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-Rajiv Gandhi



**Ashok Gehlot**  
Chief Minister, Rajasthan



**Sam Pitroda**

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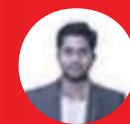
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### NEARBY



#### Caste-based census: Bihar team to meet PM

PATNA/NEW DELHI  
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will lead a delegation of multiparty leaders from the State to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 23 to press for a caste-based census in the country. With the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election just a few months away, the BJP has maintained an uneasy silence on the issue.

NEWS ► PAGE 10

#### Centre for CBI probe into 'DTC low-floor bus scam'

NEW DELHI  
The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has recommended a preliminary enquiry by the CBI into the purchase of 1,000 low-floor buses by the Delhi government. In a letter to the Chief Secretary of the Delhi government, the Ministry took note of a report submitted by a three-member panel, set up on the order of Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal, for a detailed inquiry. The BJP and the Congress had demanded a free and fair probe into the issue.

CITY ► PAGE 3

# CBI, SIT to investigate Bengal violence cases

HC orders submission of status reports within six weeks

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed a CBI investigation into all cases of murder and crimes against women in connection with alleged post-poll violence in West Bengal.

For other cases, the court constituted a special investigation team of three senior IPS officers of the West Bengal cadre.

The order by a five-judge Bench comes after allegations of violence were brought before the court in the form of multiple writ petitions. The court had directed the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to set up a committee to look into the allegations. The committee submitted its report on July 13, suggesting a CBI investigation into the matter.

"All the cases where, as per the report of the committee, the allegations are about murder of a person and crime against women regarding rape/attempt to rape, shall be referred to CBI for investigation. The committee, NHRC, any other

**In number of cases, the State had failed to register FIRs and opined the same to be not cases of murder. This shows pre-determined mind to take investigation into a particular direction**

**An investigation by independent agency will inspire confidence to all concerned**



commission or authority and the State shall immediately hand over entire record of the cases entrusted to the CBI for investigation," the order by the Bench, headed by acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal, said.

The Bench will monitor the investigations by both the CBI and the SIT. It asked the two agencies to submit status reports to the court within six weeks.

The order was written by the acting Chief Justice and Justices I.P. Mukerji, Harish Tandon, Soumen Sen and Subrata Talukdar gave concurring orders, some with their own views.

"Heinous crime such as murder and rape deserve to

be investigated by an independent agency which in circumstances can only be Central Bureau of Investigation. It is for the reason that in number of cases, the State had failed to register FIRs and opined the same to be not cases of murder. This shows pre-determined mind to take investigation into a particular direction. Under such circumstances, investigation by independent agency will inspire confidence to all concerned," Justice Bindal wrote in the order.

Hours after the order, the CBI formed four teams headed by senior officers to investigate the cases.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

# U.S. not interested in trade pact: Goyal

We will look at working with them on market access issues, says Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Hopes of an India-U.S. trade pact are off the table even as India is keen to resolve trade issues with the U.S., Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday, after referring to signals from the Joe Biden administration that it is not interested in a free trade agreement.

The comments are significant as this is the first time that the stance of the Biden administration on the FTA negotiations, something the previous Donald Trump administration was keen to work on, has been spelt out officially.

"The U.S., as of now, has kind of indicated that they are not looking for new trade agreements, but we will look at working with them on



Piyush Goyal

market access issues on both sides," Mr. Goyal said during an interaction with exporters. The Minister added that even resolution of these issues would boost outbound trade to the U.S.

Resolving issues such as non-tariff barriers, entering mutual recognition agreements, and aligning with each other on higher quality international standards would help spur trade between the countries, he said.

On his recent visit to India, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken had said India and the U.S. must continue to grow their trade relationship to fuel the economic recovery.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

# HC protects interfaith couples from Gujarat law

MAHESH LANGA  
AHMEDABAD

Granting protection to interfaith couples from harassment under Gujarat's anti-conversion law, the Gujarat High Court on Thursday said some sections of the Act will not apply to a marriage that did not involve force, fraud or allurement.

A Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Biren Vaishnav, passed the interim order, saying it was meant to protect people from unnecessary harassment. The order applies to

Sections 3, 4, 4A to 4C, 5, 6 and 6A of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021.

"Pending further hearing, rigours of Section 3, 4, 4A to 4C, 5, 6, and 6A shall not operate merely because the marriage is solemnised by a person of one religion with another religion without force, allurement or fraudulent means, and such marriages cannot be termed as marriage for the purpose of unlawful conversion," the Chief Justice said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

# Loan scheme to be notified soon, says FM

VIKAS DHOOOT  
NEW DELHI

A ₹60,000 crore loan guarantee scheme for helping sectors hit the hardest by COVID-19 is yet to get off the ground, 52 days after it figured at the top of an economic relief package to cope with the shocks of the second wave.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said work on it was under way, and it will be notified and implemented soon. "It's all happening and is in the process," she told *The Hindu*.

This proposed credit sup-

port was part of a new ₹1.1 lakh crore loan guarantee scheme for COVID-affected sectors, announced on June 28 under a relief package whose financial implications were pegged at nearly ₹6.29 lakh crore by the government.

Of the ₹1.1 lakh crore additional credit that was to flow to COVID-affected businesses, ₹50,000 crore was earmarked for healthcare projects in non-metro cities and was approved by the Union Cabinet two days later.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 10

# RSS-affiliated farm unions plan stir

Bharatiya Kisan Sangh will protest on September 8 to demand MSP guarantee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)-affiliated farmers and trade unions on Thursday announced plans to hold protests on September 8 to demand Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops and curbs on price rise.

Leaders of the RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) said the Centre should either bring in a law to ensure that MSPs are actually paid to farmers or amend the 2020

farm reform laws to do so.

This is also a demand of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) platform of farm unions, which is opposed to the BJP and has been vociferously protesting the three farm laws for almost a year now.

"There is no point in announcing MSP rates if most of the farmers are not actually getting that price in the *mandis*. Many farmers are not even getting their production costs covered," BKS general secretary Badri Narayan

Chaudhary told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

#### "Time till month-end"

"We will give the government time to take action and respond to our concerns until the end of this month. But if they do not, we are prepared to carry out a *dharna* at the national level on September 8," he added.

He said the BKS was not asking the government itself to procure all crops at MSP rates, but rather to ensure

that no buyer is allowed to pay below MSP rates.

Meanwhile, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), the Central trade union affiliated with the RSS, wrote to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday with a copy of the resolution passed in their meeting last week.

The BMS resolution said it would hold protests in all districts of the country on September 8 if the government did not take immediate steps to curb price rise.

# Nagaland CM allays fears over RIIN

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has sought to allay fears over an exercise akin to Assam's National Register of Citizens, allegedly designed to leave out certain Nagas and non-Nagas for their eventual eviction or denial of opportunities.

The State government, through a notification on June 29, 2019, had decided to update the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN) with December 1, 1963, as the cut-off date for the inclusion of people in it. The exercise was put on hold after opposition from various quarters, which demanded that the cut-off date be changed to April 28, 1977, when the government laid down the criteria for issuing indigenous inhabitant certificates to the residents.

"Citizens of India should not be denied their rights. Therefore, decisions on RIIN should be well thought-out and should not cause any harassment to any community," Mr. Rio said at a consultative meeting between the government and leaders of apex Naga tribal bodies on Wednesday.



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## Delhi Police constable sacked due to involvement in illegal activities

Station House Officer has also been sent to District Lines

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
A constable has been dismissed from his service for his involvement in illegal activities in Paharganj, the police said on Thursday.  
The Station House Officer has also been sent to District Lines.  
In an order dated August 18 signed by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Jasmeet Singh, it was stated that Constable Amit Kumar “has committed one of the gravest acts of misconduct which cannot be tolerated in any disciplined organisation like the police... He indulged himself in an abominable

act... The shameful act committed by him has not only tarnished the image of police force and brought disgrace to the organisation but has also demoralised other police officers”.  
**Case comes to fore**  
It is stated that a case of firing was reported on August 14 in Paharganj police station and it was found that the firing was between two groups over the operation of satta.  
It was further revealed that the constable was working in close connivance with the satta operator and was involved in the collection of

proceeds from such illegal activities. The order also stated that the constable was aware of all the illegal practices, which were being undertaken at some of the bars. Mr. Kumar had allegedly hidden his connection with the owners of the bars when asked about them. His call detail records, however, proved otherwise.  
On July 26, the constable was sent to District Lines after which a discreet inquiry was initiated against him.  
A senior police officer said the punishment of such policemen will send a loud message to others to not flout rules.

## CM to inaugurate city’s first smog tower

Event scheduled for August 23; move aimed to control air pollution in Delhi, says Environment Minister

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will inaugurate the city’s first “smog tower” to help purify polluted air.  
“The smog tower will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal on August 23, 2021. Next, experts will start monitoring the performance of the tower and then assess its impact on the environment. We will then accordingly submit a report to the government and act upon the plan,” Mr. Rai said after inspecting the tower at Baba Khark Singh Marg in Connaught Place.  
The smog tower is a 24 metre-high structure fitted with fans and air filters and it will draw in polluted air from the top and release purified air near the ground through fans fitted on sides. The tower has 40 big fans and 5,000 filters to clean the air.

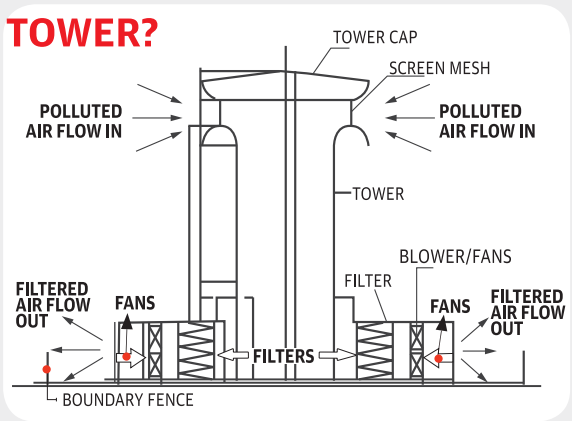
**Supreme Court order**  
On January 13 last year, the Supreme Court ordered the Delhi government to build a smog tower at Connaught Place in the city by April 13,



Environment Minister Gopal Rai inspecting the construction site of the smog tower at Connaught Place in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

### WHAT IS A SMOG TOWER?

- It is a 24-metre-high steel and cement structure fitted with fans and filters to purify air
- A total of 40 big fans at the bottom of the tower will suck in polluted air from the top and it will pass through 5,000 filters installed at the bottom
- The tower is built at a cost of ₹20 crore
- 1,000 cubic metre of air per second will be purified by the tower
- The ‘3M Filtrete’ filters contain electrostatically charged filter media and can capture particles as small as 0.3-10 microns in size



2020, to control air pollution.  
On the same day, the court also ordered a smog tower to

be installed in Anand Vihar by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) by the same time. But the govern-

ments missed the deadlines for both the towers.  
On July 29, 2020, the Supreme Court threatened con-

After inauguration, experts will start monitoring the performance of the tower and then assess its impact on the environment. We will then accordingly submit a report to the government and act upon the plan

GOPAL RAI  
Environment Minister

tempt action against the Indian Institute of Technology (Bombay) on learning that the premier institution has opted to pull out of the court-ordered project to instal the tower.  
Less than a month after this, an MoU was signed for building the tower.  
The Delhi Pollution Control Committee of the State government was the nodal authority for building the tower. IIT Mumbai and IIT Delhi were technical advisors and Tata Project Ltd. executed the project.  
The smog tower is a pilot project and is expected to influence the air quality of more than 1 km in the down-wind direction, said an official. “The government is working on reducing pollution in the city; be it dust pollution, vehicular pollution or stubble burning...I am certain that the smog tower will contribute immensely towards this cause. The smog tower will work with full force after the monsoon season,” Mr. Rai said.

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will pay floral tributes to the great martyr at  
Grain Market, Longowal (Sangrur) on  
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## Two held for raping woman

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
Two persons have been arrested for allegedly raping a 22-year-old woman in north-east Delhi's Shastri Nagar, the police said on Thursday.  
A senior officer said the accused have been identified as Nitin and Rohit – both residents of Noida. The victim is also a resident of Noida.  
The police said a call was received at 4 p.m. on August 16 on the women's helpline number wherein the caller stated that she was raped by two men. She told the police that the duo brought her to Delhi in a car from Noida on the pretext of helping her with a job and raped her, and dumped her at Dharampura junction. Her medical examination has been conducted.  
The victim said she and Rohit were known to each other. The victim gave the police the registration number of the vehicle. Next, the accused were held.  
A case under Section 376D (punishment for gang rape) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against the accused.

## IIT-D reaches out to alumni for fundraising campaign

It seeks to strengthen teaching, research  
**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi has reached out to its alumni to celebrate 60 years of its establishment through a fundraising campaign- Going Further, by Giving Back.  
The campaign is seeking support to realise the institute's strategic vision for 2030.  
**From ₹3L-₹61L**  
The institute said the IIT-Delhi Endowment Fund has set an ambitious target of collecting pledges from its over 54,000 global alumni by which alumni can pledge amounts ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹61 lakh to be contributed over five years.  
It added that the effort is inspired by the annual fund-raising approaches of some of the leading global universities, which have raised even larger levels of alumni and philanthropic funding through their annual campaigns.  
In the last two decades, alumni of IITD have launched over 800 startups, raising over US\$19 bil-

lion in funds collectively, placing the Institute amongst the world's top-10 undergraduate programmes in terms of a number of startups founded and capital raised by its graduates. The institute is hoping that these entrepreneurs will be willing to give back to their alma mater.  
The institute is seeking to strengthening teaching and research, investing in technology leadership in select areas, revamping industry engagements, setting up a world-class entrepreneurship centre for alumni, students, and faculty and build strong alumni engagement teams by 2030.  
V. Ramgopal Rao, director, IIT, Delhi, speaking about the campaign said since its establishment in 1961, IIT-Delhi has nurtured and encouraged people who want to change the world by doing things differently. After 60 years, that same founding ethos has gained even more significance by giving brilliant people the space to make a tangible difference, to do new and disruptive things.

## BusinessLine's quiz back with its 18th edition; sees over 6,000 participants

This time, the competition will be in the virtual format

BusinessLine's Cerebration 2021 – one of India's premier corporate quiz championships – is back with its 18th edition. This time, the quiz will be in a virtual format.  
The quiz is designed for corporate executives, business professionals, B-school students, and MBA aspirants.  
The preliminary online quizzing was scheduled from August 4 till August 11 to shortlist the top six from each of the six cities – Chennai, Bengaluru, Kochi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi. It witnessed more than 6,000 participants.  
Now for the regional Delhi round, the following six participants will battle it out and one will qualify for the grand finale on August 28. Participants selected for the Delhi regional round, which is scheduled on August 21 at



4 p.m., are: Ayush Awasthi, EY; Rahul Panda, Steel Authority of India Ltd; Rishi Kant Gupta, Steel Authority of India Ltd; Ashish Kumar, Zomato; Abhinav Dhar, PT JayKay Files Indonesia; and Rohan Khanna, Barclays.

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# Centre for CBI inquiry into ‘DTC low-floor bus scam’

It is a political conspiracy: Delhi govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Home Ministry has recommended a preliminary enquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the purchase of 1,000 low-floor buses by the Delhi government.

In a letter to the Chief Secretary of the Delhi government, the Home Ministry took note of a report submitted by a three-member committee set up on Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal’s order, for a detailed inquiry.

The Ministry said after examining the matter, and with the approval of the competent authority, it had requested the Department of Personnel and Training to take necessary action for undertaking a preliminary enquiry by the CBI.

The BJP and the Congress that had raised the issue demanded that Transport Minister and DTC chairman Kailash Gahlot and all those officials involved must be removed from their post with immediate effect and free and fair probe must be ensured.

Reacting, the Delhi government said: “There is absolutely no truth to these allegations. A committee was already set up to investigate the matter thoroughly, which gave a clean chit. It is a politically motivated conspiracy against the AAP.”

A Delhi government spokesperson said that the BJP wants to prevent the residents from getting new buses and that, in the past as well, the Central government has tried to harass the

Delhi government using the CBI, but not even once has their attempt been successful because there has never been any truth to any of their allegations. “The Delhi government does not believe in the politics of slander, it only believes in good governance and is committed to delivering upon its promise of good governance,” the spokesperson said.

Former State BJP president and Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta said that the matter was raised in the Delhi Assembly in March 2021 and complaint filed in the Anti Corruption Branch but the Delhi government instead of answering, tried every trick in the book to suppress the matter altogether.

“The Ministry of Home Affairs took cognisance of the report submitted by the committee and found the findings to be a sufficient ground to order a CBI probe. The ₹5,000-crore scam has dented the carefully crafted image of Mr. Kejriwal of being a crusader against corruption. Instead, it is evident that he has been standing and shielding the corrupt since Day 1,” Mr. Gupta said.

“Ever since the AAP came to power, it has bled the DTC to virtual death, and the corporation needs a massive overhaul to bring it back into the level of efficiency and profits it had attained under the Congress rule to provide affordable transport to the common people,” said Delhi Congress president Ch. Anil Kumar.

# Capital records maximum temperature of 36.5°C; moderate rain likely today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The national capital recorded a maximum temperature of 36.5 degrees Celsius on

Thursday, three notches above season’s average, the India Meteorological Department said.

The minimum tempera-

ture in the city settled at 27.5 degrees Celsius, one notch above normal, it said.

The relative humidity recorded at 5.30 p.m. was 56%.

The weatherman has predicted “generally cloudy sky with moderate rain” for Delhi on Friday.

According to weather ex-

perts, good rainfall in the last 10 days of the month is expected to cover the precipitation deficit in the national capital.

Normally, the Capital gauges 247.7 mm rainfall in August. The IMD had earlier predicted normal rainfall for Delhi this month.

|                   |       |       |       |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| ☀️🌧️ Timings      |       |       |       |
| DELHI             |       |       |       |
| FRIDAY, AUG. 20   |       |       |       |
| ☀️ RISE           | 05:54 | 🌙 SET | 18:56 |
| 🌧️ RISE           | 17:43 | 🌅 SET | 03:12 |
| SATURDAY, AUG. 21 |       |       |       |
| ☀️ RISE           | 05:54 | 🌙 SET | 18:55 |
| 🌧️ RISE           | 18:30 | 🌅 SET | 04:18 |
| SUNDAY, AUG. 22   |       |       |       |
| ☀️ RISE           | 05:55 | 🌙 SET | 18:54 |
| 🌧️ RISE           | 19:12 | 🌅 SET | 05:24 |

|               |     |     |
|---------------|-----|-----|
| Delhi Weather | max | min |
| Delhi City    | 36  | 27  |
| Safdarjang    | 36  | 27  |
| Palam         | 37  | 29  |

**Delhi Palam Today**  
**34°C** Few spells of rain and thundershower with cloudy sky and moderate winds. Day remian warm and humid.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
**32°C** Few spells of light to moderate rain and thundershower would continue. Light winds with cloudy sky to mainly overcast sky.

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THE HINDU

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## Foreign national held with heroin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old national of Ivory Coast was arrested for allegedly selling heroin in the national capital, the police said on Thursday.

The accused has been identified as Kassi Francis, a resident of Ivory Coast in Africa, they said.

On Saturday, the police received information that a foreign national will come to metro pillar number 894B and was suspected to sell heroin, Dwarka Sector-15, the police said.

The police laid a trap and apprehended Francis who came on a scooter.

### Search conducted

A search was conducted and a polythene bag was found in his pocket, they said. When it was opened, 101 gram heroin, worth over ₹1 crore in international market, was found in it, the police said.



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‘Help children orphaned due to COVID-19’

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has urged people to sponsor the needs of a child or children or donate towards the Delhi Child Welfare Fund as many children have been rendered orphans due to COVID-19.

A public notice issued by

the Women and Child Development Department of the Delhi government also said that people can contact the department to be foster parents.

The department said that during the pandemic, many children have been rendered orphan and deprived of fa-

mily care having lost one or both parents and they need to be placed in foster care so that their right to grow in a family is restored.

**Foster parents**  
“Seek recognition as ‘Fit Person or Foster Parents’ to receive a child/children for ser-

vices of specific purpose based on the need or in foster care in your family,” the notice read.

“You any visit the district child protection unit of respective district of Delhi and submit your application or many mail it at scpsdelhi@gmail.com,” it said.



An RT-PCR test in progress at Majlis Park in Delhi on Thursday. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

City reports 25 fresh infections, two deaths

Positivity rate now stands at 0.04%; 69,160 tests conducted

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Capital reported only 25 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,37,217, as per a bulletin released by the Delhi government.

There were two new deaths reported and the total number of deaths stood

at 25,079.

A total of 69,160 tests were done in a day and that test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.04%.

Of the total cases, 14,11,690 people have recovered and there are only 448 active cases.

The COVID-19 vaccine stock of the city on Thursday

morning would last for three days, as per another bulletin.

**Number of vaccinations**  
A total of 1,37,938 vaccinations were done on Wednesday and till now, 1,19,71,576 doses of vaccines have been administered in the city, the bulletin said.

NGT plea seeks action against construction project in Ghaziabad

Tribunal tells panel to furnish report within three months

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Following a plea seeking remedial action against a construction project in Ghaziabad for alleged violation of environmental norms, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed senior environment ministry and pollution control board officials to conduct an audit of the State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) to find out how “frequent blatant violations” are taking place.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel constituted a two-member committee comprising officials from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to look into the violations.

The committee will comprise officials from the Union Environment Ministry, CPCB, district magistrate Ghaziabad and Uttar Pradesh pollution control board, the Bench specified.

“The joint committee may visit the site and interact with stakeholders to



**The NGT plea alleged that construction was taking place without requisite environmental clearances**

verify the status of compliance. Based on the facts found, statutory authorities may take remedial action including stopping creation of third party rights and further construction activities, if the same are found to be in violation of the law,” the Bench said. The Tribunal directed the committee to furnish the report within three months.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by Savour Park Apartment Owners Association, which alleged that construction was being taken place without requisite environmental clearances.

Case against candidate for illegal distribution of liquor in the Capital

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The police have registered a case following a complaint alleging illegal distribution of liquor by a candidate, Paramjeet Singh Chandok, during the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee elections.

The police said they got a PCR call at Naraina police station regarding illegal distribution of liquor at the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee elections by Ward No. 13 candidate Paramjeet Singh Chandok of Shiromani Akali Dal party.

