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# Petrol hits Rs 100 per litre

**THIS IS THE 14TH INCREASE IN PRICES SINCE MAY 4, WHEN STATE-OWNED OIL FIRMS ENDED AN 18-DAY HIATUS IN RATE REVISION THEY OBSERVED DURING ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN STATES LIKE WEST BENGAL**

**NEW DELHI:** Petrol price on Thursday crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Thane district of Maharashtra, while it was hovering a tad below that level in Mumbai, after fuel prices were raised again. Petrol price was increased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 29 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The increase 14th this month took petrol and diesel prices to an all-time high across the country. The price of petrol, which had already crossed the Rs 100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan,



Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, breached the psychological barrier in Thane district of Maharashtra. In Thane, petrol now comes for Rs 100.06 a litre and diesel comes for Rs 91.99 per litre. In neighbouring Mumbai, petrol price increased to Rs 99.94 per litre, while diesel rates soared to Rs 91.87. Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Delhi, petrol price rose to Rs 93.84 a litre and diesel to Rs 84.61.

This is the 14th increase in prices since May 4, when state-owned oil firms ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision they observed during

## 'Govt should focus on converting 30 cr on-road vehicles to clean fuels'

**NEW DELHI:** The government should focus on converting around 30 crore vehicles currently running on petrol and diesel to clean fuels in a bid to improve the air quality, said Indian Auto LPG Coalition, apex body of Auto LPG stakeholders.

In a statement, the industry body said that with mass adoption of electric vehicles still a distant future, an absence of a near term strategy to convert existing vehicles to cleaner alternatives is a crucial policy oversight. Indian Auto LPG Coalition has said that government's indifference towards immediately available clean alternative fuels is proving to be a major health bane for the country. "Electric Vehicles are still in very early stages of adoption and even the most optimistic



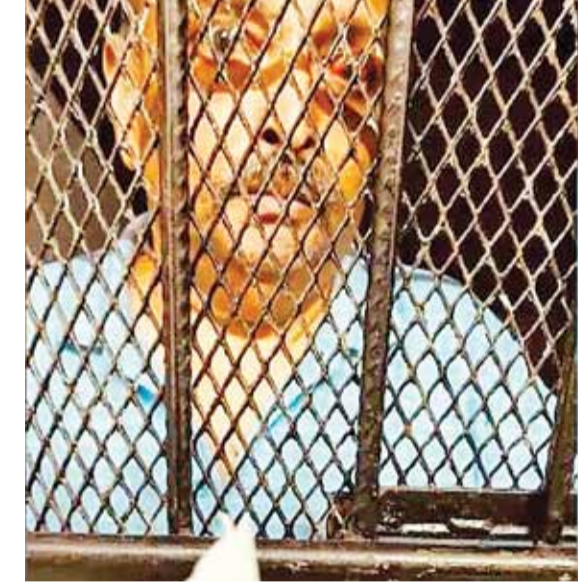
projections suggest that a mass adoption is not likely to begin at least till another decade. Meanwhile, around 300 million vehicles including two wheelers continue to produce toxic emissions," said Suyash Gupta, Director General, Indian Auto LPG Coalition.

The statement also noted that there remains a large untapped market for vehicle conversions in India with consumers actively looking to cleaner as well as cheaper alternatives to petrol and diesel. In this situation, a positive messaging from the government supported by regulatory easing and fiscal incentives can bring about a largescale clean switch. **AGENCIES**

Assembly elections in states like West Bengal. Oil companies revise rates

of petrol and diesel daily based on the average price of benchmark fuel in the international market in the preceding 15-days, and foreign exchange rates. **AGENCIES**

## Fugitive bizman Mehul Choksi moved to govt quarantine facility in Dominica: Sources



**NEW DELHI:** Fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi has been moved to the government quarantine facility in Dominica, sources said on Sunday.

On Saturday, pictures of Choksi released by Antigua Newsroom showed him behind bars and with injuries on his hands and a swollen and bruised left eye.

These were the first public pictures of Choksi, who had reportedly gone missing on Sunday (May 23) evening. He was later apprehended by Dominica Police on Wednesday and had been in their custody since then.

On Friday, the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court allowed Choksi to be transported to a hospital for medical attention and for the administration of a Covid-19 test.

Efforts have been scaled up to bring back the fugitive businessman to India. ANI has learnt that multiple agencies are in touch with the government of Dominica on the issue, which has been told that Choksi is originally an Indian citizen and had taken new citizenship to escape the law in India after having committed a fraud of almost two billion US dollars.

It is learnt that India through back channel and diplomatic route has clearly told Dominica that Choksi should be treated as a fugitive Indian citizen who has an Interpol Red Corner notice against him and he should be handed over to Indian authorities for deportation and to face the law in India for his alleged deeds which have robbed the Indian public of billions of dollars.

A Dominican court has extended till June 2 its order restraining the extradition of Choksi from Dominica. The High Court will also hear the Indian fugitive's habeas corpus plea on that date. **AGENCIES**

**India through back channel and diplomatic route has clearly told Dominica that Choksi should be treated as a fugitive Indian citizen who has an Interpol Red Corner notice against him**

## Covid-19 second wave renders one crore Indians jobless: CMIE

**MUMBAI:** Over 10 million Indians have lost their jobs because of the second wave of Covid-19, and around 97 per cent of households' incomes have declined since the beginning of the pandemic last year, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) chief executive Mahesh Vyas said on Monday.

The unemployment rate measured by the think-tank is expected to come at 12 per cent at the end of May as against 8 per cent in April, Vyas told, adding this signifies that about 10 million or 1 crore Indians have lost jobs in this period.

Stating that the main reason for the job losses is "mainly the second wave" of COVID-19 infections, Vyas said, "As the



economy opens up, part of the problem will be solved but not entirely". He explained that people who lose jobs find it hard to get employment, specifying that while the informal sector jobs come back quickly, the formal sector and better quality job opportunities take up to a year to come back.

Unemployment rate had touched a record high of 23.5 per cent in May 2020 because

of the national lockdown. Many experts opine that the second wave of infections has peaked and states will slowly start to ease the economic activity-impacting restrictions in a calibrated fashion. Vyas further said an unemployment rate of 3-4 per cent should be considered as "normal" for the Indian economy, hinting that the unemployment number will have to decline for longer before the situation improves.

