached the protest site at Rajasthan's Shahjahanpur village on Wednesday to support the ongoing agitation against the three farm laws. Swaraj India national president Yogendra Yadav welcomed the farmers.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4



Odisha reports highest single-day COVID deaths

BRUBANESWAR
Odisha on Wednesday reported its highest single-day COVID-19 fatality as 59 people died, taking the toll to 4,358. The highest number of deaths were reported from the Khurda district. The State also registered 2,602 new cases, pushing the tally to 9.2 lakh. There are 28,015 active cases in the State at present.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

High Court seeks report on black fungus drug

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to submit a status report on the availability of Liposomal Amphotericin B, used for treating patients of black fungus, which primarily affects those who have recovered from COVID-19. The Centre was also asked to provide data on the quantity of the drug imported.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

P.R. Kumaramangalam's wife murdered at her Delhi home

Two arrested, police searching for a third accused

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Kitty Kumaramangalam, 70, wife of former Union Minister the late P. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam and a lawyer by profession, was murdered at her residence in southwest Delhi's Vasant Vihar area on Tuesday night.

Police have arrested two persons in connection with the case.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West) Ingit Pratap Singh said they had been identified as Raju, 24, the victim's washerman for over five years, and his friend Rakesh Raj, 34.



Kitty Kumaramangalam. • ANI

Another associate Suraj was absconding, Mr. Singh said. Teams of the police were looking for him, the DCP said.

Ms. Kitty lived on the second floor of her residence in Vasant Vihar's A Block. An

office runs in the basement, tenants live on the ground floor and on the first floor.

Mr. Singh said police received a call around 10 p.m. about an incident of loot in a house in Vasant Vihar.

When the police reached the house, they were informed by the cook, Mithila, that her employer, Ms. Kitty, had been killed by the washerman and two others.

The cook said the PCR call was made by her brother-in-law Ajay.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SON LOSES MOTHER ON HIS BIRTHDAY ▶ PAGE 2

Thespian Dilip Kumar dies, the legend lives on

Laid to rest with full state honours; tributes pour in from friends, political leaders and peers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Legendary actor Dilip Kumar died at a Mumbai hospital on Wednesday morning and was laid to rest with full state honours in the evening, his death a testament that the end of an era can be more than just a cliché. He was 98.

The actor, known to generations of film-goers as "tragedy king" for his portrayal of the brooding, intense romantic in classics like *Mughal-e-Azam* and *Devdas*, is survived by wife Saira Banu. Kumar, born Yusuf Khan, an enduring legend through his

decades in cinema and in public life, had been admitted to Hinduja Hospital, a non-COVID-19 facility in Khar, since last Tuesday.

"He passed away due to prolonged illness at 7.30 a.m.," Dr. Jalil Parkar, who had been treating Kumar, told PTI.

"With a heavy heart and profound grief, I announce the passing away of our beloved Dilip Saab a few minutes ago. We are from God and to Him we return," family friend Faisal Farooqui posted on the actor's Twitter handle at 8.01 a.m.



Dilip Kumar

Kumar's body was taken to his Pali Hill residence around 9.30 a.m., where friends, political leaders and colleagues, including Dhar-

Judge recuses from hearing Mamata's election petition

He imposes cost of ₹5 lakh on CM

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Calcutta High Court Justice Kaushik Chanda on Wednesday imposed a cost of ₹5 lakh on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee while recusing himself from hearing an election petition filed by her. The cost has been imposed for "vifilication adopted to seek recusal".

The Chief Minister had filed an election petition in June 2021 before the High Court, alleging irregularities in the counting process in the Nandigram Assembly poll. The matter came for hearing before Justice Kaushik Chanda.

Ms. Banerjee urged the

judge to recuse himself from hearing the petition, alleging that he had links with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The order said, "The calculated psychological offensives and vilification adopted to seek recusal need to be firmly repulsed, and a cost of ₹5 lakh is imposed upon the petitioner... Such cost should be deposited with the Bar Council of West Bengal within two weeks from date, and upon such deposit, the Bar Council shall set aside the amount for the families of the advocates who had succumbed to COVID-19."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

emerging India. The thespian's charm transcended all boundaries, and he was loved across the subcontinent... Dilip Saab will live forever in the heart of India," the President said.

Prime Minister Modi tweeted: "He was blessed with unparalleled brilliance, due to which audiences across generations were enthralled. His passing away is a loss to our cultural world. Condolences to his family, friends and innumerable admirers. RIP."

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 10

Lekhi in, Harsh Vardhan all set for Delhi return

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Two-time BJP Lok Sabha MP from New Delhi Meenakshi Lekhi replaced the party's veteran local leader and Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan in the Union Cabinet on Wednesday.

Given his "seniority, experience and goodwill", party sources said Dr. Harsh Vardhan's exit heralds his return to Delhi politics in the run-up to the civic elections due early next year.

"Dr. Harsh Vardhan was the party's Chief Ministerial candidate in the 2013 Delhi Assembly polls. The party's

State unit will do much better if he is at the helm in one way or another," said a senior leader in the Delhi BJP.

According to party sources, Ms. Lekhi's legal acumen and experience in the administration of Lutyens' Delhi where most embassies are located, as Member, New Delhi Municipal Council, was expected to inform the choice of portfolios for her.

Ms. Lekhi, a practising Supreme Court lawyer, was named Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture.

VARDHAN HAS BECOME THE FALL GUY, SAYS CONGRESS ▶ PAGE 9

Petrol price crosses ₹100/litre mark in Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The price of petrol crossed the ₹100 per litre mark in Delhi for the first time ever on Wednesday, fuelling

protests from various sections across the city.

The price of petrol was increased by 35 paise per litre while the diesel rate was increased by 17 paise a

litre. In Delhi, the price of petrol now stands at ₹100.21 per litre and diesel at ₹89.53 a litre.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 2

Boy beaten to death on theft suspicion

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 16-year-old boy was allegedly beaten to death on suspicion of theft in south-west Delhi's Kapashera on Wednesday afternoon. Police have registered a case.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-West) Ingit Pratap Singh said that the victim has been identified as Sandeep Mahto, who is from Jharkhand and a resident of Kapashera. His father works as a driver.

Police said that on Wednesday morning, Sandeep and two of his friends entered a farmhouse owned by one Prakriti Sandhu, a resident of Gurugram. "When the three boys entered, the security guard thought that they had come with the intention of committing theft. Therefore, the guard held all of them but Sandeep's friends managed to flee," a senior police officer said.

Dog bites on body

Police said the owner of the farmhouse then thrashed Sandeep with sticks and the stick appears to have hit him fatally on his head. However, Sandeep fled for 50-60 meters and collapsed. "There are dog bites on his body and it looks like dogs had bitten him when he was fleeing," the officer said.

Around 4.30 p.m., an e-rickshaw contractor then spotted Sandeep lying on the road and made a PCR call after which his family was called for identification.

Police said that a case has been registered and teams are looking for the farmhouse owner.

Farmers gear up for stir against fuel price hike

Protests to be organised across India for 2 hours today: SKM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Large contingents of farmers have started arriving at protest sites in preparation for their agitation on Thursday against fuel price hike, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said on Wednesday.

"At the call of Samyukt Kisan Morcha, protests will be organised across India on Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon for two hours against the hike in diesel, petrol and cooking gas prices," the umbrella body of over 40 farm unions said.

The protesters will reach designated public locations with any means of transport including scooters, motorcycles, tractors, cars, buses, trucks and also with empty gas cylinders, it said. On Wednesday, the petrol prices



The SKM has demanded that the fuel prices be halved with immediate effect. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

in Delhi as well as Kolkata crossed the ₹100 a litre mark.

For peaceful march

The SKM has demanded that the fuel prices be halved with immediate effect. It has also appealed to the protesters to keep the demonstration peaceful and on the

roadside, without blocking any pathways.

"This is an issue that affects every section of the society, and SKM appeals that farmers, labourers, youth, students, women, employees, shopkeepers, transporters, traders and others be part of these protests everywhere," the body said.

Improved last-mile connectivity discussed at meet

Policies on shelter and social infra also find place among suggestions at DDA webinar

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

In a webinar held for consultations on the draft Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) 2041, suggestions pertaining to GIS-based plans, improved last-mile connectivity, detailed mandates on night shelters were discussed among other issues, officials of the Delhi Development Authority said.

Policies and plans pertaining to transport and mobility, shelter and social infrastructure were also discussed at the webinar held on Tuesday,

according to officials.

"The major suggestions provided during the webinar were that MPD-2041 to be GIS-based plan, last-mile connectivity to be focused by promoting more Intermediate Public Transport (IPT) modes, facilities mandated for night shelters should be detailed out, women workforce participation to be reflected in provisions for housing," the urban body said.

The need for specific guidelines for urban peripheral rural area, the approach of mixed use development

zones to be adopted on the lines of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) corridors, development of rental housing, inter-linkage of MPD-2041 with the sub-regional plan for NCR and a healthcare infrastructure to cater to the pandemic situation, were among the other issues discussed, officials said.

Additionally, suggestions pertaining to the need for circle rates to be rationalised, permission for vertical mixed use needs to promote urban extension road (UER) with

Petrol crosses ₹100/litre mark in Capital

Cong. workers hold Centre responsible, demand Dharmendra Pradhan's exit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The price of petrol crossed the ₹100/litre mark in the Capital for the first time, fuelling protests from various sections.

Petrol price was increased by 35 paise per litre while diesel rates were increased by 17 paise a litre, according to price notification from State-owned fuel retailers. In Delhi, the price of petrol now stands at ₹100.21 per litre and diesel rates rose to ₹89.53 a litre.

Demands rollback

The Delhi Congress organised a flash protest outside the residence of Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gases Dharmendra Pradhan, demanding his resignation for failing to keep fuel prices in check. Congress workers held the BJP government at the Centre responsible for the prices of



A scene at a filling station in Delhi soon after the fuel price hike on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

petrol and diesel and demanded a rollback of excise duty and VAT (value added tax) on these products to give relief to common people.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that frequent petrol and diesel price hike, almost on a daily basis for the past many weeks, seems to have not affected

the BJP government at the Centre, which is least concerned about the plight of the common people. "The common people have been financially distressed by the pandemic crisis and are in no position to bear the extra burden of oil price hikes," Mr. Kumar said.

He added that the seven BJP MPs from Delhi were not

Relative arrested for killing wife, son of IAF employee in Palam

He was irked as aunt used to 'taunt' his family over money

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A day after wife and son of an Indian Air Force employee were found murdered at their residence in south-west Delhi's Palam village, police have arrested their relative in connection with the case.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West) Ingit Pratap Singh said that the accused has been identified as Abhishek Verma (33), a resident of Burari, who allegedly killed his paternal aunt Babita Verma (52) and her son Gaurav Verma (27). The accused was annoyed as his aunt used to allegedly "mentally torture and taunt" his family to return the money she had given for his sister's marriage.

Police said that on Tuesday evening, a PCR call was received by Krishan Swaroop Sudhir (55), who is employed as accountant in the IAF Palam station, stating that his wife and son have been murdered. When police reached the spot, they found that the two had been killed using dumbbells and almirahs were open.

During investigation, police

Accused was present during post-mortem and has been with the family since the murder to ensure that no one suspects him

POLICE

examined the CCTV footage and saw the accused taking an e-rickshaw to Dashrathpuri metro station where he stopped near a coffee shop. When police tracked down the e-rickshaw driver, he told them that the man had blood on his face and the currency note he gave was torn. So, the driver returned it because of which the accused used e-wallet to pay the driver ₹30.

E-wallet gives clue

When the mobile number was examined, it was found to be in the name of Abhishek Verma. Family members of the victim were asked if they knew this name, after which it was revealed that Abhishek is Babita's brother's son. Abhishek was arrested on Wednesday.

Police said that the accused was present during post-mortem and has been with the family since the murder to ensure that no one suspects him.

During interrogation, it was revealed that Babita had given ₹50,000 to Abhishek's family for his sister's wedding and she used to allegedly "mentally torture and taunt" his family to return the money.

Two days before the incident, the accused had come to the victim's residence and an argument ensued. Therefore, on Tuesday, Abhishek had allegedly come with a plan to kill his aunt but ended up killing the cousin as well because he had witnessed the murder.

Police said Abhishek had come on his two-wheeler, which he parked at Dashrathpuri metro station, and took an e-rickshaw to the house. He was also carrying an extra pair of clothes to change after the incident. After killing the two, Abhishek allegedly opened the almirah to mislead police and make it look like a robbery, police said.

DCW notice to police over online harassment of Muslim women

Their photos were uploaded online without consent

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Wednesday issued notice to Delhi Police over photos of Muslim women being displayed online without their consent and being termed as "sulli deal of the day."

The DCW has sought information pertaining to the steps taken by the police in identifying the accused and other details in the matter.

Taking suo motu cognisance of media reports, the women's panel said: "It has been reported that photos of hundreds of Muslim women and girls were uploaded by an unidentified group



DCW chief Swati Maliwal

ter, the DCW said, adding, "Subsequently, many had to leave social media platforms after their images got circulated. This is a very serious matter."

Sought FIR copy

In the notice issued to Delhi Police, the women's panel has sought a copy of the FIR registered in the matter, details of accused identified and arrested in the matter and a detailed action taken report.

The DCW asked the police to respond by July 12.

Meanwhile, the Editors Guild of India (EGI) issued a statement after a woman journalist was also targeted.

Armed men hold family hostage, loot house

Incident caught on camera; case filed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four armed men wearing masks, caps and helmets barged into the house of a property dealer in Dwarka's Uttam Nagar and decamped with cash and valuables after holding his family hostage on Wednesday, the police said.

Police said that according to the information, four men entered victim Vinod's house around 1.30 p.m. The accused were carrying weapons.

The incident, which was caught on CCTV, shows that a woman opened the door and was threatened by the men. The accused entered posing as electricians.

It was revealed that at the time of the incident, Vinod's wife Seema, mother Savitri Devi, two minor children and a relative Sachin were at home. In the video, Mr. Vinod's minor daughter can be seen reaching out to her mother whose chain was snatched by the accused at gunpoint. The accused could be seen tying Sachin and holding him hostage.

The police said that the accused robbed ₹7-₹8 lakh in cash and jewellery worth lakhs after threatening Ms. Seema to give the locker's code. A case has been registered and teams have been formed to identify and arrest the accused, the police said.

DU gets over 300 pleas for confidential results

Results of 47 applicants issued so far

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Senior officials of Delhi University on Wednesday said that the varsity had received over 300 requests for issuance of confidential results, of which 47 were issued.

DU had earlier announced that students will be permitted to apply for confidential results to ease the application process for higher education or jobs.

DU Dean of Examinations D.S. Rawat said: "We have received 354 applications till date for the issuance of confidential results out of which 47 have been issued already. The examination got over on June 28 and the first confidential result was issued on June 30."

In a notice issued on June 25, DU had said that students can seek confidential results in order to apply for higher studies or job purposes.

Two involved in international online cheating scam arrested

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons, allegedly hired by Chinese nationals, have been arrested in connection with an international online cheating scam. They used to allegedly induce people to invest online in wine and spice market and cheated people of ₹25 crore, police said on Wednesday.

DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena said that the accused have been identified as Nagaraju

Karmanchi (31), a resident of Gurugram, and Kondala Subash (31), a resident of Secunderabad.

Police said that a complaint was received wherein the complainant stated that he met one of the accused persons, Soo Yeon Park, allegedly a South Korean national, on a dating app and he was promised huge returns on his investment. He told police that initially more than 20% returns were given

to him in three to four days on investment of ₹5,000.

Police said that the victim was asked to make account on a given website and the money got deposited by accused persons in four separate accounts of different companies, out of which one was Golden Mark Technologies Private Limited.

During probe, police said, raids were conducted and Subhash, one of the directors of the said company, was arrested from Secunderabad

and Karmanchi, who was allegedly in touch with Chinese nationals and also operated the bank accounts, was arrested from Gurugram.

During investigation, it was revealed that Karmanchi created at least 10 different companies whose bank accounts were used by Chinese nationals.

He was in touch with them and was working as dummy director in an online short-term loan company whose real owners are Chinese nationals, the DCP said, adding that Karmanchi used to work on the directions of Chinese nationals.

Police said the accused used to ask victims to invest only a small amount and gave good returns in less than one week. Victims eventually got to know that they have been cheated when they invested large amount and were unable to withdraw money.



Rangarajan Mohan Kumaramangalam (centre) and relatives outside Kitty's residence in Vasant Vihar. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Talking about her sister, Ms. Chadha said she was the sweetest person on the planet. "She was the most helpful person who would go out of her way to help people. She was intolerant to wrongdoing. She was vocal and that was her personality. I am sure she would have put up a fight while they were

smothering her because she was a warrior. I haven't met a person who was more selfless than her," the sister remembered of Kitty.

It has been learnt that Kitty used to financially help the accused Raju, her washerman, because he wasn't earning enough during the pandemic.

Timings DELHI
THURSDAY, JUL. 08
RISE 05:31 SET 19:23
FRIDAY, JUL. 09
RISE 05:31 SET 19:23
SATURDAY, JUL. 10
RISE 05:32 SET 19:23

Delhi Weather
Delhi City 43 30
Safdarjang 43 30
Palam 42 31

Delhi Palam Today
40°C Duststorm & thunder-storm with light rain may occur at some places towards evening.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
38°C Light rain and thunder-storm likely at some places with gusty winds.

Copyright Skymet Weather 2019

L-G reviews progress of Yamuna project

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal reviewed the progress of work related to the restoration and rejuvenation of the Yamuna riverfront along with DDA Vice-Chancellor, senior officials and experts on Wednesday.

While appreciating the progress of the rejuvenation work undertaken so far, a senior officer present at the meeting said the L-G emphasised that each constituent project be assigned specific timelines that should be strictly adhered to for effective monitoring and timely completion of projects.

According to the officer, the L-G advised that the provision of eco-friendly amenities and conveniences in the above areas, including zero-waste toilets, drinking water, sit-outs, solar lights and signages be made available to encourage increased utilisation of these assets and to foster strong ownership of the community.

Delhi gets own genome sequencing lab

Kejriwal inaugurates facility at Lok Nayak Hospital; machine will help identify all variants of COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday inaugurated the SARS CoV-2 genome sequencing facility at Lok Nayak Hospital. It will help in timely identification of COVID-19 variants and aid strategies to counter them, he said.

The third such facility in north India, Mr. Kejriwal stated that the machine will be able to identify and analyse all variants of COVID-19 for any future waves or spreads in the city. Until now, he added, Delhi was dependent on the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for this purpose.

The machine will be able to sequence 5 to 7 samples in a day with a turnaround time of about 4 to 5 days. This facility will be used mainly for surveillance and public health purposes as identification of variants of concern in interest would be done.



Arvind Kejriwal at the genome sequencing facility at Lok Nayak Hospital in New Delhi.

The Chief Minister also appealed to residents to follow COVID-19-appropriate behaviour and take requisite precautions to prevent the outbreak of another wave of infection.

Follow precautions
The Chief Minister also appealed to residents to follow

COVID-19-appropriate behaviour and take requisite precautions to prevent the outbreak of another wave of infection.

“We have been constantly reading in the newspapers that new variants and mutations of COVID-19 are emerging every day. So as to get our samples tested, we were dependent upon the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the lab of the Central government,” he said.

BJP accuses AAP leaders of siphoning off ration meant for poor

‘They have been caught stealing and black-marketing it’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leaders of siphoning off ration meant for distribution amongst poor in Delhi and selling them in the market.

The BJP claimed to have caught AAP worker red-handed while trying to steal dry ration from a storage point in Trilokpuri to sell it in the black market. Party also staged a protest against the local AAP MLA, it said.

“Ration meant for the poor had been stored in the Government Boys Senior Secondary School at New Ash-

ok Nagar. However, the AAP workers with the connivance of the school management stole the ration and started selling them in the open market,” Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged.

Demands arrest
“We demand that an FIR be lodged against the AAP MLA and he should be arrested immediately. The Delhi Food and Civil Supplies Minister should also resign,” he demanded.

Mr. Bidhuri claimed that 516 food kits had already been stolen and this was the

second time that AAP workers had come to pick up kits to sell in the open market, but we caught them red-handed.

Stolen ration had also been recovered from the house of an AAP party worker which he offered to return to the school, he alleged.

“What is most unfortunate is that action had been taken against the school principal in the matter, but no action had been taken against the AAP MLA or the party workers,” Mr. Bidhuri alleged.

“We have sent all the evidence of the incident to L-G Anil Bajjal for appropriate action,” he said.

HC: submit report on black fungus drug

It also seeks details of imports from govt.

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to submit a status report on availability of Liposomal Amphotericin B, used for treating patients of mucormycosis (black fungus), which primarily affects those who have recovered from COVID-19.

A Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh asked the Centre to also indicate the quantities of the drug imported and the outstanding supplies and also its domestic production.

No shortage
The court was informed that there was no shortage of the drug as of now as the num-

ber of patients had gone down.

“If we are preparing for the third wave of COVID-19, we need to see the arrangement for it,” the Bench said.

The court was informed by the Centre’s counsel that presently there are 17,000 cases of black fungus in the country, which have come down from 23,000-24,000.

In May, the High Court had allowed duty-free import of Amphotericin B till the Central government took a final decision on waiving the customs and other duties on the drug. The court had also asked the Centre to come out with a policy on distribution of Amphotericin B due to its current scarcity.

Capital reports 93 new COVID-19 infections

78,582 tests conducted; positivity at 12%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 93 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday along with four deaths, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government.

It added that 78,582 tests were conducted that had a positivity rate of 12%. Of the total tests conducted, 53,983 were RT-PCR.