“Instantly a raid was conducted at the premises in Naraina Vihar and 35 bottles of whiskey were recovered from the possession of Harveen Singh Lamba [55],” said Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Urvija Goel.

The police said that another raid was conducted at the co-accomplee – C.S. Bhatia (63) – wherein two filled and 28 empty bottles of whiskey were recovered from his premise.

The police said Mr. Bhatia is senior V-P of SAD, Delhi. A case under Section 33/38/58 Delhi Excise Act has been registered and investigation is in process.

**BSES**  
**BSES Rajdhani Power Limited**  
Regd. Off.: BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019  
Website: www.bsesdelhi.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

**Objections / Response to BSES Rajdhani Power Limited's Appeal No. 246 of 2021 filed before the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal for Electricity against DERC Tariff Order dated 28.08.2020 related to the "True-up of expenses for FY 2018-19 and approval of Aggregate Revenue Requirement & Tariff for FY 2020-21".**

1. BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. ("BRPL") has filed an Appeal No. 246 of 2021 before the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal for Electricity ("Hon'ble Tribunal") challenging the Tariff Order dated 28.08.2020 passed by Ld. Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission ("DERC") in Petition No. 01 of 2020 with respect to certain specific findings and observations. The Appeal has been admitted on 16.07.2021. Accordingly, BRPL by the Public Notice seeks to inform the public regarding filing of the Appeal as also to invite objections and responses (if any) to the Appeal. The Appeal is listed for hearing on 02.09.2021 before the Hon'ble Tribunal (via video conference mode).
2. The findings of the DERC have been challenged on the following issues:

| S. No. | Issues   |
|--------|--|
| 1      | No relaxation in CE and T&D Target despite force majeure events  |
| 2      | Overestimation of sales  |
| 3      | Reduction in O&M Expenses based on provisionally estimated lower capitalization for FY 2020-21   |
| 4      | Cost of auditor certificates pursuant to Judgment in Appeal 246 of 2014  |
| 5      | License fees paid on assets  |
| 6      | Physical verification Issues: 10 issues (Issue No. 7, 14, 15, 16, 20, 23, 24, 36,58) linked to the same by the Commission pending for implementation   |
| 7      | Loss due to retirement of assets from FY 2004-05 to FY 2016-17 (DERC Order 29.05.2017)   |
| 8      | Disallowance of Bank charges/ syndication fees from FY 2007-08 to FY 2018-19   |
| 9      | Computation of AT&C Losses for FY 10 using actual kWh figures  |
| 10     | Non-considerations of actual units reversed on account of self-consumption   |
| 11     | Financing cost of LPSC based on SBI PLR (FY 08 to FY 13)   |
| 12     | Incorrect revision of R&M Expenses by revising "K" Factor from FY 13 to FY 17  |
| 13     | Funding of working capital in debt-equity ratio of 70:30 for first control period  |
| 14     | Re-casting of means of finance based on actual consumer contribution capitalised   |
| 15     | Lower rates of carrying cost   |
| 16     | Deferment of capitalization based on EI Certificate  |
| 17     | Impact of Truing-up of first 11 months of FY 08  |
| 18     | Non-revision of AT&C Loss Trajectory for second control period (FY 13-16)  |
| 19     | Increase in employee expenses corresponding to increase in consumer base   |
| 20     | Lower Cost of debt for second Control Period (FY 13 to FY 17)  |
| 21     | R&M and A&G Expenses for FY 05   |
| 22     | Re-fixation of AT&C Loss for FY 12   |
| 23     | True-up of interest rates of loans for first control period (FY 08 to FY12)  |
| 24     | Capital expenditure on equipment's purchased from REL not allowed  |
| 25     | Repayment of loans not considered while computing WACC   |
| 26     | Disallowance of Incentive from sale of surplus power.  |
| 27     | No reasoning specified for lower rate of interest for capex loans for FY 2018-19   |
| 28A    | Advance from consumers-FY 2017-18.   |
| 28B    | Advance from consumers-FY 2018-19  |
| 29     | Incorrect truing-up of carrying cost rates for FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19   |
| 30     | Incorrect computation of over-achievement on account of T&D loss targets   |
| 31     | Ratio of fixed to energy charges   |
| 32     | Income from street light maintenance business to be considered as other business income  |
| 33     | Commission earned on ED considered as Non-Tariff Income  |
| 34     | Disallowance of interest on inter-company loans by considering it as Non-Tariff Income   |
| 35     | Treatment of Income-tax contrary to Regulations  |
| 36     | Incorrect truing-up of Working Capital Interest rates for FY 2018-19   |
| 37     | Loans approved since FY 2008-09  |
| 38     | Loss due to retirement of assets from FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19  |
| 39     | Normative rebate of 2%   |
| 40     | RPO penalty  |
| 41     | Capitalisation for FY 2017-18  |
| 42     | Capitalisation for FY 2018-19  |
| 43     | Reduction in O&M Expenses based on provisionally allowed capitalisation despite no reduction in capacity (FY 2018-19)  |
| 44     | KYC Expenses   |
| 45     | Additional O&M Expenses FY 17-18 and 18-19: Impact of GST, Impact of Minimum wage revision, SMS Charges, Legal fees, Legal expenses, Revision of Bonus of Contractual employees, Energy Audit Expenses as part of DSM Charges. |
| 46     | Unilateral consideration of Special Rebate announced by Ministry of Power in Power Purchase Costs for FY 2020-21.  |
| 47     | Erroneously disallowed the Sustained Deviation Charges while computing the total Power Purchase Cost for 2018-19.  |
| 48     | Direction related to Pension Trust Liability   |
| 49     | Incorrect levy of penalty on account of alleged delay in depositing deficit in pension trust amount  |
| 50     | Write-back miscellaneous provisions considered as part of NTI for FY 2007-08 to 2018-19  |
| 51     | Cost disallowed on account of excessive trading at UI above contingency limit  |
| 52     | Disallowance of power purchase cost from FY 13 to FY 16 on account of overlapping banking transactions   |
| 53     | Disallowance on account of monthly billing rebate contrary to its' own affidavit submitted by the Commission in Civil Appeal 6959-60 of 2015 before Hon'ble Supreme Court  |
| 54     | Working Capital not changed for previous period despite of correct treatment for FY 2017-18  |
| 55     | Disallowance on account of Regulated power from FY 12 to FY 18   |
| 56     | Disallowance of rate of short term power procured during period of Regulation of Power   |
| 57     | Capping of Equity at 30% and re-opening the statutory Transfer Scheme  |
| 58     | Erroneous net worth computation  |
| 59     | Enforcement sales not considered on actual basis   |
| 60     | Directive on adjustment related to 1% of sales   |
| 61     | Old methodology for computation of financing cost of LPSC continued  |
| 62     | Non-correction of errors (in RoCE)   |
| 63     | Efficiency Factor for FY 2010-11.  |
| 64     | Erroneous consideration of Short-term Power Purchase Cost for FY 2020-21.  |

3. Copies of the Appeal Paper Book can be obtained from office of Mr. Kishan Singh Rana having their offices at: J. Sagar Associates, B 303, 3rd Floor, Ansal Plaza, Hudco Place, August Kranti Marg New Delhi - 110049 (Phone: 011-49370673)
4. Anyone who intends to file Objections/Responses to the Appeal may file 3 copies of the same at the Registry, Appellate Tribunal for Electricity, 7th Floor, Core IV, SCOPE Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003 before the next date of hearing in the matter along with proof of service on the Appellant addressed to Mr. Anupam Varma/ Mr. Rahul Kinra, J. Sagar Associates, B 303, 3rd Floor, Ansal Plaza, Hudco Place, August Kranti Marg New Delhi - 110049 (011-43110600, 43110617).
5. The said submissions should be supported by an affidavit in the notified format and should carry the full name, postal address and e-mail address, if any, of the sender. Should the objector wish to be heard in person, he must appear before the Hon'ble Tribunal on 02.09.2021 for which no separate notice shall be issued.

**For BSES Rajdhani Power Limited**  
Sd/-  
Rajul Agarwal  
Head (Regulatory Affairs)

Regd. Off. : BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527  
Telephone No. : 19123 (Toll-free) | Fax No. : +91 11 39999890 | Website : www.bsesdelhi.com

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,  
GENERATION DIVISION USHP-I, SUMBAL (Kangan)**  
(Email id: xenesumbal@gmail.com)  
**e-NIT No: GDS/ 01 of 2021-22**  
**Dated: -16-08-2021**

For and on behalf of the Managing Director, J&K Power Development Corporation, sealed bids (Two Cover) valid for 180 days, accompanied with earnest money in the shape of DD/ CDR/FDR/BG from any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank @ 2% of the estimated value pledged to the Accounts officer with Chief Engineer, Generation Wing, Kmr, JKPDC are invited from OEM/ Registered firms/ Contractors having sufficient experience of the relevant job

| S. No. | Description                                       | Estimated cost (Lacs) | Amount of EMD (Rs) | Cost of tender Documents Rs. (Non refundable) | Time of completion |
|--------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| 01     | Restoration of Uni-II of 2x11.3 MW USHP-I, Sumbal | 80.83                 | 161600             | 2000.00                                       | 45 days            |

**CRITICAL DATES**

|    |   |                          |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | Date of Issue of tender notice              | 16-08-2021               |
| 2. | Period of downloading of bidding documents. | 18-08-2021 to 01-09-2021 |
| 3. | Bid submission start date                   | 18-08-2021               |
| 4. | Bid submission end date                     | 01-09-2021               |
| 5. | Date & time of opening of Bid (Online).     | 02-09-2021               |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 1.   | The complete bidding process in two cover will be online. Cover 1 contains techno commercial bid and cover 2 contains price bid. The bid document along with EMD, DD and all other required documents shall be uploaded online and also shall be submitted in the office of Superintending Engineer, Generation Circle-II, JKPDC, Bemina Srinagar and same will be considered for technical bid opening. Due to non operation of treasury in JKPDC the Cost of tender document in original shall be submitted in the office of Superintending Engineer, Generation Circle-II, JKPDC, Bemina Srinagar by or before bid submission end date. |
| 2.   | Bid documents can be seen at & downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in. The bid documents contain Qualifying criteria for the bidders, specifications, Bill of Quantities, terms & conditions and other details.  |
| i)   | DD on account of cost of tender document (Pledged to CP&AO Kangan).  |
| ii)  | Prescribed EMD (i.e 2 % of estimated value).   |
| iii) | Copy of Registration certificate.  |
| iv)  | Copy of valid GST Registration Certificate.  |

**Authority reserves the right to: -**

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| i)  | Increase / Decrease the quantity of material.                |
| ii) | Reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof. |

**Sd/-**  
**Executive Engineer**  
**Generation Division USHP-I**  
**Sumbal**

**DIPK-NB-2709/21**



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The State of Chhattisgarh  
Remembers & Pays its Tribute to  
Former Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna

## Late Rajiv Gandhi

on his Birth Anniversary  
**Sadbhavana Diwas**  
on 20<sup>th</sup> August



### GODHAN NYAY YOJANA

Cow dung bringing monetary benefits

| Category                 | Amount    |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Cattle Farmers           | ₹99.08 cr |
| Women's Self-Help Groups | ₹18.49 cr |
| Gauthan Committees       | ₹26.75 cr |



### RAJIV GANDHI KISAN NYAY YOJANA

Transfer of second instalment of  
**₹1522cr**

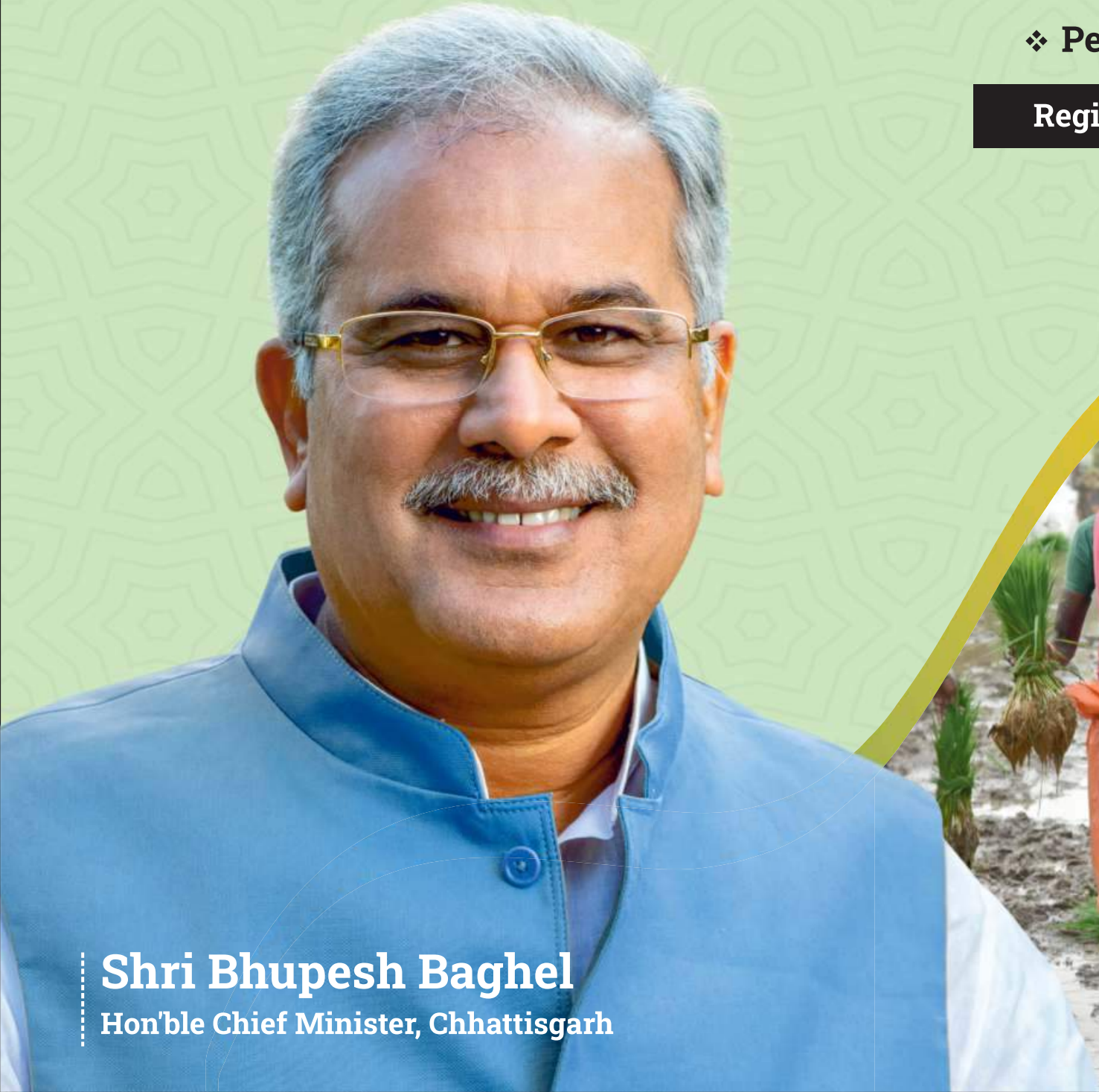
- ❖ ₹5750 cr to be paid in 4 instalments, benefit to 20.74 lakh farmers
- ❖ First instalment of ₹1526 cr transferred on 21st May
- ❖ Farmers selling paddy at MSP this year will receive input subsidy of ₹10,000 per acre for Kharif season 2020-21 if switching crops or planting trees

**₹5702 cr transferred last year**

### RAJIV GANDHI GRAMIN BHOOMIHIN KRISHI MAJDOOR NYAY YOJANA

- ❖ To be implemented from FY 2021-22
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**Registration open from 1<sup>st</sup> Sep till 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2021**



**Shri Bhupesh Baghel**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh





# Haryana Assembly session likely to be a stormy affair

Opposition set to corner State government on several issues

**VIKAS VASUDEVA**  
CHANDIGARH

The monsoon session of the Haryana Assembly, which is slated to begin on August 20, is likely to be a stormy affair, with the Opposition set to corner the BJP-led government on several issues, including police lodging sedition cases against farmers, rising inflation and unemployment.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly of the Congress party, on Thursday chaired a meeting of Congress Legislature Party (CLP) here to deliberate issues to be raised during the Assembly session.



Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda

government is in deep slumber, hoping that the problems will go away on their own,” Mr. Hooda added.

“The government hid the actual death toll due to COVID-19 and a lack of oxygen. It is clear that the government does not want to see the ground reality. Today, unemployment, crime and inflation are at their peak. Scams are being carried out in the name of employment and government recruitments,” he said.

Mr. Hooda said poor families in the State during the previous Congress government were provided with foodgrains, pulses, sugar, salt and oil when he was the Chief Minister.

“During the BJP-JJP government, this scheme of free ration has become only a medium of advertising and creating publicity events. The present government stopped giving pulses, mustard oil, sugar and salt to the poor,” the Congress leader added.

# Now, JD(U) Ministers to hear people’s grievances at party office

Party following in the footsteps of the BJP

**AMARNATH TEWARY**  
PATNA



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. ■ FILE PHOTO

Following in the footsteps of ruling alliance partner BJP, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has asked JD (U) Ministers to listen to grievances of party workers and people at the State unit’s headquarters in Patna for four days a week.

The BJP Ministers in the Nitish Kumar Cabinet have been doing this since August 2 under the party’s *sayog* (assistance) programme for six days a week.

“Ministers informed” “All Ministers of the JD(U) have been informed about the decision to be at the party office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from next week”, said State JD(U) president Umesh Singh Kushwaha.

Two other Ministers too would be present on the given day, he said.

As per the schedule, Education Minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary, along with Food and Consumer Protection Minister Leshi Singh and Minority Welfare Minister Zama Khan, will be present at the party office from 11.30 a.m. every Tuesday from next week.

“Similarly, other Ministers too would be present at the party office on the given day to hear grievances of party workers and other people”, added Mr. Kushwaha.

“BJP now shows the path to the ruling alliance partner JD(U) in Bihar on what to do and what not. Earlier, it was vice-versa, wasn’t it?”, asked a senior RJD leader, preferring anonymity.

# Private varsity brought under RTI purview

‘It received benefits from Odisha govt.’

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK**  
BHUBANESWAR

The State Information Commission (SIC) in Odisha has declared Kalinga Institute of Industrial Training (KIIT), a deemed to be university and one of State’s largest private institutions, as a public authority, which means the university has to furnish information under the Right To Information Act.

Despite KIIT’s reluctance to come under the purview of the RTI Act during the past four years of hearing, the SIC, in a 92-page judgment, observed that since the institute received significant benefits from the State government, without which it would have struggled to carry on, it should respond to the RTI queries.

This is for the first time that a major private university in Odisha has been declared a public authority under the RTI Act.

“The commission is of the considered view that the KIIT is a public authority within the meaning of Sec-

tion 2(h)(d)(ii) of the RTI Act, 2005 and is directed to furnish the required information to the appellant, as per his application in Form-A, within 30 days from the date of receipt of this order,” State Chief Information Commissioner Sunil Kumar Misra said in a judgment.

Pradip Pradhan, an RTI activist, had knocked on the doors of the SIC after he was denied information by the institution in 2017.

**KIIT submission** KIIT secretary Rabindra Nath Das had submitted that the institution did not come under the RTI Act as it was a society of private persons registered under the Societies’ Registration Act, 1860, and it was neither set up under the Constitution nor was it established by an Act of Parliament or the State Assembly.

Mr. Pradhan had argued that KIIT was a big beneficiary of government’s “largesse”.

# ‘Rajasthan Cong. leaders fighting for the chair’

Union Minister leads ‘Jan Ashirwad Yatra’ to highlight achievements of Modi govt.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
JAIPUR



Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav taking part in the ‘Jan Ashirwad Yatra’ in Rajasthan’s Alwar district on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav on Thursday targeted the ruling Congress in Rajasthan for the “power tussle” between rival factions, while leading a “Jan Ashirwad Yatra” for highlighting the achievements of the NDA government at the Centre. Mr. Yadav said the top leaders of the Congress were fighting for the chair.

The three-day yatra, which began from Bhiwadi in Alwar district, will cover a distance of 417 km and hold public dialogues at 40 places. The march will pass through the rural areas and the towns in Alwar and Jaipur districts and finish in Ajmer on Saturday.

Mr. Yadav, a Rajya Sabha member from Rajasthan, has made his maiden entry into the State after his recent induction in the Union Cabinet. Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, BJP State president Satish Poonia and other leaders accompanied Mr. Yadav in a specially-designed vehicle, painted in saffron colour, during the yatra.

Mr. Yadav alleged that the fight between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot had pushed back the develop-

ment agenda and resulted in lack of governance and a poor law and order situation. “This is a meaningless tussle for power... It will cause a great harm to the rights of citizens and impede the State’s progress,” he said.

**“Atmanirbhar Bharat”** The Union Minister, who also addressed a meeting of BJP workers at B.M. Birla Auditorium in Jaipur, said the opposition party would win the next State Assembly election and form the government in the State. He said the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had taken several decisions to improve people’s lives and was trans-

forming India into “Atmanirbhar Bharat”.

BJP workers escorted the yatra on motorcycles and cars fitted with loudspeakers and raised slogans in support of Mr. Yadav and the party. The march passed through Tapukara, Tijara, Kishangarh Bas, Khairthal, Bansur, Kotputli, Shaphura, Chandwaji and Achrol before entering the State Capital late in the evening.

Political observers said the yatra was being used for bringing Mr. Yadav, belonging to an Other Backward Class (OBC) community, into the mainstream politics in the State, where the BJP was ridden with factionalism. Mr.

Yadav had planned former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje’s Swaraj Sankalp Yatra in 2013, which played a significant role in her victory in the Assembly polls.

**Public dialogues** The public dialogues during the yatra will also be used for reaching out to the farmers’ groups in the rural areas in an attempt to convince them to end their agitation against the agriculture sector laws. Besides, the appearance of Ms. Raje’s picture in the banners and posters put up for the march was seen as a strategy to end the rift between different camps in the party’s State unit.

# WBTC’s street art campaign lends colour to ‘City of Joy’

Depot walls to celebrate city’s diversity

**BISHWANATH GHOSH**  
KOLKATA



**Paying tribute:** Art celebrating 100 years of Satyajit Ray on the wall of a WBTC tram depot in Park Circus. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Transport Department and art may not always travel hand in hand, but in Kolkata they have come together to lend some colour to roads in the heart of the city.