He said CMIE has completed a nation-wide survey of 1.75 lakh households in April which throws up worrying trends on income generation during the last one year—which has witnessed two waves of the pandemic. **AGENCIES**

## Core sectors' output jumps 56.1 per cent in April

**NEW DELHI:** The output of eight core sectors jumped by 56.1% in April mainly due to a low base effect and uptick in production of natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity, official data released on Monday showed.

The eight infrastructure sectors of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity had contracted by 37.9% in April 2020 due to lockdown restrictions imposed to control the spread of coronavirus infection. In March this year, the eight sectors had recorded a growth rate of 11.4%. "This high growth rate in April 2021 is largely due to low Index



base in April 2020 consequent to the low industrial production across all sectors caused by nationwide lockdown imposed to contain spread of Covid-19 last year," the ministry said.

According to the commerce and industry ministry data, production of natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity jumped by 25%, 30.9%, 400%, 548.8% and 38.7% in April, as against (-) 19.9%, (-) 24.2%, (-) 82.8%, (-) 85.2% and (-) 22.9% in April 2020, respectively. **AGENCIES**

## CII elects Tata Steel CEO, MD as its new president

**NEW DELHI:** Tata Steel CEO and MD TV Narendran has been elected CII president for 2021-22. He takes over from Uday Kotak, MD & CEO, Kotak Mahindra Bank, the CII statement said. He has been engaged with CII for many years at various levels. Sanjiv Bajaj, CMD, Bajaj Finserv Ltd., has been elected president-designate of CII for 2021-22. He has also been engaged with CII for many years and was chairman of CII Western Region during 2019-20. Pawan Munjal, chairman, Hero MotoCorp, will take over as CII vice-president for 2021-22. He was chairman of CII Northern Region during 1996-97. **AGENCIES**

## Kala Diwas: Farmers mark six months of their morcha



**CHHAVI BHATIA Tikri**

On May 26, the otherwise green and yellow hues of Tikri border had turned black as farmers marked completion of six months of their protest on Delhi borders with Kala Diwas or Black Day. Lakhs of farmers including women wore black to register their indignation towards the Centre for not heeding to their demands of repealing the three controversial Farm Laws and assured MSP.

Wearing Black turbans and dupattas, a departure from their usual green and yellow—representing colour of kisan and farmers' union, thousands of agitating farmers raised black flags and burnt effigies of the central government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for failing to address their issues. They also put black flags atop their tractors and trolleys, their makeshift homes, as a sign of protest. "We are raising our voices against

anti-farmer policies of this corporates driven government. We will continue to do so till the laws are rolled back," said Abhimanyu Khar, member, Samyukta Kisan Morcha.

For six months now, lakhs of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh are camping on various Delhi borders, demanding a rollback on the new farm laws which farmers say will put them at mercy of corporates. The sit-in began

on November 26 when hundreds of farmers from these parts of the country reached the outskirts of Delhi. A lot of these peasants have now even set up homes of bricks and mortar to deal with the vagaries of weather, expecting the battle to go on for long. "If this government is so obstinate, we are no less. It is hon di ladaai (it is a fight for our existence). We can live here for six years if need be," 51-year-old Ranjodh Singh, a farmer from Moga district, Punjab.

Thousands like Singh are unanimous in this decision, swearing to fight to finish. "We are being forced to do this. Who wants to live on the roads for months, away from families? The moment the government accepts our demands of dissolving the new Act and gives us assurance of MSP, we will go back," said Joginder Singh Ugrahan, president, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan).

Multiple rounds of talks between the farmers' unions and the government have hit a roadblock.

Earlier this year, Modi's government had offered to put the farm laws on hold for 18 months, but the farmers rejected the offer, saying they want a complete repeal.

*A complete* **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**

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# Cyclones may blow away the economic sheen

India's capacity to withstand multiple, near-simultaneous shocks is being tested, with a Very Severe Cyclonic Storm, Yaas, striking Odisha, just a week after an even stronger Cyclone Tauktae wreaked havoc along the west coast. Yaas, which put up an unnerving display of tornadoes and rain, smothered the north Odisha coast as it made landfall, but the preparatory mass evacuation from habitations appears to have limited the loss of life. Yet, thousands have lost houses and property. West Bengal and Jharkhand also bore the brunt of the weather system's force, as it punched its way inland from May 26, weakening into a deep depression. All coastal States facing the Bay of Bengal have always been in the path of severe cyclones, the majority following the withdrawal of the monsoon, but their vulnerability may be growing as pre-monsoon and post-monsoon storms increase in frequency and strength. Moreover, for the second year running, States have been hobbled by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 season comes as another reminder that India will have to improve its resilience to cyclones. Governments are, no doubt, more sensitive to loss of life today and are raising the capacity of the disaster response forces, but much work needs to be done when it comes to protecting assets and creating fiscal instruments to help people rebuild their lives. While the full extent of displacement and losses from Cyclone Yaas is yet unknown, past experience points to a growing threat to overall well-being from such catastrophes. The challenge is to address the risk of cyclones and other extreme weather events using specific funds, making citizens members in a social insurance model. Moreover, considering the negative climate change impact on tropical cyclones, rebuilding should use a green, build back better approach. Cyclones will otherwise take the shine off economic progress.



PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY SAYS THERE IS EROSION OF 'TRUST' AND 'TRUSTWORTHINESS' BETWEEN STATES AND CENTRE

## The end of the road for India's GST?

The 43rd meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council is to be held on May 28. Representatives of 31 States and Union Territories are expected to attend. They belong to 16 different political parties. Of the 31 representatives, 17 members are from the ruling BJP or its alliance partners. Ideally, this nugget about political affiliations should not matter in a Council set up to decide indirect taxes. But in today's India, 'the economic is political', to paraphrase the American saying.

States are dependent on GST collections for nearly half of their tax revenues. The GST Council was mandated to meet at least once every quarter, but it had not met for two quarters, ostensibly due to the pandemic. Several of the 14 members of the non-BJP group implored the Finance Minister to convene the GST meeting to help them manage their finances but none of the 17 members of the ruling group deemed it necessary. Even the need for a meeting to determine tax revenues for States is evidently a political decision.

