

SHORT TAKES

4 held for robbing collection agent of ₹2.37 lakh

New Delhi: Four men were arrested for allegedly robbing ₹2.37 lakh from a cash collection agent of an e-commerce company by threatening him with a toy pistol in south Delhi's Maidan Garhi area, police said on Wednesday. Accused Pradeep (21), Sonu (22) and Neeraj (21) executed the robbery on Tuesday based on information provided by an insider who has been identified as Sanjeev (24), they said. They got inspired by gangster based movies and planned to rob to fulfill their drug addiction, police said. According to police, the incident took place on Tuesday morning with Ganesh Sahani who works with a cash collection company situated at Mohan Estate on Mathura Road.

3 burglars held after shootout with police

New Delhi: Three burglars were arrested following a brief exchange of fire with police in north Delhi's Kashmere Gate area on Wednesday, officials said. The burglars have been identified as Anwar (38), Manirul (24) and Rafiq (24), all residents of Delhi's Jahangirpuri area and members of the same gang. Anwar was injured in the firing, they said. Deputy commissioner of police (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said: "Our team led by SI Amit Kumar from KM Pur police station was following a gang of armed burglars travelling in a vehicle. Around 12.35 pm, our team overtook their Wagon R on Outer Ring Road near Hanuman Nagar, Kashmere Gate." The accused tried to escape while Anwar pulled out a country-made pistol and fired on the police team. The police team retaliated and he sustained a bullet injury in his leg, he said. Anwar has been found involved in 70 cases, Saifuddin in 23 and Rafiq in 30, the police said.

Man shot to death, wife hurt; honour killing suspected

New Delhi: A 26-year-old cousin of a woman was arrested for allegedly shooting her and killing her husband in a suspected case of honour killing in Dwarka area, police said on Wednesday. The accused has been identified as Vicky. The incident took place on June 24 at Ambarhai Village in Dwarka, they said. Vinay Dahiya (23) of Haryana's Sonapat and his wife Kiran Dahiya (19) were shot at by six to seven people inside their rented accommodation in Ambarhai village, police said. Further details are awaited.



Balaji Srivastava (L) takes additional charge as the commissioner of Delhi police from outgoing police chief S.N. Shrivastava at police headquarters in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

Balaji new Delhi police chief as top cop Shrivastava retires

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

Senior IPS officer Balaji Srivastava took additional charge as the Commissioner of Delhi Police on Wednesday after incumbent S N Shrivastava retired. Balaji Srivastava was posted as Special Commissioner (Vigilance) of the Delhi Police.

A 1988-batch IPS officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre, he has previously worked as the DGP of Puducherry and Mizoram and Special Commissioner, Economic

Offence Wing and Special Cell, Delhi.

He has also served in the Cabinet Secretariat for nine years and handled sensitive assignments, said an order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

He also worked as Addl.DG/Andaman and Nicobar Island.

S.N. Shrivastava too initially took the additional charge of the CP, Delhi, in February 2020 in the wake of the communal riots in the capital following protests over the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.

He was regularised as the CP of the Delhi Police only last month.

Severe heat wave sweeps Delhi, monsoon still away

Mercury soars to 43.5 °C, highest recorded this year so far

New Delhi, June 30: A severe heat wave swept the national capital on Wednesday, with the mercury soaring to 43.5 degrees Celsius, the highest recorded this year so far, the India Meteorological Department said, adding the monsoon is at least a week away.

The maximum temperature recorded at the Safdarjung Observatory, the official marker for the city, was seven notches above normal, weather officials said.

By July 7, conditions are predicted to become favourable for the monsoon to advance into the region, according to the MeT office.

Most of the monitoring stations in the capital recorded a severe heat wave, with their respective maximum tempera-



Children play in a canal during a hot summer day in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

ture remaining at least 7 degrees Celsius above the average temperature.

A severe heat wave seared Lodhi Road (43.7 degrees Celsius), Ayanagar (44.2), Ridge (44), Mungeshpur (44.3), Najafgarh (44.4), Pitampura (44.3) and Narela (43.7), officials said. The monitoring station at Pusa recorded a

high of 44.3 degrees Celsius, eight notches above normal, they added.

On Monday, Delhi recorded the first heat wave this summer with the mercury levels increasing to 43 degrees Celsius.

Another heat wave has been predicted for Thursday.

Light rainfall and dust storm on Friday are likely to bring the mercury below the 40 degrees mark.

Usually, the capital witnesses heat waves till June 20 and cooler temperatures thereafter. The increase in the maximum temperature this time can be attributed to the delay in the arrival of the monsoon, said Kuldeep Srivastava, head of IMD's regional forecasting centre.

Normally, monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27 and covers the entire country by July 8. Last year, the wind system had reached Delhi on June 25 and covered the entire country by June 29.

The last time the monsoon arrived so late in Delhi was on July 7 in 2012. — PTI

2 women among 4 killed in LPG cylinder blast

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

Four members of a family including two women died while a 29-year-old man sustained burn injuries following a cylinder blast at a house in Farsh Bazaar area of Shahdara on Wednesday, Delhi Fire Service officials said.