This Independence Day, the West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC) began an art campaign, ‘Colours of Kolkata’, to celebrate what it called the diversity of Kolkata.

“Street art is common in America, Australia and Europe. A small attempt is being made to add some colour to the city of joy. This year marks 100 years of Satyajit Ray and 160 years of Rabindranath Tagore. To begin with, the street art has begun with these two stalwarts. The location is Park Circus, on the wall of a WBTC tram depot,” said WBTC Managing Director Rajanvir Singh Kapur.

“The whole idea is to add some colour to our mundane streets. The art, celebrating Kolkata and her famous people, will be done on WBTC depot walls, most-

ly located in the heart of the city in prime locations. A lot of times, people spit and deface our depot walls. It looks bad. This would add an artsy touch to the art capital of India and also maybe discourage people from spoiling the walls,” Mr. Kapur, who has initiated a string of people-friendly measures ever since he took charge in January 2020, said.

**Eminent artists** “In future, eminent artists of Kolkata will be invited to help in creating such public art at prominent locations to make the city of joy even more beautiful,” he said.

The ‘Colours of Kolkata’, starting from Park Circus, will cover the walls of most of the depots by Durga Puja in mid-October. The next places in line are Tolly-

gunge, opposite the Tolly Club, and also, Gariahat, near Ballygunge Phari, which also houses the Tram World.

The Tram World was launched in December 2020, commemorating the 140th anniversary of the foundation of Calcutta Tramways Company in London.

The first two art works under ‘Colours of Kolkata’ have been curated by the WBTC in collaboration with Mudar Patherya, a city-based artist, who has long experience in livening up walls and electrical boxes.

“The objective is to utilise the public walls of the city to send out a singular message – that Kolkata is artistically and aesthetically one of the most vibrant cities of the country,” said Mr. Patherya.

# Odisha child rights panel for reopening of classes

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSPCPCR) has recommended reopening of Classes VI to VIII in a phased manner.

“We have held multi-stakeholder discussion over the past several weeks. Teachers, parents and students have strongly advocated for gradual reopening of schools as it was necessary for students’ cognitive and academic development,” said Sandhyabati Pradhan, OSPCPCR chairperson.

**Health issues** Ms. Pradhan said, “long absence of students from schools start to affect their physical and mental health. The online education cannot replace the school education.”

“While appreciating the reopening of Classes X and XII, students and teachers voiced in support of reopening of elementary classes. The commission also recommends reopening of Classes VI, VII and VIII in a phased manner,” says the commission order.

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



**Gudiya**

General public is hereby informed that a female namely **Gudiya Devi (alongwith her son namely Viraj Kumar, Age: 8 Yrs.), W/o: Murari Jha, R/o: Gali No. 21A, Savtenter Nagar, Narela, Delhi has been missing since 25.06.2021 at about 10:00 AM from her home. In this regard DD No. 36A dated 27.06.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Narela, Delhi.** The description of missing lady is as under:  
**Name: Gudiya Devi, Age: 25 Years, Height: 5’3”, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Black & White Colour Saree and Black Colour Sandal in Feet.**  
If anyone has any information about this missing lady please inform P.S. Narela, Delhi  
**Web: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbc@cbi.gov.in**  
**Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639** **SHO**  
**Police Station, Narela, Delhi**  
**Ph: 011-27280435, 7065036323**  
**DP/1167/ON/2021**

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



**ASHU**

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Namely: Ashu, S/o: Sh. Ravi, R/o: Chilla Village, Shiv Mandir, Tanchua Mohalla, Mayur Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi, Age: 21 Years, Height: 5’2”, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Black Colour Shirt & Blue Colour Pajama and Hawai Chappal in feet has been missing since 15.06.2021 from the area of P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 56-A, Dated 19.06.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi.**  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing person please inform the undersigned.  
**Web-site : http://cbi.nic.in**  
**E-Mail ID: cbc@cbi.gov.in**  
**Fax: 011-23011334** **SHO**  
**P.S. Mayur Vihar, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-22711061, 22711048**  
**DP/632/ED/2021**

### SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



**Sujata**

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Sujata, D/o Ram Surat Pandit, R/o H.No. A-360, Raja Vihar, Badli Industrial Area, C/o Rohit Ka Makan, Delhi, Age: 14 years, Height: 5’, Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Thin, wearing White colour Suit and Salwar and Black colour Dupatta and Brown colour Sandel in feet, has been missing/kidnapped from her house since 14.07.2021. In this regard a FIR No. 494/21 U/S 363 IPC, dated 15.07.2021 has been registered at P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi.**  
Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about her please inform undersigned.  
**Website : http://cbi.nic.in**  
**E-mail : cbc@cbi.gov.in**  
**Fax: 011-24368639** **SHO**  
**Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**P.S. Samaipur Badli, Delhi**  
**DP/1180/ON/2021** **Ph. No.: 011-27854757, 27854799**

### APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



**Dead body**

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead from Road Side Near Raja Garden Chowk, New Delhi on 01.08.2021. In this regard a **DD No. 24A, Dated 01.08.2021** has been lodged at **P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi.** The Dead Body has been preserved in DDU Hospital Mortuary for Identification. The description of the dead body is given as under:  
**Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown R/o: Unknown, Age: About 45 years, Height: 5’7” (Approx) Face: Oval, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Medium, Hair: Short Identification: Old healed scar over left frontal region, Wearing: Green T-Shirt and Grey Pajama.**  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so  
**SHO**  
**P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-25101150, 08750871125**  
**DP/519/WD/2021**



**DELHI TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE Development Corporation Ltd. (DTIDC)**  
Delhi Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited  
(An Enterprise of GNCT of Delhi)

**Notice**  
Calling application for filling up various posts on deputation.

DTIDC, an enterprise of Govt. of NCT of Delhi, having its office at 2nd Floor, Maharana Pratap ISBT, Kashmere Gate, Delhi invites applications from the eligible and interested employees of Govt. organizations for the following posts on deputation basis for an initial period of three years:-

1. AGM (Works-Civil) / Executive Engineer (Civil) Level-11 as per 7th CPC (Grade pay Rs. 6600/- pre revised scale)

02 Post

2. AGM (Works-Electrical) / Executive Engineer (Electrical) Level-11as per 7th CPC (Grade pay Rs. 6600/- pre revised scale)

01 Post

3. Manager (Works-Civil) / Asstt. Engineer (Civil) Level-8 as per 7th CPC (Grade pay Rs. 4800/- pre revised scale)

01 Post

4. Manager (Works-Electrical) / Asstt.Engineer (Electrical) Level-8 as per 7th CPC (Grade pay Rs. 4800/- pre revised scale)

02 Post

5. Asstt.Manager (Works-Civil) / Junior Engineer (Civil) Level-6 as per 7th CPC (Grade pay Rs. 4200/- pre revised scale)

02 Post

6. Asstt.Manager (Works-Electrical) / Junior Engineer (Electrical) Level-6 as per 7th CPC (Grade pay Rs. 4200/- pre revised scale)

03 Post

The last of receipt of application is 20.09.2021. The further details regarding eligibility, qualification etc. can be seen on the website of DTIDC i.e. dtidc.delhi.gov.in

DIP/Shabdharat/0258/21-22 Executive Director, DTIDC


### SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



**Radha**

General public is here by informed that this girl **Namely: Radha, D/o Surender Kumar, R/o H. No. K-38, B-Block, Surya Vihar, Kapashera, New Delhi, Age: 21 Years, Height: 5 feet, Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Thin, Wearing: Green Colour Kurta and Blue Jeans and Slippers in Feet, has been reported to be missing since 09.08.2021 from the area of PS Kapashera, New Delhi.**  
In this regard a DD No. 67A, dated 10.08.2021 has been registered at P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi.  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this girl but no clue has come to light so far.  
Any person having any information or clue about this girl kindly inform to the following.  
**E-Mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in**  
**Website: http://cbi.nic.in**  
**Fax: 011-24368639** **SHO**  
**P.S. Kapashera, New Delhi**  
**Ph No. 011-25063758, 7065036226**  
**Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**DP/782/SW/2021**

### APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



**Babu Lal**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of male **Age : Approx. 35 years, Height : 5’6”, Face : Round, Complexion : Wheatish, Build : Medium, wearing white colour shirt, grey colour pant and chappal in feet, was found dead on 12.08.2021 near godown of Babu Lal and Anil Kumar, Khasra No. 72/3, Behind Carnival Banquet, Zindpur, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 17-A, dated 12.08.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Alipur, Delhi.**  
Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.  
**SHO : P.S. Alipur, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-27202290, 27708515**  
**DP/1209/ON/21**

### SEARCH FOR KIDNAPPED



**Isha**

General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Isha, D/o: Ramphal Singh, R/o: H.No. C-136/B, Gali No. 08, Near Shiv Mandir, Ambedkar Vihar, Joharipur, Karawal Nagar, Delhi has been kidnapped since 02.08.2021 from her home. In this regard FIR No. 335/21 dated 03.08.2021 has been lodged at Police Station Karawal Nagar, Delhi.** The description of kidnapped girl is as under:  
**Name: Isha, Age: About 17 Years, Height: 5’5”, Built: Medium, Face: Oval, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Red Colour Top, Blue Colour Jeans and Sky Blue Colour Slipper in Feet.**  
If anyone has any information about this kidnapped girl please inform P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi  
**Web: http://cbi.nic.in, Email: cbc@cbi.gov.in**  
**Ph.: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639** **SHO**  
**Police Station, Karawal Nagar, Delhi**  
**Ph: 011-22932232, 8750870728**  
**DP/971/NE/2021**





**'A.P. gov't. taking credit for Centre's schemes'**

TIRUPATI / TIRUMALA

The YSRCP government has done nothing except affixing its label to the schemes sanctioned by the Centre, Union Minister for Tourism and Culture G. Kishan Reddy said on Thursday. Addressing the media, he said: "No development is happening in Andhra Pradesh, except for the Centre's schemes."

**Wild tusker electrocuted in paddy field in Chittoor**

A wild elephant was electrocuted in a paddy field at Buvanamantha village in a forest enclosure in Somala mandal, 70 km from here in Andhra Pradesh, on Thursday. The tusker, aged around 25, was part of a three-member herd from Palamaner range that strayed into Somala forests, close to the Seshachalam hills, a week ago.

**Five held in Kochi, MDMA drug worth ₹1 cr. seized**

Five persons were arrested from an apartment in Kochi with 90 gm of MDMA, a premium party drug, worth ₹1 crore in the open market, on Thursday. "They are suspected to be involved in its distribution in Wayanad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod," N. Ashok Kumar, Deputy Excise Commissioner, said.

**Six engineering colleges in Karnataka to be closed**

Six engineering colleges in Karnataka will be closed in the 2021-2022 academic year. Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) said the affiliation of these colleges had been withdrawn. Three of these are in Bengaluru. The other colleges are in Belagavi, Chamarajnagar and KGF. Studets who enrolled will be re-allotted to other colleges.

# Boat crew seek share; SC stays ex gratia

SC directs Kerala HC not to disburse ₹2 crore to boat owner for now

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the disbursement of ₹2 crore to the owner of a fishing boat shot at by two Italian marines aboard Italian flagship *Enrica Lexie* in 2012, after 10 crew members demanded their share from his compensation.

The crew of the boat *St. Antony* said they have every right to get a cut of the compensation from the boat owner and that they too had suffered "moral harm" and trauma after escaping death by hair's breadth.

Issuing notice to the boat owner, a Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and V. Rama-

subramanian asked the Kerala High Court not to disburse the ₹2 crore to the boat owner for the time being. The court will take up the case again after two weeks.

Justice Banerjee, however, indicated that once the owner comes aboard after receiving notice, the top court may ask the Kerala High Court to take a call on the crew's demand for their share.

**SG's suggestion**

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, had earlier in the hearing suggested that the crew could directly approach the High Court with their plea for a portion of the owner's compensation. He said the



Two crew members of *St. Antony* died after they were shot at by Italian marines from tanker *Enrica Lexie* in 2012. ■ REUTERS

Bench, instead of taking up the matter directly, ought to ask the High Court to implead the boat owner and the 10 crew members and decide their case there.

Though Justice Banerjee considered Mr. Mehta's ad-

vice initially, the Bench finally decided to have the boat owner appear in the top court first before taking any further steps.

During the court hearing, advocate Manish Dembla, for the crew members, said

two of their friends on the boat were killed in the shooting. They said not a penny from the ₹10 crore compensation paid by the Republic of Italy had reached them. They were not even made parties in the case.

On June 15, the Supreme Court agreed to close criminal proceedings against marines Massimiliano Latorre and Salvatore Griro after Italy paid ₹10 crore. Of this, ₹4 crore each was allotted to the families of the two dead fishermen. The remaining ₹2 crore was set aside for the boat owner. The 10 survivors said the bullets damaged the outer body of the boat. The boat was worth only ₹10 lakh. A payment of ₹2 crore exclusively for the boat owner was "not justified", they said and urged the court to permit them equal share.

## 'Mappila riots a sign of Taliban mindset'

Left is whitewashing it: Ram Madhav

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOZHIKODE

Terming the Malabar rebellion of 1921 the first manifestation of the Taliban mindset, Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) national executive member Ram Madhav accused the Left Democratic Front government of whitewashing the Mappila riots as a Communist movement against the bourgeois and zamindars.

Inaugurating the 'Mappila Riots Martyrs Remembrance Year' organised by the Vishwa Samvada Kendram here on Thursday, Mr. Madhav said the first society subjected to violent mindset of the Taliban was in Kerala.

This mindset, born out of certain fundamentalist and radical Islamist ideas, also



Ram Madhav

led to the Partition of India in 1947, he said.

At the same time, he said the Communist government wanted to celebrate the Mappila riots in a totally different form, with films released on its heroism. "The Leftist liberal cabal wants to whitewash it. But then the Left is known for distortion of history, not only here but the world over," he said.

## SC lets Reddy visit Ballari, Kadapa

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed former Karnataka Minister and mining baron Gali Janardhana Reddy to visit the districts of Ballari in Karnataka and Kadapa and Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh for eight weeks, provided he informs the district police chiefs beforehand.

A Bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari agreed to modify the bail conditions of Mr. Reddy after noting that the trial had not commenced in the illegal mining case against him. The CBI had objected, saying Mr. Reddy was at the centre of "one of the most notorious mining scams" of the country and his return to Ballari would spell disaster for the trial.

## Karvy chairman held for bank fraud

Clients' shares pledged without consent

ABHINAV DESHPANDE  
HYDERABAD

The chairman and managing director of Karvy Stock Broking Private Limited (KSBL), C. Parthasarathy, 67, was arrested by the Hyderabad police on Thursday for allegedly cheating IndusInd Bank by availing credit facilities of ₹137 crore.

The accused had pledged securities/shares on a personal guarantee by suppressing the fact that he pledged the securities of his clients without their consent by misusing the power of attorney. He was arrested based on a complaint lodged by the vice-president of IndusInd Bank, Hyderabad. "The securities were pledged before the complainant for margin and short-term requirement

in the business of KSBL from March 1, 2013," Joint Commissioner of Police (Detective Department) Avinash Mohanty said.

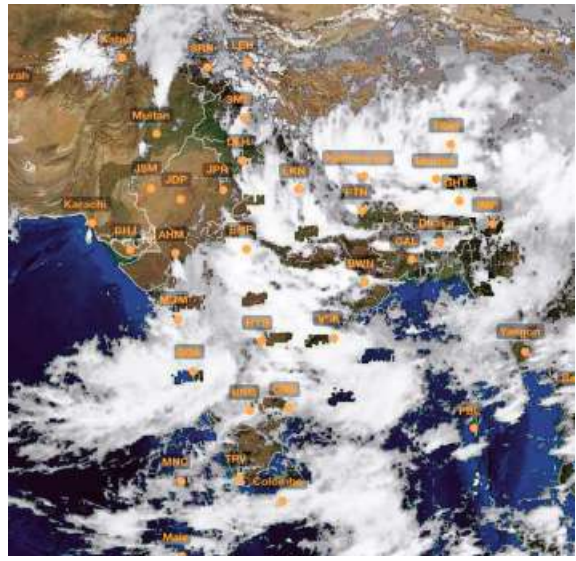
Karvy became a defaulter by diverting the funds into own and connected business entities and on November 22, 2019, the SEBI revoked the pledge of securities with banks/NBFCs and returned the securities/accounts, he said.

The complainant bank was left with no collateral and thereby KSBL defaulted on repayments of about ₹137 crore as of March 31.

Further investigation by the city police revealed that the accused had also diverted ₹720 crore of clients' funds lying in the bank accounts linked to their trading account.

### 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 Friday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Sikkim, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra and Konkan & Goa. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, coastal Andhra Pradesh, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

| CITY        | RAIN   | MAX     | MIN  | CITY               | RAIN    | MAX     | MIN  |
|-------------|--------|---------|------|--------------------|---------|---------|------|
| Agartala    | 6...   | 31.4... | 25.0 | Kozhikode          | 34...   | 28.6... | 22.6 |
| Ahmedabad   | 0.4... | 31.5... | 26.4 | Kurnool            | 2...    | 32.3... | 25.0 |
| Aizawl      | 1...   | 26.2... | 22.1 | Lucknow            | 4...    | 33.6... | 28.5 |
| Allahabad   | ...    | 34.3... | 26.0 | Madurai            | 0.2...  | 37.2... | 25.6 |
| Bengaluru   | 0.2... | 28.8... | 20.4 | Mangaluru          | 44.1... | 28.7... | 22.8 |
| Bhopal      | 4.8... | 27.7... | 22.9 | Mumbai             | 43...   | 27.2... | 23.0 |
| Bhubaneswar | ...    | 31.2... | 25.6 | Mysuru             | 2...    | 29.0... | 21.2 |
| Chandigarh  | ...    | 36.6... | 27.8 | New Delhi          | ...     | 36.5... | 27.5 |
| Chennai     | ...    | 34.6... | 27.6 | Patna              | 8...    | 34.2... | 26.0 |
| Coimbatore  | ...    | 32.3... | 20.9 | Port Blair         | 9...    | 30.9... | 23.6 |
| Dehradun    | 57...  | 31.1... | 23.8 | Puducherry         | ...     | 34.0... | 24.8 |
| Gangtok     | 6...   | 21.2... | 17.7 | Pune               | 1.2...  | 25.1... | 21.2 |
| Goa         | 10...  | 30.2... | 23.5 | Raipur             | 5...    | 30.0... | 25.6 |
| Guwahati    | 3...   | 34.0... | 26.0 | Ranchi             | 5...    | 29.6... | 23.5 |
| Hubbali     | ...    | 27.0... | 21.0 | Shillong           | 2...    | 25.1... | 18.2 |
| Hyderabad   | 1.2... | 28.5... | 22.2 | Shimla             | ...     | 26.2... | 20.9 |
| Imphal      | 2...   | 26.0... | 21.8 | Srinagar           | ...     | 31.6... | 16.3 |
| Jaipur      | ...    | 37.8... | 27.2 | Thiruvananthapuram | 5...    | 31.0... | 23.4 |
| Kochi       | 15...  | 30.2... | 23.6 | Tiruchi            | 33...   | 35.4... | 24.2 |
| Kohima      | 5...   | 24.2... | 18.2 | Vijayawada         | 21...   | 33.0... | 25.6 |
| Kolkata     | 11...  | 30.3... | 25.8 | Visakhapatnam      | 1...    | 32.2... | 26.4 |

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

| CITIES        | SO <sub>2</sub> | NO <sub>2</sub> | CO  | PM2.5 | PM10 | CODE | Yesterday  |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-------|------|------|--|
| Ahmedabad     | 82              | 22              | 26  | 85    | 105  | ■    | In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhiwadi, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 237 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 17 |
| Bengaluru     | 5               | 53              | 44  | 18    | 58   | ■    |  |
| Chennai       | 4               | 25              | 69  | 26    | 57   | ■    |  |
| Delhi         | 14              | 86              | 43  | 290   | 236  | ■    |  |
| Hyderabad     | 50              | 19              | 14  | 24    | 35   | ■    |  |
| Kolkata       | 14              | 19              | 20  | 42    | 47   | ■    |  |
| Lucknow       | 7               | 54              | 53  | 96    | 114  | ■    |  |
| Mumbai        | 18              | 43              | 102 | 29    | 51   | ■    |  |
| Pune          | 32              | 108             | 109 | 58    | 51   | ■    |  |
| Visakhapatnam | 19              | 53              | 51  | 50    | ...  | ■    |  |

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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.

**NO<sub>2</sub>:** 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

## Kamothe youth with Covishield vials held

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

The Navi Mumbai Crime Branch on Wednesday arrested a 20-year-old Kamothe resident for allegedly selling vials of Covishield, a COVID-19 vaccine, in the black market.

Acting on information, a Crime Branch team along with Food and Drug Administration officials approached the accused, identified as Kishore Khet Kumar, via a 'fake customer' and asked for delivery of the vaccine under Rajiv Gandhi flyover in Sector 8, Nerul.

He took ₹60,000 for 15 doses. "At the time of his arrest, he was in possession of two vials and 15 syringes. While one vial had 10 doses, the other contained five doses. Both the vials have been seized," assistant police inspector Vaibhav Ronge from Unit II, Crime Branch, said.

According to the police, Mr. Kumar used to work as a helper with a pharmacist in Kamothe and would visit various hospitals for delivering medicines. "We suspect he might have procured the vials from one of those hospitals with the help of someone. We are still investigating," senior police inspector Giridhar Gore from Unit II of Crime Branch said.

While the government is currently providing free vaccines against COVID-19 and the private hospitals charge ₹800 per dose, the accused was selling each dose for ₹4,000.

A case was registered against the accused with the Nerul police. Mr. Kumar, a Class X passout, has been remanded in police custody till August 27.

## Narayan Rane claims BJP will sweep Mumbai civic body polls

Union Minister starts Jan Ashirwad Yatra after visiting Thackeray memorial; Shiv Sena workers conduct purification ceremony

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

In what could be construed as the beginning of a political slugfest ahead of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls, Narayan Rane, Union Minister for Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises, on Thursday claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Par-

ty (BJP) would win the civic body which is presently ruled by the Shiv Sena.

Mr. Rane kick-started his Jan Ashirwad Yatra in Mumbai after paying respects at the memorial of Sena founder late Bal Thackeray at Shivaji Park in Dadar, despite the party MP, Vinayak Raut, earlier opposing him as he was

involved in breaking the Sena. Mr. Rane also visited Hindutva ideologue V.D. Savarkar's memorial located nearby.