The total number of cases since the pandemic began now stands at 14,34,780 with 25,005 fatalities. On Wednesday, 64 more patients recovered, taking the total recoveries to 14,08,917. There are 858 active cases in the Capital out of which 265 are

under home isolation.

Vaccination drive

According to the vaccination bulletin issued by the government, 34,688 beneficiaries were vaccinated on Wednesday out of which 19,162 got their first dose.

The total number of beneficiaries vaccinated since the drive began has reached 85,04,690, of which 19,56,331 have received both doses.

The government said that Delhi was facing a shortage of vaccinations with Covaxin being used only for the second dose as its stocks are limited and have irregular delivery supply.

DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Battery (Management & Handling) Rules, 2001 came into force w.e.f 16th May, 2001. These rules mandate various responsibilities on manufacturers, importers, assemblers, re-conditioners, dealers, recyclers, consumers, bulk consumers and auctioneers. Major responsibilities of each of these stakeholders are listed as under.

Manufacturers/Importers

- Shall ensure that the new batteries be sold only to the registered dealers and the used batteries are collected back as per the schedule against new batteries sold excluding those sold to original equipment manufacturer and bulk consumer(s).
- Shall file a half-yearly return of their sales and buy-back to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) in Form- I latest by 30th June (for Oct-Mar) and 31st December (for Apr-Sept) of every year.
- Set up collection centres either individually or jointly at various places for collection of used batteries from consumers or dealers and shall ensure that the collected batteries are sent only to the registered recyclers.
- Shall ensure that necessary arrangements are made with dealers for safe transportation from collection centres to the premises of registered recyclers and shall ensure that no damage to the environment occurs during the transportation.
- Create public awareness through advertisement, publications, posters or by other means with regards to (a) hazard of lead (b) responsibility of consumers to return their used batteries only to the dealer or deliver at designated collection centre and (c) address of the dealer and designated collection centres.
- Buy recycled lead only from registered recyclers.
- Bring to the notice of the DPCC or the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India for any violation by the dealers.
- Importers shall apply for registration as per Form II and Form III on the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) online portal for a period of five years (link: http://cpccbrms.nic.in/).

Assemblers/Re-conditioners

- Shall ensure that the used batteries collected back are of similar type and specifications as that of the new batteries sold and shall ensure that used batteries collected are sent only to registered recyclers.

- Create public awareness through advertisement, publications, posters or by other means with regard to hazards of lead.

Dealers

- Apply for registration by submitting online application in Form- IV available on DPCC website by creating user ID and password for the period of five years.
- Shall ensure that the used batteries are collected back as per the schedule against new batteries sold.
- Shall ensure safe transportation of collected batteries to the designated collection centres or to registered recyclers.
- Shall file a half-yearly return of their sales

means with regards to (a) hazard of lead, and (b) obligation of consumers to return used batteries only to the registered dealers or deliver at the designated collection centres.

Consumers/Bulk Consumers

- Shall ensure that used batteries are not disposed off in any manner other than by depositing with the dealer/ manufacturer/ registered recycler/ importer/ re-conditioner or at the designated collection centres.
- Bulk consumers shall file half-yearly return latest by 30th June (for Oct-Mar) and 31st December (for Apr-Sept) in Form- I to DPCC.
- Bulk consumers to their user units may auction used batteries to registered recyclers only.



and buy-back of old batteries to the DPCC and manufacturer in Form-V latest by 31st May (for Oct-Mar) and 30th November (for Apr-Sept) of every year.

Recyclers

- Shall apply for registration to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change or an agency designated by it (if not applied already), by submitting information in Form VI.
- Shall submit half-yearly returns as per Form-VII to the DPCC latest by 30th June (for Oct-Mar) and 31st December (for Apr-Sept) of every year.
- Shall make available all records relating to receipt of used batteries, sources, quantities and metal yield to be submitted to the DPCC.
- Create public awareness through advertisement, publications, posters or by other

Auctioneers

- Shall ensure that used batteries are auctioned to the registered recyclers only.
- Shall maintain records relating to receipt of used batteries, sources, quantities and metal yield and submit to DPCC.
- Shall file half-yearly returns of their auctions latest by 30th June and 31st December to DPCC in Form-IX.

Note:- As per Batteries (Management and Handling) Amendment Rules, 2010, every dealer of Lead Acid Battery shall obtain registration from DPCC, within 30 days of this Notice and in case of failure legal action including prosecution shall be initiated.

Member Secretary

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Rewari farmers join protest in Rajasthan

Farmers’ movement is gaining strength with each passing day, says Swaraj India chief Yogendra Yadav

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A large number of farmers from Rewari under the aegis of Bawal Khap-84 reached the protest site at Rajasthan’s Shahjahanpur village on Wednesday to support the ongoing agitation against the three farm laws.

Welcoming the farmers, Swaraj India national president Yogendra Yadav said the farmers’ movement was gaining strength with each passing day. He said that those who were claiming that the movement had lost its steam must see the huge number of farmers reaching the protest site at Shahjahanpur in tractors and trolleys. Mr. Yadav said the farmers’ morale was high and they would soon emerge victorious.

He said farmers from neighbouring villages in Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab were reaching the Shahjahanpur protest site every day despite blistering heat. Mr.



Yogendra Yadav

Yadav added that the movement had improved the self-respect of the farmers who had risen above caste and religion to unite and fight for their rights.

‘We stand united’

He said that 450 farmer organisations had joined hands to spearhead the ongoing agitation and still stood united despite the efforts from the government to create division. The Swaraj India chief said the farmers were awakened and had learnt to

peacefully continue with the agitation and their victory was confirmed.

The farmer unions have given a call for nationwide protest against the rise in prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas on July 8.

‘Contest Punjab Polls’

Meanwhile, Haryana Bharatiya Kisan Union (Charuni) chief Gurnam Singh Charuni said on Wednesday said that outfits involved in farmers’ agitation against the new agriculture laws should contest the Punjab Assembly elections as it will “present a model on how the system can be changed”.

Mr. Charuni, a key leader of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) which is spearheading the farmers’ stir, said: “What I want to say is that we should not run ‘Mission U.P.’, but ‘Mission Punjab’.” SKM has planned a mahapanchayat in September and other activities in Uttar Pradesh, which

goes to the polls next year.

“Now, we are moving for Mission U.P. A mahapanchayat will be organised on September 5. Other activities will happen. Then polls will come and we will work to defeat the BJP. If we assume BJP gets defeated, will the Centre then agree to our demands? Don’t take it otherwise,” asked Mr. Charuni in a video message, and cited the example of West Bengal, where the farmer bodies campaigned against the BJP.

“The BJP was defeated there, but did the Centre then accept our demand,” he asked.

Mr. Charuni said that the BJP and the Congress have not been able to change the system. “Then from whom should we expect to do this? If we have to change the system, then we will have to formulate a plan. And that plan should be ‘Mission Punjab’,” he said.

(With PTI inputs)

‘Punjab BJP gave incorrect feedback’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

A day after the Punjab BJP issued a show-cause notice to him for his “anti-party” activities, former Minister Anil Joshi on Wednesday slammed the State unit alleging that it did not give correct feedback to the Centre on farm laws.

Mr. Joshi claimed that initially, farmers protesting against the farm laws had a few demands that could have been handled had the BJP’s Punjab unit not projected that all was hunky-dory in the State.

He also said State BJP president Ashwani Sharma should admit his failure and resign rather than issuing him notices.

Only traditional food items to be served at Assam govt. events

Handwoven *gamosa* to be used at official programmes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Only traditional food items will be served at government programmes in Assam, the State Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma decided on Wednesday.

The decision has been taken in sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s credo of ‘vocal for local’ for promoting indigenous food products, a government spokesperson said.

Assam has a variety of snacks, mostly on the sweeter side and made of powdery rice, coconut and other locally available ingredients.

“Traditional snacks such as *pitha* and *laaru* will be served with tea at official functions from now on,” the spokesperson said.

The Cabinet also decided to make it mandatory for

handwoven *gamosa* – the traditional multipurpose scarf-towel – to be used at government programmes.

Gifting an Assamese *gamosa* to visitors or dignitaries is a tradition in Assam. The tradition is similar for other indigenous communities with the Bodos, for one, using the *arnai* or a decorative scarf.

But over the years, cheaper machine-made *gamosas* from Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have threatened to push Assam’s weavers out of business. According to a 2018 estimate by the State government, Assam has more than 13 lakh looms out of a total of 28 lakh looms in the country.

Seizures of machine-made *gamosas* under the Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985, have had little impact.

The Act reserves certain

articles for exclusive production by handloom. These include the *gamosa*, *angavastaram* and the Manipuri *phanek*.

Playing the State anthem ‘O mur apunar dekh’ at the beginning of all government programmes and meetings and the national anthem ‘Jana gana mana’ at the end was another decision taken by the Cabinet.

Awards for govt. staff

Among other decisions was an annual performance-based award for five non-gazetted employees at the district and 10 at the State level. Apart from citations on Karmachari Divas (August 5) to mark the death anniversary of the State’s first Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi, the award-winning employees will get a year’s extension of service, the spokesperson said.

Compensate industry for huge losses: Akali Dal

It seeks Assembly session to discuss ‘complete mismanagement’ of power situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Wednesday demanded the Congress government provide financial package to the industry for the losses suffered by it on account of forced shutdown amid the ongoing power crises.

Mr. Badal said after suffering huge losses due to the COVID lockdown in the last one and a half years, the sector was presently in the grip of a “power lockdown” with the government imposing a three-day compulsory off,

closing down large-scale industries for five days and reducing contracted power load of continuous supply to industry by 50%.

“This has broken the back of the industry which is suffering losses of worth crores of rupees on a daily basis besides losing orders,” said Mr. Badal, holding Chief Minister (Retd.) Captain Amarinder Singh responsible for the state of affairs.

He said collection of bills for the current cycle be deferred by two months for the sector. “Power should also be provided at a landing cost of

₹5 per unit as promised by the Chief Minister,” he said, adding that the industry was paying nearly ₹10 per unit.

‘PSPCL in a sad State’

Mr. Badal also demanded a special session of the Assembly to discuss the complete mismanagement of the situation. He said the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL), which had been declared as the best electricity utility in 2015 during the SAD government led tenure, was now finding it difficult to even supply adequate power to the consumers.

“Mismanagement and the Congress government’s failure to add a single mega watt in the last four and a half years has led to a situation where farmers are not getting adequate supply for their paddy crop even as unscheduled power cuts are being imposed on domestic consumers. The Chief Minister owes an explanation as to how a power-surplus State during SAD tenure has become deficient and unable to even distribute power to consumers due to lack of maintenance of transmission and distribution system,” he said.

Health start-ups providing innovative solutions

They have begun rolling out new concepts of hybrid pharmacy and diagnostics

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Health start-ups coming up in Rajasthan during the COVID-19 pandemic have provided some innovative solutions to overcome the crisis amid the virus infection putting an excessive burden on the public health infrastructure. The start-ups have kicked off with the new concepts of hybrid pharmacy and diagnostics.

Supported by a health research institution, the start-ups have conducted research and made intelligent planning with an out-of-box thinking to

provide succour to those affected by the second wave of pandemic as well as other patients whose health needs constant monitoring. The institution provided orientation to several of the entrepreneurs who launched the new units.

CIIE support

The Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) at the Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) University here has extended support to the nascent startups in the State and helped them with

the entrepreneurial skills. Home healthcare for the elderly patients was a major area of intervention in the services of start-ups.

CIIE chairperson Sheenu Jain said here on Wednesday that while one of the start-ups had come up for operating in the sphere of hybrid pharmacy, another had launched health-based devices for diabetes and other allied diseases. Technology and service-based start-ups had joined the centre to get connected with the right set of people, she said.

The CIIE has worked on

evolving the prototypes for start-ups and supported them through mentoring, legal assistance and company registration. Dr. Jain said the CIIE would shortly become the first purely health-based incubator in Rajasthan and get the State government’s support for laying a strong foundation for the units adding value to the healthcare services.

A women’s entrepreneurship development programme launched by the CIIE has helped out women entrepreneurs to take up the start-up projects with profitable outcomes.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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Col. O.P. Dudi

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that PAWANDEEP SINGH SON OF AMARJEET SINGH, RESIDENT OF B-74, GROUND FLOOR, GANESH NAGAR, TILAK NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110018 OF AFGHANISTAN is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

CORRIGENDUM

Reference tender notice published on 18/06/2021 regarding supply of machinery & equipment for Common facility centre at Murthal, Sonapat-Haryana, this is to inform you that due to some unavoidable reasons the last date for submission of bids has been extended to 19/07/2021, 12 PM and bids shall be opened at 3.30 PM. Tender available on www.urda.org

Urho Rural Integrated Development Association, WZ-33A, Dayalgar Road, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unidentified dead body of male **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 30 Years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5' 6", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Without clothes, **ID:** Mentally disturbed, who was found near Majdiya Hospital, Delhi. In this regard a case **DD No. 21A Dated 30.06.2021 has been registered at P.S. Tigri, New Delhi.**

Any person having any information or clue about the above deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.



Sd/- SHO

P.S: Tigri, New Delhi

Tel.: 011-26041473

DP/589/SD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



UMESH KUMAR @ LALA

General Public is hereby informed that one boy **Name:** Umesh Kumar @ Lala, **S/o:** Late Sanjay Kumar, **R/o:** 102, Old Kondli Village, Gali No. 1, Jatav Mohalla, Delhi-110096, **Age:** 13 Years, **Height:** 4', **Complexion:** Fair, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue Colour Jeans, Red & Black Jarsi and Hawai Chappal in Feet has been missing/kidnapped since 12.12.2018 from the area of P.S. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi. In this regard **DD No. 658/18, U/s 363 IPC, Dated 17.12.2018**, has been lodged at P.S. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi.

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

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
DP/576/ED/2021

SHO
P.S. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22610839, 22610843

SEARCH FOR MISSING FEMALE



USHA

General public is here by informed that this female namely Usha D/o Megha Ram R/o T-634/17, Near Chachi Ka Mandir, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi **Age** : 21 years, **Height** : 5'2", **Face** : Round, **Complexion** : Wheatish, **Built** : Medium, wearing pink colour suit, red colour salwar and hawai chappal in feet, has been missing since 19.06.2021 at about 11:30 A.M. from her house. In this regard **DD No. 31 dated 20.06.2021** has been lodged at P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing female may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SHO : P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi
Ph. : 011-25874034,
8750870434, 8750870436

DP/664/CD/21

2 more held for ‘indecent’ sloganeering

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALLIA (U.P.)

Two more people were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly indulging in “indecent” sloganeering against Uttar Pradesh Minister Upendra Tiwari and his family members, police said.

The police also said charges of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act have been added in the FIR.

“With two more arrests, the number of those arrested in the case reaches nine,” a police officer said here.

After the initial probe, charges of the POCSO Act have been included in the FIR, he said.

Tiwari’s family had demanded that the accused be booked under the POCSO Act as the slogans targeted the minister’s two minor daughters.

6 Pak migrants get Indian citizenship under CAA

They were staying in M.P. for decades

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHOPAL

Six Pakistani migrants, living in Madhya Pradesh for decades, were granted Indian citizenship on Wednesday under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), officials said.

State Home Minister Nartam Mishra said these migrants were victims of religious persecution.

“Indian citizenship has been provided to these Hindu migrants who reached here due to religious persecution in neighbouring countries. The State government has completed the process and handed them Indian citizenship certificates today,” Mr. Mishra told reporters.

Among the six who were granted Indian citizenship, Nandlal and Amit Kumar are residents of Bhopal while Ar-

jundas Manchandani, Jairam Das, Narayan Das and Saushalya Bai are from Mandsaur, the Minister said.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Manchandani said, “We are happy that the government has provided us citizenship. I was neither an Indian nor a Pakistani for the last 31 years, but now I am an Indian”.

‘Came from Sindh’

Officials said these people came to Madhya Pradesh from the Sindh province of Pakistan between 1988 and 2005 and were granted Indian citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act.

The CAA, passed in December 2019, expedites grant of Indian citizenship to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian immigrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

‘Ensure no candidate is intimidated’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ALLAHABAD

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday directed the District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police, Prayagraj, to ensure that the entire process of filing nomination papers for Block Pramukh (Chairperson) is completed in a free and fair manner and no candidate is intimidated by their rivals.

The order was passed while hearing a petition filed by one Kalpana Pandey, a candidate for block Sringerpur in district Prayagraj.

The Bench also directed the District Magistrate and the SSP to make necessary arrangement for providing adequate security to Ms. Pandey so that she may file her nomination paper without any hindrance.

Dhami takes charge as CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand’s new Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Wednesday formally assumed charge of office at the State Secretariat after performing a puja.

Odisha reports highest single-day COVID deaths

59 patients lose their lives in the State

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha on Wednesday reported its highest single-day COVID-19 fatality as 59 people died, taking the toll to 4,358, a Health Department official said. The State also registered 2,602 new cases, pushing the tally to 9,29,788, he said.

There are 28,015 active cases in the State at present. In the last 24 hours, 3,258 patients have recovered. So far, 8,97,362 have recovered from COVID-19 in the State.

The number of deaths is on the rise, bucking the country-wide trend, a cause of concern for the government.

The highest 10 deaths were reported from the Khurda district, followed by Bargarh, Dhenkanal and Puri (five each). Ganjam, Nayagarh, Rayagada and Sundargarh reported four deaths

each. Khurda district also reported the highest 529 new cases, followed by Cuttack (397), Jaipur (183), Puri (174), Balasore (164) and Mayurbhanj (141). Odisha tested 74,468 samples on Tuesday.

Cuttack district registered a positivity rate of 15.1%, the State’s highest.

COVID despite doses

Around 0.13% of the people who are either fully vaccinated or received one dose have been found to be COVID-positive in the State, officials said. “While 9,154 persons (0.09%) of 1,00,43,077 people getting the first dose tested positive, 7,806 (0.31%) people got infection even after taking both the doses,” an official said.

The State government has urged the Centre to allocate more Covishield vaccines on an urgent basis as it was facing a shortage.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

IN MEMORIAM



The best portion of a good man’s life is his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.
Mr. K. Sethuraman, Senior Vice President, Arun Excellio Ltd., passed away on May 25, 2021. His memory will forever live in our hearts.

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IN BRIEF



Swami Prakashananda of Sivagiri Math is no more
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Swami Prakashananda, former president of Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham Trust and former head of the Sivagiri Math, passed away here on Wednesday. He was 99. The last rites were performed at Sivagiri Math.

Govt. attaches Roshan Baig's assets in IMA scam

BENGALURU
The government on Wednesday told the High Court of Karnataka that it has issued a notification on July 6, 2021, attaching around 20 immovable and movable assets of former Minister R. Roshan Baig situated in various parts of the Bengaluru in connection with his alleged involvement in the scam of I Monetary Advisory (IMA) group of companies.

Kitex: court order on minimum wages awaited

KOCHI
The Labour Department has said that action on the notice issued to Kitex Garments Limited, Kizhakkambalam, for violation of minimum wages rules as per Government Order (P) No. 143/2019 of December 30, 2019, will be taken in accordance with the orders of the court.

A.P. decides to reopen schools on August 16

VIJAYAWADA
The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to reopen schools on August 16. Speaking after attending a review meeting with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh said online classes would commence from July 12. Teachers would be given training on workbooks from July 15 to August 15, he added.

HC for further probe into Fazal's murder

Order to CBI comes after confessional statement of RSS activist that he was involved in the killing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI
The Kerala High Court on Wednesday ordered the Central Bureau of Investigation to conduct further investigation into the murder of National Development Front (NDF), now Popular Front of India, activist Mohammed Fazal at Thalassery in 2006 in view of the confessional statement given by a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) activist.

Justice Ashok Menon directed the CBI to constitute a special team to further investigate the case.

The order was passed while allowing a petition filed by P.K. Abdul Sathar, elder brother of Fazal, for a directive to conduct further investigation into the case. He

pointed out that further investigation was required in the light of the statement given by RSS activist Subeesh alias 'Kuppi' Subeesh that he was involved in the murder.

Subeesh made the confession in 2016 when he was interrogated by the Koothuparamba police in connection with the murder of CPI(M) activist Mohanan. He stated that Fazal was murdered by RSS workers, including himself and three others, namely Proneesh, Prabheesh and Shinoj.

The court observed that there was undoubtedly a need for examination of the confession statement of Subeesh and the attending circumstances. It might be true that the CBI might not be satisfied with the materials



Mohammed Fazal

now collected by the local police during the investigation in some other case involving Subeesh. But there was no harm in examining those materials also, as part of a further investigation. Without an examination of

those materials by the investigating agency, it was not proper to discard them altogether.

The Ernakulam CBI Special Court had earlier dismissed the petitioner's plea for further investigation, holding that once the final report is filed, the de facto complainant could not seek further investigation invoking the provisions under Section 173 (8) CrPC, without the investigating officer asking for it.

The State government had submitted before the court that the murder was a sequel to the NDF-RSS standoff in Thalassery in October 2006.

The CBI took over the investigation on the directive of the High Court on a plea by the victim's wife Mariyu.

According to the investiga-

tion agency, Fazal of Madapedika from Kodiyeeri was murdered allegedly by a group of CPI(M) sympathisers after he defected from the CPI(M) and joined the NDF on October 22, 2006.

Eight persons, including Karayi Rajan and Karayi Chandrashekarani, CPI(M) local leaders, were arrested by the CBI.

M.K. Sunil Kumar, alias 'Kodi' Suni, who had been convicted in the case of the murder of Revolutionary Marxist Party (RMP) leader T.P. Chandrashekarani, was named the prime accused in the case.

According to the CBI, the murder was masterminded by Rajan and Chandrashekarani because of political animosity.