According to fire department, a call about cylinder blast was received at around 12.15 am on Tuesday night after which nine fire tenders were rushed to the spot, they said.

A portion of the roof of the house collapsed due to the explosion, the fire officials said, adding that a gas stove repair shop was also being run by them in front portion of the house. Police said that 45-year-old Munni Devi, her two sons — Om Prakash (22), Naresh (18) and daughter Sunita (18) died due to suffocation after inhaling smoke while her son Lal Chand (29), sustained burn injuries in the incident.

The police team at the spot also brought electri-



The house in Shahdara's Farsh Bazaar area in New Delhi where four people died due to LPG cylinder leakage on Wednesday. — PTI

cian from BSES timely to cut off the line before breaking the window and door to rescue Chand who was struggling inside the house due to suffocation, a senior police officer said.

"All five members were rescued by fire service personnel with the help of police by breaking the window and door of the house. They were then shifted to Dr Hegdewar Hospital by CATS ambulance. Four among them were declared brought dead by the doctor, due to suffocation. Lal Chand

suffered 30 per cent burn injury in the incident," said police.

Crime team was also called at the spot for inspection of place of incident, the officer said, adding short-circuit in electric meter board is suspected to be the reason. A case has been registered against the owner and his niece who were running a shop in front portion of the house where gas stove, Keresene stove and other small cylinder stoves were being repaired.

1 more arrested from Punjab in Red Fort violence case

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

A 26-year-old man who has been absconding for last five months in Red Fort violence case in which he was carrying a reward of ₹50,000 was arrested from Punjab by the Crime Branch team of Delhi Police, officials said on Wednesday.

Police said Singh was present at the Red fort during riots and had also claimed to have hoisted the religious flag at main flag hoisting area at Red Fort.

DCP (Crime) Monika Bhardwaj said: "Our

team received specific information about Buta Singh and a team was sent to Punjab which managed to trace him. Subsequently, a raid was conducted at his village in Talwandi Sobha Singh."

"But our raiding team had to face a strong resistance from his family and neighbours who tried to get Singh out of police custody. They tried to block roads with their tractors but with the help of local police, our team finally managed to come out from the village along with accused Singh," she said.

2 of Delhi family feared drowned in Ganga in UP's Bulandshahr

Bulandshahr (UP), June 30: Two members of a Delhi-based family have gone missing while taking bath in the Ganga at Karnvaas here, police said.

Four members of the family were washed away by strong currents while they were taking bath in the river. However, divers present

at the Bazaar Ghat rescued two of them after hearing their screams, according to police.

Personnel of the flood platoon division of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) along with divers are engaged in search for the two missing family members, they said. — PTI



A boy selling fresh jamun waits for customers at a roadside stall in New Delhi on Wednesday. — AFP

■ Traders say price rise due to transportation cost

Prices of veggies, fruits rise, Amul milk hiked by ₹2/litre

New Delhi, June 30: Prices of vegetables and fruits in the city's wholesale and retail markets have risen further this week as surging fuel prices continued to push transportation costs, traders said on Wednesday.

Vegetable and fruit traders, however, said that rates were not that steep at this point but indicated that these consumables might get dearer in coming weeks if diesel prices continue to swell in the same fashion.

In the national capital, petrol is selling at ₹98.81 per litre on Wednesday, while diesel is priced at ₹89.18 per litre.

Rajendra Sharma, a wholesale vegetable and fruit trader at Delhi's largest Azadpur Mandi, said that prices of wholesale and retail vegetables and fruits have increased slightly.

"Wholesale prices of onion are now in the range of ₹23-25 per kg, while dur-

ing normal scenario at this time of the season, rates would be around ₹16-20 a kg. Similarly, pomegranate, which comes from Maharashtra, is priced around ₹70-90 per kg. It normally sells at around ₹60-80 during this time of the season," he said.

The trader attributed the price rise to a hike in transportation cost. Now that diesel rates have almost touched ₹90 per litre in Delhi, transporters have revised their fee, Sharma said.

A wholesale trader at Okhla Mandi, Haji Yamin, corroborated the price hike in staple vegetables such as onion, tomato and potato.

"Onion and tomato come to Delhi mainly from Maharashtra while potato from Shimla and Uttar Pradesh. Since the prices of diesel have increased quite a bit so it has also raised the transportation cost. The another factor which is con-

tributing to hike is longer detours being taken by truckers due to farmers protest at Delhi borders," Yamin said.

Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets milk and milk products under the Amul brand, has hiked milk prices by Rs 2 per litre in Delhi-NCR as well as in Ahmedabad and Saurashtra in Gujarat from July 1 due to a rise in input cost.

The increase of ₹2 per litre translates into 4 per cent hike in MRP (Maximum Retail Price) which is much lower than average food inflation, GCMMF said in a statement on Wednesday.

GCMMF has decided to revise the milk prices by ₹2 per litre in markets of Ahmedabad and Saurashtra of Gujarat and Delhi-NCR with effective from July 1, the statement said. — PTI

No case of Covid Delta plus variant in city so far: Jain

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Wednesday said the national capital has not reported any case of Delta plus variant of Covid-19 so far, adding that there is no communication from the Centre to make any special arrangement to deal with it.