Mr. Rane, during his stint with the Sena, was the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. He later exited the party to join the Congress. He again quit to form his own outfit and finally

switched to the BJP in 2019.

"The BJP will win the BMC polls and end the sins committed over 32 years. The job to ensure victory is with all the BJP leaders, including myself," he said.

When asked about Mr. Raut's opposition to him visiting the memorial, Mr. Rane said people's sentiments

must be respected when it came to paying tributes.

Referring to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's comments about avoiding political gatherings in the times of pandemic, Mr. Rane said, "Those who have come to power through the back door shouldn't preach to us. Seeing the response to the Jan

Ashirwad Yatra, one must understand their days are numbered."

Meanwhile, in the evening, Sena workers visited the Thackeray memorial and conducted a purification ceremony with milk and cow urine, claiming that the site was contaminated following the visit by Mr. Rane.

**TAMILNADU HOUSING BOARD**  
O/o. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER,  
**MADURAI HOUSING UNIT**  
Ellis Nagar, Madurai - 625 016. Phone : 0452 - 2600 835 E-mail : eemhuthnb@gmail.com

**APPLICATIONS FOR SEALED TENDER-CUM-OPEN AUCTION NOTICE**  
Madurai Housing Unit of Tamil Nadu Housing Board has proposed to sell the **School sites / Commercial sites / shop sites / Community Hall / Public Purpose site / Religious Purpose Site / Service Industries sites / Prime commercial sites (Totally 105 items)** situated in **Madurai, Virudhunagar, Dindigul & Theni Districts** through inviting Applications for Sealed Tender-Cum-Open Auction.  
Please visit **TNHB website [www.tnhb.tn.gov.in](http://www.tnhb.tn.gov.in)** from **25.08.2021** for further details regarding Code No., Plot No., Plot extent, Upset price, EMD amount, Auction date, Cost of Application, Cost details, Period of sale of application and conditions.  
**Manager - Marketing and Service, Madurai Housing Unit, Madurai**  
DIPR /734/ DISPLAY / 2021

**DELHI JAL BOARD: DELHI SARKAR**  
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Applications are invited from the eligible candidates to fill up 02 Nos. of posts of Doctor (GDO) Grade-II (Allopathic) purely on Contractual basis at a fixed monthly emolument of ₹86,170/- Per Month for a period of 06 months or till these posts are filled in on regular basis through UPSC or till further orders whichever is earlier.  
Name of the Post : DOCTOR (GDO)-GRADE-II (ALLOPATHIC)  
No. of Post : 02  
Emoluments (Fixed) : ₹86,170 /- Per Month  
Period : 06 Months  
Age Limit : Not exceeding 65 years  
Qualification : MBBS or above.  
Application along with attested copies of Certificates with Marksheet and other relevant documents must reach the office of Assistant Commissioner (D), Delhi Jal Board, Room No-211, Varunalaya Phase-II, Jhandewalan, New Delhi-110005 within 15 days of publication of this advertisement. Candidate can also drop the application in the Drop Box placed at reception counter, Delhi Jal Board, Varunalaya Phase-II, Jhandewalan, New Delhi-110005. The application format and other terms & conditions can be downloaded from Delhi Jal Board website i.e. [www.delhijalboard.nic.in](http://www.delhijalboard.nic.in)  
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) (VIRENDER SINGH)  
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**Standard Bid Document for NABARD**  
**SECTION-1**  
**Superintending Engineer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle, HPPWD, Solan.**  
(Name of Authority Inviting Bids)  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)**

The Superintending Engineer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Circle, HPPWD Solan on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the percentage rate/item bids, in electronic tendering system, for construction of roads under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development for each of the following works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HPPWD and HP Jal Shakti Vibhag (Contractors of HP Jal Shakti Vibhag are eligible to participate for the works having amount put to tender above Rs. 100lacs). Non registered contractors may submit the bids; however successful bidder has to register in appropriate class with appropriate authority in HPPWD.

| Sr. No.  | Division | RIDF | Name of work   | Estimated cost (Rs. Lakh)  | Total cost (Rs lakh) | Period of completion (Months)                            | Bid Security (Rs. Lakh). |
|--|----------|------|--|--|----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| (1)  | (2)      | (3)  | (4)  | (5)  | (6)                  | (7)  | (8)                      |
| 1.   | Kasauli  | XXVI | M/T of Bharti to Gamberpul via Deothal road km. 0/00 to 6/595. Under NABARD RIDF-XXVI.   | 305.48   | 38.41                | 343.89   | 18                       |
| 2.   |          |      | Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement-25.08.2021  |  |                      |  |                          |
| 3.   |          |      | Cost of Bids Form :-Rs. 5000 per package/job(non-refundable) only in form of Demand Draft in favour of respective Executive Engineers.   |  |                      |  |                          |
| 4.   |          |      | <b>Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:</b> The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <a href="http://www.hptenders.gov.in">www.hptenders.gov.in</a> . The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). *Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in NABARD may obtain the same from the website: <a href="http://www.hptenders.gov.in">www.hptenders.gov.in</a> Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the valid digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender. |  |                      |  |                          |
| * Non-registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.     |          |      |  |  |                      |  |                          |
| 5.   |          |      | <b>Submission of Original Documents:</b> The bidders are required to submit (a) original Demand Draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4B(a) (ii) of ITB with Superintending Engineer, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Circle HPPWD, Solan, on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand.   |  |                      |  |                          |
| 6.   |          |      | <b>Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering</b> -Last date /time for receipt of bids through e-tendering of above mentioned works are as follows:-   |  |                      |  |                          |
| Sr.No.   |          |      |  | Name of work   |                      | Last date /time for receipt of bids through e-tendering. |                          |
| 1  |          |      |  | M/T of Bharti to Gamberpul via Deothal road km. 0/00 to 6/595. Under NABARD RIDF-XXVI. |                      | 03.09.2021 at 10:30 AM                                   |                          |
| 7.   |          |      | The site for the work is available.  |  |                      |  |                          |
| 8.   |          |      | Only online submission of bids is permitted, therefore; bids must be submitted online on website <a href="http://www.hptenders.gov.in">www.hptenders.gov.in</a> . The technical qualification part of the bids will be opened online at 11:00 A.M Hours on above mentioned date in the office of Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle HPPWD Solan by the authorized officers. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened online on the next working day at the same time.  |  |                      |  |                          |
| 9.   |          |      | The bidder is not required to quote his rate for routine maintenance. The rates to be paid for routine maintenance are indicated in the Bill of Quantities. Further, the payment for routine maintenance to the contractor shall be regulated based on his performance of maintenance activities.  |  |                      |  |                          |
| <b>All the required materials like Cement/Steel/Bitumen/Explosive etc shall be arranged by Contractor at his own level.</b>  |          |      |  |  |                      |  |                          |
| 10.  |          |      | The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than seventy five(75) days after the deadline date for bid submission.   |  |                      |  |                          |
| 11.  |          |      | To qualify for a package of contract made up of this for which bids are invited in the same NIT, the bidder must demonstrate having experience and resources sufficient to meet the aggregate of the qualifying criteria for the individual contracts.   |  |                      |  |                          |
| 12.  |          |      | Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.  |  |                      |  |                          |
| (Er. Surinder Pal Jagota)<br>Superintending Engineer,<br>HPPWD,3rd Circle Solan<br>Tel 01792-220675, Fax 01792-223802<br>E-mail <a href="mailto:hp-sol@nic.in">hp-sol@nic.in</a> |          |      |  |  |                      |  |                          |
| HP / 3474/21-22  |          |      |  | HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPARK   |                      |  |                          |

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## Optimistic assessment

RBI should avoid having to choose between taming inflation and pushing for growth

Less than a fortnight after the RBI announced its latest monetary policy, a team of its officials has provided an optimistic assessment of the ‘State of the Economy’ in the August issue of the central bank’s monthly bulletin. Pivoting from what the bank posited on August 6 when it said, “the outlook for aggregate demand is improving, but still weak and overcast by the pandemic”, the officials led by Deputy Governor Michael D. Patra asserted that aggregate demand conditions had been buoyed by pent-up demand released by unlocking and vaccination. And, evidence that the economy was gaining traction could be seen in “manufacturing activity gradually turning around even as the contraction in services had moderated”, they wrote. The authors of the article have arrayed several high-frequency indicators including E-way bills, toll collections, fuel consumption, automobile dispatches and registrations, and rail freight volumes to buttress their view that demand is regaining momentum. The team has also pointed to a private forecaster’s data showing a sizeable sequential decline in the unemployment rate last month – to 6.95% from 9.17% in June, and that with a pronounced rural bias – to posit that this reflects the “resilience of the rural sector on brightened agricultural prospects”. But the authors elide over the fact that the CMIE, whose survey-based unemployment rate they have cited, is far less sanguine about the addition of approximately 16 million jobs in July.

CMIE MD Mahesh Vyas contends in an analysis that “all the additional employment provided by India in July was of poor quality” while better quality salaried jobs shrank by 3.2 million, noting that the bulk of the rural jobs added were of temporary farm labour linked to delayed *kharif* sowing. The RBI officials also throw no additional light on the concerns that earlier this month prompted the central bank’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to cut its own June forecast for GDP growth in the second, third and fourth fiscal quarters by between 0.5 and 0.9 percentage points. On inflation too, the article’s authors have pitched an upbeat prognosis citing July’s 70 basis points month-on-month deceleration in retail price gains to 5.6% as “reinforcing the view that the recent upsurge has peaked and the worst would be behind us”. However, official food price data for the August 1-12 period reveals an uptick in cereal prices, while edible oils continue to see price pressures after July’s 32.5% inflation rate for oils and fats, belying the authors’ optimism. The RBI Deputy Governor overseeing monetary policy admits the internal dilemma at the MPC observing that ultimately the policy decision was “a judgment call” as any move to tame inflation by one percentage point would mean ‘sacrificing’ 1.5-2 percentage points of GDP growth. In postulating an either-or trade-off, monetary authorities risk achieving neither goal and sending the economy into a harder to redress state of ‘stagflation’.

## Arms and the women

Gender parity in the Army is happening at a slow pace, and is mostly led by the courts

Women have been fighting a tough and uphill battle for equal opportunities in the Indian Army. In a landmark judgment in February 2020, the Supreme Court asked the Government to abide by its own policy and grant permanent commission to women in the Short Service Commission and give them command postings in all services other than combat. In *The Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya & Others*, the top court pointed out that women had played a “significant role” in the army since their induction in 1992 and extending permanent commission to women SSC officers “is a step forward in recognising and realising the right of women to equality of opportunity in the Army”. Despite the stringent verdict, systemic issues remain in the Army, and women have gone back to court to sort out the issues. Another step towards ensuring that women get an equal opportunity, as laid down by the Constitution, has been taken on Wednesday, when the Court passed an interim order allowing women to appear for the National Defence Academy entrance exam on September 5. Till now, women could join the Army through the Indian Military Academy and the Officers Training Academy. The directive allows girls who clear the exam to study at the NDA and then at the IMA or the naval and air force academies and become commissioned officers.

The directive is subject to further orders from the Court, and the case has been posted for hearing again on September 8. When Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Government and the Indian Army, told the Court that it was a policy decision not to allow women to take the NDA exam, the Bench, of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy, said it was based on “gender discrimination”, directing the Centre and the Army to take a constructive view. The Bench pointed out that closing a route of entry for women to join the Army was discriminatory. The ruling came on a writ petition filed by Kush KALA seeking permission for women to sit for the NDA entrance exam. Mr. Kalra argued that Articles 14, 15, 16 and 19 of the Constitution, which uphold the values of equality and allow equal, non-discriminatory opportunities at work, were being violated by denying eligible women the opportunity. Though the legal route has helped overcome some of the hurdles, it will be a long haul before gender parity is fully achieved in the Army. In that context, the Prime Minister’s Independence Day announcement that girls will be granted admission in the Sainik Schools is a welcome move towards preparing them for an equal role and life in the military.

# Lessons from India’s all-cause mortality data

Data suggest there were 3.5 million to 3.7 million ‘excess deaths’ nationwide, from April 2020 to June 2021



MURAD BANAJI & AASHISH GUPTA

The scale of devastation caused by India’s COVID-19 epidemic is gradually becoming clearer. This is thanks to the efforts of journalists, *The Hindu* included, who have been gathering all-cause mortality data from around the country.

The mortality data, from State and city civil registration systems, paint a grim picture of a major increase in deaths across the country during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Very few of these additional deaths have been recorded as COVID-19 deaths.

### Cautious estimate

We can try to understand the scale of the tragedy via a simple question. How many extra deaths have occurred, over and above those expected in normal times? The data suggest an approximate answer: during 15 months from April 2020 to June 2021, there were 3.5 million-3.7 million “excess deaths” nationwide. This amounts to 35% more deaths than expected.

This estimate is cautious, and likely to increase as more data come in. Data for June and beyond are very limited, and so the story is incomplete.

Before we examine the numbers it is important to understand the context. There are several reasons why estimating a surge in mortality is difficult. We need to know how many deaths have occurred during the pandemic, and how many to “expect” in normal times. The idea is to carefully reconstruct these numbers from death registrations and survey-

based estimates of pre-pandemic mortality.

### Data in the pandemic period

But death registration data for the pandemic period are limited. It is unavailable for some States, and incomplete in others, for example coming from online systems which do not log all death registrations. Some data are organised according to date of death, and some by date of registration. Moreover, there are uncertainties about death registration prior to the pandemic. In some States, official estimates of levels of registration, which we use, appear to be overestimated.

Compounding the difficulties, registered deaths show complex trends in some States – for example, gradually increasing prior to the pandemic, but dropping sharply around the time of the national lockdown before the pandemic deaths start to show.

To arrive at the estimates here, we examined data from 12 States where partial or complete civil registration data are available for at least January 2018 to May 2021: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. These States comprise roughly 60% of the national population.

During April 2020-May 2021 we found six million death registrations in the data; that is 1.3 million more than expected from 2019 data. If we assume – perhaps optimistically – that the deaths which were not captured in these registration systems, including unregistered deaths, rose proportionately, we arrive at an estimate of around 1.7 million excess deaths in these States up to May.

If these 12 States reflect the national picture, then India saw around 2.8 million excess deaths nationwide during April 2020-May



2021. This is 8.5 times the official COVID-19 death toll of 3,32,000 over the same period.

### Global comparison

Using limited data for June (currently available only for Andhra Pradesh and Punjab), or assuming that the ratio of excess deaths to official COVID-19 deaths does not change rapidly, we estimate 3.5 million-3.7 million excess deaths nationwide by the end of June. Over a 15 month period, for every three expected deaths, there was a further “pandemic death”.

This places India among the harder hit countries in the world. It would mean that relative to baseline, India’s surge in mortality is lower than that of Mexico, similar to that of Brazil and South Africa, and considerably higher than in the United States, the United Kingdom and most of western Europe.

Moreover, the estimates here are conservative. More up-to-date data will push up the numbers. There are also hints that disruption may have prevented – and not merely delayed – many death registrations. For instance, we see significant drops in birth registrations during 2020 in some States where this data are available, most noticeably in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, there are good reasons to believe the mortality surge may have been greatest in marginalised communities where death registration is weaker.

We cannot be sure how many of India’s excess deaths were from COVID-19. According to the latest national serosurvey, around 60%-

70% of people in India may have been infected with the virus by June. If so, international data on fatality rates suggest we should expect two million to four million COVID-19 deaths. So, it is quite plausible that the majority of India’s excess deaths have been from COVID-19. But we cannot rule out a significant surge in non-COVID deaths too.

### Individual States

In individual States, all-cause mortality data paint diverse pictures. Kerala, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh stand out for having somewhat lower excess mortality than expected, even after we adjust for possible disruptions to registration. Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, on the other hand, saw considerably more deaths than expected.

Overall, around two-thirds of the excess deaths took place during a shocking mortality spike around May 2021. But the time-course varies in different States. Madhya Pradesh’s explosive second wave accounted for 80-90% of its excess deaths. By contrast, Maharashtra saw more even surges, with over 40% of its excess deaths during its first wave.

There are striking variations in the ratio of excess deaths to recorded COVID-19 deaths. In Maharashtra excess deaths up to May 2021 are roughly four times recorded COVID-19 deaths, or less if we factor in reconciliations of COVID-19 deaths during June and July. By contrast, in Madhya Pradesh, excess deaths are an astonishing 25-30 times recorded COVID-19 deaths.

Exploring the stories behind these variations is important for understanding the pandemic and disease surveillance in India.

Considerable gaps remain. Some civil registration data are available for Uttar Pradesh up to April 2021, and these appear to

show a major surge in mortality; but there are huge fluctuations in registrations, and unexplained discrepancies with historical data which make it hard to use this data with any confidence. Where civil registration data are of poor quality or unavailable, large-scale mortality surveying could help to fill the gaps.

### A perspective

Could the sharp rise in death registrations reflect not a surge in mortality but improvements in death registration? This claim has been made, but is not credible for several reasons. If we accept the estimate that 92% of deaths were registered in 2019, higher registration coverage could not cause a 35% surge in death registrations.

In fact there is little evidence for improving death registration during the pandemic. During the relatively quiet period between the two COVID-19 waves (January-March 2021), we see death registrations return close to 2019 baseline levels. And throughout the pandemic period, we see a very strong association between monthly excess deaths and official COVID-19 deaths, strongly suggesting these are pandemic-related excess deaths, and not a reflection of underlying trends in registration.

There are no easy ways to explain away or deny the scale of the catastrophe. Yes, there are uncertainties, and details will change as more data become available. Most likely, the numbers will increase. One thing is clear: during the COVID-19 pandemic, India has witnessed a surge in mortality on a scale not seen since Independence.

Murad Banaji is a mathematician at Middlesex University London. Aashish Gupta is a demographer, and a research fellow at the research institute for compassionate economics

# The Abraham Accords as India’s West Asia bridge

The signing of the Accords has helped remove strategic obstacles for New Delhi and aided defence cooperation



KABIR TANEJA

The recent visit by the Indian Air Force chief, Air Chief Marshal R.K. Bhadauria, to Israel offers a window to study how New Delhi is taking advantage of the Abraham Accords deal signed between Israel and a consortium of Arab States led by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2020 (<https://bit.ly/3yWHOHY>). According to reports, an Indian contingent of the Indian Air Force (IAF) will now visit Israel in October to take part in multilateral military exercises.

### Deepening cooperation

In the same week as ACM Bhadauria’s visit, India also conducted the ‘Zayed Talwar’ naval exercises with the UAE off the coast of Abu Dhabi, further deepening the fast-developing strategic cooperation between the two countries. In December 2020, Indian Army chief, General M.M. Naravane, visited the UAE and Saudi Arabia, becoming the first chief of the Indian Army to do so. The foundation for

these visits was set by the (now former) chief of the Indian Navy, Admiral Sunil Lanba, in 2017, who visited the UAE and Oman, the latter being home to Duqm Port where New Delhi signed a deal with Muscat for access to the facility, including dry dock use by the Indian Navy. The above examples show the pacy developments on the defence front between India and the West Asian region. The signing of the Accords has removed a significant strategic obstacle for New Delhi – that of a trappeze wire delicate balancing act India has had to play out between the Arab Gulf and Israel over the decades. This status quo is now witnessing a change, with Israel inaugurating its first diplomatic mission in Abu Dhabi and direct flights, business and tourism picking up between the two countries over the past few months. New Delhi had welcomed the Accords, highlighting its support for mechanisms that offer peace and stability in the region.

### The thread

India’s trajectory towards an increased strategic footprint in West Asia has been in development for some time now. Starting from the relatively low-key staging visit to Saudi Arabia conducted by the IAF in 2015, to hosting visiting Iranian



naval warships in 2018, defence of the critical waterways in and around the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea and the extended Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has taken a driving seat in Indian strategic thinking.

Recently, as tensions between Iran, Israel and the United States flared up in the Persian Gulf, the Indian Navy orchestrated Operation Sankalp, which saw Indian warships escort on an average 16 Indian-flagged vessels a day. This comes as covert attacks on merchant vessels in the region expand, with tensions between Iran and Israel spilling across the region. Till a certain extent, the Accords, from the UAE’s perspective, were to make sure the emirate along with its international centres of trade such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi do not become targets between Jerusalem and Tehran. However, not all Arab States have been on board with the geopolitical shifts the Accords have pushed through. Despite a lot of effort from Israel, under the (now form-

er) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Arabia has maintained a distance from this arrangement. More recently, Riyadh has praised the Accords, but said that the resolution of the Palestinian State remains at the forefront of its requirements.

It is imperative to remember here that despite India’s rare but arguable successes in a ‘non-alignment’ approach in West Asia, it has taken one-sided decisions in the past, such as training Iraqi Air Force cadets on MiG aircraft in Tikrit between 1958 and 1989, while also maintaining good relations with former President Saddam Hussein, seen as a critical part of India’s energy security thinking. The rationale behind such thinking back then has not changed even in 2021, as India still imports more than 80% of its annual oil requirements, much of which still comes from suppliers such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

### The Iran link

Iran, as part of India’s ‘West Asia’ construct, will also play a significant part in India’s outreach in the months to come as the crisis in Afghanistan deepens. The fact that New Delhi used Iranian airspace and facilities when evacuating its diplomatic staff from Kandahar in July showcases a level of strategic

commonality, interest and play on certain issues in the region. Keeping this in mind, connectivity projects such as Chabahar Port and Chabahar-Zahedan rail project (project discussions are still on) amongst others remain critical. Recent multiple visits by India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh followed by Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami’s visit to India highlight a revitalised strategic cooperation between the two countries despite multiple obstacles in the bilateral relations, led by U.S. sanctions against Tehran and the general tensions between Israel, the Gulf and Iran via proxy battles in theatres such as Yemen, Syria and beyond.

India’s strategic play in West Asia will be reflective of its economic growth, and by association, an increasingly important place in the global order. From the UN Security Council to the Indo-Pacific, New Delhi will be expected to be more assertive, diplomatically and militarily, in its posturing and shed the cloaks of its foreign and strategic policies being conducted from a stage balanced on a fence.