The representative from West Bengal will attend the meeting against the backdrop of the Centre using investigative agencies to selectively target and incarcerate some of the State's ministers, soon after their election victory. The Kerala representative will attend the meeting in the knowledge that his predecessor complained bitterly about the Centre reneging on its promise to pay guaranteed GST compensation to the States. The Chhattisgarh representative will attend this meeting aware of how the Centre imposed sudden and stringent policy conditions to grant approval to States for extra borrowing in the middle of the pandemic last year. The Maharashtra minister will attend the meeting with a feeling of betrayal over how the States have been forced to pay a much higher price for COVID-19 vaccines than the Centre. The Punjab Finance Minister will be cognisant of how the Centre legislated new farm laws unilaterally that affected Punjab's farmers deeply. The Rajasthan representative will be aware of how a sudden lockdown imposed by the Centre with no consultations with the States threw millions of Rajasthani migrant workers in disarray. The Tamil Nadu representative will be wary of the Centre's duplicity in levying cesses that garner significant revenues for the Centre without sharing them with the States. The Delhi representative will be suspicious of the Centre's motives after it



stealthily passed legislation to strip the elected Delhi government of its governance powers. The list is endless. These are not acts in the spirit of 'cooperative federalism'. The catchy phrase 'cooperative federalism' was introduced into India's political lexicon to justify the transition to GST in 2017. Sadly, like other catchy phrases such as 'Minimum government, maximum governance' and 'Make in India', this too has turned out to be hollow. Cooperative federalism has a larger meaning beyond just fiscal federalism. It also entails cooperative political, administrative and governance federalism between the States and the Centre.

### The Trust Game

The GST Council is not an inanimate economic body. It is a compact of trust between the States and the Centre, set in the larger context of India's polity. Behavioural economists, such as the Nobel Laureate, Daniel Kahneman, have articulated the critical role of the twin attributes of 'trust' and 'trustworthiness' among heterogeneous participants in an economy. Using a tool called 'The Trust Game', they have demonstrated that the motive of 'altruism' leads to the most optimal economic outcome for everyone in the group while a motive of 'spite' leads to the worst outcome for all. The tragedy of the GST Council is that it is afflicted with spite and forced to function under the prevailing cloud of vendetta politics.

The 17 members of the ruling dispensation and the 14 members of the non-BJP dispensa-

tion in the GST Council represent exactly one half of India's population each. However, the non-BJP group contributes a higher share of 60% of overall GST revenues and accounts for 63% of the country's GDP. With elections to another seven States due next year, these numbers could change dramatically again. If the functioning of the GST Council is subject to the vagaries of elections and consequent vendetta politics, GST will continue to be just a caricature of its initial promise.

The 15th Finance Commission report formally acknowledges that GST has been an economic failure that did not deliver on its early promises. GST, as postulated by technocrats, was supposed to be the panacea for India's throttled economy to deliver enormous economic efficiency gains, improve tax buoyancy and collections, boost GDP growth and usher in greater formalisation of the economy. Three years after its launch and even before COVID-19, GST had failed on all those promises.

### Problems underpinning GST

Economists and commentators point to the multiple rates structure, high tax slabs and the complexity of tax filings as the problems underpinning India's GST. These were indeed the initial problems in the way GST was implemented, leading to some of its current woes. But now, GST has a more fundamental problem — the erosion of 'trust' and 'trustworthiness' between the States and the Centre. Technical fixes such as simplification of GST rates and

tax filing systems to restore GST to its initial promise is akin to applying a pain balm to an injury that needs surgery.

The States paid a huge price for GST in terms of loss of fiscal autonomy. The promised economic gains are invisible, and India's federalism has been ruptured. GST in today's politically acerbic, hate-ridden and divided India is an unviable and unworkable proposition.

GST has endured so far primarily because the States were guaranteed a 14% growth in their tax revenues every year, which minimised their risks of this new experiment and compensated for their loss of fiscal sovereignty. This revenue guarantee ends in July 2022. This can lead to a crumbling of the precarious edifice on which GST stands today.

In a situation where the States have no taxation powers, their GST revenues are uncertain, the supposed economic benefits seem phantom, and the hypocrisy of 'cooperative federalism' looms large, what is the incentive for States to continue in a GST regime? When the Prime Minister can impose a draconian lockdown in a ham-fisted manner without consultation or play favourites with critical oxygen supplies during an emergency, there seems very little motivation for the States to cooperate in a chase for an elusive economic goal by sacrificing their significant economic powers of taxation.

Technocratic cheerleaders of GST failed to factor in India's unique political economy and its ramifications. Striking a balance among diverse interests of India's numerous parties in a larger political climate of spite and suspicion to arrive at a uniform tax policy for the nation is a near impossibility. Tamil Nadu's new Finance Minister P.T.R. Thiagarajan and I had warned of these exact issues in an article in 2017 in this newspaper.

The tapestry of India's GST was stitched on a fabric of implicit trust and painted with vibrant economic colours. The fabric is now torn and the colours have faded. The loose thread of guaranteed revenues that holds this together is about to snap. The end of India's grand GST experiment seems inevitable unless there is a radical shift in the tone and tenor of India's federal politics, backed by an extension of revenue guarantee for the States for another five years.

Praveen Chakravarty is a political economist and Chairman of the Data Analytics department of the Congress party

## FIVE OBSERVATIONS

ON WHATSAPP PRIVACY POLICY AND NEED FOR DATA PROTECTION LAWS

- CHINA'S NEW THREE-CHILD POLICY**  
Experts blamed the policy for making China's population age faster than other countries, impacting the country's growth potential.
- OLYMPICS DURING PANDEMIC**  
A green signal to the games by IOC and the Japanese govt, despite the raging pandemic, is unwise. If Japan is the first to call off the games, it has to pay a hefty penalty to IOC.
- POWER CUTS DUE TO STORM IN PUNJAB**  
Storm bares Punjab's power; blackout in several districts is grim reminder of the bad condition of PSPCL. With paddy season about to start, power engineers are worried how to cope with the situation.
- THE REAL HEROES**  
It is heartening to see the gurdwaras stepping up the essential facilities for Covid patients. Such places of worship had become hospitals and were giving 24-hour service to all.
- CORONA- DON'T TAKE IT FOR GRANTED**  
The second wave seems to be subsiding, but it's way too early to take it easy. Nobody is safe until everyone is safe — it's as simple as that.