ISRO spy case: bail plea of former DGP adjourned

Maldivian women have opposed bail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/KOCHI

A court here on Wednesday adjourned till July 12 the hearing on the anticipatory bail plea of former Kerala Director General of Police Siby Mathews in a case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation against him and 17 other police officers in connection with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) espionage case.

Two Maldivian women, "wrongfully" arraigned as accused in the case, have opposed Mr. Mathews' anticipatory bail petition.

Mr. Mathews had moved the district court for protection from arrest after the CBI named him as accused in the 1994 "police frame-up" case.

Former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan, the de facto complainant in the case, had done the same earlier.

The CBI informed the High Court that if anticipatory bail was granted to the two former police officers, S. Vijayan and Thampi S. Durga Dutt, it would cause serious prejudice to the investigation. In a statement filed before the High Court, the CBI pointed out that the police officers had played an active role and concocted an espionage case following a conspiracy with the other accused in the FIR and other unknown persons.

The petitioners were still very influential. If bail was granted, it would create fear in the minds of probable witnesses, the CBI said.

Andhra Pradesh announces YSR achievement awards

Surendra, retired cartoonist of The Hindu, among awardees

STAFF REPORTER VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government announced 63 YSR Lifetime Achievement and YSR Achievement Awards in various categories on Wednesday. A cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a memento would be given to the YSR Lifetime Achievement awardees. Similarly, ₹5 lakh cash prize and a memento would be given to each YSR Achievement award winner.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had planned to present the awards last year, but the COVID-19 pandemic postponed the process.

A State-level screening committee has selected eight organisations, 11 farmers, 21 artistes, seven wri-



Surendra

ters, eight journalists, and eight COVID-19 warriors for the awards.

Among the YSR Lifetime Achievement awardees are the MSN Charities Trust (Kakinada), the C.P. Brown Library (YSR Kadapa), and the Maharaja Government College of Music and Dance (Vizianagaram).

The farmer who will re-

ceive the Lifetime Achievement Award is the late Palla Venkanna, founder of Kadiyam Nurseries.

Among the writers are included the late Kalipatnam Rama Rao (Kara Master, Srikulam) and Katti Padma Rao (Guntur).

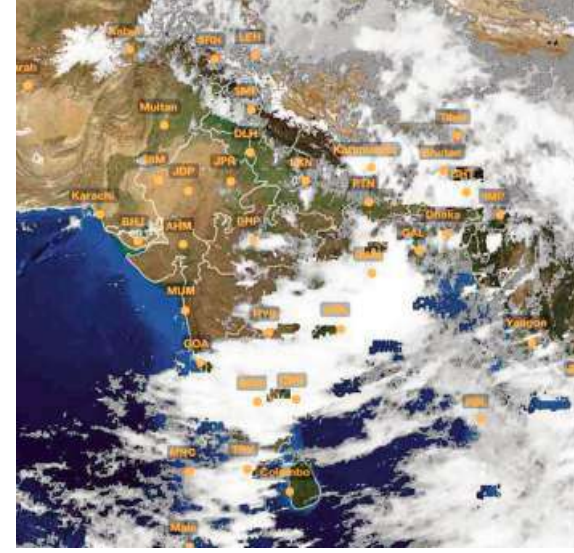
Among the journalist Lifetime Achievement awardees are Palagummi Sainath (Chennai) and retired cartoonist of The Hindu Surendra (Kadapa).

Achievement awardees include COVID-19 warriors Dr. Nitichandra (Professor, Pulmolonology, Nellore), Lakshmi (staff nurse, GGH, Vijayawada) and Turubilli Tejaswi (staff nurse, Visakhapatnam).

The awards will be presented on August 14 or 15.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Assam, Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha, Konkan & Goa, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan

Table with 3 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists weather data for various cities including Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, Allahabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Gangtok, Goa, Guwahati, Hubballi, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur, Kochi, Kohima, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Kurnool, Lucknow, Madurai, Mangaluru, Mysuru, New Delhi, Patna, Port Blair, Puducherry, Raipur, Ranchi, Shillong, Shimla, Srinagar, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchi, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Table with 3 columns: CITIES, SO2, NO2, CO, PM2.5, PM10, AQI. Lists air quality data for various cities including Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, Visakhapatnam.

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Recoveries dip as Maharashtra reports more than 9,500 fresh COVID-19 cases

Pune records highest infections; active tally climbs to 1.14 lakh; 179 patients succumb

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PUNE

Maharashtra saw a dip in recoveries on Wednesday with 8,899 patients being discharged against a surge of 9,558 new COVID-19 cases.

The active case tally rose to 1,14,625.

A total of 326 deaths have been added to the progressive death toll, with 98 of those occurring in the last 48 hours and 49 being from the past week. A further 179 fatalities have been added as per the ongoing 'reconciliation' process.

The State's total death toll has climbed to 1,23,857 with the State's case fatality rate standing at 2.01%.

The State's total cases have reached 61,22,893 while its cumulative recoveries have gone up to 58,81,167



A beneficiary receives a dose of COVID-19 vaccine as others wait outside at a hospital in Navi Mumbai. FILE PHOTO

with the recovery rate standing at 96.05%.

"Of a total 4,31,24,800 laboratory samples tested thus far, 61,22,893 (with the average case positivity falling incrementally to 14.2%) have returned positive with

over 2.16 lakh samples being tested in the last 24 hours," State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said.

Pune reported 1,533 new cases taking its total case tally to 10,63,678. Seven deaths were reported as the fatality

toll rose to 17,034. According to district authorities, the active cases went up to nearly 10,500 while the death toll touched 18,034.

Mumbai recorded 662 new cases to take its total tally to 7,26,278 while the active cases declined to 12,255. Nine fatalities took the city's death count to 15,573.

Kolhapur added more than 1,300 new cases taking its total cases to 1,68,015 of whom 12,902 are active. As many as 17 deaths saw the toll climb to 4,847.

Satara registered 1,114 cases and nine deaths as its total case tally rose to 1,99,014 of whom 7,675 are active while the fatality toll went up to 4,781.

Neighbouring Sangli logged more than 900 new cases and 17 deaths.

Pune fire: flagrant violation of safety norms, labour laws at chemical unit, reveals report

Fact-finding team held interviews with survivors, kin of deceased, district officials

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE PUNE

A fact-finding team, probing the horrific Pune chemical factory blaze last month in which 17 workers, most of them women, were killed, has found that the factory owners flagrantly violated safety and labour laws and that the authorities from the State Industrial Safety and Health Department connived with the factory owners in granting the firm a licence in the absence of all safety norms.

A fire erupted on June 7 on the premises of SVS Aqua Technologies in Mulshi taluk. The blaze, which sounded like a bomb explosion to 37 workers trapped inside the cramped working space, spread with such rapid intensity that 17 of them were charred to death.

The team, organised by the Trade Union Action Committee, comprised Nitish Nawsagaray, a professor at the city-based ILS Law College; Vivek Patwardhan, a senior HR professional; advocate Vishal Jadhav; health and safety expert Prahlad Malvadkar; and social researcher Roma Makati. It held detailed interviews with the survivors, the kin of the deceased, and the Pune division and district authorities.

No training for workers

The report revealed that the factory had been in operation since 2012 but had neither obtained a licence under the Factories Act, 1948, nor even bothered to acquire one till 2020. Contrary to the line given out by the factory owners, the

workers were not given any training on the safety precautions or made aware of the enormous risk of handling chemicals, it said.

"Since commencement of its operations in 2012, no officer of the Industrial Safety and Health Department had ever visited the factory nor sent any notice even once till December last year regarding norms flouted by it. It was also learnt the visit [by an authority] was the result of an unrecorded fire that had occurred in the factory earlier," Dr. Nawsagaray said.

The officer's report to the Industrial Safety and Health Department in December 14 last had raised objections regarding the process, safety and the layout of the factory even.

The fact-finding team re-

vealed that after the official's visit, the plan of the existing factory building was filed with the authorities of the Industrial Safety and Health Department in February last and "hurriedly approved" by the Industrial Additional Director of Industrial Safety and Health.

"The Director neither visited nor inspected the existing factory structure before approving the said plan which, he was legally duty bound to do. The factory plan itself reveals that it did not provide sufficient fire exits and doors. The windows shown in the plan were, in fact, sealed with grills right from the beginning. It showed many elements that never existed on the site, thus making it to be a fraudulent and fake submission," said advocate Jadhav.

Soon, a special cell to protect doctors from complaints by patients' relatives

It will consist of medical experts, police officers, State tells HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court on Wednesday that it was in the process of constituting a special cell by next week to protect doctors against unnecessary police complaints by kin of patients.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) petition filed by one Dr. Rajeev Joshi, seeking orders from the court to protect doctors from being attacked by families of patients.

The PIL alleged that Maha-

ashtra witnessed the maximum number of such instances of violence. According to the plea, the State government had failed to implement the Maharashtra Medicare Service, Persons and Medicare Institutions (Prevention of violence and damage or loss of property) Act, 2010, to curb such instances.

Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni informed the court that the special cell would consist of experts from the medical field, senior police officers, and stakeholders.

He said that the duty of the cell would be to examine

complaints of medical negligence against doctors and hospitals and only after verifying how genuine the complaint was, the police station concerned would register an FIR.

With respect to complaints of vandalism and attack on doctors and hospitals, the Indian Penal Code was sufficient to deal with them, Mr. Kumbhakoni said.

The Chief Justice said there was a similar committee in West Bengal that comprised nine members, including IPS officers and doctors, and suggested that the cell here could be formed on similar lines.

Won't arrest Param Bir till July 29: State to HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court on Wednesday that it would not arrest former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh till July 29 in a case registered against him.

The statement was made before a Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and N.J. Jamadar.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Mr. Singh seeking to quash an FIR filed against him at Bazzar Peth police station in Kalyan and also registered at Akola.

The plea said, "The FIR refers to an event of 2015 and is belatedly registered after

having failed to pressure him to withdraw his complaint against former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh."

On March 20 last, Mr. Singh wrote to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, alleging that Mr. Deshmukh directed suspended police officer Sachin Vaze to collect ₹100 crore from bars and restaurants over a month.

The FIR was registered on April 24, 2021, by police inspector Bhimraj Ghadge against Mr. Singh under several sections of the Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the Civil Rights Protection Act, the Indian Penal Code, and the Maharashtra Police Act, at Akola.

State land appears paternal property of executive, says Bombay HC

Bench makes remark while hearing plea on illegal buildings

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said it appears that the 'State's property was the paternal property of the executive' while commenting on the rampant illegal constructions in Mumbai.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a suo motu public interest litigation following the collapse of a building in Bhiwandi last year. While 41 people, including three toddlers and 18 children, were killed in the incident, the National Disaster Response Force rescued 25 people.

Senior counsel Aspi Chinoy, along with advocate Joel Carlos, representing the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), informed the court that the civic body could not act against encroachers as the State government's slum rehabilitation policy protected them. Mr. Chinoy said that the BMC had a limited role to play as an external authority.

'Statutory protection'

State Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni said that the government's slum rehabilitation policy granted statutory protection against the

demolition of structures constructed before January 1, 2000, and not higher than 14 feet. He said the structures of slum dwellers with valid photo identity cards were protected and could not be demolished. Mr. Kumbhakoni added that successive governments had extended the cut-off date for protecting tenements in notified slum areas till 2000.

The court said, "The moment you [State] bring them under a beneficial scheme, State land and corporation lands are written off. It seems like the State's property is the paternal property of the executive."



Perfecting the test

CBSE's plan for Class 10 and 12 assessments should incorporate needs of stressed schools

Preparing for an uncertain academic year ahead during the pandemic, the Central Board of Secondary Education has decided on an assessment scheme for Classes 10 and 12 for 2021-22 under various scenarios, including the possibility that Board examinations can be conducted, should circumstances improve. The year gone by was extremely challenging for all Boards, and the CBSE had to hastily come up with a scheme to assess candidates in Class 12. It became clear that even with its high emphasis of academics, there was considerable deprivation for some students, and not all got the opportunity to complete their syllabus or attend online classes even in the national capital. The wide coverage of the Board, as of 2019, includes 1,138 Kendriya Vidyalayas, 2,727 government schools, 17,553 independent schools, 598 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and 14 Central Tibetan schools, and schools abroad. The diversity of students and their varied backgrounds was apparently reckoned to some degree while drafting the scheme for the coming year, which includes a mix of internal assessments for Classes 9-10 and 11-12, and term examinations in November-December and in March-April 2022. There will be a rationalised, compartmentalised syllabus split into two halves for each term. The scheme, which has the benefit of advance planning unlike the past year, must be responsive to the issues faced by all institutions in remote locations and the deprivation faced by less privileged students.

The CBSE's special scheme relies on syllabus rationalisation done through expert evaluation of interconnectivity of subjects, and a centralised protocol of question papers and marking scheme for the term examinations. In the case of term I, it will be a multiple-choice question (MCQ) type test stretching over 90 minutes, with machine-readable optical marking, and for term II, a short-and-long-answers model, if circumstances permit. Efficient as it may sound, the multiple-choice model is critiqued by some as inferior, with sometimes irrelevant and meaningless questions that add up to little in terms of assessment, helping only the marking process. An adjunct to the MCQ pattern could be a decentralised process, empowering regional CBSE units and external experts to consider the state of particular districts and come up with assessments tailored to specific situations. At the same time, the Board has done well to plan for different scenarios that could be imposed by the pandemic, where either of the term examinations or both cannot be held, or the second term has to be converted into the MCQ type. The fallback option in the worst-case scenario is a combination of internal assessments, practical and project work and theory examinations taken at home. The extreme uncertainty underscores the need to take online lessons to all classes of students, and factor in schools with special needs.

The surge

The Taliban should not be allowed to take control of Afghanistan through bloodshed

The rapid territorial gains made by the Taliban over the last two months should worry both the Afghan government and the regional powers who are invested in the country's long-term stability. The Taliban started their latest offensive on May 1, the day the remaining U.S. troops started withdrawing as part of President Joe Biden's plan. With 90% of U.S. withdrawal complete, the Taliban have taken control of 195 of Afghanistan's 407 districts, and are contesting 129 others. Most of their recent victories are in the northern provinces of Badakhshan and Takhar, which had resisted Taliban rule in the 1990s. In several northern districts, Afghan troops have either surrendered or retreated. If the north, home to Afghanistan's elite power brokers and leaders, is lost, the risk of a total collapse of the government in Kabul would increase. The government still controls most of the provincial capitals and cities but are practically surrounded by the Taliban. Given the pace of the Taliban's advancement in the countryside, it is possible they could launch an offensive to take the population centres once the foreign troops are out.

The Taliban's strategy is still not clear. Their political office in Doha, which started peace talks with Afghan government representatives in September 2020, continues to say they are committed to the dialogue. But on the battlefield in Afghanistan, they continue a relentless campaign aimed at capturing more territories. Part of the problem was the total abdication of leadership and responsibility by the U.S., which invaded Afghanistan 20 years ago. When direct talks between the U.S. and the Taliban began, the U.S.'s focus was not on finding a peaceful settlement to the crisis that it partly created, but on exiting the war. Therefore, instead of putting pressure on the Taliban to extract concessions, the U.S. struck a deal with them, completely ignoring the concerns of Kabul. Now, the Taliban are much more powerful on the ground and even if the peace process is revived after American pullout, they would negotiate from a position of strength. But that should not stop Kabul and regional powers China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan and India from seeking a political settlement. A violent takeover of the country by the Taliban, like in 1996, would not serve anybody's interests. The Taliban would also not find international legitimacy if they capture Kabul through bloodshed. Afghan's past experiences suggest that one-party regimes – the communist regime, Mujahideen or the Taliban – failed to stabilise the country or sustain themselves in the long term. Now that the invading troops are exiting Afghanistan, the warring parties' focus should shift towards settlement and building lasting structures of power. Else, Afghanistan would fall into another cycle of violence.

Darkness at noon, felled by the judiciary

Posterity will blame the judiciary for the incarceration and unfortunate death of Father Stan Swamy



AJIT PRAKASH SHAH

It has been 81 years since Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* was first published. The novel is set in the backdrop of the Great Purge of the late 1930s in the Soviet Union under Stalin. This period was marked by, among other things, political repression, police surveillance, general suspicion of the opposition, imprisonment, and executions. Decades on, thousands of miles away, darkness fell at noon in India too, when Father Stan Swamy passed away at a private hospital in Mumbai on July 5. Omniscently reminiscent of the macabre world Koestler had drawn, Fr. Swamy's death is much more than the death of an activist accused of terrorist activities. It is the result of a systemic abuse of majoritarian authority and disregard for the rule of law.

His life in a nutshell

For many, Fr. Swamy will be remembered as an inspiration. A Jesuit priest, he chose to make the upliftment of marginalised communities in Jharkhand his life's work. He lived and worked in a single room, prolifically writing (over 70 books are credited to him) on dispossessed people. He was an activist for most of his life, and used the legal system to fight for the rights of those who were being unfairly targeted, and thought that the Constitution would help in securing justice, even moving the Jharkhand High Court in a public interest litigation on undertrials. When doing all of this, surely, he would never have imagined that his fate would be decided by the very system he used and believed in.

It started in August 2018, when the Pune police raided Fr. Swamy's single-room home, seized his computer, cell phone, books and some classical music cassettes. Another raid took place in June 2019. Finally, on October 8, 2020, Fr. Swamy was arrested by the Na-

tional Investigation Agency (NIA), under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the 16th to join a roster of professors, activists, writers, and public intellectuals, as a suspect in the Bhima-Koregaon case. Fr. Swamy, aged over 80, remained an accused, in the custody of the state, till his death. Besides being arrested for what many believe to be improbable causes, and being possibly the oldest person ever accused of terrorism in India, the most tragic story is how his detention was handled by the state, by the police and worst of all, by the courts.

Fr. Swamy was arrested on flimsy evidence of some propaganda material and communication with other activists in the field, such as Sudha Bharadwaj and Varavara Rao, who were also arrested for similar charges. The authenticity of some of the allegedly indicting documentation, including a key report, has been questioned by international forensic data experts. But the state defended its arrest arguing that these issues must be gone into only during trial, and that the accused – i.e., Fr. Swamy – should remain in jail until then.

Pointer to judicial decline

This is the outcome also of the problematic Watali judgment, which I discuss in subsequent paragraphs. Repeated pleas for medical assistance by Fr. Swamy were consistently ignored or dismissed. Medical reports taken on record clearly showed that Fr. Swamy had the degenerative Parkinson's disease, and could not even do basic tasks, such as holding a spoon, writing, walking or bathing. Indeed, the court noted that he had a severe hearing problem, and was physically very weak. But even that did not move them. Every regular bail application that was filed by his lawyers was unequivocally rejected. When he applied for medical bail, the court kept adjourning the matter, and merely offered him the services of a private hospital. In my opinion, this demonstrates a lack of sensitivity on the part of the judges, which is deeply saddening.

The series of events that led to Fr. Swamy's eventual and tragic



passing is testimony to the judicial decline that we have seen in recent years, which coincidentally or not, appears to be coterminous with the current political regime in India.

Why is the political establishment, and the police, so emboldened to pursue cases under UAPA against individuals like Fr. Swamy? A key reason, undoubtedly, is the weak judiciary we have today. Indeed, our judiciary today suffers from a great many flaws besides mere weakness. In Fr. Swamy's case, the judges displayed apathy of a shocking order. It is perplexing when, on the one hand, the Chief Justice of India grandiloquently states that personal liberties and fundamental rights must be protected, and courts do precisely the opposite.

A weakened central principle

It would not be too bold to suggest that the idea of the "presumption of innocence" – a central principle of criminal law and procedure – is on a terribly weak footing these days in our country, and this should worry all of us greatly.

The source of this worry is the Supreme Court of India itself. Its April 2019 decision in *National Investigation Agency vs Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali* on the interpretation of the UAPA has affected all downstream decisions involving the statute. This decision has created a new doctrine, which is that effectively, an accused must remain in custody throughout the period of the trial, even if it is eventually proven that the evidence against the person was inadmissible, and the accused is finally acquitted. The illogic of this veers on the absurd: Why must an accused remain in jail only to be

eventually acquitted?

According to the decision, in considering bail applications under the UAPA, courts must presume every allegation made in the First Information Report to be correct. Further, bail can now be obtained only if the accused produces material to contradict the prosecution. In other words, the burden rests on the accused to disprove the allegations, which is virtually impossible in most cases. The decision has essentially excluded the admissibility of evidence at the stage of bail. By doing so, it has effectively excluded the Evidence Act itself, which arguably makes the decision unconstitutional. Bail hearings under the UAPA are now nothing more than mere farce. With such high barriers of proof, it is now impossible for an accused to obtain bail, and is in fact a convenient tool to put a person behind bars indefinitely. It is nothing short of a nightmare come true for arrestees.

This is being abused by the government, police and prosecution liberally: now, all dissenters are routinely implicated under (wild and improbable) charges of sedition or criminal conspiracy and under the UAPA. Due to the Supreme Court judgment, High Courts have their hands tied, and must perforce refuse bail, as disproving the case is virtually impossible. As a result of this decision, for instance, a High Court judge can no longer really adjudicate and assess the evidence in a case. All cases must now follow this straitjacketed formula of refusing bail. The effect is nearly identical to the draconian preventive detention laws that existed during the Emergency, where courts deprived people access to judicial remedy. If we want to prevent the disasters of that era, this decision must be urgently reversed or diluted, otherwise we run the risk of personal liberties being compromised very easily.

The most flagrant abuse of the UAPA, and constant rejection of bail applications of those accused as a means of silencing opposing voices, can be seen in the Bhima Koregaon cases, including Fr. Swamy's case, as well as the cases per-

taining to protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), where mere thought is elevated to a crime. In multiple instances, evidence is untenable, sometimes even arguably planted, and generally weak overall. But as a consequence of UAPA being applied, the accused cannot even get bail. Courts cannot go into the merits of the case due to the Supreme Court judgment.