Kabir Taneja is Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, Observer Research Foundation

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Afghan developments

With the Taliban clear that their so-called governance will be according to sharia law, India is in a tough predicament as religious dogmas can never contribute to the peace of any region (Page 1, August 19). The void the United States has created is being hurriedly filled by vested interests such as China and Pakistan. And Russia and Iran will in all likelihood follow suit. India needs to do a lot of tight-rope walking on the issue of Afghanistan so as not to be caught in the crossfire between the West and the new players warming up in Afghanistan for a new game.

S. SANJEEVI RAO,  
Puducherry

■ In *A People’s History of the United States*, Howard Zinn says: “On the supposition that the Islamic militant

Osama Bin Laden was responsible for the September 11 attacks, and he was somewhere in Afghanistan, Bush ordered the bombing of Afghanistan... the full extent of the human catastrophe caused by the bombing of Afghanistan was not being conveyed to the Americans by the mainstream press...” The stated objective of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan was the destruction of Islamic terrorism. But after 20 years, America has made a deal with the same terrorists and left stealthily. The statements of the Taliban, that there will be only Sharia law, make it clear that the fate of Afghanistan is bleak.

SUKUMARAN C.V.,  
Palakkad, Kerala

■ There is every possibility that the return of the Taliban will be the rallying point for radicals to recall their

so-called glorious past and embolden them to radicalise the youth, intensifying the already volatile socio-political milieu of South Asia. Afghanistan has fallen apart because of the U.S. And to add insult to injury, U.S. President Joe Biden has said “Afghanistan was never about nation-building”. He is right in his own way! America has allowed a nation to become a fertile ground for outmoded and medieval ideals to flourish.

SATYANARAN PADHEE,  
Bargarh, Odisha

■ The precipitate ascension of the Taliban to the Kabul throne should take us back to Iraq engulfed by the geopolitics of the times. Iraq had long been a far more stable political entity with an envious history of culture and heritage. The Afghan tale is the opposite: every player was counting on a

perennial U.S. presence. Unlike Iraq, with an evolved polity, the myriad tribes of Afghanistan have never found a common and enduring command for centuries. Overnight, they have to find a unifying theme and a cause and the vitally needed sagacious leadership to organise effective domestic governance. It is a tall order for the Taliban that is steeped in radicalism and has counted on disruption for survival.

R. NARAYANAN,  
Navi Mumbai

■ Western nations claim to be the torchbearers of democracy and human rights, but their interventions only leave behind a huge mess. It is high time that the affected countries drop this “white man’s burden” and fix their own internal problems first.

ISHITA PHULORIA,  
New Delhi

### The forces and equity

Gender discrimination against women joining our armed forces is irrational and against the spirit of egalitarianism defined in the Constitution. While womenfolk can work efficiently alongside men in massive governmental institutions, obstacles before women when it comes to the Indian armed forces are questionable. Similarly, the current monopolistic system of admitting only women in the corps of Military Nursing Service is brazenly biased against men applicants.

CICILY THOMAS,  
Muvattupuzha, Kerala

■ The interim measure, on women and the NDA exam (Page 1, August 19), is welcome but in a patriarchal and misogynist society it will hardly be an emollient. Why is the women’s reservation Bill hanging fire? The defence forces are no big

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draw or the holy grail of the employment ecosystem unlike yesteryears. After globalisation, MNCs are attracting top talent, providing remunerative and gainful employment. The hierarchical working of the forces may not gel with the aspirations of millennials.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,  
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

### Entrance exam dates

Two national level entrance examinations to be written by Class 12 students – the JEE Main for admission to NIT/IIITs and CLAT for admission to 22 law universities – will fall on the same date in respect to certain candidates. CLAT is on July 23 and one session of the JEE is from July 20-25. The National Testing Agency has to take note of this.

B.S. WARRIER,  
Kochi



# Is a caste census desirable?

PARLEY

It is required to document both the disadvantages and privileges of various communities in India



Satish Deshpande teaches Sociology at Delhi University



Valerian Rodrigues taught Political Science at Jawaharlal Nehru University and held the first Ambedkar Chair at Ambedkar University



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

At the recently concluded Parliament session, there was a demand to lift the 50% cap on reservation imposed by the Supreme Court through the legislative route. With the 2021 Census coming up, several political parties have demanded a nation-wide caste census. They argue that a Socio-Economic Caste Census is the only way to make a case to breach the 50% cap on reservation and rationalise the reservation matrix in the country. Is a caste census desirable? Satish Deshpande and Valerian Rodrigues discuss the question in a conversation moderated by K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj. Edited excerpts:

**There is a vocal demand to breach the 50% cap on reservation. Some States like Tamil Nadu have already done this. Do you think it is desirable to breach this cap?**

**Satish Deshpande:** The 50% cap, as introduced by the court, has not really been argued through. Reservation in our country has been caught in ideological misgivings. It is constructed as though it is the only departure or the main departure from fair competition, but that is simply not true. The absence of reservation does not mean that the playing field is level. Reservation is one among many considerations which affect competition among candidates. Therefore, I think there is nothing sacrosanct about the 50% limit – it can be exceeded, if necessary, but a clear argument should be given for why this is being done.

**Valerian Rodrigues:** While I agree that there is nothing sacrosanct about the 50% cap, I still feel that it is a prudent rule. The reservation policy is one of the elements of the larger structure of democratic constitutionalism in India that by definition subscribes to the argument of equality of citizens. Reservation, no matter how extensive, is going to cater only to a small proportion of those who are entitled to it. Exceptionally, however, reservation can be accepted, extended, but we do need to know very well that the rule is 50% and if there is an extension, it is an exception. I also want to say a couple of

more things regarding reservation in India – the way it is practised has invariably led to [the growth of] elites among castes and communities. These elites within the castes have tended to exercise their dominance over their very communities and not let them exercise the kind of freedoms, or search for equality, which any democratic polity deserves. Eventually, the bent in a good society should not be to preserve caste but to strengthen democracy. Therefore, we need to see where the convergence lies. The more you actually begin to dole out reservation, the more the tendency to preserve caste, protect it, precisely because that becomes the bastion for the dole.

**Many have argued that a Socio-Economic Caste Census would be the best way to rationalise reservation based on data and make a strong case for breaching this gap. Earlier governments argued that counting caste will perpetuate it. Do you think a caste census is actually desirable at the national level today?**

**VR:** I feel that a caste census is absolutely desirable in India today. And the purpose of a caste census is not merely geared to the reservation issue; a caste census would actually bring to the fore the large number of issues that any democratic country needs to attend to, particularly the number of people who are at the margins, or who are deprived, or the kind of occupations they pursue, or the kind of hold that institutions like caste have on them. This information is absolutely necessary for any democratic policymaking. The courts in India have often emphatically said that it is important to have adequate data with regard to reservation. Very often, States have shied away from gathering this data. Now, data gathering itself is a big problem because it can become very, very invasive. But we need to actually balance it with enabling people and asserting citizen equality.

**SD:** We have got locked into a mindset where we think only those communities which want welfare benefits from the state must be



M. PRABHU

enumerated. We should not be associating enumeration of communities only with welfare programmes, that is to say only with communities that are, in some sense, needy. Caste is not only a source of disadvantage; it is also a very important source of privilege and advantage in our society. Caste enumeration is also required to document, as far as possible, this privilege. We have to stop thinking of caste as being applicable to only disadvantaged people, poor people, people who are somehow lacking. The opposite is even more true: caste has produced advantages for certain communities, and these also need to be recorded. In my opinion, when everyone's caste is counted, we will finally come out of the unhelpful mindset of thinking of caste as an exception meant only for those who are supplicants of the state. The state has helped privileged communities far more, even though this help has not taken the explicit form of programmes like reservation. The naming and counting of caste is a difficult thing that we have to pass through in order to bring about a future when it will not matter as much as it matters today.

**It is actually many of the OBC [Other Backward Classes] leaders and parties that have been demanding the enumeration of castes. But the somewhat unsaid opposition to it seems to be coming from the upper castes.**

**VR:** I don't think that counting of caste necessarily perpetuates caste or the caste system. However, under certain conditions, enumeration of caste for cultivating elitism can be a backward step to hold on to caste. But that is concerning the elites. Overall, the democratic dividends of enumeration of caste are much

**A caste census is badly needed, but a caste census without data integrity would be much worse. A suspect caste census would be much worse than no census at all.**

SATISH DESHPANDE

higher. There are a lot of myths which actually deprive a large number of people, particularly on the margins. Let's take the case of Karnataka. For a long time, there were claims that among the castes, the Lingayats are the most numerous. But a lot of other studies have brought out that this may not be true. And these kinds of myths lead to the argument that given that this is a caste which is numerous, it has to be constantly placated. This is true of Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and several places across India. These myths can be debunked through a caste census. There is a vested interest among Backward Class leaders demanding that caste be enumerated. There is a section of people in India who relish claiming that they are casteless while utilising all the benefits that a democratic dispensation provides to them. This can be debunked by saying, look, you have benefited so much across the years, while there are people in this country who have either not benefited at all or if they have benefited, it is nothing in comparison to what you have and most of these benefits that have accrued to you are precisely because you belong to a certain caste.

**We have had two exercises of a caste census – one carried out by the Union government in 2011 and another by the Karnataka government in 2015. Data from both censuses have**

**not been made public and the governments have also disputed the data. Why is a caste census always controversial?**

**SD:** Yes, this is a demonstration of the principle that those in power control data and information. We have had instances where this data has been collected but has not been made public. I have to also emphasise that a caste census is a necessity, it is not a happy thing, it is not a great achievement, it is just something that we have to do. It will also, I think, increase friction, to some extent harden caste identities in the short term. But not counting caste is much worse. And one of the major things we will have to fight against in this journey is the vested interests of particular governments. You see, we say that democracy is rule by the people, but it is not. It is rule by a particular party or parties which have won an election. And once they have won an election, they have their own vested interests. So, this is a larger issue with democracy that has to be countered.

**Governments shying away from releasing the data of a caste census seems to be a bipartisan issue. How do we find the political intent and capital to carry out this exercise?**

**SD:** I am actually quite pessimistic. I don't think a caste census will happen unless something extraordinary happens in our polity. As you said, this seems to be a bipartisan issue. And in my opinion, the main need is that of exposing privilege. There are also important questions of demands coming up because of mismatches between the numbers that we come out with and the share in resources that different communities have. This is a kind of nightmare that all governments fear. So, they would much rather leave things vague.

**VR:** I make a slightly different assessment. I think the ruling dispensation is seriously feeling that it needs to reach out to the Backward Classes. The Backward Classes are more than 50% of the population. And this dispensation knows that it cannot afford to lose the support of the Backward Classes. So, there has recently been a tendency within the dispensation to bring the Backward

Class elite to the forefront. Therefore, I am not negative that this dispensation, or the UPA government, would be wholly denying a caste census. However, like the UPA government escaped by saying that a caste census would be different from the general census and called for only certain issues to be enumerated, this dispensation also might actually play the same game and begin to disconnect the caste census from the general census. What is required is to bring the caste census alongside the general census. Only then will we know the situation.

**SD:** Yes, this is a very important issue. I agree completely. We cannot separate the caste census from the general census. Only if we don't will the exercise make sense. But what really worries me about this particular government given its record in the past few years is the integrity of data. A caste census is badly needed, but a caste census without data integrity would be much worse. A suspect caste census would be much worse than no census at all.

**The data of caste censuses have always been disputed, probably due to the contest of several vested interests in accepting the data. While Hindutva forces seem to be trying to co-opt subaltern communities that are demanding a caste census, how do they handle the paradox of the caste question?**

**SD:** I think this is the central issue. The problem is that the core support for the ruling party is upper caste, at least in mentality, if not always strictly in terms of caste identity. But the upper castes are a minority; hence the unavoidable electoral necessity of bringing in the middle castes, and the Dalits who provide large numbers. This is a political balancing act, where you invite the lower castes promising to give them the place denied to them for so long. At the same time, you have to keep your core supporters happy. The core supporters are extremely uncomfortable when the social distance between them and the castes that they believe are lower than them appears to shrink. They get very upset. All over the country, the conflict between Dalits and OBCs is bitter and violent. How do we square this circle? This is the main challenge for Hindutva politics.

## Back to basics

It is important for India to work on ways to strengthen foundational education for children

VIKRAM VINCENT

A preliminary report of a nationwide survey conducted by Lego Foundation in Denmark stated that students give importance to peer interactions, good teachers, fun learning content and knowledge gained from experimental approaches. The UNICEF says that children want to go back to school. We can reasonably assume that these aspirations hold true for Indian children but how prepared are we to send them back to school? According to various estimates, the pandemic and lockdowns have led to an alarming drop-out rate from schools, migration of children from private to government schools due to inability to pay fees, increased abuse at home, inadequate nutrition, etc. Industry experts will agree with the claim that for adults to unlearn and relearn is a very expensive and time-consuming process. Thus, if the foundation of education is weak, any effort at a later stage to strengthen it will only yield sub-optimal results.

**Issues to be addressed** So, what are the major factors that need to be addressed at the foundational level? UNICEF has raised the issue of nutrition. Children, depending on their age group and gender, need to consume 1,000-3,200 calories per day. How close do India's mid-day meal schemes address their nutritional needs? The UNDP Human Development Report 2019 states that students who fall behind may struggle "if the level of classroom instruction (based on textbooks that follow ambitious curricular standards) is considerably above their learning level. These problems are exacerbated at higher grades, if students are automatically promoted to the next grade without having acquired foundational skills." While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes pedagogical freedom to the teacher, content-heavy curriculum forces instructionist rather than constructivist engagements by default, as teachers are always short of time. As a result, students simply consume what they are taught; they don't become creators. Supporting slower foundational de-

velopment while focusing on the essentials will allow for deeper and more meaningful learning.

### Need for skilled teachers

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009 quoted the NEP 1986 which said, "The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of the society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers". NEP 2020 has entrusted the intellectual development of kindergarten children from underprivileged sections to matriculation-pass Anganwadi teachers and helpers whose monthly salary is about ₹10,000 and ₹5,000, respectively. Anganwadi teachers will not be able to fulfil the task of developing underprivileged kindergarten students into creators simply because they lack the expertise to do so. The proposal to upgrade their skills using online methods is grossly inadequate.

### Working in rural areas

If the sight is on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal for Education, India needs to work on a war footing. It will have to acknowledge that Ed-Tech is a resource of the privileged and learning higher-order cognitive skills requires time and personal support. One way is to mobilise students in higher education to contribute three to six months in government-sponsored programmes by working in the most remote and underdeveloped areas to educate children and teachers. Private companies could also sponsor mentorship programmes where employees spend about a month on the field. This will have a transformative effect on all the participants involved. Current solutions appear to be designed in the cloud without adequate exposure of the ground.

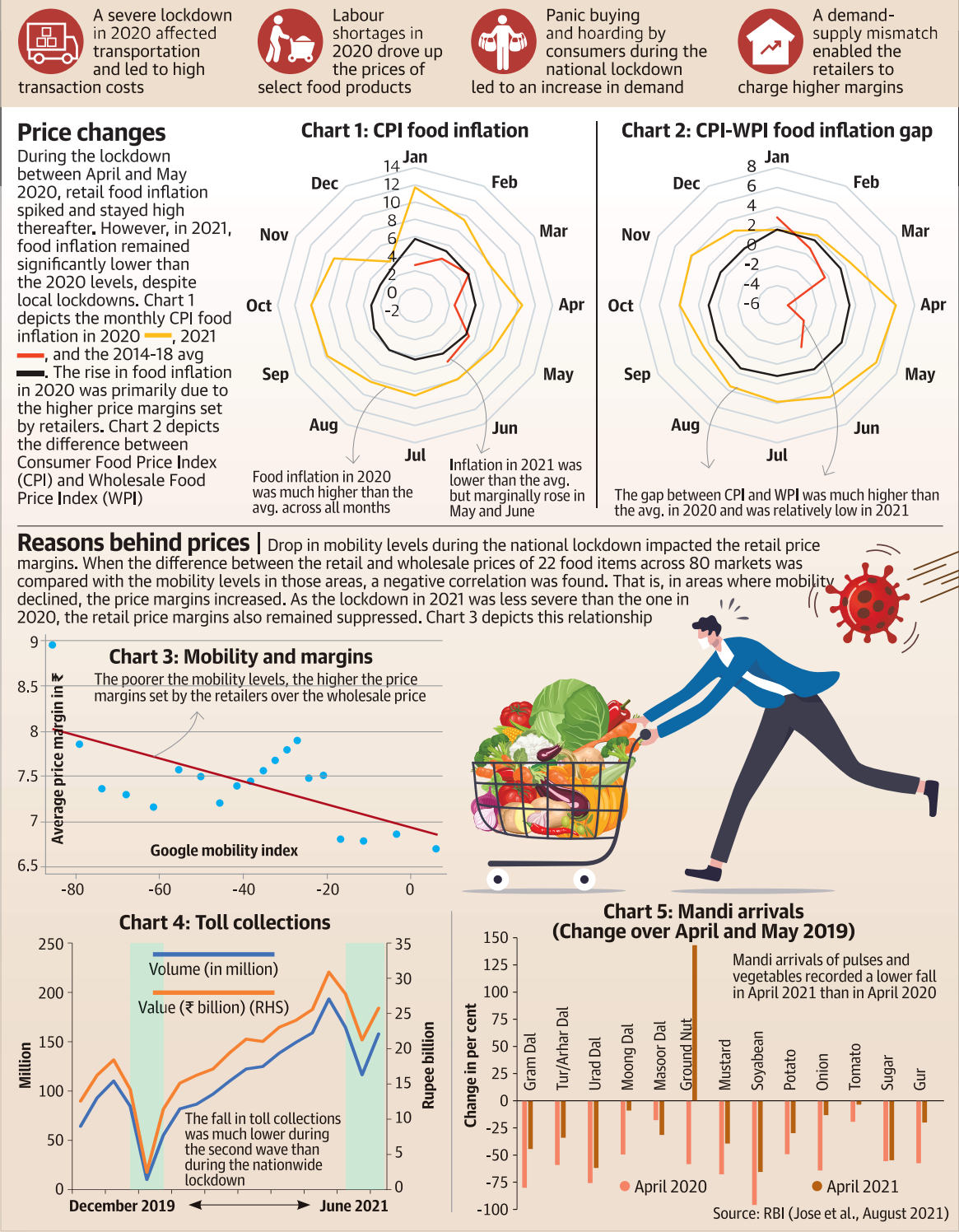
The ability to successfully satisfy Sustainable Development Goal 4 will depend on the priority afforded to school education. And with budgetary allocations based on priority, the question that begs to be asked is, what is the priority of school education?

Vikram Vincent has a Ph.D. in Educational Technology from IIT Bombay

## DATA POINT

### Covid impact on food price

An analysis of retail and wholesale prices of essential food items by the Department of Economic and Policy Research shows that food inflation shot up during the national lockdown in 2020 due to stringent restrictions. During the second COVID-19 wave in 2021, relatively lenient restrictions and better supply management kept food prices lower. During the second wave, the decline in highway toll collections and mandi arrivals was lower compared to the period of the national lockdown. The major reason behind the higher food price levels in 2020 was the higher price margins set by the retailers over the wholesale price



## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 20, 1971

### The problem of plenty of food

The Centre has decided to take emergency steps to tackle the problems of storage and movements of foodgrains arising out of bumper crops in the country this year. Briefing pressmen here to-day [New Delhi, August 19] after a conference of State Food Ministers, which, perhaps for the first time in Independent India's history, discussed the problem of plenty in agriculture, the Union Minister for Food and Agriculture, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, said the State Food Ministers agreed that in view of the expected massive arrivals of foodgrains in the markets immediately after harvest, measures should be worked out to handle procurement and marketing. Mr. Ahmed, who had presided over the conference, said the State Food Ministers had unanimously agreed to evolve a co-ordinated approach by the Centre and the States to improve the storage and movement position following massive procurement of grain and the record wheat crop of over 23 million tonnes.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 20, 1921

### A guide to health by Mahatma Gandhi

It may be a happy surprise to many that Mahatma Gandhi is the author of a very useful and instructive treatise on health. The original, which is in Guzerati, has now been rendered into English by Mr. A. Rama Iyer, M.A. of the National College, Trichinopoly, and published by Mr. S. Ganesan (Publisher, Triplicane, Madras SE). The book covering about 150 pages is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the general principles of personal health and hygiene and the second giving some simple treatments for the common ailments and accidents. The great value of the publication consists in the practical and original way in which the Mahatma has handled the subject backed on the one hand with an extensive knowledge of Eastern and Western treatises on health and treatment and on the other with the fruits of personal experience. A close perusal of the book serves to prove the hollowness and danger of many of our ordinary notions and daily habits contracted under the influence of modern civilisation, fear and ignorance. The Gandhian style of open simplicity and impressiveness is preserved in the translation and adds to the chastening effect of the Mahatma's condemnation of our daily vices and follies.



FROM PAGE ONE

## CBI, SIT to investigate Bengal violence cases

The Bench emphasised that the working of the SIT should be overviewed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court, for which a separate order would be passed. The court directed that immediate action should be taken by the State to pay compensation to the victims of crime as per the policy of the State, after due verification.

While the verdict was unanimous, two judges expressed reservation over the NHRC committee recommendations. “The said committee had only power under our order to report on facts as gathered by them on investigation. They had no jurisdiction to make any recommendation or to express any opinion. We did

not vest them with that power,” Justice Mukerji wrote in his order.

Justice Sen was also critical of the remarks made by the NHRC against politicians and police officers. “I am of the view that such remarks and recommendations were uncalled for and to that extent the committee has transgressed its limits.”

Acting Chief Justice Binal had rejected the allegations of bias against the committee, pointing out: “It seems to be an argument in frustration, where on the core issue the State has been found on a wrong foot”.

While the BJP leadership welcomed the order, sources in the West Bengal government hinted that it may move the Supreme Court.

## U.S. not interested in trade pact, says Goyal

“... Beyond that, we have to keep working through the barriers that stand in the way of greater bilateral investment and deeper commercial ties. If we create the right conditions from more trade and investment and innovation, there really is no limit to what our private sectors can achieve together,” he said at a joint briefing with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on July 28.

### Harvest deal

Mr. Goyal said India had begun working on an FTA with Bangladesh and was close to sealing an early harvest deal with Australia “which has almost agreed” on the matter, with a similar deal being worked out with the U.K.

“Australia is first on the

list, the U.K., then the UAE, and if the UAE happens, the pact with GCC [countries that are part of the Gulf Cooperation Council] will also be expedited. We have already started the dialogue with the UAE and one more country from the Middle East,” said Mr. Goyal on the FTAs currently on the priority list of the government, which also includes Israel.