## LETTERBOX

Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to [fwletters@gmail.com](mailto:fwletters@gmail.com). We will publish them on this page.

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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DEBMALYA NANDY HIGHLIGHTS THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND THE MGNREGS

## Tackling the country's rural economic distress



Several States are under lockdown again. This will have severe implications for the livelihoods of those in the informal sector. There is adequate evidence that migrant workers and the rural poor have been facing great distress over the past one year and the crisis for food and work is only going to intensify further.

A few months ago, the Right to Food campaign and the Centre for Equity Studies published a 'Hunger Watch' report which compared the pre-lockdown situation last year to the situation in October 2020 to assess the impact of the nationwide lockdown. The survey involving 4,000 respondents across 11 States exposed the life and livelihood uncertainties of people belonging to low-income categories in the informal sector. In October 2020, 27% of the respondents said that they had no income; 40% respondents said that the nutritional quality of food had become "much worse"; and 46% of the respondents said they had to skip one meal at least once in the day in October 2020.

The migrants have again become vulnerable due to the lockdown in different cities. While many have once again headed to their villages, a large population has got stranded in different parts of the country without work. The Stranded Workers Action Network, a group of individuals helping distressed migrant workers since last year, has been



reaching out to workers for providing essential help. According to them, 81% of the people whom they reached out to said that work had mostly stopped since April 15, 2021 and 76% of the workers said they are short of food and cash and require immediate support.

In this context, there is an urgent need to strengthen the public distribution system (PDS) and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The government announced 5 kg free foodgrains for individuals enlisted under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), for May and June 2021. The government should expand

PDS coverage immediately and include all eligible households under the schemes. According to an independent study, about 100 million people are excluded from the ration distribution system owing to a dated database based on the 2011 Census.

The Centre should also extend the free foodgrains programme to a year instead of limiting it to two months. The economic crisis is likely to last for a long time. It is being reported that India procured record amounts of rice and wheat last year through mandis. The total procurement is way more than the current requirement for PDS. It is thus quite possible to expand the safety net of the NFSA.

### Inadequate provisions

The Centre had allocated Rs 73,000 crore for 2021-22 for MGNREGS and notified an annual increment of about 4% in wages. Both these provisions are inadequate to match the requirements on the ground. The central allocation for MGNREGS is about Rs 38,500 crore less than last year's revised estimate. Of the 7.56 crore households which worked in MGNREGS in 2020-21, even if 1 crore households opt out of the scheme this year, the Centre should still budget for 75-80 days of employment in the year for 6.5 crore families given the current scale of economic distress. By this rationale, at the current rate of Rs 268/day/person, at least Rs 1.3 lakh crore will have to be budgeted. The government should also reconsider its decision of a mere 4% increase in MGNREGS wages and hike it by at least 10%. This will mean another Rs 10,000 crore. Therefore, at least Rs 1.4 lakh crore will be required to ensure uninterrupted implementation during the year.

A large population is facing hunger and a cash crunch. The situation is only becoming more dire as the pandemic continues to rage on. Therefore, the Union government should prioritise food and work for all and start making policy reforms right away.

Debmalya Nandy is member of NREGA Sangharsh Morcha. Views expressed are the author's own

## BOOKS: REVIEW

# Book documents how 7 migrants pedalled home

Filmmaker Vinod Kapri has come out with a book that documents a seven-day arduous journey undertaken by seven migrant workers on their bicycles from Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, battling hunger and exhaustion to reach their homes in Bihar during the 2020 lockdown.

"1232 km: The Long Journey Home" is about this trip by Ritesh Kumar Pandit, Ashish Kumar, Ram Babu Pandit, Sonu, Krishna, Sandeep Kumar and Mukesh to Saharsa in Bihar that spanned 1,232 km. A documentary based on this journey, directed by Kapri, has just been released on Disney+ Hotstar.

"When I set out on this journey, I had a deep curiosity about what makes the migrant labourers bi-

cycle 1,232 km without food or any help in such extreme circumstances. I wanted to know who these people are. I wanted to see them up close," Kapri says about his book, published by HarperCollins India.

"This is not only a journey about courage, willpower or grit. It is about good and bad people in our society. The migrants I filmed were getting unexpected help from strangers, while the authorities, who one would expect cooperation from, were harassing them," he says.

Kapri, who has won a National Award for his film "Can't Take This Shit Anymore" (2014), says as a filmmaker, he saw the migrant exodus right from day one through

'... All I can say is these seven labourers represent the desperate millions you saw during the lockdown on your television screens, crying, hassled and dejected'

the perspective of a documentary. "I initially had no plans of writing a book, though I did feel that the camera couldn't catch many aspects of the journey (partly because I had set strict rules for shooting that gave the seven men their privacy and the right to speak to the camera at a time of their choosing and only if



1232 km: The Long Journey Home By Vinod Kapri; HarperCollins; 232 pages; Rs223

commissioning editor at HarperCollins India. "The painful images of labourers (often with children) walking or cycling home at the peak of summer will long remain implanted in my memory. Here's an incisive reportage of the seven of them, angry and frustrated yet full of hopes and dreams, on their way home - 1,232 kilometres away," Kapri says the exodus was covered on TV and by the newspapers.

"But it's very hard to understand just how hard these journeys were. They were difficult, life-threatening and almost impossible - as much for these seven men, as for those millions who undertook them."

But, why only these seven labourers? "... All I can say is these seven labourers represent the desperate millions you saw during the lockdown on your television screens, crying, hassled and dejected," he says.