An issue for the judiciary

When courts do go into such matters, as in the instance of the Delhi High Court granting bail to three young activists accused in a conspiracy relating to the 2020 riots in Delhi, the Supreme Court uncharacteristically decides to weigh in. The Supreme Court reportedly expressed "surprise" and dissatisfaction at the High Court's decision, giving the direction that the decision will "not to be treated as precedent by any court" to give similar reliefs. Specifically, the Supreme Court reportedly said that "in a bail application, a 100-page judgment discussing all laws is surprising us", perhaps forgetting that the case that started it all, i.e., the Watali judgment of the Supreme Court, was itself a judgment in a bail matter! This seems to imply that only the Supreme Court can hold forth on matters of statutory interpretation, and that High Courts – which are constitutional courts in their own right – may not? By extension, if statutes ought not to be examined at all by High Courts, does this mean that individual arrestees must languish in jail till, say, the constitutional validity of the statutes under which they are arrested are decided? Surely, this would be completely irrational.

Posterity will blame the judiciary for the incarceration and unfortunate death of Fr. Swamy, and the continued imprisonment of so many others like him. But voices will continue to rise in protest. As Fr. Swamy himself said, though, "we will still sing in the chorus. A caged bird can still sing."

Ajit Prakash Shah is Former Chief Justice, Delhi High Court and Former Chairperson, Law Commission of India

Agents of change and a new chapter in Israel's politics

After the Netanyahu years, Israel, a divided society, is now looking forward to some domestic stability



KHINRAJ JANGID

Benjamin Netanyahu is out and Israel has got a government without him after 12 years. The new government has cobbled together a very unexpected coalition of eight political parties led by Naftali Bennett (*picture*) who is head of the smallest segment of the coalition. With only six seats of his far-right party, Yamina, Mr. Bennett has surprised all by preventing two things – Netanyahu's hold on power and the fifth national election that most Israelis feared coming their way.

It is Yair Lapid, Israel's new Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister-in-waiting, who is the key architect of the coalition. Mr. Bennett acknowledged him in his first speech in the Knesset (<https://bit.ly/3wmqVcG>) by saying that Mr. Lapid "showed national responsibility, political generosity, and without whom we would not be here today". Under the coalition deal, Mr. Bennett will be the Prime Minister for the first two years, followed by Mr. Lapid for the remaining two. While there are not many who predict that this coalition will last that long, the ve-

ry strange union is still a welcome change in Israeli politics after the four national elections in less than two years. The eight parties do not have any ideological coherence but the single agenda to keep Mr. Netanyahu out of power, in the short run, and to uphold the democratic system based on consensus building, in the long run.

Diverse team

What makes this coalition unique as much as fragile is the fact they fight each other on the most essential matters of politics. Yet, the fight against Mr. Netanyahu has given the Israeli people the most representative government: the coalition has three right-wing parties, two centrist parties, two left-wing parties and one Arab party. Women leaders have done well too, comprising nine Ministers out of the total of 27 Ministers. It is remarkable from the gender point of view as Israel, like most other nation-states, is male-dominated. There is no religious party in the coalition, but Mr. Bennett is a religious individual unlike Mr. Netanyahu; he is also the first kippa (skull cap) wearing Prime Minister of Israel.

The political stalemate is over for the time being, and Mr. Netanyahu is not the 'King Bibi' of Israel after all. He has been outdone by the far-right political leaders who were once his loyal aides; they include Mr. Bennett, Mr. La-



pid and Avigdor Lieberman. What makes the new government unprecedented is the fact that the far-right, in order to fight its mentor Mr. Netanyahu, walked up to the left parties as well as an Arab-Islamist party of Mansour Abbas.

While Israel is a strong and militarily capable state, it is also deeply divided as a society, with too many fundamental frictions among its Jewish population. Therefore, diverse and different ideological groups in this government can help in enabling political stability and inner-social-cohesion. The role of one Arab party in the government is much needed assurance for the otherwise marginalised and stigmatised Israeli Arabs minority.

The challenge ahead is to satisfy each party's core ideological interests but not at the cost of the other so that the fickle unity can last. It demands compromise, reconciliation and acceptance of the other.

Anti-Netanyahu sentiment is pivotal thus far and this will be the glue but a constructive and long-lasting common minimum programme is what the Israeli democracy is striving for after a battered past.

Change of leadership

Mr. Bennett was born and raised by American immigrant parents who moved to Israel from the United States after the 1967 war. He is a former commando of the army's most prestigious commando unit, Sayeret Matkal, the one that Netanyahu used to boast about himself. Mr. Bennett made his way to active politics in the aftermath of the Lebanon war in 2006. Though religious, he is not ultra-orthodox. He is a self-made millionaire who had a greatly successful high-tech career. In short, he is a poster boy for a Start-Up Nation.

As a free-spirited entrepreneur, he has an astonishing ability to take risks and can be called a politically audacious leader. He was Mr. Netanyahu's loyal man for long and served under him as Defence and Education Ministers, and in those years, he demonstrated his far-right inclinations without any qualms such as advocacy for settlements, annexation of major parts of West Bank, Jewish religion and its major role in Israeli society and politics. However, while he struggled to come out of the shadow of Mr. Netanyahu, he transformed himself as flexible and ne-

gotiable politician which was clear when he delivered his first speech and said, "Twice in history, we have lost our national home precisely because the leaders of the generation were not able to sit with one and another and compromise. Each was right, yet with all their being right, they burnt the house down on top of us. I am proud of the ability to sit together with people with very different views than mine." It is going to be intriguing how he conducts himself with the others in the coalition and revisits some of his core ideological beliefs and assumptions.

The world watches

Israeli foreign policy is Prime Minister-driven, so the world awaits to see how the new leader will be outside Israel. He has not given many hints about his foreign policy agenda except that he will work to cement Israel's special relationship with the United States, and that he is also well-prepared to deal with Iran firmly and aggressively like his mentor, Mr. Netanyahu. As far as Hamas is concerned, he is likely to leave that to the Defence Minister as he thinks it is a security issue and not a political question.

Khinraj Jangid is Associate Professor and Director, Jindal Centre for Israel Studies, Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Dilip Kumar

The kohinoor of Indian cinema, Dilip Kumar, has moved to another world. What an actor! What a powerful pair of eyes! He acted through his eyes, excelled in tragic roles, and was rightly given the title, 'Tragedy King'. Dilip Saab stood out, his subtle emotions conveyed through expressions that conveyed it all. Thank you, Dilip Saab, for everything.

BALASUBRAMANIAM PAVANI, Secunderabad

■ Dilip Kumar had an innate flair for tragic and forlorn

roles. His influence on Hindi cinema was so profound that it could be divided as the pre- and post- Dilip Kumar eras. His performances were so complete that there was nothing left unsaid. That he repeatedly produced blockbusters out of pathos, was proof of his immense ability to bring out the different dimensions of tragedy. He was neither one-dimensional nor formulaic. He never overacted and herein lies the core reason for his immense success.

V. LAKSHMANAN, Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

■ He was one of Indian cinema's first superstars, a thespian par excellence, who could deliver sterling performances in varied roles proving beyond the pale of doubt that when it came to histrionics he was indeed a class apart. Dilip Kumar was the last of the golden troika that ruled the roost in Bollywood, the other members being Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand. A magnetic personality with an angelic smile, Dilip Kumar held an entire generation in a thrall for decades.

C.V. ARAVIND, Bengaluru

Words that resonate

"I am not a silent spectator, but part of the game, and ready to pay the price whatever be it," were the words of Father Stan Swamy in an interview before he was arrested by the NIA. They resonate now, loud and clear, in all of us who have long been spectators. We watch until the game is over and then play the blame game. It is a challenge for all of us who are now talking about justice and injustice to take a clear stand on the cause for which Father Stan Swamy died. We need to be the voice for

the voiceless and fight against all elements that suppress the truth and the rights of every Indian citizen.

Dr. JESSE LIONEL, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

■ Fr. Swamy was the bearer of sincere and selfless service towards the emancipation of the less fortunate. It is sheer callousness on the part of those concerned to have not paid heed to his welfare. The spate of letters ('Letters to the Editor', July 7) have made things clear. Where is India heading? MANI NATARAJAN, Chennai

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



Callous again

The return of massive crowds to hill stations is worrisome. Are people in the throes of amnesia? When the Government has failed miserably in the COVID-19 fight by providing hospitals beds, oxygen, medicines and leaving people to fend for themselves, what makes such citizens to drop their guard? Lastly, why are the authorities not coming down heavily on such large gatherings? DEEPAK SINGHAL, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Challenging negative social norms

India touches a demographic milestone this World Population Day, but roadblocks remain



ARGENTINA MATAVEL PICCIN

In these troubled times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Population Day on July 11 brings some positive news – India has entered a demographic sweet spot that will continue for another two to three decades. Half of India's population is under 29 years of age, which means that in this period, a greater proportion of young people will drive India's economic growth and social progress. So, they must not only be healthy, knowledgeable and skilled but must also be provided with the rights and choices to develop to their fullest potential, including, and especially, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The Guttmacher-Lancet Commission (Starrs et al, 2018) in looking at how to improve SRHR in populations formulated a comprehensive definition of SRHR that encompasses a broader range of issues. These include SRHR and issues such as violence, stigma and respect for bodily autonomy, which greatly impact the psychological, emotional and social well-being of individuals.

Developmental goals

India's population growth is now stabilising. The decline in overall fertility notwithstanding, the population will continue to grow because of the effect of 'population momentum'. It is like a Jumbo Jet that has started to descend but will take some distance to stop. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), presently at 2.2 children, will soon reach replacement level (2.1). However, the TFR remains higher than the national average of 2.2 children among women who live in rural areas, have little formal education and are in the lowest income quintile – a majority of them live in the poorer States.

Changing social norms is one of the biggest challenges for India to address the needs of the next generation. For example, India's population stabilisation strategy must be adjusted keeping in mind the rights of women and girls.



Turning the focus on women and improving access to information and services leads to better health outcomes. *FILE PHOTO

men and girls. Women must have a greater say in choosing their family size. Prescriptive or coercive methods, such as one- or two-child norms, have rarely worked well anywhere for long. It goes without saying that for women and girls, the empowerment to make choices leads to better health outcomes, such as knowing how to prevent unintended pregnancy or giving birth with the help of a skilled birth attendant.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed weaknesses in healthcare systems and has led to serious gaps and challenges in the provision of information and services on sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Even before the pandemic, pervasive negative social norms, health system barriers and gender inequality hindered universal access to SRHR as envisioned under the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). On World Population Day this year, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India recognises that even if health systems are understandably strained, the provision of these services cannot wait. Any further delays will curtail the health and well-being of women and girls, the consequences of which can last a lifetime.

In the last two decades, India has

made substantial gains with SRH indicators. Progressive policies for maternal health have resulted in improved rates of institutional delivery and a decline in maternal mortality ratio (MMR) from 327 in 1999-2001 to 113 per 100,000 live births in 2016-18, as per Sample Registration System (SRS) data.

There have also been significant shifts in family planning in the past decade, and data from the National Health Family Survey 5 for the year 2019-20 (NFHS-5) show how contraceptive prevalence has improved in most States. We ought to celebrate India's success, as it significantly contributes to global progress.

The current government, with programmes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), has made some efforts to challenge existing social norms and has underlined that investments in social causes must go alongside economic progress. All sections of society must embrace this call for positive change, each doing their part, from the individual to the institution level. The UNFPA is keen to take India's success models and strengthen the South-South Collaboration further.

Poor indicators

But success is hard-earned and never assured. There are many challenges

on the path to 2030, the goalpost for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Two million adolescent girls (15-19 years) each year had a pregnancy, and of these, nearly 63% were unwanted or unintended (Guttmacher Institute, 2021). This points to inadequate information and access to SRH services for this age group. In girls aged 15-19 years, 22.2% had an unmet need for contraception, according to NFHS-4.

Girls are still marrying too young – 26.8% of women aged 20-24 years are married before they turn 18, often having their first child within the first year of marriage. Far too many girls and women face gender-based violence and harmful practices that are socially sanctioned. All of these practices are rooted in social norms, beliefs and practices that deny women their bodily autonomy.

India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia in The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report (2021). Time to achieve the ambitious targets of the SDGs is running out. India must hence choose its priorities carefully. Our analysis seems to suggest that placing youth, women and girls at the centre of policymaking and services could trigger a positive ripple effect. If young people, and adolescent girls in particular, have access to education, relevant skills, information and services to make healthy choices, including related to SRH, are empowered to exercise their rights, and have access to opportunities for employment, then India will be on a clear path to achieve its goals.

What research and practical experience show is that when women can make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health, and when they have access to services to support their choices, societies are healthier and more productive. A woman who has control over her body gains not only in terms of autonomy but also through advances in health, education, income and safety. She is more likely to thrive, and so is her family. The UNFPA calls upon stakeholders to help build a new set of social norms to drive this mission.

The author is Representative, UNFPA India and Country Director, UNFPA Bhutan

Haryana's misplaced priorities

The State's poor record on the NITI Aayog's SDG index points to deep flaws and lax governance



DEEPENDER SINGH HOODA

Haryana's performance towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is disappointing. The NITI Aayog's latest report on SDGs has put Haryana among the top three States in terms of unemployment and crime, with a dismal show in the fields of health and education and in industrial and economic growth as well. The results are the outcome of the current dispensation's misplaced priorities. The report ranks Haryana 14th among all States with 67 composite points, just a notch above Tripura. Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, its neighbouring States, have done pretty well.

However, Haryana could have done much better as the Congress government led by former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda had handed over a robust State to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014. As per the NITI Aayog report, at 11.16%, there is no change since 2019 in the number of people living below the poverty line (BPL) in the State. Clearly, the government has failed to lift people from the vicious circle of poverty. Similarly, there is no change in the proportion of the children below five who continue to be underweight (28.80%) and stunted (34.90%). As many as 55% of pregnant women in the age group of 15-49 years continue to be anaemic. Crimes against women were 88.7 per one lakh female population in 2019, which went up to 108.5 in 2020. The State reported 3.90 murders per one lakh population in 2020 as compared to 3.74 in 2019.

Instead of living in an ivory tower, the government must focus on adding resilience to education, which has suffered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the claims around 'Digital Haryana', the State failed to ensure seamless online classes for all students. The current State government had also promised to build a medical college in every district.

Before 2005, there were only eight universities in the State, but the number went up to 43 during the Congress tenure from 2005 to 2014. Many technical education institutes, ITIs and new government colleges were opened during the Congress regime, but in the past seven years, only two universities have been set up.

Bigger challenges such as improving gross enrolment ratio, checking dropouts, addressing poor student-teacher ratio and in-

roducing enabling interventions for providing skill training in schools and colleges have taken a backseat. The government has not been able to implement a zero vacancy policy, due to which a large number of teaching posts are vacant. In schools, 31,232 posts of teachers were lying vacant as of last year.

Compromised education has a direct relation to employability. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (2018-19) data pegged Haryana's unemployment rate at 9.2%, which was significantly higher than the all-India figure of 5.8%. In February, data from the Centre For Monitoring Indian Economy revealed a 26.4% unemployment rate, the highest among States; in 2012-13, the Department of Economics and Statistical Analysis had put the unemployment rate in Haryana at just 3%. But instead of providing jobs, the current regime's focus is on ill-thought steps like providing reservation in private jobs.

Worsening numbers

Similarly, Haryana has failed to enhance the quality of health infrastructure. It was the first State in the country to give free medicines to OPD patients in government hospitals. Free referral transport service for expecting mothers for delivery, patients of BPL families, accident victims and freedom fighters, had attracted the attention of other States. The Congress had laid significant emphasis on the health sector. One State health university and four medical colleges were set up at Karnal, Faridabad, and Nuh in Mewat, including one for women in the rural area of Sonapat district. Also, AIIMS-II and the National Cancer Institute were set up at Badshah village in Jhajjar district.

The State's financial health, which is worsening due to mounting debt, huge funds deployed on various boards and corporations, and interest payments on borrowings, is also disturbing. Infrastructural development has come to a standstill – in the last seven years, not even a single new metro station was added, while during 2005-2014, four towns were linked to metro services through new lines. The fiscal situation is equally concerning. As per the Budget Estimate for 2021-22, the debt liability of the State is likely to go up to ₹2.30 lakh crore as of March 2022. It was ₹70,369 crore in 2013-14.

Haryana is suffering on all counts due to the misplaced priorities of the current government. The State used to be one of the top performers in areas like per capita income, investment and agricultural productivity, but it has now slipped to the 14th position on the SDG index. The indicators suggest that governance has gone for a toss.

The author is a Rajya Sabha MP from the Congress

A long road for migrant workers

The guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court are welcome, but they require robust systems

AAGAM JAIN

The Supreme Court on June 29 pronounced its judgment in the migrant labourers case. The case was initiated last year after the national lockdown was announced on March 24. Thousands of landless labourers had started walking towards their home States due to the loss of employment and income. The Supreme Court took cognisance of the matter on May 26 that year and acknowledged the plight of the workers in light of the strict lockdown.

The court has laid down numerous guidelines to provide relief to workers and efficiently tackle the problem till the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Two of the most important components to protect the migrants during this time were the food and travel arrangements insisted on by the court. In the orders pronounced in May this year, it laid down that dry ration be provided to migrants who want to return to their homes. Further, the court said that identity proof should not be insisted upon by the governments since the labourers might not be able to furnish it. Secondly, the court called upon the State governments to arrange transportation for workers who need to return to their homes. These guidelines by the court are crucial to ensure the safety of workers.

The Supreme Court fixed July 31 as the deadline for the States to implement the 'One nation One Ration Card' scheme. Under this scheme, the States are to complete the registration of migrant workers in order to provide dry ration to them. But it is unlikely that a standardised system can be developed within the deadline prescribed by the court.

Apart from dry ration, the top court also directed the State governments to run community kitchens for migrant workers. However, there arise administrative problems in implementing these measures. First, migrant workers keep moving in search

of employment and it is difficult to cover them all under the scheme. Second, many States do not have the necessary infrastructure to run and maintain community kitchens on such a large scale.

Important directives

Under the National Food Security Act, migrant workers are issued ration cards and they are entitled to dry ration under various government programmes, such as the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme, during the pandemic. In the order passed on June 29, the court affirmed the Right to Food under Article 21 of the Constitution. In furtherance of this, the court asked the States to formulate their own schemes and issue food grains to migrants. This is an indispensable step to keep more than a fourth of the population of the country safe and healthy during the pandemic.

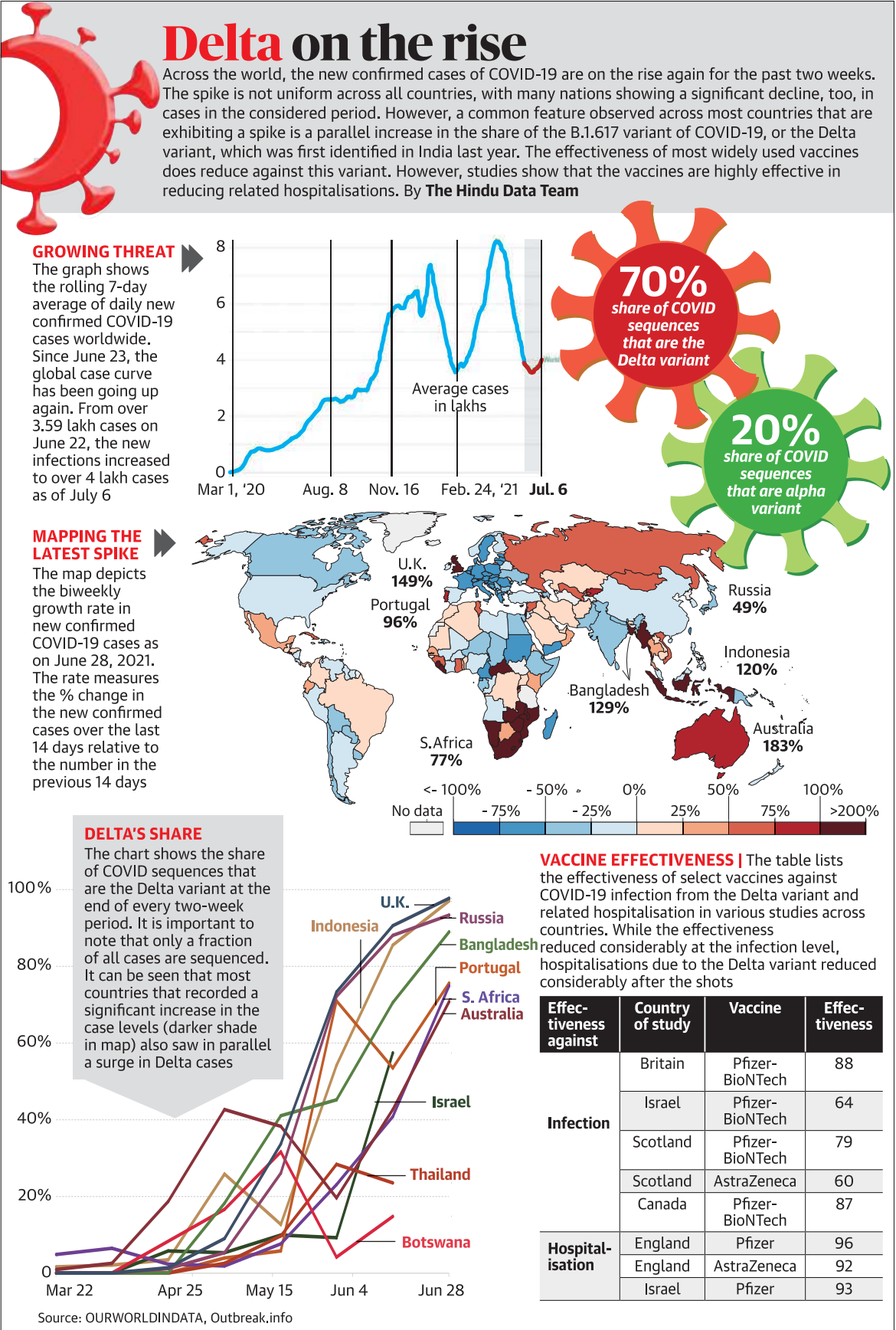
However, there are no normative data that would allow the States to identify eligible migrants. The court took cognisance of the issue and directed the Ministry of Labour and Employment to ensure that the National Database for Unorganised Workers is updated by July 31.