While talks with Canada got waylaid amid the pandemic, the Minister said the dialogue was expected to pick after the Canadian elections conclude in the next few months. The European Union, he said, had agreed to restart renegotiations after abandoning earlier talks in 2013, purely on the basis of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “goodwill”.

## HC protects interfaith couples from Gujarat law

“This interim order is to protect the parties which solemnised interfaith marriages from unnecessary harassment,” he added.

The anti-conversion law was amended this year to bring in new sections that penalise forcible or fraudulent religious conversion through marriage. The law was notified on June 15. The law, the State government contended, was meant to stop religious conversion through interfaith marriages, citing several incidents of alleged conversion through marriages.

### No forcible conversion

In the new amendment, Section 3 of the law defines what is “forcible conversion”. It says “no person shall convert or attempt to

convert any person from one religion to another by use of force, or by allurements or by any fraudulent means or by marriage or by getting a person married or by aiding a person to get married, nor shall any person abet such conversion”.

As per Section 4, people found guilty of violating the provisions of Section 3 will face up to three years of imprisonment and a fine of ₹50,000.

If the victim is a minor, a woman or from SC or ST community, then the jail term will be four years with a fine of ₹one lakh.

The court acted on a petition filed by the Gujarat chapter of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind challenging constitutional validity of some of the amended sections.

## Loan scheme to be notified soon, says FM

For other sectors, including tourism, a ₹60,000 crore loan guarantee scheme was promised with the interest on such loans capped at 8.25%, as opposed to prevalent rates of 10%-11% without such a guarantee. An official statement at the time indicated more decisions may be taken later “based on evolving needs”.

### ‘Colossal damage’

With none of the expected credit flowing to them yet, the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India had urged Ms. Sitharaman to intervene to notify the scheme “with immediate effect” in a communique last week. It cited the “colossal damage suffered by the tourism and hospitality sector” after the second wave added to the losses they have suffered since the onset of the pandemic.

The Federation also pointed out that lenders

were not processing applications of several members and small enterprises for loan restructuring or assistance under the existing Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).

The relief package announced in June had enhanced the ECLGS cap from ₹3 lakh crore to ₹4.5 lakh crore, stating that contact intensive sectors are “already covered” under the scheme and “shall be continued”. The Cabinet had approved the expansion of the ECLGS along with the ₹50,000 crore loan guarantee scheme for healthcare sector projects on June 30.

A ₹77.5 crore revival package for the North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation, which was also included in the ₹6.29 lakh crore relief package, was approved by the Cabinet this Wednesday.

# Census: Bihar team to meet PM

Nitish Kumar says BJP leaders too will be part of the State delegation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA/NEW DELHI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will lead a delegation of multi-party leaders from the State to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 23 to press for a caste-based census in the country. The BJP-led Union government has so far remained non-committal on the issue.

“We got information yesterday [Wednesday] evening to meet the Prime Minister at 11 a.m. on August 23 on the issue of our demand for caste-based census.

A multi-party delegation will meet him and the final list of leaders will be sent to his office,” Mr. Kumar told presspersons in Patna on Thursday.

With the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election just a few months away, the BJP has maintained an uneasy silence on the issue. It fears that a caste census could disrupt the carefully crafted non-Yadav OBC bloc that it has nurtured.

Already, the BJP government in U.P. has been sitting on a report recommending



sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota for the past three years. The sub-categorisation will limit the quota for the dominant castes, including Yadav, Jat and the BJP’s key vote bank of Kurmis.

Asked if the BJP’s State leaders too would be in the delegation, Mr. Kumar said, “Yes, they too will be part of the delegation and their party will finalise the list of leaders.”

But the BJP’s discomfort is clearly visible. Recently, its leader and Deputy Chief Minister, Renu Devi, tried to lodge the ball back in the

Chief Minister’s court saying, “The Bihar government, like Karnataka, is free to hold caste-based census, but the Central government will not accept any proposal for this, as its policy decision is not to conduct caste-based census.”

### JD(U)’s advice to BJP

The Janata Dal(U) though has a word of advice for the BJP. “This is just a friendly advice to a friendly party that if caste census is delayed any longer, even the non-Yadav OBCs will get alienated,” the party’s secretary-general K.C. Tyagi said.

## Subedar, Apni Party leader and militant killed in J&K

Parties flay a spree of political killings in Union Territory

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

A junior commissioned officer (JCO), a militant and a J&K Apni Party leader were killed in two separate militancy-related incidents in the Union Territory on Thursday.

A subedar of the Army’s Rashtriya Rifles suffered bullet injuries in a “fierce gun battle” with hiding militants in Rajouri district of the Pir Panjal Valley in the morning. “The JCO was immediately evacuated to a nearest medical facility but he died of his injuries,” the spokesman said.

The JCO was identified as Subedar Ram Singh.

One soldier was injured in the operation.

One militant was also killed but his body was not retrieved till last reports came in, the police said.

On August 9, two militants of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) were killed in Thanamandi area.

Suspected militants killed a J&K Apni Party leader in



**Safety first:** Police distributing masks to those taking out a Muharram procession in Srinagar on Thursday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Kulgam in south Kashmir.

Gunmen opened fire from a close range at Ghulam Hassan Lone at his home in Devsar. “He died on the way to hospital,” an official said.

J&K Apni Party is headed by Altaf Bukhari, a businessman-turned-politician and a former Peoples Democratic Party leader, who floated the party in 2020.

Mr. Bukhari termed the killing “extremely unfortunate”. “Such attacks are intended to stop the current

ongoing peace process in J&K,” he said.

“Unfortunately, there seems to be no end to the spree of political killings in Kashmir,” Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said.

National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah said the renewed trend of targeting politicians by militant outfits was worrying.

Three BJP leaders were killed in the Valley in three months.



**New vistas:** Rajnath Singh launching DISC 5.0 in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ PTI

## Rajnath opens Defence Startup Challenge 5.0

It lays innovation foundation, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday launched the 5th edition of the Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC) under Innovations for Defence Excellence - Defence Innovation Organisation (iDEX-DIO) meant to achieve self-reliance and foster innovation and technology development in the defence and aerospace sectors.

“Thirty-five problem statements –13 from the Services and 22 from Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) – were unveiled under DISC 5.0. These are in areas such as situational awareness, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, air-

craft-trainer, non-lethal devices, 5G network, underwater domain awareness, Drone SWARMS and data capturing,” a Defence Ministry statement said.

Speaking at the virtual launch, Mr. Singh said the iDEX provided a strong foundation for innovation, Research and Development (R&D) to the industry. “Initiatives like iDEX form a link between our youth, academia, R&D, start-ups and the armed forces,” he said. On the earlier editions of DISC, Mr. Singh said that more than 80 start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and individual innovators had joined as winners in over 40 technological areas.

## ‘Transit camp’ title is humane, says Assam

Parties sense a softening of stand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The “detention centres” in Assam have been renamed “transit camps” to humanise them, the Assam government said on Thursday.

Last Tuesday, the Home and Political Department issued a notification saying the “nomenclature of Detention Centre is changed to Transit Camp for detention purpose”.

Assam currently has such centres within the Dibrugarh, Goalpara, Jorhat, Kokrajhar, Silchar and Tezpur central jails. A standalone detention centre with a capacity to house 3,000 foreigners is under construction at Agia in Goalpara district.

“One should not read much into the cosmetic change. The government has coped criticisms for years over the detention centres, which sound like concentration camps. We are trying to make them more humane,” a senior administrative officer said, de-

clining to be quoted.

Political parties sense a softening of stand by the government on the issue of “illegal immigrants”, specifically non-Muslims, who came from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan up to December 31, 2014, sought to be given preferential citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

### ‘More respectability’

“The government is trying to give the detention centres some respectability by using the new softer term,” said Assam Jiyoti Parishad president Lurinjyoti Gogoi.

Congress leader Bobbeeta Sharma said changing names was a BJP trait. “They have not made the legal ramifications of the change in nomenclature clear. One needs to know how long an inmate would be kept in transit, which means temporary stay,” she observed.

The inmates of the detention centres have allegedly been treated on a par with the criminals in the jails.

## ‘BJP-affiliated’ sarpanch, associate held with pistol

‘We disown him,’ says BJP spokesman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

A “BJP-affiliated” sarpanch and an associate were arrested and a pistol and ammunition seized from him at Kulgam in south Kashmir on Thursday.

The arrested were identified as Aqib Shafi Badder, sarpanch from Badderpora-Qaimoh in Kulgam, and Mohammad Amin Hajam from Hangalgund Kokernag in

Anantnag. BJP spokesman Altaf Thakur said, “The arrested person didn’t contest on BJP ticket. He, however, participated in some of the rallies of BJP. We disown him”.

The police said, “A joint patrolling party of the Army’s 1 Rashtriya Rifles and the police apprehended the two persons when they were riding a motorcycle in Khudwani area.”

## Caste column in Assam college forms draws ire

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Students’ organisations in Assam have slammed some colleges for seeking specific caste and religion of applicants in online forms for graduate courses.

Organisations such as the Students’ Federation of India (SFI) and Chhatra Mukti Sangram Samiti said these forms go beyond the standard policy of asking stu-

dents to tick boxes such as Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Other Backward Classes for reservation.

Online forms issued by Guwahati-based institutes such as Handique Girls’ College, Arya Vidyapeeth College and Karmashree Hiteswar Saikia College have asked applicants to specify if they are Brahmin, Ganak, Kalita, Kayastha, Muslim, Sudra, Vaishya or Other.

## After Sonia meet, Opposition may issue joint statement

Mamata, Uddhav expected to attend virtual interaction

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Top Opposition leaders are likely to adopt a joint resolution or statement on a host of issues, including the recent washout of the monsoon session of Parliament, after a virtual interaction with each other at a meeting convened by Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar will be among the leaders attending Ms. Gandhi’s meeting.

Though the list of invitees is not public yet, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) may not be among the invitees.

The joint statement, which is expected to be adopted by the Opposition leaders, is a work in progress. Senior leaders from the Congress and other Opposition leaders have exchanged notes on the issues that are likely to figure, said a source on Thursday.

Opposition parties would



Sonia Gandhi

“use of sedition laws against activists and political workers can also be part of the statement, said a source.

The chosen date for the Opposition leaders to come together on a common platform is significant, August 20, also marks the 77th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister, the late Rajiv Gandhi.

The virtual meet could set the stage for discussions to have a more formal structure, and if the pandemic situation permits, Opposition leaders could also have a physical meeting next month.

“Ms. Gandhi wants to keep the momentum going in terms of the Opposition unity that one saw during the Parliament session, when Rahul Gandhi hosted a breakfast for Opposition leaders,” said one Opposition leader. Ms. Gandhi’s meet is seen against the backdrop of a dinner hosted on August 9 by Kapil Sibal, a member of the Congress group of 23 dissenters, which was attended Mr. Pawar, Rashtriya Janata Dal patriarch Lalu Yadav, Samajwadi Party’s Akhilesh Yadav, Sitaram Yechury of the CPI (M), and D. Raja of the CPI.

### IN BRIEF



#### President undergoes cataract surgery

NEW DELHI  
President Ram Nath Kovind underwent a cataract surgery at the Army’s Referral and Research Hospital on Wednesday. A Rashtrapati Bhavan statement said the President was discharged from hospital after the surgery. Earlier in March, the 75-year-old President had undergone a bypass surgery. Mr. Kovind has been active post his heart surgery and recently undertook a four-day trip to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

#### ED arrests PISL managing director in graft case

NEW DELHI  
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested the managing director (MD) of Prithvi Information Solutions Limited (PISL) for allegedly causing a loss of ₹3,316 crore to a consortium of public sector banks. Vuppapapati Satish Kumar has been accused of money laundering in connivance with his sister, Hima Bindu B, who is the MD of VMC Systems Limited (VMCSL). The ED probe is based on an FIR registered by the CBI against VMCSL, which had taken loans from the consortium.

#### Former Haryana CM writes Class 10 paper

SIRSA  
Former Haryana Chief Minister and INLD supremo Om Prakash Chautala has written the Class 10 English exam of the Haryana School Education Board at a centre here at the age of 86 years. “I had appeared in the Class 10 examination two years ago while I was in the Tihar Jail. However, I did not appear in the English paper. The education board gave me a compartment in the subject, so I wrote the paper now,” Mr. Chautala said. He said he had prepared for the exam thoroughly and would pass with 100% marks. PTI

#### Modi’s bust removed from temple

PUNE  
Days after a BJP worker constructed a temple for Narendra Modi in Pune, the bust of the Prime Minister was removed from it. Mayur Munde, who built the temple, could not be reached for comments on what prompted him to remove the bust. Some NCP workers staged a mock protest outside the temple in the Aundh area here on Thursday. “Optimism had prevailed that now [after the construction of the temple], fuel prices will come down, inflation will dip and people will get ₹15 lakh in their accounts. However, we came here and saw that the ‘god’ is missing,” an NCP leader said wryly. PTI



HC judge caught in row elevated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KOLKATA

Kaushik Chanda, an additional judge of the Calcutta High Court whom the Supreme Court Collegium has appointed as a permanent judge, was in West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's line of fire over his alleged proximity to the BJP. The Trinamool Congress chief had even opposed his confirmation.

Justice Chanda had on July 7 recused himself from hearing a petition by the Trinamool chief challenging the election of Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Sundendu Adhikari from Nandigram after she expressed apprehension of bias against her by the judge.

The Collegium, headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, met on August 17 and approved the proposal. The statement was uploaded on the top court's website on Thursday.

Besides Chief Justice Ramana, Justices U.U. Lalit and A.M. Khanwilkar are part of the three-member Collegium that takes decisions on the appointment of High Court judges.

Justice Chanda had imposed ₹5 lakh costs on Ms. Banerjee for the manner in which she had sought his refusal.

Tough wait for Indians in Afghanistan

Around 450 still stranded; govt. coordinating with the U.S., other embassies to assist in their return

SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI

With as many as 450 Indians possibly still stranded inside Afghanistan, the Government of India is coordinating with the embassies of the United States and other countries to assist in their return, as transport to the airport as well as flights from Kabul to Delhi are proving to be a challenge. In addition, four days after the Taliban militia took control of the capital, there was no formal government in place, making it harder for those who do not have all the necessary documents, officials said.

"Our biggest problem is that even those in Kabul aren't able to leave their residences without approval from Taliban guards to travel to the airport," an official said. While U.S. troops were in charge of Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport, located just 10 km from the Indian Embassy, they were unable to provide support outside it for convoys to reach, and it became necessary to deal with local militia at every checkpoint, the official said.

On Monday, Indian diplomats trying to leave the city after closing the embassy faced several issues, after most of their convoy was turned around by Taliban gunmen posted near the city



On call: Ministry officials at the "Special Afghanistan cell" that is processing visa applications.

outskirts, and it took them more than a day to make the necessary arrangements to leave. As a result, one of the special military C-17 flights operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF) had to return to Delhi with only 40 passengers, as the rest could not make it to the airport. Another C-17 that had landed, was asked to fly to Dushanbe, in neighbouring Tajikistan, after the tarmac got overrun by Afghans desperate to leave.

Officials said the U.S. Embassy in Kabul as well as its diplomats in Delhi have been helping by providing their teams access to the airport and security within the area, and had also been providing

them updated information on their movements so that the government could "plan ahead".

U.S. officials also coordinated parking slots for the C-17 that finally flew out on Tuesday carrying the remaining 120 Indian diplomats and about 20 others.

Among the Indians left behind who have reached out to the government are doctors, university professors and engineers, many of whom had tried to leave Afghanistan earlier, but had been unable to find seats on Air India flights to Delhi, which were suspended this week. On Thursday, Air India officials told *The Hindu* that no new flights had been

planned at present.

The speed with which the Indian Embassy had to be closed also left several Afghans stranded, as they had submitted their passports in order to receive their visas, and those could not be returned before they left. "We are in danger here, but without the passports we can't do anything right now," Mohammad Farhan (not his real name), a Ph.D. student who is one of four students who applied some months ago for their visas, told *The Hindu* over the telephone from Kabul.

Hundreds of calls have come in to the External Affairs Ministry at a "Special Afghanistan cell" manned

round the clock by about 20 officers. The cell was originally set up on Monday night, just as diplomats and personnel from the Indian Embassy were leaving so as to ensure "seamless contacts" for Indians who are still stranded inside the country. The officers are preparing an updated database based on the calls received, on what sort of assistance they need. They gave estimates of between 300 and 450 Indians who still remain and need to be evacuated.

Newly launched visa

The special cell is also coordinating visa applications for the newly launched "e-Emergency X-Misc Visa" for Afghan nationals wanting to flee the country urgently, which will be processed after security clearances by the Union Home Ministry.

According to sources, hundreds of applications have already been filled out online by Afghans, many of them belonging to minorities and sects such as the Hazara community that fear being at risk of harm from the Taliban.

However, when asked, officials said the visas will likely take some time to process, and only a few have been issued so far.

(With inputs from Jagriti Chandra)

'Terror groups continue to work with impunity'

At UNSC, Jaishankar slams Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA UNITED NATIONS

Terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) continue to operate with both impunity and encouragement, India told the UN Security Council (UNSC), asserting that the international community must never host sanctuaries for terrorists as it recalled the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, Pathankot air base and Pulwama attacks carried out by Pakistan-based terrorists.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, chairing a high-level United Nations Security Council briefing, held under India's current presidency, on "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts", said the heightened activities of the proscribed Haqqani Network justified this growing anxiety.

"In our own immediate neighbourhood, ISIL-Khorasan [ISIL-K] has become more energetic and is constantly seeking to expand its footprint. Events unfolding in Afghanistan have naturally enhanced global concerns about their implications for both regional and international security," he said.

"Whether it is in Afghanistan or against India,



S. Jaishankar

groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed continue to operate with both impunity and encouragement," Mr. Jaishankar said.

'No complacency'

It is, therefore, vital that the Security Council does not take a selective, tactical or complacent view of the problems we face, the External Affairs Minister said.

"We must never countenance sanctuaries for terrorists or overlook their raising of resources," Mr. Jaishankar added.

Slamming Pakistan, where proscribed terrorists and terror groups enjoy safe havens and state support, he said: "When we see state hospitality being extended to those with innocents' blood on their hands, we should never lack the courage to call out this double-speak."

'India should have kept a small team in Kabul'

Ex-diplomats slam withdrawal of all officials

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE SUHASINI HAIDAR NEW DELHI

India tried to maintain a core team of diplomats in Afghanistan, but could not do so because of lack of operational space for non-NATO countries at the Kabul airport, *The Hindu* has learnt.

The decision to withdraw all Indian officials from Kabul has drawn criticism from some veteran diplomats who



K.P. Fabian

believe that there are many who require India's help in Afghanistan and a well-trained small team of diplomats should have been left behind to help them.

"Evacuation of the embassy in Kabul was a mistake that needs to be corrected promptly," said former Ambassador K.P. Fabian, who had played a crucial role in the airlift of Indians in 1990 after Iraq had invaded Kuwait.

India on Tuesday evacuated 120 diplomats and officials in a special flight as Kabul was taken over by the Taliban. An attempt was made at this time to station a core team of diplomats in Kabul, but it did not work out as the place for diplomatic outposts in Kabul air-

port at present is meant only for the NATO countries.

Apart from security concerns, there was also a need to observe the behaviour of the Taliban and other major powers on the ground in Afghanistan, which was of crucial importance for India's security, said Mr. Fabian. "Instead of monitoring developments, India should seek to shape them," he added.

Former Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan Jayant Prasad said the Taliban were yet to prove that they were serious in tackling the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-

e-Mohammed (JeM) and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM). "There have been reports of clashes between the Islamic State and the Taliban in the recent past, but we have not noticed any attempt by the Taliban to counter the LeT and JeM," said Mr. Prasad.

Former diplomat Vivek Katju, however, supported the evacuation of Indian officials. "In view of the complexities and dangers inherent in the current situation in Afghanistan, the withdrawal of the mission was justified," he said.

Tough legal battle awaits wives of slain IS men post extradition

K.S. SUDHI KOCHI

Freedom may remain a distant dream for widows of Islamic State (IS) members, including Nimisha Fathima, a Keralite, as a long-drawn battle awaits them in India, if extradited from Afghanistan. She has been accused of joining the IS, a banned terrorist organisation, an offence under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

There were reports that Nimisha was among those released from jail after the Taliban took over the reins of the

country. She and three others had accompanied their husbands to join the IS in the Khorasan province. Bexen Vincent, her husband and an IS activist, is believed to have been killed in Afghanistan. K. Bindu, Nimisha's mother, had recently approached the authorities to bring back her daughter and five-year-old granddaughter.

Incidentally, the National Investigation Agency has included Nimisha on the list of most wanted persons in the IS case. She has also been accused of associating with the

IS to furthering and supporting its activities. She will have to face trial for waging war against Afghanistan. All the charges levelled against Nimisha are non-bailable. In UAPA cases, the court may grant bail only if it is satisfied that the charges are baseless, judicial sources indicated.

The challenge before the NIA is to gather evidence to link Nimisha to the offences allegedly committed in Afghanistan. It may have to bank heavily on digital evidence and witnesses in India to prove the charges.

SC acquits family sentenced to life

Case a shocking reminder of police docility to political influence, says Bench

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has acquitted three members of a family, framed by the police acting under political pressure and sentenced to life imprisonment by the courts, after they complained about their relative's murder over a ₹250 debt, 13 years ago.

A Bench comprising Justices Indira Banerjee and V. Ramasubramanian, in a judgment, said the police, instead of proceeding in pursuit of the truth, tried to bury it deep in a case that was a shocking reminder of police docility to political influence, a lack of proper legal representation in courts and



judicial oversight.

In May 2008, a grievously injured Nand Kishore was rushed to hospital by Madhav. Kishore was the brother of Raju Yadav. Yadav was married to Madhav's sister, Sahodara Bai. But Kishore was declared dead on arrival. Bai informed the police and the three of them named two men, Ruia and Kailash, in the First Information Re-

port (FIR) as the culprits.

However, the case took a bizarre turn when the Madhya Pradesh police turned on them. Instead of investigating the FIR, the police arrested the three family members of the dead man. The trial court convicted all three and sentenced them to life in prison. During the trial, they realised that the two men they had named in the FIR for Kishore's murder were arraigned as star witnesses. The High Court confirmed the punishment.