# Sidhu after three member panel meeting, says he had uncovered truth of Punjab

**CHANDIGARH:** Navjot Sidhu met the three-member committee appointed by AICC president Sonia Gandhi to look into the Congress feud on Tuesday after a two-month tirade against Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, his nemesis. Congress leader said he had conveyed the voice of people at the grassroots level in the state to the high command. Sidhu is the sole party leader who met with three members of the committee led by Rajya Sabha's leader of opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, and including former Delhi MP JP Agarwal and AICC national secretary in charge of Punjab, Harish Rawat. After the meeting, Sidhu told the media, "I came on the invitation of the high command. Whatever they



asked me about the people of Punjab, I apprised them. I have come to make sure that the voice of the people of Punjab reaches the high command. I have come to convey their message. My stand is that the democratic power of people

## SIDHU SPEAKS

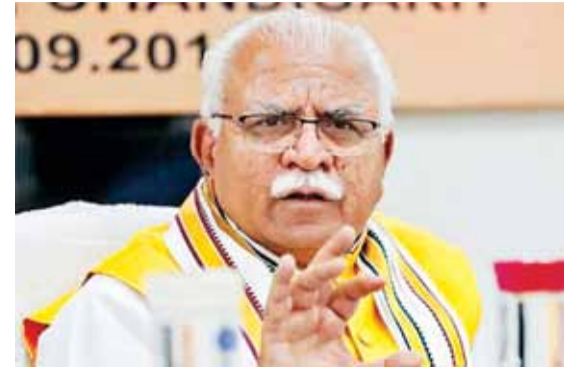
- ❑ I came on the invitation of the high command. Whatever they asked me about the people of Punjab, I apprised them.
- ❑ I have come to make sure that the voice of the people of Punjab reaches the high command. I have come to convey their message.
- ❑ My stand is that the democratic power of people that goes to the government in the form of taxes should go back to the people, in whatever form.

that goes to the government in the form of taxes should go back to the people, in whatever form. I came to tell the truth. The power of the people must return to the people. I have completely uncovered the truth.

The truth may be oppressed but it cannot be defeated. So I have brought the truth of Punjab to the notice of the high command. We have to make the truth victorious and defeat every anti-Punjab force." He refused to speak further. **AGENCIES**

# After meeting Khattar, PM 'expresses satisfaction' with Haryana's handling of Covid

**CHANDIGARH:** Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Monday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made by the state government to check the spread of Covid-19. A press release issued by the state government said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed satisfaction over the comprehensive arrangements made by the Haryana government in the state for the control of Covid-19." Khattar's meeting with the PM comes a fortnight after meeting Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J P Nadda in New Delhi. "In view of the possibility of third wave of Covid-19, the PM has asked to be alert in the coming times...he was also informed about the require-



ments for vaccine stocks and black fungus medicine," the CM said. Responding to a query regarding vaccinations in Delhi, Khattar said, "I had never said that vaccines should not be given. Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal is also aware and we also know the status of Covid vaccines' stock. I have said that the vaccination campaign should

be conducted in view of the available stock. Now it is not appropriate to do politics over it." He added that "12 crore vaccines are going to be available in the country soon". Haryana's Leader of the Opposition Bhopinder Singh Hooda asked the state government to begin preparations for a possible third wave. **AGENCIES**

## Expedite recruitment process to fill vacant posts: Vini Mahajan

**CHANDIGARH:** Complying with the orders of the Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh to fill up the vacancies in all the departments at the earliest and provide employment to the youth of the state under his government's flagship 'Ghar Ghar Rozgar Mission', the Chief Secretary, Vini Mahajan, on Monday, directed the heads of all the departments to expedite the recruitment process to fill up the vacant posts in their respective departments. This will not only further enhance the efficiency of official work and further improve the public delivery services, but the unemployed youth will also get government jobs, said the Chief Secretary, while chairing a high-level meeting on the state-level employment plan here. She disclosed that as



many as 38,552 posts were to be filled in just 5 departments, including 16,681 in the School Education department alone, 10,387 in the Home, 3,623 in the Power, 5,834 in the Health and Family Welfare and 2027 posts in the Cooperation department at different levels. Ms Mahajan said though the state government has undertaken large scale recruitments in various departments during the last two years, several vacancies were yet to be filled. **AGENCIES**

## Admn treads carefully, Covid curbs to continue till June 9

**CHANDIGARH:** Displaying ample caution, the UT Administration has decided to continue the existing corona restrictions till June 9 with a certain modifications despite a continuous fall in the new infection cases in the city. A war room meeting held here on Monday with the Governor of Punjab and the Administrator of Chandigarh UT, V.P. Singh Badore in chair decided that shops will now be allowed to open from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily. All sports facilities will also be opened to sports persons, who can utilize the infrastructure by strictly following covid protocol. However, swimming pools and gyms will remain closed.

The meeting further decided to allow barbershops and salons to reopen only for hair-cutting etc. However, spa and massage centres where physical contact is involved will continue to be closed. During the meeting, the Administrator expressed satisfaction over the availability of adequate oxygen and medicines in all medical facilities. He directed that the hospital in



Sector 45 should be converted into an exclusive Paediatric Hospital for children, who suffer from covid. He also directed Vinod P. Kavle, Secretary Food & Supply to ensure that the ration being distributed under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMJKAY) Scheme reaches the beneficiaries. The distribution should be done properly, while strictly following the covid protocol. The Administrator directed Sanjay Baniwal, Director General of Police to ensure that

proper security is available in all medical institutions, so that the health officials feel protected and can work without fear. He also directed him to ensure that covid protocol is strictly followed in the city. The Administrator expressed concern about the plight of the children, who have lost their parents due to covid. He directed that the school fees of all such children be exempted and if any child needs accommodation in the Administration's welfare home, the same will be provided free of cost. **AGENCIES**

## With formation of AAP govt in Punjab, justice will be given to Punjab and all Sangat: Cheema



**AAM AADMI PARTY MLAS, LEADERS PAY OBEISANCE AT GURDWARA SAHIB IN BURJ JAWAHAR SINGH WALA**

**CHANDIGARH:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Punjab Assembly, Harpal Singh Cheema promised that after the formation of the AAP government in Punjab in 2022, those responsible for desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and atrocities on the Sikhs seeking justice; will be put behind bars and justice will be done to Punjab and the sangat. On Tuesday, the AAP MLAs and leaders led by LoP Harpal Singh Cheema visited Burj Jawahar Singh Wala village and paid obeisance at Gurdwara Sahib for justice in the case of desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Later, the AAP leaders went to village Sarawan and met the family of one of the youths who was killed in the firing incident.