Finally, the top court recognised the need for direct cash benefit transfer to workers in the unorganised sector. But it did not issue any guidelines for the same as the workers need to be covered by the States themselves.

The Supreme Court has given a purposive declaration in the case but the bulk of the judgment seems declaratory rather than mandatory. In order to efficaciously implement the orders of the court, the State governments need to work with the Centre closely. With the third wave of COVID-19 infections looming, it is imperative to ensure that government machinery works to its full potential and robust systems are developed to withstand the challenges.

Aagam Jain is a 11-year student at National Law School of India University, Bengaluru

DATA POINT



The Hindu FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 8, 1971

Kissinger, Indira hold discussions

[NEW DELHI, JULY 7] A major outcome of discussions, which Dr. Henry Kissinger, President Nixon's Adviser on National Security Affairs, had to-day with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was stated to be a clear recognition by the visiting diplomat that a "political solution" was necessary to solve the Bangla Desh problem and to ensure the return of refugees to East Pakistan.

Dr. Kissinger did not spell out the ideas of the U.S. administration but he gave enough indication during the talks with the Prime Minister that the plan of President Yahya Khan for breaking the present constitutional and political deadlock in East Pakistan would not serve the purpose.

The Prime Minister had 15-minute discussions with Dr. Kissinger before the advisers on both sides joined the talks.

Earlier, Dr. Kissinger had held talks with Mr. Swaran Singh, External Affairs Minister, on the Bangla Desh situation for nearly two hours ... After analysing the Bangla Desh problem in depth, the Prime Minister was stated to have emphasised that there was no question of the refugees being turned back to their country to be butchered by the Pakistan Army which had received reinforcements from the U.S.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 8, 1921

Indian women's right to property

Mrs. Kamala Bai writes :-

Under the auspices of several ladies' associations, an influential gathering of Indian ladies was held at Baroda to support Mr. T.V. Seshagiri Iyer's Bill for the right of property to Indian women, which is to be brought up at the next session of the Assembly. Shrimati Sarada Gowri Mehtu presided. Shrimati Deepakba, Venu Da Ben, Sreemati Suraj Ben and Mrs. Kashi Bai Herelekar were the principal speakers. About three hundred Gujarathi and Marathi-speaking ladies were present. As a result a resolution was passed unanimously supporting Mr. T.V. Seshagiri Iyer's Bill and the association placed on its record its thanks to him for his efforts for the emancipation of women. It is requested that ladies in all parts of the Presidency and elsewhere should convene meetings to support Mr. Seshagiri Iyer's Bill and give due information to Mr. Seshagiri Iyer, as well as the Government and the Press, so that they may know that he has the support of all women in India behind him.

FROM PAGE ONE

Cabinet reshuffle attempts inclusion

“The spread of the Council of Ministers has been to reflect not just marginalised sections of society but also marginalised regions like the northeast with a Minister each from Tripura [Pratima Bhowmick] and Manipur [Rajkumar Ranjan Singh], a Cabinet Minister [Virendra Kumar] from Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh, et al,” said a government source. Women emerged as a significant vote bank for the BJP in the general elections and in the Bihar Assembly poll, and therefore form a sizeable presence in the government.

This sense of inclusion is tinged with the need to beef up the governance deficit that emerged especially during the second wave of the pandemic. Former Chief Ministers Mr. Sonowal and Narayan Ran, have been made Cabinet Ministers and those with experience in State governments like Purushottam Rupala and long-term MPs like Virender Singh, a six-term MP, have been included. Former bureaucrat and Odisha MP Ashwini Vaishnaw was included as a Cabinet Minister and gets the Railway portfolio.

The current government has 13 lawyers, six doctors, five engineers, seven civil servants, seven Ph.D.s and three MBAs along with 68

Ministers with graduate degrees.

Like all reshuffles, this one too made a significant nod to the States going to polls next year, with Uttar Pradesh getting seven ministerial berths, taking its tally in the Council of Ministers to 14. Uttarakhand saw the inclusion of Ajay Bhatt; for Punjab, the elevation of Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri was a nod to Sikh sentiments; and Manipur got Rajkumar Ranjan Singh in a Minister of State berth.

Gujarat, which goes to polls a little later in 2022, got two Cabinet berths with Mr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Mr. Purushottam Rupala's elevation, and a Minister of State berth for Darshana Jardosh, MP from Surat.

With the inclusion of four Ministers – Nishith Pramanik, John Barla, Subhash Sarkar and Shantanu Thakur, Mr. Modi established that West Bengal would continue to be important as a political project for the BJP.

The inclusion of Maratha strongman Mr. Rane proved the same for Maharashtra, with the portends of a peaceful relationship between the Centre and the Maha Vikas Aghadi-led Maharashtra government not very sunny.

The reshuffle was the result of a massive stock taking exercise undertaken by the Prime Minister for over a month.

P.R. Kumaramangalam's wife murdered at home

Ms. Mithila told the police that Raju came to the house as usual around 8.30 p.m. to pick up the laundry. She said as soon as she turned after opening the door, he overpowered her and dragged her into a room.

Meanwhile, two others, later identified as Raju's friends Rakesh and Suraj, entered the house. They allegedly smothered Ms. Kitty with a pillow. “The articles and cash that are missing are yet to be ascertained. At least three bags are missing and a few briefcases were open at the spot,” the officer said.

After the accused left, Ms. Mithila managed to free herself and call her brother-in-law. Sources said she would also be examined.

Mr. Singh said a team went to Raju's residence in Bhanwar Singh Camp, from where he was arrested. He reportedly told the police that he was familiar with the house because he was a regular there and he told this to Rakesh and Suraj.

He said he had known Rakesh for a year and Suraj for eight years. “A bag was recovered on Raju's instance, but it had nothing but clothes. It appears that the other two planned to fool him,” Mr. Singh said.

On Wednesday afternoon, Rakesh was also arrested. Ms. Kitty is survived by her son Rangarajan Mohan Kumaramangalam, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee working president, and daughter Ruchira. Mr. Rangarajan Mohan Kumaramangalam noted with pain that his mother died on his birthday. “The most independent and powerful woman I knew, the one who taught me right from wrong, who raised me to be who I am, who suffered through my pain, laughed loudest for my joy, loved me unconditionally, left this realm on the date she gave birth to me,” he tweeted.

Judge recuses from Mamata's election case

In a strongly worded order, Justice Chanda said the petitioner had approached the Hon'ble Chief Justice (Acting) on the administrative side on June 16, 2021 by way of writing the letter for reassignment of the case. “The election petition was first taken up for hearing on June 18, 2021, before this Bench, and quite surprisingly, nothing regarding recusal was revealed. No clue was given to me as to the fact that the petitioner had already approached the Hon'ble Acting Chief Justice for reassignment of the petition,” the Judge said.

In the 13-page order, Justice Chanda referred to tweets by leaders of the State's ruling party, and as well as statements in public, and said that a “deliberate and conscious attempt was made to influence my decision before the recusal application was placed before me for judicial consideration on June 24, 2021”.

While recusing himself from hearing the case, Justice Chanda said he had “no personal inclination to hear out the case of the petitioner. I had no hesitation in tak-



Justice Kaushik Chanda

ing up the case, either”. “I have, however, decided to recuse myself from this case for a different reason.”

The Judge also stated, “Since the two persons involved in this case belong to the highest echelon of the State politics, in the name of saving the judiciary, some opportunists have already emerged. These troublemongers will try to keep the controversy alive and create newer controversies. It would be contrary to the interest of justice if such unwarranted squabble continues along with the trial of the case, and such attempts should be thwarted at the threshold.”

4 States alerted on virus surge

Step up testing, Centre directs Odisha, Assam, Tripura & Sikkim

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has sent letters to Odisha, Assam, Tripura and Sikkim, pointing to a rise in COVID-19 cases despite a decline in the national curve. It directed them to take steps such as improving containment measures and ramping up testing, vaccination and emphasising pandemic-appropriate behaviour.

The letter, signed by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, to the State Chief Secretaries is common in format except for the details on the case loads. In Odisha, five districts (Baleswar, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Khorda) had shown an increase in cases over the previous week. The Odisha case fatality ratio was less than 0.46%, but there was an increase in deaths over the past two weeks. Three districts had reported a test positivity rate above 10%.

NCBS lab retracts paper after data fraud

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

A research paper by scientists at the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), among India's top research institutes and part of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, announcing a breakthrough in the field of chemical biology, and published in the prestigious *Nature Chemical Biology* (NCB), has been retracted as its key findings were manipulated.

On October 5, 2020, the paper “Discovery of iron-sensing bacterial riboswitches” was published online in the *NCB*. The publication was announced in an NCBS



Worrying trend: People crowding a market in Bhubaneswar. In Odisha, five districts saw a rise in cases. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

In Tripura, there was a 11% increase in the number of weekly new cases, with 2,814 cases reported during June 28-July 4. All eight districts reported more than 100 new cases over the previous week. Four out of eight districts had reported a test positivity rate above 10%.

25% jump in Sikkim
Sikkim had a weekly positivity rate of 18.7% and was consistently over 15% during the last four weeks. There was a 25% increase in the weekly new cases over the previous week. In Assam, four out of

33 districts were showing an increase in the weekly new cases and 29 out of 33 districts had reported over 100 new cases. Two out of 33 districts had shown a positivity rate of over 10%.

On Tuesday, Balram Bhargava, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said at a press conference that 73 districts were clocking over 10% positivity and that this was a cause of worry. “We have to be careful, responsible and cautious – the second wave is still on in some parts of this large country,” he said.

opened the possibility of designing RNA-based sensors.

Though it had ostensibly passed the process of peer review, within weeks of the discovery being made public, independent commentators said images included with the article, that provided critical proof of the discovery, appeared manipulated. In response, Ms. Ramesh uploaded original images and denied manipulation. Other commentators pointed out several more discrepancies in the original files.

Inquiry held
Ms. Ramesh meanwhile informed NCBS Director Satyajit Mayor of these comments.

Give details on information panel, says SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Central government to place on record the latest information on the appointment of Information Commissioners, vacancies and pendency of cases in the Central Information Commission (CIC), the apex adjudicatory body for disputes under the Right to Information Act.

A Bench of Justices S. Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari directed the government amidst submissions by advocate Prashant Bhushan, for activist Anjali Bhardwaj that “party acolytes” and bureaucrats had been appointed to the CIC in an opaque manner despite a direction from the court in 2019 that the appointment process should be transparent. “Pendency of the cases in the CIC has grown to 36,000. The RTI Act is being destroyed,” Mr. Bhushan said.

Impose curbs if needed, says Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Home Secretary Ajay Bhalra on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the COVID-19 situation in all the northeast States and Union Territories.

The status and trends on active cases, case fatality rate, case positivity rate (CPR) and vaccination status were discussed. “It was noted that of the 73 districts in the country with CPR above 10%, 46 districts are in northeast States, where strict containment measures need to be taken,” said a government release.

The northeast States and Union Territories were advised to strictly monitor the situation at district/city level. They could consider imposing restrictions in a calibrated manner in districts with high case positivity and higher bed occupancy.

He set up a departmental inquiry that found that the images had most certainly been manipulated “by a single individual”.

The NCBS hasn't named the individual responsible, but Mr. Mayor told *The Hindu* that the person was no longer with the institute.

The journal formally retracted the paper on June 30 but it was only on Wednesday, the NCBS issued a press statement on the retraction.

“As the corresponding author, I must bear responsibility and am deeply shocked and saddened that such scientific misconduct could happen under my watch,” Ms. Ramesh said.

Indemnity issues hold up U.S. vaccine donation

Clause is still under discussion: official

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

More than a month after the U.S. announced the donation of 80 million doses of American-made COVID-19 vaccines to dozens of countries including India, and Vice-President Kamala Harris called Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convey the decision, the vaccines are being held up by regulatory issues over indemnity, Indian and U.S. officials confirmed.

According to the officials, the demand by the U.S. companies, including Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson, to be granted an indemnity or waiver of liability has yet to be resolved, which is also holding up the donations from the U.S. Since June 3, the U.S. has already distributed 40 million doses to about 12 countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Legal provisions

“The delay is not from the U.S. side,” an American Embassy spokesperson said to queries about the fact that the shipments are yet to be announced. “India has determined that it needs further time to review legal provisions related to accepting vaccine donations. Once India works through its legal process, our donation will proceed expeditiously.”

The MEA declined to comment on the issue, directing queries to the Ministry of Health. Health Secretary Bharat Bhushan told *The Hindu* that the “specific provisions of indemnification are still under discussion”, indicating that not only are the U.S. vaccine donations on hold for the moment, but casting a cloud over the delivery of Moderna vaccines, which have already received Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) in India, of which the first con-



The U.S. has distributed 40 million doses to 12 nations.

signment was due to arrive this week.

During his visit to the U.S. in May, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had met pharma company executives and U.S. business chambers who had conveyed concerns about India's request for them to provide vaccines without receiving indemnity in case of side effects. The indemnity would be used as a legal defence to protect the U.S. firms, which have pointed out that they cannot take responsibility for cold-chain lapses and transportation problems within India.

“Yes, liability issues remain unresolved,” confirmed one official involved in the negotiations, adding that the ‘dilemma’ on the Indian side is that if the U.S. companies are given indemnities, all vaccine makers, including Serum Institute, Bharat Biotech and Sputnik, would also demand them.

Last month, the U.S. announced the distribution of 80 million doses as part of its “COVID-19 Global Response and Recovery Framework”. Indian officials had estimated that India's share would total not more than a mere 2 million doses, less than half of its daily disbursement of vaccines, but said the donation was important as it made more types of vaccines available to Indians.

(With inputs from Bindu Shajan Perappadan)

IN BRIEF



NIA appeals against Akhil Gogoi's release

GUWAHATI
The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has approached the Gauhati High Court challenging the July 1 order of the NIA special court that cleared activist-MLA Akhil Gogoi of all charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act. He was in jail for over a year from December 2019.

'Summons to PDP chief's mother a coercive tactic'

SRINAGAR
The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, an amalgam of five J&K parties, on Wednesday condemned the Enforcement Directorate (ED) move to summon PDP president Mehbooba Mufti's mother in an alleged money laundering case. “There are not enough words to condemn such coercive acts,” Gupkar alliance spokesman M.Y. Tarigami said.

HC slams Juhi Chawla for not depositing penalty

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday expressed shock over the conduct of Bollywood actor Juhi Chawla and two others of “not willing to gracefully deposit” a penalty of ₹20 lakh imposed on them for filing a ‘frivolous’ plea against the roll-out of 5G technology in India. Justice J.R. Midha granted them a week to deposit the penalty.

Court rejects appeal by Sushant's father

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to stop further circulation of a film purportedly based on the life of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput that was released on a website on June 20. A Bench rejected Mr. Rajput's father's plea against releasing the film *Nyaay: The Justice* on OTT platforms. The HC will hear the case on July 14.



Mughal-E-Azam (1960)



Naya Daur (1957)



Ram Aur Shyam (1967)



Devdas (1955)



Gunga Jumna (1961)



Azaad (1955)

Method actor with an understated elegance

The right blend of star and actor, Dilip Kumar set a template for many generations to come

ANUJ KUMAR
NEW DELHI

When Marlon Brando was struggling to find a footing in Hollywood, a shy Pathan boy from Peshawar was practising method acting in what was then the Bombay film industry, helping it come out of the Parsi theatre's influence. As Dilip Kumar transcends to a new stage, the pole star of the golden age of Hindi cinema would be remembered for setting a template of acting for generations to come.

A veritable cultural icon who inspired economist Meghnad Desai to draw parallels between his films and the newly independent India's tryst with socialism and capitalism in his seminal work, *Nehru's Hero: Dilip Kumar in the Life of India*, there is a bit of Dilip Kumar in everyone's life.

Discovered and later renamed by Devika Rani of the famed Bombay Talkies, Dilip Kumar, along with Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand, were part of the discovery of cinema in India as a means of mass communication as we see it today. They had had

few examples to follow and perhaps it worked to their advantage as each one carved out his own niche.

Naturalistic style

Out of the three, Dilip Kumar's naturalistic style never became stale or dated. The right blend of star and actor who could keep both the public and the purist engaged with his craft, he kept his performances subtle, understated but always believable.

Not just his younger contemporaries like Rajendra Kumar, Manoj Kumar and Dharmendra, generations of dependable actors, from Amitabh Bachchan to Shah Rukh Khan and Aamir Khan to Irrfan, built edifices of their performances on the foundation laid by Dilip Kumar. Mr. Bachchan, who played Dilip Kumar's son in *Shakti*, once said there was such finality to Dilip *sahib's* performances that once he enacted a scene, there was no alternative to it.

Irrfan once told this journalist that he often wondered when trained actors like him found it difficult to deal with scars left by tragic

roles, how Dilip Kumar, who learnt the craft on his own, came to terms with it. Well, he did approach doctors in London, who advised him to consider lighter roles.

Film historians often label the thespian as the tragedy king for his moving portrayal of a loner who loses everything in love in a series of films such as *Jugnu*, *Dee-*

I start identifying with the character. Often directors leave it to me to interpret the character

DILIP KUMAR IN A BBC INTERVIEW

dar and *Devdas*, but the eight-time Filmfare Award winner was equally compelling as a winsome romantic in *Shabnam*, *Azaad* and *Kohinoor*. Not to forget his intense performances as a revolutionary in *Shaheed* and a trade union leader in *Paigham*.

Be it the lawyer who rapes a village girl in Mehboob Khan's *Amar*, the journalist who becomes black-marketeer in Zia Sarhady's *Footpath*, the atheist in love with

a mendicant in Kidar Sharma's *Jogan* or the wheelchair bound Raja Sahib in *Aadmi*, a role earlier essayed by Sivaji Ganesan, the Padma Vibhushan awardee constantly lunged for complex characters where he was expected to evoke multiple emotions in a single frame.

He experimented not just with characters but also directorial styles. Both *Amar* and *Footpath* deal with moral guilt but while Mehboob Khan visualised a mass entertainer, Zia's treatment was neorealist. With Tapan Sinha's *Sagina Mahto*, he ventured into parallel cinema and earned praise from his contemporaries.

At the time of *Mughal-e-Azam*, he was the top draw, but the narrative demanded Kumar to play second fiddle to Prithviraj Kapoor, a senior and a friend of his father. He delivered a restrained performance, a subtle counterpoint to the bombastic Kapoor that is etched in the minds of cinegoers.

Home production

The one that stands out and inspired many adaptations is

the dacoit in *Gunga Jumna*, his ambitious home production where the sophisticated Kumar transformed into an Awadhi-speaking rustic who is forced to pick up the gun. It is this constant urge for variety and chiselling of the craft that the megastar, despite the world at his feet, chose to do only around 60 films spanning over almost five decades.

He refused Guru Dutt's *Pyasa* for he found the character similar to Devdas. He said no to David Lean for *Lawrence of Arabia* as he was not keen to commit the amount of time that the director was asking from him.

In a BBC interview, he once said that when the director came to him with a 30-year-old character, he tried to find and build the first 29 years of his life from the script so that, "I start identifying with the character. Often directors leave it to me to interpret the character."

Known to help out his colleagues in finding a rhythm that suited the narrative, the actor is said to have ghost-di-

rected many films such as *Gunga Jumna*, *Ram Aur Shyam* and *Aadmi*.

He took the preparation for a character to a different level. For "Madhuban Mein Radhika Nache Re" from *Kohinoor*, where he played sitar on screen, he trained with sitarist Ustad Halim Jafar Khan for six months. It is said while filming for *Dil Dya Dard Liya*, he ran four rounds of the studio because in the next sequence he was supposed to snatch a rifle from Pran, playing the villain, in a state of breathlessness.

Even in his second innings, when his mannerisms became marked, he impressed with power-packed performances in *Shakti*, *Mashaal* and *Karma*.