"We are conscious of the fact that at times persons who commit a crime, themselves make/lodge the first information so as to create

an alibi of innocence. But even in such cases, the investigation would normally proceed first against those named as accused in the FIR, and thereafter, the needle of suspicion may turn against the informant himself," Justice Ramasubramanian, who authored the judgment, reasoned.

The apex court was appalled that both the Sessions Court and the High Court "overlooked" crucial admissions. Besides, Justice Ramasubramanian wondered why both the courts found nothing amiss in the prosecution version that a murderer would rush his victim to the hospital in an autrickshaw.

Nagaland CM, State BJP chief called to Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and the State's BJP president, Temjen Imna Along, left for New Delhi on August 19 for an emergency meeting.

A senior leader of the Nagaland unit of the BJP said the duo had been summoned by Home Minister Amit Shah. The issue of discussion is expected to be the inclusion of the Naga People's Front (NPF) in the coalition government, leaving the State Opposition-free.

The BJP's central leadership is reportedly unhappy with the political development "in the name of achieving a peaceful solution to the Naga political issue". The issue pertains to the peace process with extremist groups since mid-1997.

Mr. Rio's Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP), the BJP and independent MLAs had stitched up the People's Democratic Alliance government in 2018. On August 16, the coalition included the NPF by "setting aside political rivalry" for the sake of the Naga peace process and renamed the coalition the Nagaland United Government.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,  
CENTRAL RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR  
No. 3858 / Date: 17.08.2021  
The tender for the works invited this office N.I.T. No.Tender-Online-C.C.-10 of 2021 Dt-23.04.2021 issued vide this office Lr.No.2222 Dt-23.04.2021 is hereby cancelled due to some unavoidable circumstances.  
Chief Construction Engineer, Central Rural Works Circle, Bhubaneswar.  
O-557: OIPR-25082/11/0022/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : SUNDARGARH  
AT/PO-SANKARA, SUNDARGARH-770020, E-mail address-serw\_sundargarh@yahoo.com  
No.Tender Online – RWCCESNG-13 of 2021-22, Letter No.2462/Dtd.13.08.2021  
e-Procurement NOTICE  
1. Type of the Work : Bridge  
2. Class of Contractor : As specified in the column-6 of the Annexure  
3. Time of Completion : As specified in the column-5 of the Annexure  
4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached  
5. Estimated Cost : As specified in the column-4 of the Annexure  
6. Other details:  
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender on-line for bidding From To Last Date & Time of Seeking Tender Clarification Date & Time of Opening of tender Technical Bid Financial Bid  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh RWCCESNG-13 of 2021-22 31.08.2021 11:00 AM 21.09.2021 3:00 PM 20.09.2021 3:00 PM 27.09.2021 11:00 AM Will be intimated separately  
Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in  
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh.  
O-554: OIPR-25133/11/0020/2122

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NOTICE INVITING INFORMATIONS REGARDING CONFIDENTIAL PRINTING WORKS  
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Details of information to be sent by organizations may be seen on website of the Board www.rajeduboard.rajasthan.gov.in. Secretary

OFFICE OF THE ADDL. CHIEF ENGINEER, P.H.E.D., REGION-I-JODHPUR  
Tele-091-2651750 E-Mail : r.j.angad@nic.in  
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बिड संशोधन सूचना, भाग संख्या 17 से 20 / 2021-22  
इस कार्यवाही द्वारा जारी की गई निविदा संख्या 17 से 20 / 2021-22 में निविदा प्रपत्र में आश्रित संशोधन होने के कारण बिड संशोधन जारी किया जाकर https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in एवं https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर अपलोड किया गया।  
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निविदा संख्या 19 / 2021-22 (UBIN No.PHE2122WL0B05154)  
निविदा संख्या 20 / 2021-22 (UBIN No.PHE2122WL0B05158)  
(नियत समुदाय)  
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Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPCL Website only.  
Terms and conditions, Quantity, Tender Fee, EMD etc., are available in the tender document which can be downloaded from websites : www.tnpl.com / www.tenders.tn.gov.in  
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ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PHED NCR REGION ALWAR  
Manu Marg ALWAR(RAJ.) E-mail- ace.alw.phed@rajasthan.gov.in  
No-2991-3004 Date-13/08/2021  
NOTICE INVITING BID (NIT No. 39-41/2021-22)  
Bids for Work of construction of Sources, rising main pipelines, CWRs, Pump houses, ESRs, internal village distribution pipeline and FHTC including one year Defect Liability period of Various Villages under Sub Division Remgarh / Sub Division Laxmangarh Panchayat samiti, Thanagazi under J.M in the jurisdiction of PHED Rural Division IInd NCR Alwar are invited from interested bidders upto 05.00 PM on Dated 07-09-2021. Other particulars of the Bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raji.nic.in ) of the state and https://phedwater.rajasthan.gov.in departmental website.  
UBN:- PHE2122WL0B06106 UBN:- PHE2122WL0B06110 UBN:- PHE2122WL0B06114  
(Aditya Sharma)  
Additional Chief Engineer  
PHED, NCR, Region, Alwar  
DIPRC/8150

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ANDHRA PRADESH  
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TENDER NOTIFICATION  
Sealed tenders are invited from reputed Firms / Agencies for the following:  
1. Annual Maintenance Contract for Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) Plant at NIT Andhra Pradesh.  
2. Annual Maintenance Contract for 11kV/433V Substation and all other subsidiary substations at NIT Andhra Pradesh.  
3. Operation & Maintenance of two number 200 KLD Sewage Treatment Plant (MBBR Technology) at NIT Andhra Pradesh.  
4. Designing and Furnishing of the newly constructed existing offices in G+4 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Administrative Vista at NIT Andhra Pradesh by supplying & installing the necessary furniture and interior works.  
5. Supply & Installation of Thermal Engineering Laboratory at NIT Andhra Pradesh.  
All the details can be obtained from the institute website:  
www.nitandhra.ac.in/main/tender DIRECTOR

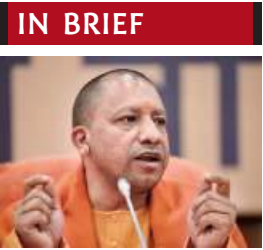
ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
UNION TERRITORY OF LAKSHADWEEP  
(DIRECTORATE OF MEDICAL & HEALTH SERVICES)  
KAVARATTI - 682555  
F.No.5/9/2021-DHS Dated: 18.08.2021  
NOTIFICATION  
Application for the post of Principal, Vice Principal, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Tutor on contract for the proposed Govt Nursing College, Kavaratti, U.T. of Lakshadweep has been invited. The application and other details can be had from www.lakshadweep.gov.in. The last date of submission of application will be on 31st August 2021.  
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E-Tenders are invited through MSTC for Supply of Block Board Packing boxes  
i) For BRBNMPL, Mysuru - 39,670 boxes  
ii) For BRBNMPL, Salboni - 58,500 boxes  
MSTC Event No.: BRBNMPL/MYSURU PRESS/MMD/21-22/ET/6 - BLOCK BOARD PACKING BOXES  
Last date of submission of bids for the above tender is 22/09/2021.  
Vendors/ Bidders are required to register themselves online with www.mstcecommerce.com for participation. The details are also published in our website www.brbtnmpl.co.in. Amendments/ Corrigendum to the e-tender if any, issued in future will only be notified on the BRBNMPL's website and MSTC website as given above and will not be published in Newspaper. Further extension or amendment/s, if any will be available at website only.  
General Manager





**Kin of 41 COVID warriors get ₹50 lakh each in U.P.**

**LUCKNOW**  
A total of 103 corona warriors — health and sanitation workers —died of COVID-19 in Uttar Pradesh and so far the families of 41 of them had received the ₹50 lakh ex-gratia compensation promised to them, according to the State government. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath provided the details in a written reply in the Assembly on Thursday to a direct question by Sanjay Garg, Samajwadi Party MLA from Saharanpur.

**Price of diesel cut by 20 paise per litre**

**NEW DELHI**  
The price of diesel was cut by 20 paise per litre on Thursday, the second consecutive day of reduction, but petrol rates remained unchanged. Diesel price in Delhi was reduced to ₹89.47 per litre from ₹89.67 a litre, according to a price notification by state-run oil companies. The reduction comes on the back of a similar cut on Wednesday. Just like on Wednesday, the petrol price was not revised on Thursday. In Delhi, petrol continued to be priced at ₹101.84 a litre. The price cut follows international oil prices tumbling to their lowest level since May. **PTI**

**DRDO's chaff technology to safeguard jets**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Thursday said it had developed an advanced chaff (strips of metal foil released in the air to obstruct radar detection) technology to safeguard the fighter aircraft of the Air Force against hostile radar threats. "The IAF has started the process of induction of this technology after the completion of successful user trials," a DRDO statement said. "The technology has been given to the industry for production in large quantities to meet the annual rolling requirement of the IAF," it added.

**Curfew lifted in Shillong for 12 hours**

**SHILLONG**  
Curfew, which was clamped here following unrest, was lifted for 12 hours from 5 a.m. on Thursday as the law and order situation improved in the last 24 hours, an official said. The restriction, however, will be in place at night, he said. East Khasi Hills Deputy Commissioner I. Laloo has issued an order, relaxing the curfew in Shillong urban agglomeration for 12 hours till 5 p.m. on Thursday, the official said. Shops involved in selling essential commodities have been allowed to open till 4 p.m. and transactions at banks permitted till 3 p.m., according to the official order. **PTI**

# Centre monitoring booster dose move in U.S.

Doctors in India favour a third shot, but say its benefits can be understood only after studies are conducted

**BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI**

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday said it was "closely following the developments in the United States", which has given the green signal for booster dose of COVID-19 vaccines.

Doctors in India are also advocating a booster dose. They said some research papers had suggested that giving a third dose after a space of six or eight months had been shown to increase immune response markedly.

Sandeep Kharb, senior consultant, endocrinology, QRG Health City, Faridabad, said, "So in view of the new emerging variants, booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines should be used in high-risk groups. It will add to herd immunity too."

Akshay Budhbraja, senior consultant, pulmonology, Aakash Healthcare, observed that booster doses would definitely be a requirement in future. But there was a big vaccine gap between low-income and high-income countries,



**Quick jab:** A vaccination drive in progress in New Delhi on Thursday. **■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA**

which was why the World Health Organization (WHO) had recommended a stop to it for now.

"The scenario in the U.S. is different, as most of the population has been fully vaccinated, so there is no harm in giving booster doses,

although we will only be able to understand its benefits after studies are conducted on it. It is certainly going to be a trend in future to get a booster dose every year, just like the flu vaccine. As the virus keeps on mutating, even vaccines need to be updated

with the latest strain annually. It has to be decided whether it would be administered on a yearly basis or not or whether every person would require it," he said. All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Randeep Guleria had earlier

said that India would have to take a serious look at bringing in booster doses to ensure that the population was able to keep up the antibody levels.

Viswesvaran Balasubramanian, interventional pulmonologist at Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad, said that currently the U.S. FDA had agreed to the booster doses for mRNA vaccines such as Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

**No clear guidelines**

"However, with respect to J&J vaccines, there are no clear-cut guidelines regarding the booster dose yet. There are still considerations for mixing of vaccines as a booster dose, which is still a matter that needs further studies and research data. Currently in India, we still do not have guideline recommendations for booster doses of vaccine. However, with the upcoming scientific evidence, we may see a role for such booster doses in the near future," he said.

Arunesh Kumar, senior

consultant, pulmonology, Paras Hospital, explained that with variants of the virus coming in, it had become more important that people had neutralising antibodies at a higher level to prevent breakthrough infection.

"It may be planned in a phased manner, everyone who is a vaccine candidate may need a booster and perhaps it could be administered first to people who are more exposed to the virus — healthcare and frontline workers — and then can be rolled out for all age groups," he suggested.

The Indian Council of Medical Research on Thursday said the country had achieved a milestone of conducting 50 crore COVID-19 tests on August 18. "With an average daily testing of more than 17 lakh in August, India has tested 50 crore samples till date and the last 10 crore tests in only 55 days. On July 21, India had tested 45 crore COVID-19 samples, which reached the 50-crore-mark on August 18," the release said.

## 3.86 cr. people did not get 2nd dose on time

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI**

Over 3.86 crore persons did not get their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine within the stipulated time period, the Union government has said in a response to a query under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

According to information on the CoWIN portal, 44,22,85,854 persons have received their first dose, while 12,59,07,443 have taken their second as of Thursday afternoon.

Activist Raman Sharma had filed a query under the RTI Act, seeking to know from the government the number of persons who had received the first dose of a vaccine, either Covishield or Covaxin, but had not taken the second within the stipulated time period.

The Health Ministry urged people to ensure that the second dose was taken on time in order to get the full benefit of vaccination.

# Record sugar exports help reduce cane dues

Pending payments to farmers remain a thorny issue

**PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI**

Sugar mills have surpassed their 60 lakh tonne export target this year, making it easier for them to pay sugarcane farmers and reducing arrears for this year to less than ₹9,000 crore, according to government data. Pending dues to cane farmers are a thorny political issue in several States, provoking protests in western Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

Given that India produces more sugar than it consumes, leading to liquidity concerns for mills and delayed payments to farmers, the Centre has been encouraging



**Diverse uses:** The government is urging mills to divert surplus cane stock to make ethanol. **■ FILE PHOTO**

diversion to exports and ethanol production. Exports have increased more than 10 times from just 6.2 lakh tonnes in 2017-18, with the Centre now providing assistance to the tune of ₹6,000 per tonne to facilitate exports.

As against an export target of 60 lakh tonnes this

year, contracts of about 70 lakh tonnes have been signed, according to a statement from the Food Ministry on Thursday.

**High demand**

As global prices have also spiked substantially in the last month and there is high demand for Indian sugar in

the international market, the Ministry has advised domestic mills to sign forward contracts with importers for the next season, and some have already done so.

Along with the diversion for ethanol production, which the government sees as a more permanent solution to the problem of surplus stocks, the export revenue has allowed mills to partially pay off their dues to cane farmers.

At the end of May, unpaid cane dues for 2021-21 stood at ₹18,820 crore, along with pending payments from previous years worth ₹2,501 crore.

However, by mid-August, mills had bought a record ₹90,872 crore worth of cane from farmers, against which ₹81,963 crore have been

paid, leaving arrears of ₹8,909 crore. Pending payments from previous years are also down to ₹142 crore.

**Protest in Punjab**

In Punjab, farm unions will block rail and road traffic on Friday, with a dharna on the Jalandhar highway, demanding that arrears of ₹200 crore from the last season, mostly from private mills, be cleared at once.

By law, cane farmers must be paid within 15 days of delivery. On August 4, the Supreme Court issued notices to 11 cane growing States as well as industry bodies to reply to a plea from Maharashtra farmers to set up a mechanism to ensure timely payment and attach the assets of mills with accumulated arrears.

# Railways reiterates 'Make in India' policy

Officials told to implement it in 'letter and spirit' to boost income, employment

**S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI**

Did Central procurement agencies tweak tender conditions to circumvent the 'Make in India' policy, an ambitious initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi?

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has "observed" that government procuring agencies, including Public Sector Undertakings, had not implemented the Public Procurement (Preference to 'Make in India' Order), 2017,

in "letter and spirit". It was found that "excessive turnover, requirements of specific brands/make, requirement of foreign certification, requirement of unreasonable prior experience and requirement of prior experience of supplying to specific nations/entities" were sometimes prescribed as qualifying criteria.

The Ministry of Railways, which makes huge purchases for its manufacturing, maintenance and service sectors every year, has

flagged the issue with the General Managers of all Zonal Railways, Production Units and other major establishments across the country.

In an advisory issued last week, Chandan Kumar, Director, Railway Board, said there were instances where the provisions of the Public Procurement (Preference to 'Make in India' Order), 2017, were not incorporated in the tender. The policy was to encourage 'Make in India' and promote manufacturing and production of Goods, Services

and Works in India with a view to enhance income and employment. "In view of the above, it is advised to all the procuring entities to ensure full compliance of the Public Procurement (Preference to 'Make in India' Order), 2017, as amended, in letter and spirit. Procuring units, including Public Sector Undertakings, should review the implementation of the order and take all necessary measures/corrective actions so that there is no deviation," the advisory said.

## Only 3,996 of 1.08 lakh govt. flats rented out

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

Only 3,996 out of the 1.08 lakh vacant government flats identified when the Affordable Rental Housing Complex (ARHC) scheme was announced in May 2020 have been rented out to beneficiaries so far, according to a Housing Ministry official.

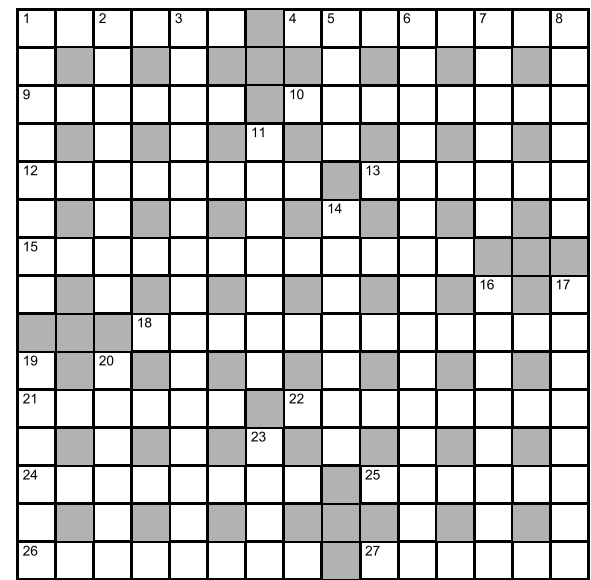
The scheme was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as a part of the COVID-19 relief package.

**THE CROSSWORD****+****13331**

(set by Hypatia)

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- 15 A country's citizen learned A-Z (3,9)
- 18 Letting go of criminal, turn here saving skin in minor accident (6-6)
- 21 Cheap liquor smuggled in barracks (6)
- 22 One new ship arranged for callers in TV shows (5-3)
- 24 Perhaps NRIs returning help with special gold article (8)
- 25 Going West, leaders of China, India and Australia embrace local language (6)
- 26 Fine park providing rental space (8)
- 27 City starting to bring one true liberal (6)

**■ DOWN**

- 1 Note people following soldier and team leader in military unit (8)
- 2 Welcome information about fresh products (4,4)
- 3 Cooking Eid pot casserole in big dishes? (5,10)
- 5 Upset over Greek god (4)
- 6 Approved tender? (10,5)
- 7 Working with a polar opposite? Not possible (6)
- 8 It's regularly picked up in meat loads! (6)
- 11 Briefly notice suggestion about date and isolate (7)
- 14 A main dynasty finally in chaos (7)
- 16 He is not prepared to talk live in bridal party (2-6)
- 17 From a corner, saw scouts assembling behind empty car (8)
- 19 Assist little dog going around to get settled (4,2)
- 20 Mysterious star can enhance shows (6)
- 23 Managed under independent country (4)

**■ ACROSS**

- 1 See colour cloth brought back inside (6)
- 4 Squeezes Spooner's little pests (4,4)
- 9 Diego building school's scientific models (6)
- 10 Desire passage on air for extended trip (4,4)
- 12 Staff of parliamentarian ringing a new debtor (8)
- 13 Security in compound outside limits of society (6)

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★☆

**Solution to puzzle 13330**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | U | R | N | T | H | E | C | O | R | N | E | R |
| P | I | O | A | O | A | N |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| P | E | T | I | D | O | M | I | N | A | T | O | R |
| A | I | T | J | P | K | W | E |   |   |   |   |   |
| N | E | G | L | I | G | I | B | L | E | M | I | N |
| D | H | N |   | A | D | N |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E | L | T | I | G | R | E | T | C | I | N | E | S |
| M | O | R | C | H | A | R | D |   |   |   |   |   |
| O | R | C | H | A | R | D |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| N | U | M | A |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| I | L | L | S |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| U | T | S |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| M | A | U | S |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| R | E |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| H | E | A | R | T | S | T | R | I | C | K | E | N |

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

## FAITH

### The Jnana marga

There are many ways to reach God. Saivism shows the paths of Satputra, Dasa, Saha and Sanmarga as the means to experience and realise God. Gnanasambandar tread the path of Satputra, Tirunavukkarasar that of Dasa marga, Sundarar Saha marga and Manikkavachagar San marga or jnana marga. Of these, Jnana marga is the most difficult to practise. Jnana is described as consciousness, knowledge, awareness, enlightenment and so on. Knowledge is of two types, that pertaining to the world, which is known as 'Apara' jnana; and that which is higher or 'Para' jnana. Para jnana when purified further with bhakti becomes Parama jnana.

Turaimangalam Sivaprakasara, a staunch devotee of Manikkavachagar, who has delved deep into the saint's hymns, asserts that by following the way of life taught by Manikkavachagar, one can easily attain salvation, pointed out Sri Ka Vinyakam in a discourse. From the life and works of Manikkavachagar it is clear that Siva alone is the granter of salvation. He had come as a Guru to Manikkavachagar who was steeped in worldly concerns when he served as a minister in the court of the Pandya king. Siva chose to bless him at an appropriate time. In the normal course of life, the aspirant goes in search of a guru. Sivaprakasara also had learnt under more than one guru. But in the case of Manikkavachagar, Siva is his guru who comes in search of a worthy disciple.

Manikkavachagar has taught us the secret and mystery in the path of jnana. One should cultivate a pure mind since God dwells in such a pure mind and heart. The mind has to be kept under control and has to be fixed in the Lord at all times. This is how devotion takes root and gets strengthened. Siva, who grants mukti on His own accord, seeks out His devotee and takes him in His fold.



# Several killed in protest against Taliban

On Independence Day, flag-waving demonstrators took to the streets of Afghan cities, including Kabul

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
REUTERS  
KABUL

Afghan protesters defied the Taliban for a second day on Thursday, waving their national flag in scattered demonstrations, and the fighters again responded violently as they faced down growing challenges to their rule.

A UN official warned of dire food shortages and experts said the country was severely in need of cash while noting that the Taliban are unlikely to enjoy the generous international aid that the civilian government they dethroned did.

In light of these challenges, the Taliban have moved quickly to suppress any dissent, despite their promises that they have become more moderate since they last ruled Afghanistan with draconian laws. Many fear they will succeed in erasing two decades of efforts to expand women's and human rights, and remake the country.