Addressing the media on the occasion, Cheema said that it had been more than six years since two Sikh youths, demanding justice for the desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib were killed by the police, but the sangat, the families of the victims and the people of Punjab had not received justice in these cases. He said that every child of Punjab knows that the entire government of that time, the then Chief Minister, the Home Minister, the Chief of Punjab Police and the SSP of the district were responsible for desecration of the Guru and firing in 2015. Cheema said that Captain Amarinder Singh had taken an oath of Sri Gutka Sahib during the 2017 Assembly elections that the culprits of desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the killers of Sikhs would be put behind bars; but the only thing that had been done was to save them through special inquiry committees and court proceedings. **AGENCIES**

## NEWSBRIEF

### SCAI calls for support from UT administration to allow mall operations

**CHANDIGARH:** Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI) has urged the Chandigarh Administration for its immediate intervention to allow malls to restart operations as per regular operational hours in a controlled and safe manner.

In its representation to V.P. Singh Badnore, Administrator, Union Territory of Chandigarh, the industry body highlighted that the pandemic has forced the union territory to take extreme measures like lockdowns which has adversely impacted businesses and livelihoods of thousands of workers in the city. SCAI also addressed the concern that almost 80% employees working in malls, shops, restaurants and service sectors are from economically weaker sections and get directly impacted with such disruption in businesses. The association also pointed out that, being the safest space following all protocols, shopping malls/centres were allowed to start operations at a later stage during gradual unlocking of the nation which resulted in massive loss of revenue to the sector as well as government.

In its representation to the Administration, SCAI lauded the efficient disease containment and management strategy of the government which led to the effective decrease in the covid-19 cases. The association also addressed the fact that operation of shopping malls is unlike opening of unorganized retail shops and requires meticulous planning and a lot of preparations. The industry body also added that the SoP created and submitted by SCAI to the authorities emphasizes on hygiene and safety of consumers and the strict adherence of these guidelines shows the dedication of the industry to ensure a safe shopping experience for consumers. **AGENCIES**

## Govt would accelerate the pace of development in rural areas: Balbir Sidhu



Health and Family Welfare and Labor Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu laying the foundation stone of Government Primary School at village Sambhalki.

### BALBIR SINGH SIDHU LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL AT VILLAGE SAMBHALKI.

**CHANDIGARH:** Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Labour at village Sambhalki in Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar. Balbir Singh Sidhu laid the foundation stone of Government Primary School. Within this boundary, playgrounds and parks will be set up for children to play. All this work will cost around Rs 20 lakh. On this occasion, S. "Even though the state is currently facing a corona epidemic," Sidhu said. However, the state government would further accelerate the pace of development in the rural areas through the active participation of the rural panchayats. No shortage of funds will be allowed. Sidhu said that education was the basic need of life. To this end, the necessary infrastructure would be provided in the schools on a first come first served basis so that the teachers and students would not face any difficulty. He apprised the Minister for Rural Development and Panchayats, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries and Higher Education.

Tripat Rajinder Singh Ba-

under whom the construction work of school buildings was being carried out by the department and Vijay Inder Singla, Minister for Public Works and School Education under whose leadership the department was conducting education in the schools. Sidhu said that the Gram Panchayat of village Sambhalki had brought to the notice of the village government school the dilapidated condition of the ground which was being beautified. Apart from the construction work of Panchayat houses is underway in the villages at a cost of Rs. 25 lakh each. Talking about the health facilities, he said that the state government has set up a mobile covid care unit in partnership with Tribho Hotels to provide covid core services in remote villages of the district. This would help in providing facilities to the rural people who have limited access to health services. **AGENCIES**

## Punjab Govt to fill 38,552 posts for five depts.

**CHANDIGARH:** The Punjab Government will soon recruit about 38,552 posts in five departments of the state. These recruitments will be done under the 'Ghar Ghar Rozgar Mission'. The process of these recruitments has been started.

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh ordered to fill up the vacant posts in all departments at the earliest and provide employment to the youth of the state under the Ghar Ghar Rozgar Mission. After this, the Chief Secretary of the state, Vini Mahajan, has instructed the higher officials of all the departments that the recruitment process should be completed soon. This will further increase the efficiency of the departments.

He said that new recruitments would increase efficiency in government offices and people would get better services. Along with this, unemployed people of the state will get government jobs. In a high level meeting held on the State Level Employment Scheme, the Chief Secretary informed that the recruitment process is going on in different departments by the Punjab Government and many posts are still to be filled.

Chief Secretary Mahajan said that 38,552 posts are to be filled for different posts in five departments. Out of these, 16,681 posts are to be recruited in the School Education Department, 10,387 posts in the Home Department, 3,623 in the Electricity Department, 5,834 in

the Health and Family Welfare Department and 2027 in the Cooperation Department are to be recruited at different levels.

The Chief Secretary was informed that the primary prerequisites for recruitment have been fulfilled by most of the departments and soon thousands of youth of the state would get employment. Vini Mahajan said that in many departments such as School Education, Technical Education, Water Resources Department, Home Department, Electricity Department, Cooperative, Health Department, Higher Education, Revenue Department and Rural Development Department, recruitment is to be done on a large scale. **AGENCIES**

# Hisar steel industry 'on ventilator, needs oxygen support'

**HIT BY THE RECESSION IN DOMESTIC MARKET DUE TO COVID-19 THIS INDUSTRY IN THE STATE HAS PERFORMED POORLY IN PAST OVER A YEAR DUE TO EPIDEMIC OUTBREAK AND REPEATED LOCK DOWN DECLARED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

**SATISH HANDA Chandigarh**

Hisar known as 'City of Steel' in Haryana state having nearly 150 small and medium steel units holding about 20% share in steel business in the country about two decades ago manufacture steel tubes and other steel products.

Ajay Batra, General Secretary Hisar Udyog Sangh said, the manufacturing, sale and profit margins of steel industry has started going down rapidly since after past about 15 years and the industry has been worst affected due to Covid-19 in past over



a year as a result steel production in manufacturing units have now dropped to nearly 20% at present.

Batra said, hit by the recession in domestic market due to Covid-19 this industry in the state has performed poorly in past over a year due to epidemic outbreak and repeated lock down declared by the government. The entrepreneurs expressed

worry over constant decline in production as well as sale since past many years since the steel is being dumped into the country from CIS countries and Korea. He said, as result of demand recession and repeated lock down steel industry in the town facing financial burden when producing hardly 15-20% of their production capacity.