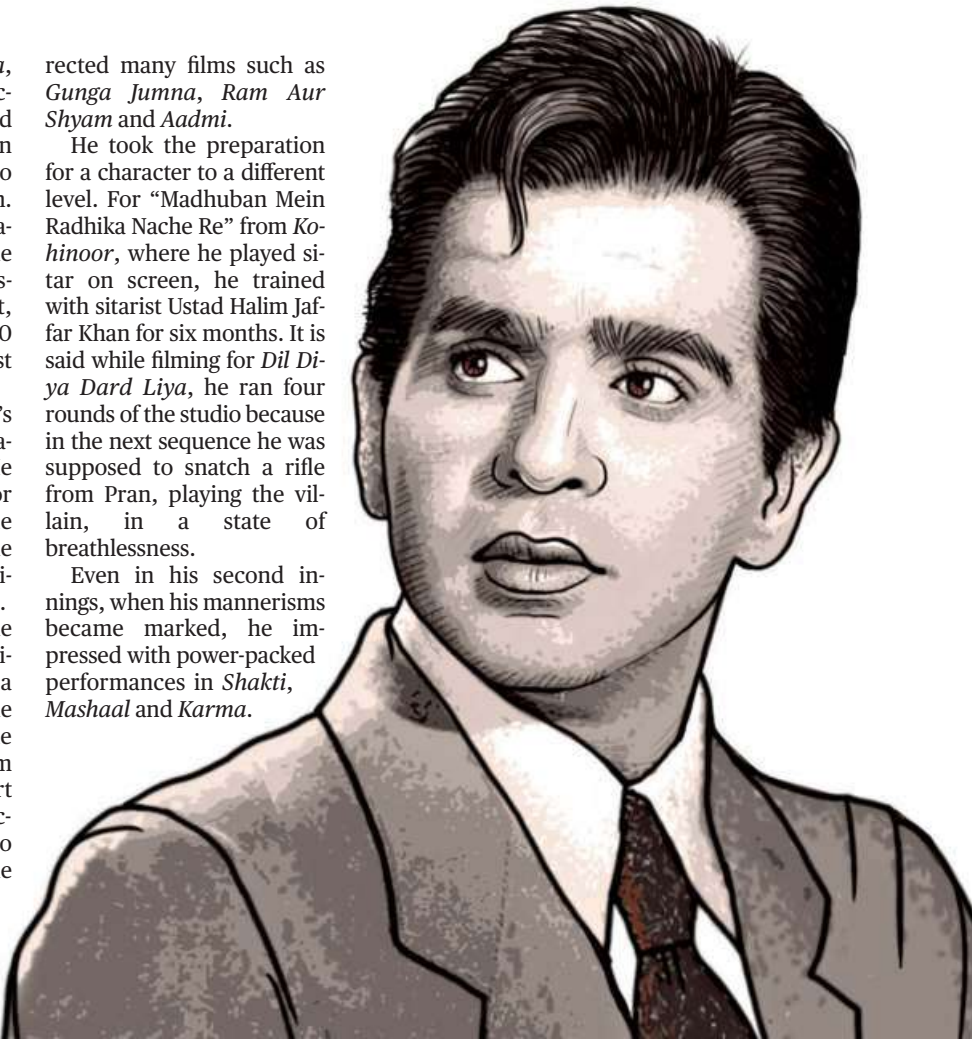


ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

A philanthropist who always stepped up

The thespian was among the earliest Indian actors to lend his star status to a cause

RAKSHANDA JALIL

As tributes tumble out at the passing of Dilip Kumar – with Amitabh Bachchan going so far as to declare that when the history of Indian cinema will be written, it shall always be "before Dilip Kumar and after Dilip Kumar" – we shall leave it to the film critics and the serious student of Hindi cinema to assess his impact on the Hindi film industry. For now, let us see him as the man who always chose to step up and speak up. When the moment came to speak truth to power, there was a superstar who chose not to be content with his superstardom but to put it good use, as and when required.

TRIBUTE

Born as Mohammad Yusuf Khan in Peshawar in 1922 in the home of a fruit merchant, he went on to enjoy a career in the movies spanning five decades, blessed with a longevity enjoyed by few of his

contemporaries.

Not content with mere stardom, Dilip *sahib* was possibly among the earliest Indian actors to lend his star status to a variety of causes – an early patron of the National Association for the Blind (NAB) who never missed its annual fund-raising train run, he chose to lend his name and face to charitable institutions such as this and the Ali Yavar Jung Institute of Speech and Hearing in Bandra rather than modelling for commercial gain. The film lyricist and director Gulzar remembers Dilip organising donation drives and rallies during the Indo-China war that began at Mumbai's Shivaji Park, where their way through Crawford Market and the gullies of Bhendi Bazaar, where money would be literally showered at them from rooftops, before ending at Azad Maidan. All through the late 1950s and 1960s, Dilip Kumar, along with Sunil Dutt, also visited troops stationed at border postings for



Dilip Kumar before taking oath as Rajya Sabha MP on April 20, 2000.

morale-boosting interactions with jawans.

Gulzar also recalls Dilip Kumar stepping up for similar interactions for the benefit of the film industry, lending his moral gravitas and serving as a bridge between actors and producers-directors. At a seminal meeting of the Indian Motion Picture Association held at Dilip Kumar's home, several landmark decisions were taken to break the impasse that gridlocked the industry: actors, it was decided, would not take on more than three films (on the floors) at a time, and the directors-producers, on

their part, would prune the shift timings to more humane hours.

Appointed Sheriff of Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1980, he worked for the improvement of the city's infrastructure, giving it the iconic Joggers Park, where he himself went for his early morning walks in later years.

As a Member of Parliament from the Rajya Sabha, he ploughed the MPLAD (Members of Parliament Local Area Development) fund into improving the Bandstand Promenade and the Bandra Fort area.

However, it was the Bombay riots of 1992 that saw Dilip Kumar truly come into his own: turning his home into a command centre for relief work, rescuing those trapped in burning shanty towns, arranging police protection for the most vulnerable and organising food supplies for those who were going hungry for days as communal riots ravaged Bombay. He later mobilised

money and legal aid for those who were unfairly detained under the draconian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act. Of course he paid a price for this. When Pakistan honored him with its highest civilian award, the Nishan-i Imtiaz in 1998, it was met with outrage in a cross-section of society, with not merely threats and abuses directed against the thespian, but regurgitation of the old "Pakistani spy" gossip by his old nemesis, the Shiv Seva.

Javed Akhtar puts it best when he says that there is a virtue that has become obsolete and that is dignity – Dilip Kumar was a personification of that virtue. "*Eik tehzeeb thii jo kho gayii hai*," he says, ruining a lost culture. "To be cool, happening and contemporary are on the borderline of rudeness. Decency, reserve, measure, these have become un-cool and obsolete."

(Rakshanda Jalil is a Delhi-based writer, translator and literary historian)

Summer of 1978: when the hero saw his epic

Dilip Kumar watched *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) at FTII, Pune

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The passing away of Bollywood film legend Dilip Kumar has opened a floodgate of reminiscences – both cinematic memories and private recollections – by people cutting across social, economic, political and national barriers.

However, few would know that it was in the main theatre of Pune's Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) that Dilip Kumar finally watched one of his defining classics, K. Asif's spell-binding *Mughal-e-Azam* for the first time in his life – a full 18 years after the film was released.

As the story goes, in the summer of 1978, the legendary actor wanted to see 15 classics during a sojourn in the city. "It was the great P.K. Nair, the country's pre-eminent archivist and scho-

lar and the driving force behind the National Film Archive of India (NFAI), who had arranged the screening of the films at the FTII main theatre. All films were chosen by his actress wife Saira Bano," says current FTII Director Bhupendra Kainthola.

Dilip Kumar saw a film a day at the main theatre and Saira Bano was by his side when he finally watched *Mughal-e-Azam* – which he had reportedly never seen since it took the country by storm in 1960. The incident bears an astonishing similarity with the experience of another legendary actor – Peter O'Toole, who reportedly viewed his greatest cinematic role, that of T.E. Lawrence in David Lean's immortal *Lawrence of Arabia*, almost two decades after that film's initial release in 1962.

In another visit to the FTII, the actor was chief guest at a convocation ceremony in December 1997. Also present were Mohan Agashe, then Director of the institute, and filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, who was then FTII Chairman.

Despite the occasion being somewhat marred by students who chose to air some of their complaints publicly, Dr. Agashe recalls how Dilip *sahab's* magnificent dignity humbled all those present. "I had organised the convocation which was interrupted by students voicing their complaints. Mahesh Bhatt was very upset. But Dilip Kumar shone through it all with his tremendous and awesome dignity. He told the protesting students that the FTII was a temple and that they ought not to wash their dirty linen in public," Dr. Agashe said.

THCROSSWORD+13294

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SCAN TO PLAY

1		2		3		4		5	6		7		8
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- 15 What thespian did when cadet danced? (5)

17 One more time India is after former chief (4,5)

19 Hound fear complex is little known (7,2)

20 First educated and registered nurse serves and makes money (5)

21 Yearn for a piece of furniture without Charlie's tresses (4,4)

23 Prohibit King, Queen and financier (6)

27 Kerry Owen is playing for American city dweller (3,6)

28 Roman year mentioned in Roman numerals (5)

29 Move through displayed screen to Supreme Court's list of names (6)

30 Type of output to expect from a money plant or a mint? (8)
- DOWN

1 Volley of shots fired in honour of a member of the Salvation Army in Australia (5)

2 The French suture around beginning of duodenum in eleventh hour (4,5)

3 Where a baffled person might be when sailing? (2,3)

4 Carve inside Somerset Church (4)

6 Pagan hero constructed an institution for children without parents (9)

7 Process natural gas compound without sugar in South African region (5)

8 Yes, rook takes fishes between twelve and twenty four months old (9)

9 Sticker if used inside city limits: "Reduce presence of calcium" (9)

14 Gangster bats an eyelid and cheats (9)

15 A question following which criminal damages guns and underwater breathing equipments (9)

16 Casualty count for estate tax? (5,4)

18 Build a finer ark for a descendant of a Dutch settler (9)

22 Later version you get when you upgrade and renew production (5)

24 Embarrass a graduate with a short request for silence (5)

25 Chart once again with average returns around opening of equity markets (5)

26 This is expressed in square units; even for circles (4)

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13293

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F	I	L	M	S	T	A	R	O	C
A	I		S	P	D				
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T	A	I							
O	B	L	I						
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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	9	3	8	1	5	2	7	6
5	1	6	2	9	7	4	3	8
2	7	8	4	6	3	9	5	1
7	6	4	5	2	8	3	1	9
3	5	1	7	4	9	8	6	2
8	2	9	6	3	1	7	4	5
6	3	7	9	5	2	1	8	4
1	4	2	3	8	6	5	9	7
9	8	5	1	7	4	6	2	3

FAITH

Ashtavakra, great scholar

Prakarana granthas are texts written by preceptors and gurus to introduce beginners to Vedanta study and to clarify Vedanta knowledge to those already familiar with it. For instance, Adi Sankara's Viveka Chudamani, Satasloki, come under this category. Likewise Ashtavakra Samhita, known as Ashtavakra Gita, attributed to one Ashtavakra, a sage with exceptional scholarship, is classified as a Prakarana grantha. This text presents an interesting exposition of self knowledge or atma tatva jnana, and is in the form of a dialogue between the young preceptor and king Janaka of Mithila, pointed out Sri R. Rajagopala Sarma in a discourse.

Janaka is a celebrated Raja rishi and in the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna quotes him as one who is a realised soul and a jivan-mukta who is also an example of a karma yogi. Many stories are quoted about Ashtavakra who hails from a family of Vedic scholars. He was born to Sujatha, the daughter of Uddalaka, the famed teacher in the Upanishads, and Kahola, a disciple of Uddalaka. By the age of twelve, he had completed Vedic studies. The name Ashtavakra refers to the crooked frame that he developed in his mother's womb owing to his sensitive reactions to the slips in his father's Veda chanting.

That he impressed people, including Janaka, with his sastra knowledge despite his crooked appearance and young age is evident from the incident at Janaka's court. Janaka, who was immersed in Vedantic thought, used to invite scholars and rishis to his court to engage in debates and discussions on many important and interesting esoteric ideas on Brahman, Self, the path to realisation, and so on. It is held that in one such debate, his father Kahola was defeated by another scholar named Vandi. So, Ashtavakra wished to give a fitting reply to Vandi and did so in a remarkable debate.

Srihari Nataraj and Sajan Prakash's 'A' cut Olympics qualification could herald a new era in Indian swimming

A watershed moment

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

A year-and-a-half ago, Sajan Prakash, 27, thought he would not make it to the Tokyo Olympics 2020. The swimmer suffered a slipped disc, which also hurt his neck. As he recovered, the pandemic forced pools to close in Thailand, where he was training at the Thanyapura Aquatic Centre in Phuket on a scholarship. Confined to his hostel, he contemplated returning to India. But the situation here was worse.

Then, last August, a reprieve came in the form of a 50-day camp in Dubai organised for top Indian swimmers with national coach Pradeep Kumar. After the camp, Sajan was in a quandary again. He wanted to stay back in Dubai, but that was going to be expensive. That is when coach Pradeep and his wife, Gowri, came to Sajan's rescue. The couple invited him to stay with them in Dubai and ensured he got better in the pool.

On June 26, Sajan clocked 1:56:38 seconds in the men's 200-metre butterfly event at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome. In doing so, he became the first Indian swimmer to make the Olympic Qualifying Time (also known as FINA 'A' cut), which ensures automatic qualification for the Olympics. Unable to

make the 'A' cut hitherto, Indian swimmers had to count on the Olympic Selection Time (also known as 'B' time) or the universality quota – less certain ways – to get to the Olympics.

Three days later, Sajan's compatriot Srihari Nataraj, 20, joined him in securing the 'A' cut after his time of 53.77s in a 100-metre backstroke time trial in the Rome event was ratified by international swimming's governing body, FINA.

Srihari, like Sajan, had to overcome obstacles before breaching the qualifying mark. For over six months, he could not swim due to the lockdown. Then, this January, his father passed away. It took about seven months of relentless training to shave half a second off, which de-

termined his entry to the Tokyo Games.

An Olympic medal still remains a distant dream for Indian swimming. But Sajan and Srihari's 'A' cuts could be a defining moment.

Long way to go

Ever since the 1951 Asian Games in which India won six swimming medals, including its only gold, there has been very little success. The country has added just three more medals at the Asian Games and one (in para-swimming) at the Commonwealth Games. In bigger meets – the World Aquatics Championships and the Olympics – qualification itself has been a big deal.

Can the medal drought be attributed to genes? Sports science expert Genadijus So-



kolovas, who has worked with the world's top swimmers like Michael Phelps, says, "Genes matter very little. If this is about size, then, the fastest fish is not the biggest." According to him, a swimmer's success depends on their training, technique and motivation. The US swimmers, he says, win medals because they have access to good coaches, excellent training facilities and a supportive ecosystem; not because they are superhumans.

Srihari and Sajan say they are happy with the coaching and training facilities. India's senior coaches Nihar Ameen and Pradeep are winners of

the Dronacharya award (given to honour sports coaches in India) and have decades of experience. The top Indian swimmers had the chance to interact with Sokolovas in February during a six-day workshop organised by the Swimming Federation of India (SFI). They also have access to world-class facilities at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence.

"A lot more professionals are involved now. In our days, we never had dieticians, biomechanics experts and physiotherapists at our disposal," says former Olympic swimmer Nisha Millet.

Things seem to be improving for Indian swimmers at

the elite level. The problem, Nisha points out, is at the grassroots. "Once you reach the top-level, you get support from the Government, federation and private institutions. But when you are lower down the rung, there is no one to guide you properly," she says.

Girls, for instance, have to deal with cultural taboo as some parents, Pradeep says, don't want them to wear swimsuits after puberty. And, according to

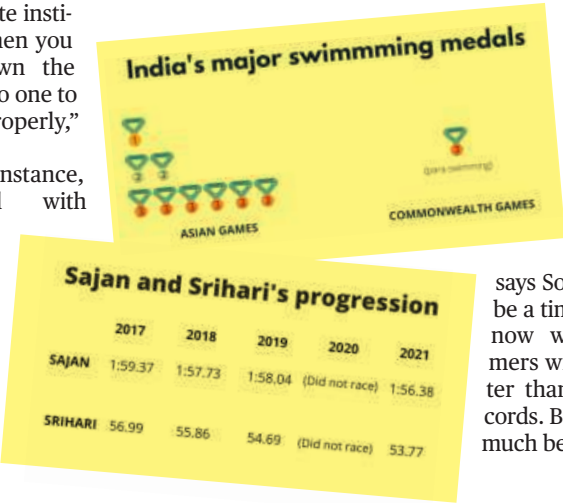
Stars of tomorrow (Clockwise from below) Maana Patel, Sajan Prakash and Srihari Nataraj • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Nisha, they get fewer job opportunities through swimming than boys. These reasons probably explain why no Indian female swimmer since 2004 has made even the 'B' time; they have only gone to the Olympics via the universality quota. Coach Pradeep says the Government, private institutions and clubs should promote swimming.

The road ahead

Srihari and Sajan's 'A' cut is important because it has lifted a mental block among Indian swimmers. "We used to think 'A' cut was impossible. Now, two people have made it at the same event," says Srihari.



Pradeep believes this will trigger more 'A' cuts in the next Olympics. At the 2028 Games in Los Angeles, he says, India should aim for a podium finish. For these long-term goals to materialise, there is a lot to be done, says SFI's general secretary Monal Chokshi.

One of the immediate goals is to ensure each State has at least three swimming academies under the Khelo India programme. Indian swimming, he explains, follows a two-tier system. The top-tier swimmers have access to high-performance centres like the one in Bengaluru. The junior swimmers – about 130 ("a very small number" according to Chokshi) – are supposed to make use of the Khelo India academies. These academies, however, are not easily accessible.

"Srihari's 53.77 would have won him a medal 15-20 years ago," says Sokolovas, "There will be a time, 10-20 years from now when Indian swimmers will be swimming faster than current world records. But we can try to do it much before that."



Park here for dosas

ANASUYA MENON

Layers of flaky Kerala *parotta* soaked in spicy gravy are served in a *thooku paathram* (a traditional steel container with a handle) at Kaasa Kitchen.

The restaurant, serving fusion food in Fort Kochi, is determined not to let the pandemic affect business. A week ago, it launched an in-car dining service that has been drawing a steady stream of customers, all pulling up in front of the restaurant to enjoy their favourite dishes.

Kaasa is just one of a clutch of restaurants across the country that has formally launched an in-car dining service.

Informally, through the last lockdown especially, an increasing number of customers – eager for a drive, change of scene and freshly made food – started eating in their cars as restaurants could only do takeaway.

Even as restaurants reopen across the country, given the ongoing pandemic, some customers are likely to opt to continue to picnic in their cars, adding an interesting new twist to restaurant service.

Kaasa, for instance, has designed an entire ceremony around it – offering finger bowls and a temporary car fumigator to prevent the smell of food from lingering inside.

Food is served on specially-designed elongated trays, which fit in the car in such a way that allows

The classic drive-in sees a revival as restaurants find creative ways to serve customers despite the pandemic, and associated lockdowns

passengers to roll up the windows and switch on the AC. "They can vibe to the music of their choice as they dig into their meal," says Sharon Gafoor, the owner of Kaasa Kitchen.

Classic drive-in

With restrictions on dining-in still in effect, Kerala is reviving the age-old concept of the classic drive-in.

With the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) launching in-car dining services in restaurants operating under it across the State on June 30, the trend is catching on.

At KTDC restaurants set in scenic locations, the experience could

feel like a micro vacation, says an official, adding that it is especially appreciated by those travelling with elderly people and children. Currently operational at KTDC's restaurants at Kottarakkara, Kayamkulam, Alappuzha, Kuttipuram and Kannur from breakfast till dinner time, food is served on long trays that can be fitted across the front and back seats of the car.

While restaurateurs maintain that in-car dining has its challenges, it has been a great way to tide over the tough phase, keeping jobs and livelihoods.

Zaatar in Kochi, which serves typically Arabian fare, has also tweaked its menu to suit the car-dining experience.

"We cut down on our gravy-heavy Indian dishes and are focussing more on our traditional Arabic fare," says Mohammed Moosa, a founding members of the restaurant. "We cannot say that business is great, but it certainly has helped us stay afloat," he adds.

Parking facility

The availability of parking space has been a huge factor in deciding the trend, say restaurateurs. Most of the places offering in-car dining have the provision to park at least 10 to 15 cars at a time.

This could be a model to follow even in a post-COVID scenario, says Gunasekharan M, senior manager of TTDC Hotel on Azhagar Kovil Road, Madurai.

One of the first restaurants in Madurai to adapt to the COVID situation by offering in-car dining, Gunasekharan says the idea eliminates fear of the disease spreading in a closed, air-conditioned space. "Even after COVID passes, people may prefer to be cautious," he adds.

With dining in set to restart in Tamil Nadu, the restaurant will offer both regular dine-in along with in-car dining. Here, instead of one elongated tray, each passenger is given a tray that is fixed to the door. A large screen placed in the outdoor dining area provides entertainment, too.

Although the trend of in-car dining has not caught on formally in Chennai, despite the legacy of well-loved Woodlands Drive-In, over the past few months it became routine to see customers unfurling ghee roast dosas in the comfort of their cars.

Restaurant dining has restarted in Chennai this week, but we expect to continue to see kerbside pickups, followed by kerbside dining now that people have discovered the joys of filter coffee to go.



Picnic in the parking lot In-car dining at Kaasa Kitchen, Fort Kochi • THULASI KAKKAT

Not just a bag of tricks

Vedic Maths finds more takers during the lockdowns, among parents, children and teachers alike, as classes remain digital

ATHIRA M

Siblings Nanditha D, 15, and Niveditha D, 11, recently led online sessions on Vedic Maths for students of classes VI-X, of their school, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Kottayam. Prior to it, they had presented a paper and held a workshop on the subject at an online conference organised by the Institute for the Advancement of Vedic Mathematics, based in the UK.

During lockdown in 2020, from March to May, they took classes via Skype for over 300 students. In 2021, around 1,000 students had registered for their online sessions. A month ago, they launched a YouTube channel, Maths Made Easy by Nanditha and Niveditha.

The inspiration came from their father, P Devaraj, an automobile engineer and Vedic Maths teacher. "When we started our sessions it was meant to help a few of our friends. We didn't expect it to go this far," says Nanditha.

Meanwhile, in Chennai, Muthuselvi Prabhu, "works round the clock", teaching Vedic Maths to students from the UK, the US, Australia, Canada and West Asia on a one-to-one basis; she also has training sessions for teachers in India.

Indore-based 50-year-old Ravi Asrani, is busy on weekends with students joining from across India and abroad for his Vedic Maths classes. Trainers such as Delhi-based Saurabh Jain and Kota-based Rekha Gupta too have many students attending their sessions these days.