On Thursday, a procession of cars and people near Kabul's airport carried long black, red and green banners in honour of the Afghan flag – a banner that is becoming a symbol of defiance. At another protest in Nangar-



Show of defiance: Afghans marching with the national flag in Kabul on Thursday. ■ AFP

har province, video posted online showed a bleeding demonstrator with a gunshot wound. Onlookers tried to carry him away.

### Curfew after protest

In Khost province, Taliban authorities instituted a 24-hour curfew on Thursday after violently breaking up another protest, according to information obtained by journalists monitoring from abroad. The authorities did not immediately acknowledge the demonstration or the curfew.

In Asadabad, capital of the eastern province of Kunar, several people were

killed during a rally, but it was not clear if the casualties resulted from Taliban firing or from a stampede that it triggered, witness Mohammed Salim said.

"Hundreds of people came out on the streets," Mr. Salim said. "At first I was scared and didn't want to go but when I saw one of my neighbours had joined in, I took out the flag I have at home. Several people were killed and injured in the stampede and firing by the Taliban."

The demonstrations – which come as Afghans mark the Independence Day holiday that commemorates the

1919 treaty that ended British rule – were a remarkable show of defiance after Taliban fighters violently dispersed a protest on Wednesday. At that rally, in the eastern city of Jalalabad, demonstrators lowered the Taliban's flag and replaces it with Afghanistan's tricolour. At least one person was killed.

Meanwhile, videos from the Panjshir Valley north of Kabul, a stronghold of the Northern Alliance militias that allied with the U.S. during the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, appear to show potential opposition figures gathering there. It was not

### Footballer fell to death from U.S. plane

KABUL

An Afghan footballer who played for the national youth team fell to his death after trying to cling to a U.S. plane airlifting people out of Taliban-controlled Kabul, a sports federation said on Thursday. The General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports of Afghanistan confirmed the death of Zaki Anwari in the mayhem that erupted at the airport in the capital this week. ■ AFP

clear how serious a threat they posed given that Taliban fighters overran nearly the entire country in a matter of days with little resistance from Afghan forces.

The Taliban so far have offered no specifics on how they will lead, other than to say they will be guided by Sharia, or Islamic, law. They are in talks with senior officials of the previous Afghan governments.

"A humanitarian crisis of incredible proportions is unfolding before our eyes," warned Mary Ellen McGroarty, the head of the UN's World Food Programme in Afghanistan.

# China for adoption of cultural symbols, language in Tibet

'Efforts needed to ensure Tibetans speak and write Chinese'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BEIJING

A top Chinese official said on Thursday that "all-round efforts" are needed to ensure Tibetans speak standard spoken and written Chinese and share the "cultural symbols and images of the Chinese nation."

Wang Yang made the remarks before a handpicked audience in front of the Potara Palace in Lhasa, the home of Tibet's traditional Buddhist leaders, at a ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the Chinese invasion of the vast Himalayan region.

China's ruling Communist Party says it "peacefully liberated" Tibetan peasants from an oppressive theocracy and restored Chinese rule over a region under threat from outside powers.

Critics say such moves toward cultural assimilation spell the demise of Tibet's traditional Buddhist culture and that Tibet was effectively independent for most of



Wang Yang waving after arriving in Lhasa on Wednesday. ■ AP

its history.

China has highlighted its efforts to boost the economy in the region and condemned the exiled Dalai Lama as a separatist.

Mr. Wang, who is a member of the Politburo Standing Committee – the apex of party power – and who oversees policy toward ethnic minorities, said "separatist and sabotage activities committed by the Dalai (Lama) group and hostile external forces have been crushed."

Mr. Wang said Tibetans

had been included in representative bodies. The region hosted close to 160 million tourists last year, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

"Only by following the CPC leadership and pursuing the path of socialism, can Tibet achieve development and prosperity," Mr. Wang was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

"Judging by developments in Tibet over the past 70 years, the Tibetan people have no cause for jubilation, as Chinese policies have turned Tibet itself into an open-air prison with restrictions on all aspects of Tibetan life," the U.S.-based International Campaign for Tibet said in a statement.

"After 70 years of oppression, the only thing the Tibetan people need 'peaceful liberation' from today is China's brutality," the group said. As China tightens its hold over Tibet, questions are arising over the future of its diaspora community.

# Hezbollah says Iranian fuel tanker to sail to Lebanon soon

Nasrallah warns Israel and U.S. against intercepting it

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BEIRUT

The leader of the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group said on Thursday that an Iranian fuel tanker will sail toward Lebanon "within hours," warning Israel and the U.S. not to intercept it.

The delivery organized by Lebanon-based Hezbollah, would be an apparent violation of U.S. sanctions imposed on Tehran after form-

er U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers three years ago.

Sayed Hassan Nasrallah said in a televised speech that the tanker, carrying diesel fuel, will be followed by others to help ease Lebanon's crippling fuel shortage that has paralysed the country for weeks.

"I would like to say that at

the moment the tanker sails – within hours – and moves in the sea, it will be considered in Lebanese territory," he said. He said the West was imposing an undeclared siege on Lebanon, causing the current crisis.

"I tell the Americans and the Israelis that this is Lebanese territory," Nasrallah said, without elaborating on what his group will do if it is intercepted.

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden said on Wednesday that he is committed to keeping U.S. troops in Afghanistan until every American is evacuated, even if that means maintaining a military presence there beyond his August 31 deadline for withdrawal.

He also pushed back against criticism that the U.S. should have done more to plan for the evacuation and

# 'Troops may stay beyond August 31 for evacuations'

withdrawal, which has been marked by scenes of violence and chaos as thousands attempted to flee while the Taliban advanced.

When asked if the administration would help Americans left in the nation after August 31, Mr. Biden said, "If there's American citizens left, we're gonna stay till we get them all out."

On Thursday, Mr. Biden said even with the Taliban in power in Afghanistan, he

sees a greater threat from outposts of al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups in other countries, and that it was no longer "rational" to continue to focus U.S. military power there.

### 'Greater threats'

"We should be focusing on where the threat is the greatest," Mr. Biden said in an interview that aired on ABC's "Good Morning America".

"And the idea we can con-

tinue to spend a trillion dollars, and have tens of thousands of American forces in Afghanistan, when we have North Africa and Western Africa – the idea we can do that and ignore those looming problems, growing problems, is not rational."

Mr. Biden has said repeatedly that America will not send significantly more forces to fight in Afghanistan. The U.S. has not had tens of thousands there for several

years and had 2,500 to 3,000 deployed there when Biden took office.

Mr. Biden named Syria and East Africa as places where the Islamic State group poses a "significantly greater threat" than in Afghanistan and said that ISIS has "metastasised." He said while the U.S. doesn't have a sizable military presence in a place like Syria, it does have an "over the horizon capability to take them out."

## ELSEWHERE



### Russia fines Google for not removing content

MOSCOW

A Moscow court on Thursday again fined Google for failing to remove banned content. In recent months, Russia has been taking legal action against foreign tech companies for not deleting content banned by the authorities, including pornographic material and posts deemed extremist. On Thursday, the Tagansky district court slapped Google with three fines totalling six million rubles (\$80,850) for the violation.

### 3 dead in bomb targeting Shia Muslims in Pakistan

LAHORE

At least three people were killed and 50 others wounded when a bomb explosion ripped through a Shia Muslim procession in Pakistan's Punjab province on Thursday, officials said. Security was on high alert as the religious minority marked Ashura during the holy month of Muharram, a flashpoint for sectarian violence in previous years. "We have confirmation of three dead and 50 injured," said a senior government official. Social media videos showed bleeding victims lying on a road being assisted by members of the public. ■ AFP

### Israel lifts curbs on blood donations by gay men

JERUSALEM

Israel has lifted restrictions on blood donations by gay men, saying the long-standing limitation was discriminatory and denigrating, Israel's Health Minister said on Thursday. Earlier this year, the U.K. eased restrictions on blood donations from gay and bisexual men, following a similar decision by the U.S. last year because of a drop in the blood supply. "There's no difference between one blood and the other," Nitzan Horowitz said. ■ AP

# Nepal's main Opposition party CPN-UML officially splits

Madhav Kumar applies for registering new political party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KATHMANDU

Nepal's main opposition CPN-UML, the largest communist party of the country, has officially split, with one of its factions, led by dissident leader Madhav Kumar Nepal, applying for registering a new political party, after the government backed a controversial ordinance to make it easier for political parties to split.

Nepal on Wednesday submitted an application at the Election Commission (EC), for registering a new political party named CPN-UML (Socialist).

Earlier on Wednesday, on the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, Presi-

dent Bidya Devi Bhandari issued an ordinance to amend the Political Parties Act 2071, aimed at easing the procedure for political parties to split.

The amendment ordinance stipulates that 20% or more members of the parliamentary party and the central committee of a political party can split their mother party.

Before the amendment, provisions of the Political Party Act required dissidents to have the support of 40% of members in the parliamentary party and the central committee to split their mother party.

The ordinance introduced by the Sher Bahadur

Deuba government has led to splits in at least two parties, marking what observers say an unprecedented political event, The Kathmandu Post reported.

The ordinance was introduced by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba-led government on Tuesday, to make it easy for the dissidents to split their mother parties, *The Himalayan Times* reported.

The ordinance is likely to help Madhav Kumar Nepal-Jhalanath Khanal faction of the CPN-UML faction that has been playing a crucial role in the formation of the current coalition government, and is vital to ensure its continuity.

# Man surrenders after 'bomb threat'

On FB live inside truck, he threatened explosions, made anti-government threats

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON

The man who claimed to have a bomb in a pickup truck near the U.S. Capitol has surrendered to law enforcement, ending an hours-long standoff on Thursday.

The man, identified by law enforcement officials as Floyd Ray Roseberry, 49, of North Carolina, was taken into custody.

He had pulled up outside the library earlier in the day and told police he had a bomb in his truck. The man had been negotiating with police during a standoff that lasted around five hours.

Officials evacuated a number of buildings around the Capitol and sent snipers to the area after officers saw a man holding what looked like a detonator inside the pickup, which had no license



Security alert: Policemen standing guard near the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Thursday. ■ AP

plates. Congress is in recess this week, but staffers were seen calmly walking out of the area at the direction of authorities.

Earlier, police negotiators were communicating with Roseberry as he wrote notes and showed them to authorities from inside the truck, according to sources, who

the ills of the country, including the U.S. position on Afghanistan, health care and the military.

He said Democrats needed to step down, then also said he loved the President, Democrat Joe Biden. Facebook removed the videos a few hours after they were apparently filmed. Roseberry did not appear to have a specific demand for law enforcement other than to speak with Mr. Biden.

Roseberry's ex-wife, Crystal Roseberry, said she had seen images of the man in the standoff at the Capitol and confirmed to The Associated Press that it was her ex-husband.

The nation's capital has been tense since the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol by supporters of then-President Donald Trump.

# 'COVID-19 booster shots make mockery of equity'

WHO says less than 2% of the population of 1.3 billion people in Africa is fully vaccinated

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NAIROBI

Rich countries' decisions to roll out COVID-19 booster shots while so many people across Africa remain unvaccinated "threaten the promise of a brighter tomorrow" for the continent, the Africa director for the World Health Organization said on Thursday, warning that "as some richer countries hoard vaccines, they make a mockery of vaccine equity."

Matshidiso Moeti and other African health officials, including the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, had warned against booster shots in recent weeks as less than 2% of the population on the continent of 1.3 billion people is fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Ms. Moeti noted that the latest resurgence in cases across Africa is levelling off



Greater need: A Kenyan man receiving a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine in Nairobi, in this file photo. ■ AP

and more vaccine doses are finally arriving on the continent, but "Africa is encountering headwinds" as rich countries like the United States decide to roll out booster shots.

### 'Fragile' situation

The situation in Africa remains "very fragile" as the more infectious delta variant

is now dominant in most of the continent's 54 countries, she said. More than 7.3 million cases, including more than 1,86,000 deaths, have been confirmed across the continent and health systems are straining to provide medical oxygen and other care.

U.S. health officials on Wednesday announced

plans to dispense COVID-19 booster shots to all Americans amid the surging delta variant and signs that vaccines' effectiveness is slipping.

Ms. Moeti told reporters she couldn't say with any accuracy whether the doses the U.S. plans to use for booster shots will come from stocks that had been planned for Africa, but "hopefully not."

The State Department did not immediately respond to questions.

Ms. Moeti noted the "already highly inequitable situation" globally in vaccine supply and urged that the emphasis instead be placed on making progress in vaccinating people in Africa, whose countries lag far behind much of the world in access and coverage.

Ms. Moeti pointed out that

rich countries have on average administered more than 103 vaccine doses per 100 people, while in Africa it's just six.

Earlier this week the WHO director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, called it "unconscionable" that some countries are now offering booster shots "while so many people remain unprotected."

She added, after the revelation this week that some COVID-19 vaccine doses now being manufactured in Africa are being shipped to Europe, "I think no better example can follow this than vaccines that are actually being produced on the African continent."

She called on those countries to consider donating some of the South Africa-produced vaccines to African nations.

# 'Pfizer jab's effect wanes faster than AstraZeneca's'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

The effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19 declines faster than that of the AstraZeneca jab, according to a new study published on Thursday.

"Two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech have greater initial effectiveness against new COVID-19 infections, but this declines faster compared with two doses of Oxford-As-

traZeneca," researchers at Oxford University said. The study, which has not been peer reviewed, is based on the results of a survey by Britain's Office for National Statistics on randomly selected households from December last year to this month.

Pfizer had "greater initial effectiveness" but saw "faster declines in protection against high viral burden and symptomatic infection".

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ**  
(Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India)  
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030

NIRD & PR an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, proposes to engage the position of **Training Associate** on a consolidated remuneration of Rs. 40,000/- p.m for a period of one year on contract basis, in the **RURBAN Mission** project of Centre for Rural Infrastructure (CRI).

For Job Profile, Eligibility Criteria and submission of online application, please visit: <http://career.nirdpr.in/>

**Last date for submission of online application is 10/09/2021**

**Advt. No.16/2021**  
**(No.NIRDPR/120/SPRAM/2016-1-Part 2)**

**Sd/-**  
**Assistant Registrar (E)**











TV PICKS

**Bundesliga:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



Seventh time's the charm for Zverev

**OLYMPIC NATI**  
Olympic champion Alexander Zverev struck gold at the ATP Cincinnati Masters on Wednesday with his first victory at the US Open tune-up event in seven attempts — a 7-6(3), 6-2 win over South African Lloyd Harris. The German has been deep in a rut from his first appearance in 2015 at the Midwest US venue, exiting in the first round every time. **AFP**



Halep withdraws from Cincinnati Masters

**CINCINNATI**  
Simona Halep withdrew from her second-round match at the WTA Cincinnati Masters on Wednesday due to a right thigh injury she suffered. The fifth seed from Romania was to have faced American Jessica Pegula but pulled out after hurting herself in the previous round against Poland's Magda Linette. **AFP**

Zimbabwe to host 2022 Women's WC qualifiers

**DUBAI**  
Zimbabwe will host the women's World Cup qualifier between November 21 to December 5, the ICC announced on Thursday. The 10-team tournament decides three qualifiers for next year's women's World Cup to be held in New Zealand from March 4 to April 3. They will join five sides who have already qualified through the ICC Women's Championship — Australia, England, India, South Africa and hosts New Zealand. **PTI**

I will be tested to the limit in Croatia'

It's quite challenging but I trust myself and my work ethic, says defender Jhingan

FOOTBALL

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI**

Trusted for his leadership qualities by his new club HNK Sibenik, Indian centre-back Sandesh Jhingan feels he will be "tested to the limit" while enhancing his game outside his comfort zone at Croatian league Prva HNL.

Jhingan will become the first India international footballer to play in the Croatian top-tier league after completing a move from ATK Mohun Bagan to HNK Sibenik.

"This will enhance my game. This is where I would be tested to my limit. Challenges wise, if I can put in the work, if I stay disciplined enough then I can see if I can

get into the starting XI.

"It's quite challenging but I trust myself and my work ethic, it's always on me whether I will play or not," Jhingan said during a virtual interaction on Thursday.

The top central defender added, "It has been my personal desire to play in Europe and I have taken up this challenge upon myself."

Named India's footballer of the year last month, the 28-year-old is already in Croatia and watched Sunday's home win against Hrvatski Dragovoljac in the country of the 2018 World Cup finalists.

He thanked his previous club ATK Mohun Bagan for backing him when he was down with an injury, even as some gave up on the player.

"The move from ATK MB

to Sibilik was difficult because I have a lot of respect for their (ATK Mohun Bagan) management and owners."

The Croatian club is owned by a Colombian company and its director Eduardo Zapata is delighted to have Jhingan on board, from a footballing point of view as well as its aim to promote multi-culturalism.

Thrilled owner

"We are thrilled about Sandesh coming here. I am Colombian owner in Croatian football.

"We are very open to everything as we aim to become a big international club. This is a great step in that direction.

"I don't care if he is from India or Argentina. Sandesh is a good player."



**Forging ahead:** Sandesh Jhingan says that it has been his personal desire to play in Europe. **■TWITTER**

Vidit returns to Champions Tour

CHESS

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

Vidit Gujrathi will return to the Champions Chess Tour following an invitation to figure in the \$100,000 Aim-chess US Rapid online chess beginning on August 28.

Vidit last played in the Goldmoney Asian Rapid, which ended on July 4, and finished ninth to narrowly miss a place in the quarterfinals.

With the World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen leading the pack of 16 players, the event will be the last one of the season before the eight-man final next month.

Carlsen leads the Tour standings, closely followed by Wesley So.  
**The players:** Magnus Carlsen



Vidit Gujrathi. **■FILE PHOTO**

(Nor), Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra), Leinier Domineque (USA), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol). Wesley So (USA), Levon Aronian (Arm), Vladislav Artemiev (Rus), Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Aze), Daniel Naroditsky (USA), Vidit Gujrathi, Eric Hansen (Can), Jorden van Foreest (Ned) and Awonder Liang (USA).

Sania loses early in doubles with Jabuer

INDIANS ABROAD

**SPORTS BUREAU  
CINCINNATI**

Sania Mirza and Ons Jabeur of Tunisia lost 7-5, 6-2 to Veronika Kudermetova and Elena Rybakina in the doubles first round of the \$2,114,989 WTA tennis here.

In the \$115,000 event in Chicago, Ankita Raina and Ekaterina Gorgodze of Georgia knocked out the second seeds Renata Voracova and Julia Wachaczyk 6-2, 2-6, [10-8] in the doubles pre-quarterfinals.

The results:

**\$2,114,989 WTA, Cincinnati: Doubles: First round:** Veronika Kudermetova (Rus) & Elena Rybakina (Kaz) bt Ons Jabeur (Tun) & Sania Mirza 7-5, 6-2.

**\$115,000 WTA, Chicago: Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals:** Eka-

terina Gorgodze (Geo) & Ankita Raina bt Renata Voracova (Cze) & Julia Wachaczyk (Ger) 6-2, 2-6, [10-8].

**\$25,000 ITF men, Uebertingen, Germany: Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals:** Eduard Esteve Lobato & Oriol Roca Batalla (Esp) bt Thibaut Gadilhe (Fra) & Tarun Anirudh Chilakalapudi 6-4, 6-2.

**\$25,000 ITF women, Ourense, Spain: First round:** Yvonne Cavalle-Reimers (Esp) bt Rutuja Bhosale 6-3, 6-1.

**\$15,000 ITF women, Monastir: First round:** Chiraz Bechri (Tun) bt Ashmitha Easwar-murthi 6-2, 6-0; Ramu Ueda (Jpn) bt Humera Baharmus 6-0, 6-3; Saki Imamura (Jpn) bt Bhuvana Kalva 3-1 (retired).

**\$15,000 ITF women, Erwitte, Germany: Doubles: Quarterfinals:** Lisa-Marie Rioux (Jpn) & Saumya Vig w/o Oana Gavrilă (Rou) & Elizabeth Halbauer (US).

Three-year Olympic cycle will be tricky: Bindra

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI**

India's first individual Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra on Thursday said the road to the 2024 Paris Games will be difficult and "tricky" given the shorter three-year cycle.

He also lauded the country's performance at the recently-concluded Tokyo Olympics.

"The next Olympics will be tricky, primarily because of the shorter cycle. Normally athletes get a year post Olympics that allows them to rest and recover, but this time they need to get back pretty quickly," he said at a webinar organised by ELMS Sports Foundation.

A rare guide for prospective achievers

Sreekar has put together an invaluable book *Behind a Sports Champion*

GENERAL

**KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI**

It is a unique venture, a book that will provide comprehensive guidance to the parents of aspiring champions.

An engineer by profession, but an all-round sportsman, Sreekar Mothukuri, who has played badminton, cricket, tennis and table tennis at different levels in India and abroad, has interviewed sports stars, their parents, coaches, psychologists, nutritionists, doctors and fitness experts in putting together an invaluable book, *Behind a Sports Champion*, which is ready for global launch this month.

First coaches

"Parents are the first coaches of the child. If parents do not show commitment, the



Sreekar Mothukuri.

child will not show interest," says P.V. Ramana, father of World Champion and double Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu.

"He started playing table tennis at the age of five. In juniors, he never achieved anything. If we had stopped my son in the 10th grade as he was not getting results, we would have missed one Padma Shri," says Srinivas

Rao, father of table tennis star Sharath Kamal.

Sreekar wanted to be a cricketer, but could not pursue his goal despite being motivated and committed, owing to "lack of knowledge and guidance".

That is the prime reason for the emergence of the book, a guide to the parents with live examples and insights.

"Parents should focus on their child's education and nutrition. They should not interfere in the child's sports. The more they interfere, the more it will affect their child's performance," says Dinesh Lad, coach of Rohit Sharma and Shardul Thakur.

Renowned chess coach R.B. Ramesh suggests that "parents should not spend beyond their means" as it would backfire if the child

does not meet their expectations with results.

"Children can start fitness training after 12, but only if they enjoy it," says Shankar Basu, former strength and conditioning coach of the Indian cricket team.

Treasure trove

With more than 50 interviews, the book spanning 350-odd pages is a treasure trove of lively experiences of many brilliant careers.

The author warns that there is no ready-made formula for success but points out that, "the chances of success increase if you follow the right steps suggested by the experts". Sreekar beautifully sums up by saying that the idea was to help parents and the young champions, "navigate the rocky road of youth sports, enjoy sports and be the best they can be".

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