Chairman of New Industrial Welfare Association Rakesh Bansal said, introduction of PVC tubes had badly affected the sale of steel tubes industry as consumers preferred low weight PVC tube as compared to steel tubes and snatched more than 50% share from steel tubes. Demanding special packages especially to MSME units for their survival as well as concession in electricity tariff from the government Bansal said that since past over a year industry in the town facing severe economic crisis due to salaries to permanent staff, meet day to day overhead expenses and instalments payment against bank loans when industry is doing hardly 15-20% of their production capacity. He said, most of small scale manufacturers have become sick or already closed down their shutters.

As seen, many big units has cut down their production between 60-75% unable to get raw material or due to shortage of labour since most of the migrant labourers from U.P, Bihar and West Bengal had left for their native places when lock down was declared by the government in

2020 and never returned. The entrepreneurs of Hisar steel industry told that tough competition has taken the toll on the industry facing tough competition with local manufacturers as well as manufacturers from Punjab having neck to neck price war as well as slump in market forcing local industry to utilise less than 25% of their production capacity. They said, industry in the town is facing shortage of labour since most of the skilled workers from U.P, Bihar and West Bengal left for their native places when lock down was declared in 2020 during first wave of Covid-19 not returned on work as such most of the units are working in single shift and some of them either turned sick or in the state of collapse or facing severe financial crisis. Information reveals, some of steel goods manufacturers has discontinued manufacturing because they are not sure when situation will be normal. There are nearly 35 big or medium steel industrial units involved in production at Hisar, whereas others are small scale manufacturing units most of them are lying closed.

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's Chief Justice Chandra Shumsher Rana has picked four justices of the Supreme Court (SC) for the Constitutional Bench to hear the 30 writ petitions filed against the dissolution of the House of Representatives by the President, according to a media report on Friday.

There is a provision of a five-member Constitutional Bench to settle the disputes over constitutional matters. As many as 30 writ petitions have been registered at the apex court against President Bidya Devi Bhandari's May 22 move to dissolve the lower house of Parliament on the advice of Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli, who is heading a minority government.

The newly-formed bench includes justices Dipak Kumar Karki, Anand Mohan Bhattarai, Tej Bahadur K.C. and Bam Kumar Shrestha, besides the Chief Justice. The Kathmandu Post reported. "Chief Justice Rana has formed the bench comprising seniormost justices," Kishor Poudel, a communication expert at the Supreme Court, told the Post.

Currently, there are 13 senior justices, besides chief justice, in the Supreme Court. The initial hearing on 19 of such petitions was conducted by the CJ Rana-led bench on Thursday. The single bench, however, forwarded the writ petitions to the Constitutional Bench for further hearing.

Some of the petitioners had demanded an interim against the dissolution and calling of the House meeting to present the national budget. Mr. Rana, however, refused.

According to the constitutional provision, the government must present the federal budget at the federal Parliament by May 29.

Since there is no Parliament, the government is



# Legal twist in Nepal politics

CONSTITUTIONAL BENCH TO HEAR WRITS ON NEPALESE HOUSE DISSOLUTION

planning to bring the budget through an ordinance.

President Bhandari dissolved the 275-member House of Representatives on Saturday for the second

time in five months and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19 on the advice of Prime Minister Oli.

She rejected the bids of

both Prime Minister Oli and the Opposition alliance's claims to form a government. Mr. Oli and Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba had staked separate claims

to the premiership, saying the "claims were insufficient." Nepal's Opposition alliance on Monday filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court demanding restoration of the House of Representatives and appointment of Mr. Deuba as the Prime Minister. Others had also filed petitions against the dissolution of the House of Representatives.

Earlier on December 20, the President had dissolved the Parliament and called snap polls on April 30 and May 10. However, two months later, the Rana-led Constitutional Bench on February 23 overturned the decision and reinstated the House.

Constitutional experts have criticised Mr. Oli and Mr. Bhandari for their complicity in trampling upon the Constitution.

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

Mr. Oli's move to dissolve the House sparked protests from a large section of the NCP led by his rival Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. In February, the apex court reinstated the dissolved House, in a setback to Mr. Oli who was preparing for snap polls.

AGENCIES



## Sonakshi Sinha Current situation makes us think hard about CLIMATE CHANGE

Actress Sonakshi Sinha says that it is important to value the environment we live in.

"We end up in the environment we create for ourselves, and we must make sure that it's beautiful. The current situation around us is making us think hard about climate change, and the kind of effect it has on our planet. As responsible individuals, if we make small sustainable changes to our daily routine then together, we can create a healthier environment to live in," she says.

On the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, Sonakshi, along with actress Tara Sharma, will be seen on the digital property "Earth Champions", which streams on the Sony BBC Earth Instagram page.

On screen, Sonakshi is all set to make her web series debut with "Fallen", where she plays a cop. She is also part of "Bulbul Tarang", which will have a digital release, and will be seen in the film "Bhuj: The Pride of India" co-starring Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt and Nora Fatehi.

AGENCIES

## Japan to extend virus curbs with safe Olympics at stake

**TOKYO:** Japan is set to extend a coronavirus state of emergency in Tokyo and other areas with infections not yet slowing to levels it can safely host the Olympics opening in just over 50 days.

The extension is needed as people are increasingly roaming in public, especially in Tokyo and Osaka, when they should be doing the opposite, and it's feared that lifting the emergency would cause an instant rebound in infections, Economy Revitalization Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said.

The current emergency in the capital and eight other metropolitan areas was to end next Monday, but hospitals in some areas are still



overflowing with COVID-19 patients and serious cases hit new highs recently.

Mr. Nishimura told reporters the government proposal of a 20-day extension to June 20 in the nine areas received

preliminary approval from experts ahead of an official announcement later Friday. The southern island prefecture of Okinawa is already under emergency status through June 20.

Olympic organisers have to decide around that date whether to allow any fans at all, after overseas spectators were banned months ago. A plan to prioritise vaccinations for Japanese athletes also is being delayed to around that time, according to media reports.

The Olympics are scheduled to start on July 23 after a one-year postponement due to the pandemic, and worries about the new variants and Japan's slow vaccination

rollouts have triggered calls from the public and medical experts to cancel the Games.

Experts have warned that more contagious variants are infecting more people, leaving them seriously ill and flooding hospitals.