Teachers are happy to observe that there has been an increase in the number of people learning Vedic Maths over the last few months. The subject got a boost when

learning went digital during the lockdown.

The subject consists of 16 *sutras* or formulae and 13 sub-*sutras* to solve mathematical problems. While some saw it as a new subject to explore while at home, for most, it was to get over the fear of mathematics. "It is an age-old fear! Several parents, on their part, make it worse by constantly reminding their children about it. So when you come across a technique that promises an easy way of doing calculations, it was natural for many people to try it. For parents, it was also about keeping their children engaged during the lockdown," says Devaraj.

Saurabh, who calls himself a "maths magician", points out that not many people were aware of Vedic Maths until schooling shifted to the digital mode. "Earlier there were live classes once a week and the fee was high. But that scenario has

changed now," says Saurabh, adding, "We try to make it entertaining." For instance, instead of paying ₹3,500 per month for just three or four classes, they need to pay between ₹100-₹500 per hour for an online class. Devaraj adds that he charges ₹1,800 for a three-week, 15-hour class.

Rekha takes classes for four or five batches with 12-15 students each on a daily basis. "I have been teaching Abacus and Vedic Maths for 15 years now. While online teaching may not give the desired result in the case of Abacus, it works in the case of Vedic Maths. That was probably one reason why many got hooked to it when learning became digital. It is all about making mathematics fun to learn, with what many call 'tricks'," she says.

Muthuselvi says that the interest is more among students who live abroad. "Here, in India, we have mark-based evaluation and so we stick to the syllabus whereas in many countries all they look at is the students' understanding of the concepts of mathematics," she adds.

Student becomes master

There has also been a rise in the number of people training to become Vedic Maths teachers. Vidhya Vikram from Coimbatore, for instance, has trained over 3,200 people from across the

country since September 2020.

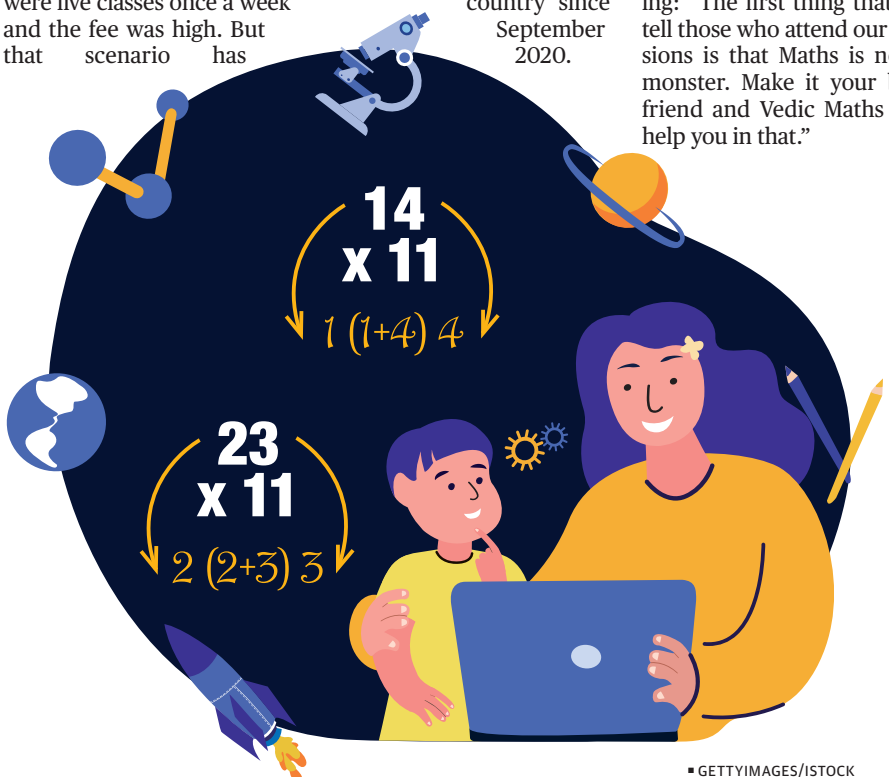
"While 50% of these trainers are Maths teachers, the rest comprise college students, retired professionals exploring new careers, women looking for flexible career options, parents, grandparents.... I have trained those in the age group of 23 to 78," says Vidhya.

She adds that but for the pandemic and the lockdown, she herself would not have explored online teaching. "When I had live classes, only Maths teachers attended the sessions, that too very few. Now I have a webinar-based training model, where I give a demonstration and take it to more people. Over 50,000 people have attended the webinars," she says.

A flipside is that those with elementary knowledge in Vedic Maths are also conducting classes. "Some of my students who have completed only their first-level sessions are now trainers. While I take ₹500 for 12 one-hour classes, they charge ₹2,000 or more," adds Ravi.

Meanwhile, mathematicians continue to be divided in their opinion over the origin and efficacy of Vedic Maths. However, according to Devaraj, "We never say that it is the only way to solve a problem. What we trainers stress on is that it is a creative, systematic way of approaching mathematics and not just a bag of tricks."

Nanditha seconds it, saying, "The first thing that we tell those who attend our sessions is that Maths is not a monster. Make it your best friend and Vedic Maths can help you in that."



• GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK



Uniform TALES

Akshaye Khanna plays a special task officer in his OTT debut

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

This year marks the 20th anniversary of *Dil Chahta Hai*, a much-loved buddy movie that went on to become a cult classic in Hindi cinema. Among the many fine things in it, Akshaye Khanna's portrayal of Sidharth Sinha — a sensitive, mild-mannered artist who falls in love with a divorcee much older than him — is especially endearing. Asked if it is one of his favourites, Khanna pauses for several seconds before saying yes.

There is already a ton of trivia, interviews and long-form pieces on *Dil Chahta Hai*. But are there any anecdotes that the world does not know yet? "You are asking the wrong person," he says, over a Zoom call from Mumbai,

"My memory is not that great. But I can tell you it was a very happy time in my life and a very happy shoot."

A lot might have changed in Khanna's career since the film's release but one thing that has not is his feeling of fun when it comes to cinema. "It has always been an enjoyable experience."

Khanna's filmography suggests he is genre-neutral. But he would have liked more action films. It is why he readily agreed to *State of Siege: Temple Attack*, in which he plays an NSG commando. The film, directed by Ken Ghosh, is inspired from the 2002 terrorist attack on Akshardham Temple in Gujarat.

This is not the first time he is playing a role where he is required to wear a uniform and

Guns and glory Akshaye Khanna in *State of Siege: Temple Attack* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

handle big guns. In his second film, *Border*, he was a second lieutenant. He later played a lieutenant in *LOC Kargil*.

So, what is the fascination for uniforms and guns? "It is just something that captures your imagination," he says, "Action movies are hugely popular all over the world. I love watching them repeatedly. Whether it is a police officer or an army officer or anyone in those kinds of professions are attractive on an aspirational level."

Khanna also likes films about real-life incidents. "It adds authenticity. When you're watching it, in the back of your mind, you know that it's something that has happened to real people," he says. But he adds that *State of Siege: Temple Attack* is different from some of his other based-on-real-life-incident films like *The Accidental Prime Minister* or *Gandhi, My Father*. "In this film, we are not claiming to recreate the actual incident. It is a dramatised, fictional account of what unfolded."

State of Siege: Temple Attack will stream on Zee5 from July 9.



Filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra talks about his upcoming boxing drama *Toofaan* and reuniting with Farhan Akhtar after eight years

Director's cut A still from *Toofaan*; (inset) Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

GAUTAM SUNDER

Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra is not a man in a hurry — he has made seven films in 20 years. His latest *Toofaan* is set for release next week; the same week which saw the release of his first directorial, *Aks*, two decades ago.

Today, the filmmaker occupies an important place in contemporary Indian cinema as a progressive policymaker — whether it is the jaunty socio-political highs of *Rang De Basanti* or the immersive adrenaline rushes of *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*.

A conversation with the 58-year-old is always fascinating; his answers measured, his tone nuanced, and one can even sense his thoughts as he explains what drew him to a boxing drama and casting Farhan Akhtar in it.

Excerpts from an interview:

Toofaan is a refreshing departure from the spate of 'sports biopics' we have had over the last decade. Is the script a totally fictional story?

Well, I have been blamed too for going the biopic route earlier, but *Toofaan* is a complete work of fiction indeed. However, it draws everything from real life, from anecdotes and people I have seen and heard about, from conflicts and struggles. It is a drama at a family and social level, and a lovely romance, set against the backdrop of boxing, a sport that has huge synergy with the protagonist.

Why did you pick

boxing as the backdrop?

Boxing is a lonely sport; not a team sport. In it, what is most important is not to hit, but how to take a hit. The person who stands till the end without getting knocked out wins. I see that as a metaphor for life. Life will slap and surprise you in different ways, but you have to stand, deal with it, and make yourself a better human being with the choices you make.

Right from the inception, the script was lending itself to boxing too. The main character is like a *bhai* in a locality, from the Bhandi Bazaar and Dongri area in Mumbai. His life so far has taught him how to fight, but his talent and mind can go either way.

One's power can be used to better society or it can be misused...that is the story I wanted to tell. Often, the right path is the difficult one to choose.



Tell us about your relationship with Farhan...was it like catching up with an old friend to work on this film?

Our relationship has evolved since *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*. We have always had a sense of mutual respect, and when we came out of our first film together, we felt extremely embraced.

When you collaborate with someone like Farhan, the energy grows manifold. The important thing is the like-mindedness in what we are doing. When I heard *Toofaan* for the first time — it was narrated to me by writer Anjum Rajabali — I immediately understood its voice, and wanted to do it with Farhan.

I feel both of us have grown a lot since *Bhaag*... and it is exciting to tell a story that dwells deeper into human relationships. This film is not plot-driven, it is character-driven. Which is why I am sure audiences will see their own struggles on screen and be able to empathise.

Toofaan will stream on Amazon Prime from July 16.

PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

What is your idea of an ideal first date? Martinis at a beach bar? Dinner and a movie? Game night?

Well, for some who just met their partners on dating apps, it is heading to the nearest vaccination centre and getting a jab together. #jabwemet.

With new variants of COVID-19 rearing their ugly heads, an increasing number of people are opting for the vaccine. And, they want to ensure potential dates are vaccinated too. Now, dating apps are adding features that educate users, busting myths and allaying fears.

Popular sites like Tinder, Ok Cupid and Woo allow users to display a badge (usually an image of a syringe or plaster) to state they are vaccinated. It does not matter if they have received just one shot or both.

Last November, when vaccines were on the verge of being launched, OK Cupid, a dating app that been in India since 2018 and has over a million members, introduced a set of questions to gauge the mood of users.

"Back then, a lot of them said they were not entirely sure if they would opt for it," says Sitara Menon, senior marketing manager, OK Cupid. She adds that, since then answers have changed to yes, with a substantial number opining that a non-vaccinated person is a deal breaker.

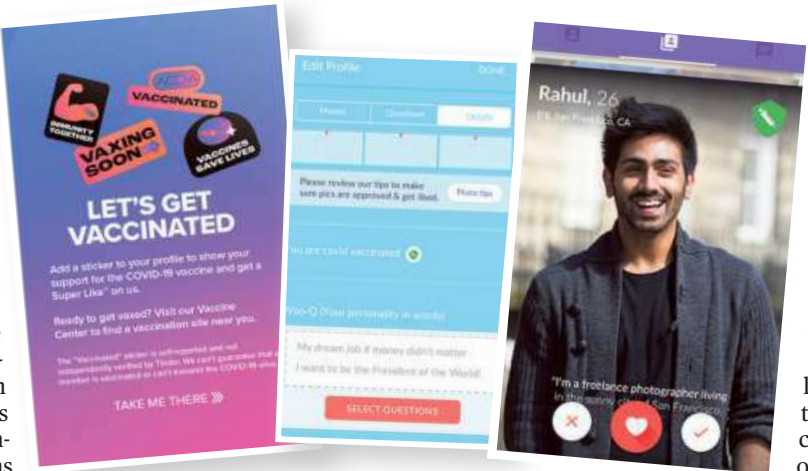
The pandemic has led to a change in conversation patterns.

New features, including stickers, are conversation starters, says Papri Dev, senior director, APAC communications, Tinder. She adds, "In May 2021 we noticed the reference to vaccines in bios went up by 42 times in members' profiles," she says. Sample this: 'Will you hold my hand while I take my vaccine?' Or, 'Let's get the COVID vaccine together :)'.

When the pandemic began, the team at OK Cupid noticed the word COVID came up a lot in users' self summaries

Forget pictures. Show me your vaccine certificate

Whether or not you are vaccinated can decide your chances of getting a date, reveals research by Tinder, OkCupid, Woo and other popular dating apps in India



on the app.

Following that, over the last three months, 'vaccination' became the most used term. There has been a 763% increase in the mention of the word vaccine in bios," says Sitara.

She adds that Indians users now want to know if potential partners are vaccinated or want to get vaccinated. Badges on profiles help the others know if the person has taken their jab or not. "People who believe in vaccines, or got theirs, get 25% more

matches," she adds.

In a survey conducted in the major metros in the country, Woo, a home-grown dating app with more than 12 million users worldwide, found that 70% of its audience wants to meet people who are vaccinated.

"The survey was based on answers given by 10,000 people in the 24-35 age group,

source with quizzes and questions, and we have a link to CoWin," says Papri. OK Cupid and Bumble have similar features, with explainers and answers from science and healthcare officials.

Tinder has partnered with India

Vaccine Project. "Through this partnership, our aim is to offer opportunities to our user base to volunteer and help verify information about COVID Vaccine Centers (CVCs) in India," says Papri. Members with relevant skill sets can join the project's tech team or choose from opportunities on indiavaccine.in, helping with creating content, verifying vaccine stocks and reducing vaccine hesitancy, among others.

The trust factor

"There is a lot of data being shared about the vaccine between users," says Rahul Namdev, co-founder of Betterhalf.ai, an Artificial Intelligence-driven Indian matrimonial app. While he believes adding badges is a good idea, he says his app has taken a different approach: "We send a lot of notifications, emails and pop up messages to drive awareness." Rahul says around 40%-50% of his users are vaccinated.

He has noticed that women are adamant not to talk to people who do not believe in vaccines. "If a guy says he will be taking his vaccine maybe after three months, then that conversation is not going anywhere," says Rahul. Sitara agrees that women are a lot more particular. "At this point, on our app, 69% of men and 71% women are vaccinated and sporting badges," she says.

A word of caution: Although users are putting up their vaccine status, the apps are operating on trust alone, and not asking for evidence right now. Woo offers a feature where users can upload their vaccine certificates, but it is not mandatory. Nevertheless, out of 19% of its vaccinated users, 50% have so far uploaded their certificates.

On Betterhalf.ai, the team keeps reminding the users to take necessary precautions if they are meeting other daters. Says Rahul, "We are encouraging them to request other users to show their vaccination certificate, that way they can be sure and, hopefully, safe."

Jabbed Dating apps are providing vaccine themed stickers that let their inoculated users stand out

Rajesh Selva begins Irai

Director Rajesh M Selva, known for Tamil films like Kamal Haasan's *Thoonga Vanam* and Vikram's *Kadaram Kondan*, has recently started work on a web-series. Titled *Irai* (Prey), this series will feature Sarath Kumar in the lead role. It will reportedly be a crime-thriller. Raadhika Sarathkumar of Radaan Mediaworks, which is known for its small-screen offerings, says in a statement, "Despite it being a crime thriller, the show will encapsulate the essence of family, sentiments, and relationships." Ghibran is the music composer of *Irai*, while Yuvaraj is handling cinematography.



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13420

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Across

- 1 French port opposite Kent (6)
 - 4 Drug, such as morphine (6)
 - 9 Japanese art form — I'm a giro (rev) (7)
 - 10 Secret store (5)
 - 11 Release (3,2)
 - 12 Cooking utensil (7)
 - 13 A super stick (anag) — North American tree cultivated for its lightweight timber (5,6)
 - 18 Small pasta cases with savoury fillings (7)
 - 20 Arbour (5)
 - 22 Unsophisticated (5)
 - 23 Irritable (7)
 - 24 Line on a cricket pitch (6)
 - 25 WH Auden's first name (6)
- ### Down
- 1 Absent-minded drawing (6)
 - 2 Be (5)
 - 3 Ornamental fowl (7)
 - 5 Ski slope (5)
 - 6 Lacking in colour or vitality (7)
 - 7 Urge strongly and sincerely (6)
 - 8 US river and state (11)
 - 14 Bill (7)

- 15 Heist (7)
- 16 Humorously mocking (6)
- 17 Ragamuffin (6)
- 19 Portents (5)
- 21 18th-century card game, the forerunner of bridge (5)

The solution will appear on July 15, 2021.

Solution No. 13419

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Haiti President Jovenel Moïse assassinated, First Lady injured

PM said some of the attackers spoke in Spanish but offered no further details

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PORT-AU-PRINCE

Gunmen assassinated Haitian President Jovenel Moïse and wounded his wife in their home early on Wednesday, inflicting more chaos on the Caribbean country that was already enduring gang violence, soaring inflation and protests by Opposition supporters who accused the leader of increasing authoritarianism.

Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph, who confirmed the killing, said the police and the military were in control of security in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas where a history of dictatorship and political upheaval have long stymied the consolidation of democratic rule.

Despite Mr. Joseph's assurances that order would prevail, there was confusion about who should take control and widespread anxiety among Haitians. Authorities declared a "state of siege" in



Controversial reign: A file photo of Haiti President Jovenel Moïse with wife Martine. ■AFP

the country and closed the international airport.

The normally bustling streets of the capital, Port-au-Prince, were empty and quiet on Wednesday. Sporadic gunshots were heard in the distance, public transportation was scarce, and some people searched for businesses that were open to buy food and water.

'Foreign mercenaries' Bocchit Edmond, the Haitian Ambassador to the United States, said the attack on the

53-year-old Mr. Moïse was carried out by "well-trained professional commandos" and "foreign mercenaries" who were masquerading as agents of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Mr. Moïse's wife, Martine, was in a stable but critical condition and efforts were under way to move her to Miami for treatment, Mr. Edmond said in Washington.

Haiti has asked the U.S. government for assistance with the investigation, he said, adding that the assassins could have escaped over the land border to the Dominican Republic or by sea.

Haiti appeared to be heading for fresh volatility ahead of general elections later this year. Mr. Moïse had been ruling by decree for more than a year after failing to hold elections, and the Opposition demanded that he step down in recent months, saying he was leading it toward yet another grim period of authoritarianism.

Mr. Joseph said the heavily armed gunmen spoke Spanish or English, but he gave no details on the attack.

The White House described the attack as "horrific" and "tragic", and said it was still gathering information to brief President Joe Biden, spokesperson Jen Psaki said.

"The message to the people of Haiti is this is a tragic tragedy," she said. "And we stand ready and stand by them to provide any assistance that's needed."

Trump files suits against FB, Twitter and Google

He challenges 'wrongful censorship'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Former U.S. President Donald Trump has filed suits against three of the country's biggest tech companies, claiming he and other conservatives have been wrongfully censored.



Donald Trump

Mr. Trump announced the action against Facebook, Twitter and Google's YouTube, along with the companies' CEOs, at a press conference in New Jersey on Wednesday. He was joined by other plaintiffs in the suits, which were filed in federal court in Miami.

"We're demanding an end to the shadow-banning, a stop to the silencing and a stop to the blacklisting, banishing and cancelling that you know so well," he said.

Under Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act, social media platforms are allowed to moderate their services by removing posts that, for instance, are obscene or violate the services' own standards, so long as they are

acting in "good faith." The law also generally exempts Internet companies from liability for the material that users post.

But Mr. Trump and some other politicians have long argued that Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms have abused that protection and should lose their immunity – or at least have to earn it by satisfying requirements set by the government.

Mr. Trump was suspended from Twitter, Facebook and YouTube after his followers stormed the Capitol building on January 6. The companies cited concerns that he would incite further violence.

Taliban attack Afghan provincial capital

Fierce fighting in western city of Qala-i-Naw

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
AFGHANISTAN

The Taliban launched a major assault on a provincial capital in Afghanistan on Wednesday, the first since the U.S. military began its final drawdown of troops from the country as insurgents press on with a blistering offensive.

Fierce fighting erupted in the western city of Qala-i-Naw, the capital of Badghis, with the militants seizing police headquarters and offices of the country's spy agency.

As news of the morning assault spread, social media was flooded with videos of clashes – with some showing armed Taliban fighters on motorbikes entering the city of about 75,000, as onlookers cheered. Afghanists' Defence Minister Bismillah Mohammadi said government forces were in a "very sensitive military situation", adding that "the war is raging" with the Taliban.



Gun battle: A smoke plume rising from houses amid fighting between Afghan forces and Taliban fighters in Qala-i-Naw. ■AFP

The onslaught came hours after Washington announced that U.S. forces had completed more than 90% of their withdrawal from Afghanistan. The militants have waged a dizzying campaign across Afghanistan since U.S. and NATO forces announced the final withdrawal from the country in early May, seizing dozens of districts and stirring fears that the government is in crisis.

"The enemy has entered the city, all the districts have fallen," Badghis Governor Hessamuddin Shams told reporters in a text message. He attempted to calm the residents in a video message, appearing with a rifle – with

Lanka issues coin for CPC centenary

'China is one of our most sincere friends,' says PM Mahinda Rajapaksa

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

In a rare diplomatic gesture, Sri Lanka has issued a commemorative coin marking the centenary of the Chinese Communist Party. The country's Central Bank on Tuesday said it has minted two coins in gold and silver, in connection with the Party's 100th anniversary, and 65 years of Sri Lanka-China relations.

"The coins have been issued at the request of the government of Sri Lanka as an accolade for long-standing friendship and mutual trust between the two countries," a statement from the apex bank said.