Meanwhile, Japan has lagged on vaccinations due to bureaucratic and planning missteps and shortages. Only 2.3% of the population has been fully vaccinated, and the current phase targeting older adults is not scheduled to finish before the Games.

Still, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and his government are determined to host the Olympics. The International Olympic Committee has also said the Olympics would go ahead even if the host city Tokyo is under emergency measures. Japan has reported about 730,000 cases of infection and more than 12,700 deaths.

AGENCIES

## SAMEERA REDDY Love your flaws for a happy you

Sameera Reddy took to Instagram on Friday to address bodyshaming and its effects on mental health. The actress said we sometimes tend to shame and question ourselves, too.

Sameera suggests loving oneself, with one's flaws and imperfections, can lead to mental happiness.

"We've all been shamed at some point: sometimes by society. Sometimes we do it to ourselves. Today's #fitnessfriday post is dedicated to #mentalhealtha-

warenessmonth Pause and ask, 'is hate, fear, expectation, shame, self-doubt driving you to question yourself? We all do it. I do too. It's only human. But going past it with kindness and acceptance of yourself and others can set you free,' she wrote.

"Loving your 'flaws' and 'imperfections' as they call it is your ticket to move towards a happy you. Take time to talk and listen to someone. It's ok not to feel ok all the time. We are all #imperfectlyperfect," she suggested.

AGENCIES



## Pak Taliban leader killed in Balochistan



**AT LEAST 80 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND NEARLY 150 WERE INJURED DURING THE SUICIDE BOMBING AND GUN FIRE BY MILITANTS AT THE CIVIL HOSPITAL IN QUETTA IN 2016**

**KARACHI:** A top commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), who was believed to be involved in the deadly attack on the Civil Hospital in Quetta in 2016, has been killed, along with three members of the banned militant outfit in Balochistan province, police said on Thursday.

Based on a tip-off, the

Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) launched an operation in Agbara area of the restive Balochistan province on Tuesday and killed Riaz Thekedar.

"Four of the terrorists were killed in heavy firing, while two of them managed to escape," police said.

A large cache of guns, ammunition and weapons was seized from the spot.

A CTD spokesman said top TTP leader Thekedar, was killed in the encounter.

At least 80 people were killed and nearly 150 were injured during the suicide bombing and gun fire by militants at the Civil Hospital in Quetta in 2016.

AGENCIES

## Novak Djokovic reaches Belgrade final



**BELGRADE:** Novak Djokovic eased into the final of the ATP tournament in Belgrade on Friday despite losing his form in the second set, beating Slovakia's Andrej Martin as he steps up his preparations for Roland Garros.

The World No. 1 saw off his 119th-ranked opponent 6-1, 4-6, 6-0.

It will be the Serbian's third final of the year after his Australian Open triumph and his final loss to Rafael

Nadal at the Italian Open last week, but his first on home soil since 2011.

"I'm super excited to play in front of a Serbian crowd. This is my home town. I'm always excited, but also nervous, coming out on the court and playing in front of my home crowd," Djokovic said. "It's a very unique feeling. You feel a lot of pressure and expectations. But I'm just happy to fight for a trophy tomorrow."

After racing through the

first set against Martin, Djokovic uncharacteristically took his foot off the gas and was broken three times in the second set. The 34-year-old was back to his best in the decider, though, quickly ending any thought of a surprise comeback.

Meanwhile at Parma, Italian Marco Cecchinato made the finals of the Emilia-Romagna Open, putting up a fight to beat Spain's Jaume Munar 7-6(2), 1-6, 6-1.

AGENCIES

## Couldn't sleep for 8-9 days during IPL, had to pullout: R Ashwin

**MUMBAI:** Ravichandran Ashwin had "sleepless nights" inside the IPL bio-bubble when most of his family members were suffering from COVID-19 and said he had to leave the tournament midway to help his close ones fight the deadly virus.

Ashwin is now back in another bubble, this time with the Indian team which leaves for a 104-day UK trip on June 2.

"I couldn't sleep for almost 8-9 days. Since I couldn't sleep, it was really stressful for me. I was playing matches without getting any sleep. And since I found it really taxing, I had to quit IPL and go home midway."

"In fact, when I left around at that time, I had thoughts on whether I will be able to play cricket thereafter. But still, I did what was required at that point of time," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel.

The IPL was eventually suspended after multiples cases were found in its bio-bubble.

Talking about the ongoing 14-day quarantine in Mumbai, Ashwin gave an idea of the Indian team's life in the protected environment. "It's really difficult, guys. It might look from the outside that we are staying at a luxurious five-star hotel. But it is not that easy. Like I said earlier, it is not 7 days, but 14-days quarantine," the star spinner said.

"So, basically, we came here on 19th and we are leaving to England on only June 2 from Mumbai. So, basically, we will finish our 14-day quarantine here in India. And we will have a test here every two days," Ashwin said.

Ashwin also explained that bubble breach doesn't mean that someone has entered the bubble.

"Many of you would have heard about the term bio-bubble breach. Bio-bubble breach doesn't mean someone from outside has entered the bubble.

This is a virus and we still don't know how it enters." While most of the Indian players have received their first jabs, Ashwin has got two jabs of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.

Ashwin also narrated the experience of reaching the Mumbai bubble from his Chennai residence.

"The way we reached Mumbai in itself was a different experience. With each passing day, the struggle is only getting worse. Hopefully, you will get joy as we play. Seven days quarantine, three tests in seven days and after that, we can practice. It is difficult, but when compared to what people are going through, it's nothing," he said.

"From Chennai, we took one charter flight. Before taking the charter, we had to take three (RT-PCR) tests. There were three tests on May 14th, 16th and 18th and we (his family) left from Chennai on May 19. From Chennai, next we landed



in Hyderabad. Fielding coach R Sridhar, Indian women's captain Mithali Raj and others also joined us. The flight that took off at 2 pm from Chennai, landed in Mumbai at 6 pm on May 19th."

AGENCIES

runway for a while and the reason was that was due to the heavy rains on that particular day, the bus that was supposed to pick-up one of the players got stuck.

"And to arrange another bus, the driver should have been in the bubble and they should also sanitize the bus and since these problems were also there. It

took one to one and half hours and after that, we got picked in another bus. We came here and checked-in at the hotel."

AGENCIES