One of the coins, of LKR 1,000 denomination, bears the words 'Communist Party of China' in Sinhala, Tamil and English, and the years 1921-2021, along with the anniversary year 100, while the other has a view of the China-built Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre [located in Colombo], with national flags of Sri Lanka and China, and the words 'Sri Lanka-China 65 Years'



Token of appreciation: President Gotabaya Rajapaksa receiving the first coin from the CBSL Governor. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and year 2022 inscribed, according to the statement. Central Bank Governor W.D. Lakshman presented the first coin to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Tuesday.

Economic help

The apex bank's move comes amid substantial economic assistance from China to Sri Lanka. While Sri Lanka already owes China over \$5 billion from past loans, Beijing sanctioned an additional \$1 billion in loan and about \$1.5 billion in a currency swap to help Colombo combat its economic crisis since the pandemic hit the island

nation in March 2020.

Speaking in a virtual conference to commemorate the Chinese Communist Party's centenary, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Wednesday said China was one of Sri Lanka's "most sincere friends". "The Communist Party of China is currently the world's largest political party, which has delivered a very important message to the world on foreign relations for the past 70 years," he said, pointing to bilateral relations since 1957, and relations between the Communist parties of both countries since the 1940s.

"I am aware that it was the foreign policy positions of the CPC that elevated China on the global stage. However, China has never tried to impose its own political views on the world," PM Rajapaksa said. "China has also never felt the need to manipulate the affairs of other countries. China has helped the other countries, keeping them at the same level, which is a very important matter for a country's independence as well as its sovereignty," he said, even as sections within Sri Lanka, including political allies of the Rajapaksas, remain fiercely critical of Western and Indian "interference" that they see as a threat to the country's sovereignty.

Further, commending China on its poverty eradication programme, Mr. Rajapaksa said China always believed that improving infrastructure would "provide new ways and new strengths for the people". "Therefore, we have constantly invited China to help develop the infrastructure," he said.

Megaship heads out of Suez after Egypt deal

It had blocked the canal in March

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ISMAILIA

Egyptian authorities announced the release on Wednesday of a hulking shipping vessel that had blocked the Suez Canal for nearly a week in March after running aground.

The *m.v. Ever Given* left the canal's Great Bitter Lake, where it had been held for more than three months amid a financial dispute. The development came after its Japanese owner, Shoei Kisen Kaisha Ltd., reached a settlement with canal authorities over a compensation amount following weeks of negotiations and a court stand-off.

The settlement deal was signed in a ceremony on Wednesday in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia, after which the vessel was seen sailing to the Mediterranean Sea. The company said the vessel would undergo a dive survey in Egypt's Mediterranean city of Port Said, before resuming her voyage to the next port where her cargo will be discharged.



The *m.v. Ever Given* sailing near the central Egyptian city of Ismailia. ■AFP

Officials did not reveal details on the terms of the settlement. At first, the Suez Canal Authority had demanded \$916 million in compensation, which was later lowered to \$550 million. In addition to the money, local reports said the canal would also receive a tugboat. The money, according to canal authorities, would cover the salvage operation, costs of stalled canal traffic, and lost transit fees for the six days the ship had blocked the crucial waterway.

ELSEWHERE



U.S. forces in Iraq, Syria come under attack

BAGHDAD

Rocket and drone attacks targeted bases in Iraq and Syria hosting U.S. forces. Fourteen rockets were fired at an air base hosting U.S. troops in Iraq's Anbar, causing minor injuries to two personnel. It was the latest in a spate of attacks on U.S. military and diplomatic facilities in Iraq, blamed on pro-Iranian armed groups within a state-sponsored paramilitary force. In Syria Kurdish-led forces also reported attempted attacks near a coalition base. ■AFP

China fines Internet giants in anti-monopoly cases

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

Companies, including Internet giants Alibaba and Tencent, were fined on Wednesday by anti-monopoly regulators in a new move to tighten control over their fast-developing industries.

In 22 cases, companies were fined 5,000,000 yuan (\$75,000) each for actions, including acquiring stakes in other companies that might improperly increase their market power, the State Administration for Market Regulation announced. It said violators include six companies owned by Alibaba Group and five by Tencent Holding Ltd.

China's leaders worry

about the dominance of its biggest Internet companies, which are expanding into finance, health services and other sensitive areas. The ruling Communist Party says anti-monopoly enforcement, especially in tech, is a priority this year.

In the biggest penalty to date, Alibaba was fined 18.3 billion yuan (\$2.8 billion) in April on charges of suppressing competition. Other companies have been fined or reprimanded for violating competition, data protection, censorship and other rules. On Sunday, ride-hailing service Didi Global Inc. was ordered to overhaul its collection and handling of customer data.

Fix anti-LGBT law, EU warns Hungary

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STRASBOURG

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday warned Hungary to reverse course on its controversial LGBT law, as pressure mounts on Brussels to cut EU funding to Budapest.

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban is facing a mounting chorus of protest over the law, which is due to go into effect on Thursday. Mr. Orban insists it is a measure to protect children, but critics say the law conflates paedophilia with homosexuality and generally stigmatises support for the LGBT community.

China social media giant shuts LGBT accounts

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BANGKOK

China's most popular social media service has deleted accounts on LGBT topics run by university students and non-government groups, prompting concern that the ruling Communist Party is tightening control over gay and lesbian content.

WeChat sent account holders a notice that they violated rules but gave no details, according to the founder of an LGBT group.

It wasn't clear whether the step was ordered by Chinese authorities, but it comes as the ruling party tightens political controls and tries to silence groups that might criticise its rule.

E-mail:ID-sectorb_2006@yahoo.co.in; Tel/Fax – 0671-2301751/2302751

Government of Odisha

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3	Tender ID	07.07.2021	07.07.2021
4	Validating Date	07.07.2021	07.07.2021
5	Bid document download / Sale start date	07.07.2021 from 1000 hrs	07.07.2021 from 1000 hrs
6	Bid submission end date	04.08.2021 upto 1700 hrs	26.07.2021 upto 1700 hrs
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INSTITUTE OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT AND CATERING TECHNOLOGY,

(An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India)

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E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers or direct authorised Dealers for Supply, installation, Testing & Commissioning of Kitchen Equipments at KIHM, Kinfra Industrial Park, Thalassery, Kannur, Kerala.

Tender Ref. No.KIHM/Tender-2/2020-21

Last date : 21.07.2021 at 2.00 pm

For details, please visit :

www.keralatourism.org, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

PRINCIPAL

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF INCOME TAX

LAKSHAR BHAWAN, M.K.MARG, MUMBAI - 400020

Email: sportscell@mumbai@gmail.com Phone No.: 022-22057236

Date: 08.07.2021

SPORTS QUOTA RECRUITMENT - 2021

The Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Mumbai, invites applications for recruitment of meritorious sports persons in certain games / sports disciplines. The recruitment will be made in the following posts:

Sr. No.	Name of the post	No. of Vacancies	Pay as per 7 th CPC
1	Inspector of Income Tax	8	Pay level-7 (Rs. 44900 to Rs.142400)
2	Tax Assistant	83	Pay level-4 (Rs. 25500 to Rs. 81100)
3	Multi-Tasking Staff	64	Pay level-1 (Rs. 18000 to Rs. 56900)

The selected candidates would also be entitled to all the allowances as applicable to Central Government Employees.

Complete details regarding the Sports disciplines earmarked for recruitment, educational qualifications, other eligibility conditions along with the terms and conditions and instructions to the candidates are available on the Department's website www.incometaxmumbai.gov.in

The application form available on the website www.incometaxmumbai.gov.in or <http://www.incometaxmumbai.in/> should be mandatorily filled **ONLINE**. Incomplete applications will be rejected summarily. The last date for online submission of application is **25.08.2021 by 23:59 Hrs.**

Sd/-
(Karik Saresa, I.R.S.)
Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax (HQ)
Personnel, Mumbai

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS:TIRUPATI

Office of the Chief Engineer e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Adv.No.17/D3/CE/TTD/2021-22 05/07/2021

e-tenders invited on e-procurement for the following works of TTD Engineering Dept.

Sl. No.	NT No.	Name of the work	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs & Time for Completion	Schedule Download Start Date	Download End Date & Last Date for bid Submission
1	2	3	4	5	6

Superintending Engineer-I

1	31/ SE-4/ TTD/ 2021-22	Construction of additional floors over existing Harini Hostel Block and Conversion of rooms in Srinivasa and Gandhi Hostels in SPW College Campus at Tirupati.	1990.00 12 Months	08-07-2021 5.00 p.m.	23-07-2021 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.
2	32/ SE-4/ TTD/ 2021-22	Construction of School Building in S.V.Oriental High School & S.V.Elementary School at Tirupati.	760.00 9 Months	09-07-2021 5.00 p.m.	26-07-2021 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.

Superintending Engineer-II

3	88/ SE-4/ TTD/ 2021-22	Improvements to Employees Staff Quarters, B-type, Old C-type, Old D-type, New C-type & New D-type Quarters (Total -437 Nos.) at Tirumala.	1800.00 18 Months	07-07-2021 5.00 p.m.	22-07-2021 1.00 p.m. & 3.00 p.m.
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Note: For full details log on to the website <https://tender.aapeprocurement.gov.in/> or <http://www.aapeprocurement.gov.in>.

Roc.No.FR4/19932/Adv.No.75/PRO/2021, Dated:07-07-2021 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Hurkacz torpedoes Federer’s quest for a ninth title at SW19

The Pole blows away the off-colour Swiss in straight sets, including a bagel in the third; Shapovalov edges Khachanov in an engrossing battle

WIMBLEDON

AGENCIES LONDON

Eight-time Wimbledon champion Roger Federer lost 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-0 to 14th-seeded Hubert Hurkacz of Poland in the quarterfinals at the All England Club on Wednesday, a surprisingly lopsided finish to his 22nd appearance in the tournament.

Federer was given an ovation, but none quite like this one, which felt more like a “Thank you” or – just in case – a “Goodbye.” As he stepped up to the baseline to serve in the last game, he needed to wait while fans in the full-to-capacity stands applauded and cheered.

Soon enough, it was over, only the third 6-0 set lost by Federer in his Grand Slam career and his 14th defeat in 119 matches at Wimbledon.

“I don’t know what to say,” Hurkacz said. “It’s super special for me. Playing on this special court against Roger – it’s always, when you’re a kid, it’s like a dream come true to play him.”

This was not the Federer the world was used to watching. He simply never was able to summon the serving and shot-making that have carried him to 20 Grand Slam titles overall, tied with

I don’t know. I really don’t know. I’ve got to regroup. My goal was always to try & play another Wimbledon. I was able to make it this year, which I’m really happy about. Everything that comes after we’ll have to sit down and talk about it

FEDERER on whether this is his last Wimbledon

Nadal for the men’s record.

“I barely made it for this year,” Federer said later. “It was a long hard road, but I actually kind of enjoyed it. It was always uphill, as slow as it was, but it was always moving forward.”

“I did not have any setbacks, but clearly there are things missing in my game,” the Swiss added.

Quick off the blocks

Hurkacz, boosted by having defeated World No.2 Daniil Medvedev in five sets in the last 16, was quickly up a break on a sluggish-looking Federer in the sixth game of the opening set and took it with ease.

The Swiss star, who underwent two knee surgeries in 2020 and was bidding to be the oldest man in the Wimbledon last-four in over a half a century, carved out a break for 2-0 in the second set.

But he couldn’t hang on, and Hurkacz was back on serve by the seventh game after being 1-4 down and went on to dominate the tiebreak.

Federer appeared flat and was quickly down 0-2 in the third set before Hurkacz wrapped up the decider in just 29 minutes in front of a stunned Centre Court.

Earlier in the day, Canada’s Denis Shapovalov reached his first Wimbledon semifinal on Wednesday beating Russia’s Karen Khachanov 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-4 in an engrossing tussle that lasted 3 hours and 26 minutes.

Shapovalov will next play defending champion Novak Djokovic after the World No.1 made short work of Hungarian Marton Fucsovics 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 on Centre Court.

The 22-year-old Shapovalov took the first set after breaking Khachanov at 4-4. The latter, like Shapovalov appearing in his first Wimbledon quarterfinal, hit back by taking the next two sets.

Whilst Khachanov was content to largely stay at the back, playing some delightful groundstrokes, especially on his backhand, Shapovalov varied his game more, with

his drop shots highly effective.

However, it was the Russian who wilted as Shapovalov romped through the fourth to take it into the deciding set. The decider looked a tight affair but in reality Khachanov was hanging on, saving his service on a couple of occasions.

Finally, the Russian, who had been involved in a record 13 breaks of serve in the fifth set of Monday’s win over Sebastian Korda, was broken in the ninth game and Shapovalov served out the match with aplomb.

THE RESULTS

Quarterfinals: Men: 1-Djokovic (Srb) bt Fucsovics (Hun) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; 14-Hurkacz (Pol) bt 6-Federer (Sui) 6-3, 7-6(4), 6-0; 10-Shapovalov (Can) bt 25-Khachanov (Rus) 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-4.

■ Matteo Berrettini reached his second Major singles semifinal with a 6-3, 5-7, 7-5, 6-3 victory over Felix Auger-Aliassime. The Italian will play Hurkacz next

Women’s semifinals

■ 1-Barty vs 25-Kerber

■ 2-Sabalenka vs 8-Pliskova

6 p.m. IST

THE HIGHLIGHTS

1 Maiden Slam semifinal for Hurkacz. He is also the second Polish man in history to do so after Janowicz (2013 Wimbledon)

1 First Major semifinal for Shapovalov. He is also the third Canadian man after Raonic (2014) and Robert Powell (1908) to enter the singles last four at Wimbledon

3 Only the third time Federer has lost in straight sets at Wimbledon. Previous: vs Ancic, first round, 2002 and vs Kafelnikov, first round, 2000

5 Only the fifth time in his Tour career, and third time at Slams, that Federer has lost a set 6-0. Previously at Slams: vs Nadal (2008 French Open final) & vs Rafter (1999 French Open first round)

19 Djokovic’s current streak on grass, starting from Wimbledon 2018, the longest of his career. Previous best: 16, across three editions of Wimbledon from 2014 to 2016

100 Djokovic has now won 100 matches on grass and is only the third active men’s player after Federer and Murray to record 100 wins each on Hard, Grass and Clay



SHORT PASSES



Spain game hardest of my career: Bonucci

LONDON Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci said Spain gave him the hardest challenge of his career in the semifinal on Tuesday night. “It was the toughest game I have ever played. I congratulate Spain for what they showed, but once again this Italy showed heart, determination and the ability to push through difficult moments,” Bonucci said. “Now there is one more centimetre to go.” REUTERS

We will be back, says Busquets

LONDON Spain captain Sergio Busquets said the team will return stronger after gaining vital experience during its run to the Euro 2020 semifinals. “It’s a shame, we would have liked for our tournament not to end today but that’s football,” Busquets told *Radio Marca*. “With lots of young players it will serve to give them confidence. This team will be back,” said Busquets. AFP



UEFA invites Eriksen to Euro 2020 final

COPENHAGEN UEFA has invited Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen to the European Championship final along with the medics who helped to save his life. Eriksen collapsed on the field during his team’s opening match against Finland on June 12 after suffering a cardiac arrest. He had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator. The final is scheduled for Sunday. AP



Liton revives Bangladesh innings

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE HARARE

Liton Das struck a Test career-best 95 on Wednesday to play a pivotal role in Bangladesh reaching 294 for eight on the first day of the one-off Test against Zimbabwe on Wednesday.

With their team struggling at 132 for six, Liton and Mahmudullah added 138 for the seventh wicket. Liton’s previous highest was the 94 against Sri Lanka at Chattogram in 2018.

The scores: Bangladesh 294-8 in 83 overs (Mominul Haque 70, Liton Das 95, Mahmudullah 54 batting, Blessing Muzarabani 3-48) vs Zimbabwe. **Toss:** Bangladesh.

Ashwin could play for Surrey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON

India off-spinner R. Ashwin could play a First Class game for Surrey as early as July 11 ahead of next month’s Test series against England.

If he is able to get a work visa in time for Surrey’s game against Somerset, Ashwin will get valuable match practice before the five-Test series against England starting August 4.

Mathews opts out of series against India

INDIA IN LANKA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO

Sri Lankan all-rounder Angelo Mathews on Wednesday pulled out of the upcoming limited-overs series against India citing personal reasons, as Sri Lanka Cricket announced that 29 of the 30 players shortlisted for the assignment have signed their contracts.

The 34-year-old Mathews was not part of the squad that toured England recently and last played the Test series against Bangladesh in April.

The India series compris-



Angelo Mathews. • FILE PHOTO

ing three ODIs and as many T20s begins here on July 13. “Mathews requested SLC to relieve him from National duty, owing to personal reasons, until further notice,” a statement from SLC said.

Shafali and Sneha nominated for ICC ‘Player of the month’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DUBAI

India’s teen batting sensation Shafali Verma and all-rounder Sneha Rana were on Wednesday nominated for ICC women’s ‘Player of the Month’ award for June following their standout performances in the ongoing series against England.

Besides the Indian duo, England’s left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has also been nominated for the honour in the women’s category.

The nominees among the men are New Zealand batsman Devon Conway and pacer Kyle Jamieson along with South Africa wicket-keeper Quinton de Kock.

The 17-year-old Shafali, who had already impressed everyone in the shortest format of the game, made a stunning Test debut against England and was named Player of the Match in the Bristol match.

The flamboyant teenager became the first Indian wo-



Shafali Verma. • GETTY IMAGES

man and fourth from any country to score half-centuries in both innings of a de-

Mace to tour New Zealand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA AUCKLAND

The victorious Black Caps squad will carry its ICC World Test Championship Mace on a week-long, nationwide tour of the country, starting July 26, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said on Wednesday.

Kane Williamson’s men won the inaugural WTC, beating India by eight wickets in Southampton.

The tour is set to start in Whangarei on July 26 and will cover Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill so that members of the public have an opportunity to be



Victory parade: The Mace tour will involve selected players and staff assembling at each of the cities on the route. • AFP

photographed with the unique trophy and collect autographs and a team poster.

“It’s quickly become apparent that Kiwis want an opportunity to be part of, and to share in this historic

The shootout

ITALY			SPAIN	
Locatelli	☒	0-0	☒	Olmo
Belotti	☑	1-1	☑	Moreno
Bonucci	☑	2-2	☑	Thiago
Bernardeschi	☑	3-2	☒	Morata
Jorginho	☑	4-2		

Semifinal: Italy 1 (Chiesa 60) drew with Spain 1 (Morata 80) (aet, Italy wins 4-2 on penalties).

Morata levelled for Spain with 10 minutes left, calmly slotting home into the bottom corner after bursting forward and exchanging a one-two with Olmo.

The result: Semifinal: Italy 1 (Chiesa 60) drew with Spain 1 (Morata 80) (aet, Italy wins 4-2 on penalties).

van Aert wins 11th stage

TOUR DE FRANCE

REUTERS MALAUCENE

Belgian Wout van Aert won the 11th stage of the Tour de France on Wednesday, a 198.9-km mountain trek featuring a double ascent of the Mont Ventoux.

The Jumbo-Visma rider went solo from the day’s breakaway 11 kilometres from the top of the second climb of the famed Ventoux, and never looked back. Trek-Segafredo teammates Kenny Elissonde and Bauke



Wout van Aert. • AP

Tony Martin out of Tour after second crash

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MALAUCENE (FRANCE)

German rider Tony Martin exited the Tour de France by ambulance early on stage 11 on Wednesday after suffering face and leg injuries when tumbling into a deep roadside ditch, having been at the centre of a crash-marred opening day that saw a fan knock half the peloton down.

Martin was the rider who collided with a roadside fan brandishing a sign last week that caused a spectacular mass pile-up

on stage one from the Atlantic port city of Brest.

Wednesday’s stage saw the Jumbo rider fall into a ditch just outside the Provence town of Sorgues, shortly after the departure for a double ascent of the Tour’s most famous climb, the Mont Ventoux.

Martin was also hurt on stage 1 and was vocal in calls for the hapless roadside fan that day to be severely punished, not for causing the crash, but for failing to stick around and help.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON

Rohan Bopanna was solid with his serve and net play as usual, but Sania Mirza’s serve was consistently put under pressure as the Indian pair bowed out of The Championships with a three-set defeat in the third round of the mixed doubles event on Wednesday.

The match resumed with the 14th seeds, Jean Julien-Roger and Andreja Klepac, having a one-set lead and they finished on the right side of the result with a 6-3, 3-6, 11-9 scoreline.

Sania has not played much competitive tennis post her comeback and is struggling to get her serve right.

It was Sania’s last tournament before the Tokyo Games where she will compete in the women’s doubles with Ankita Raina.

Thakur replaces Rijiju as Sports Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Anurag Thakur replaced Kiren Rijiju as the country’s sports minister with just over two weeks left for the Tokyo Olympics.

The 46-year-old former BCCI president was given charge of sports along with the IB ministry after he took oath as a cabinet minister.

Mixed day for Anand

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

Viswanathan Anand had a mixed day on his return to competitive chess on Wednesday.

He defeated Jorden Van Foreest of the Netherlands in the opening round of the Croatia Grand Chess Tour at Zagreb before going down to Frenchman Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in the second. Anand then drew with Russia’s Ian Nepomniachtchi.

The standings (after three rounds): 1. Nepomniachtchi (Rus) 2.5 points; 2-8. Alexander Grischuk (Rus), Anton Korobov (Ukr), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol), Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Aze), Anand, Vachier-Lagrave (Fra) and Ivan Saric (Cro) 1.5; 9-10. Anish Giri (Ned) and Van Foreest (Ned) 1.