He said a genome sequencing lab to detect the variants of coronavirus will become operational at Lok Nayak Hospital within a week. Another such lab is being created at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, he said.

"There are several variants of coronavirus, but there are only two ways to protect yourself against it — get vaccinated and use masks. There is no separate communication from the Centre to make special preparations for the Delta plus variant. Also, Delhi has not reported any such



Satyendar Jain

cases so far," Jain told reporters here.

After witnessing a slight rise in fresh infections on Tuesday,

Delhi recorded 94 new confirmed cases, along with six more Covid deaths in the last 24 hours, on Wednesday.

The tally of active cases of infection in the national capital now stands at 1,379, a mere 0.09 per cent of the total cases reported in the national capital.

Meanwhile according to a recent survey, carried out by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), over 2,000 children in the city have lost either one or both their parents to the novel coronavirus infection, with 67 of them losing both their parents, since the pandemic outbreak in March last year.

Laxmi Nagar market shut as Covid protocol violated

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Wednesday ordered closure of several markets in East Delhi's Laxmi Nagar area, including weekly popular market Mangal Bazar, in view of the blatant failure of observance of Covid-19 guidelines.

A notification issued by DDMA said the market association and shopkeepers in the main bazaar, Laxmi Nagar, were unable to ensure observance of Covid protocols last Sunday (June 27) due to the large footfall.

The order was issued by East Delhi district magistrate Sonika Singh on June 29 and the shutdown will be applicable on Laxmi Nagar main market and weekly Tuesday bazaars around it. Markets in Vijay Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Jagatram Park and Guru Ramdas Nagar have also been mentioned in the DM's order for shutdown till 10 pm of July 5.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice

No. CIID/SLR/Tender/2020 (Part V)

The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight, Northern Railway, New Delhi invites E-tender for the contract of leasing of SLR/SLRD space in the following special trains originating from various stations over Delhi Division.

Tender Opening Date:- 22.07.2021

S. No.	Train No.	From	To	Comptt.	CC	Freq	R.P. (In Rs.)	EMD (In Rs.)	Tender Cost including GST@18% (In Rs.)	Tender No.
1	02414	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	MAO (Madgaon)	FSLR	3.9	Friday, Saturday	35621	100000	1180	SLR-FSLR-02414-June21
2	02482	DEE (Delhi Sarai Rohilla)	JU (Jodhpur)	FI	04	Daily	10888	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02482-June21
3	02482	DEE (Delhi Sarai Rohilla)	JU (Jodhpur)	FI	04	Daily	10888	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02482-June21
4	02482	DEE (Delhi Sarai Rohilla)	JU (Jodhpur)	RI	04	Daily	10888	100000	1180	SLR-RI-02482-June21
5	05128	NDLS (New Delhi)	MUV (Manduadih)	FI	04	Daily	13430	100000	1180	SLR-FI-05128-June21
6	05128	NDLS (New Delhi)	MUV (Manduadih)	FI	04	Daily	13430	100000	1180	SLR-FI-05128-June21
7	05128	NDLS (New Delhi)	MUV (Manduadih)	RI	04	Daily	13430	100000	1180	SLR-RI-05128-June21
8	05274	ANVT (Anand Vihar TRM)	RXL (Raxaul)	FI	04	Daily	16091	100000	1180	SLR-FI-05274-June21
9	03430	ANVT (Anand Vihar TRM)	MLDT (Malda Town)	FI	04	Saturday	22325	100000	1180	SLR-FI-03430-June21
10	02806	NDLS (New Delhi)	VSKP (Visakhapatnam)	FSLR	3.9	Daily	28966	100000	1180	SLR-FSLR-02806-June21
11	02888	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	VSKP (Visakhapatnam)	FI	04	Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri, Sat	27492	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02888-June21
12	02888	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	VSKP (Visakhapatnam)	RI	04	Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri, Sat	27492	100000	1180	SLR-RI-02888-June21
13	02494	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	PUNE (Pune)	FSLR	3.9	Friday	22944	100000	1180	SLR-FSLR-02494-June21
14	02173	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	JBP (Jabalpur)	FI	04	Daily	17134	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02173-June21
15	02618	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	ERS (Ernakulam)	FI	04	Daily	37665	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02618-June21
16	02782	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	TPTY (Tirupati)	FI	04	Wed, Fri, Sun	31677	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02782-June21
17	02782	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	TPTY (Tirupati)	RI	04	Wed, Fri, Sun	31677	100000	1180	SLR-RI-02782-June21
18	02488	DEE (Delhi Sarai Rohilla)	BKN (Bikaner)	FI	04	Daily	8555	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02488-June21
19	02488	DEE (Delhi Sarai Rohilla)	BKN (Bikaner)	FI	04	Daily	8555	100000	1180	SLR-FI-02488-June21
20	02488	DEE (Delhi Sarai Rohilla)	BKN (Bikaner)	RI	04	Daily	8555	100000	1180	SLR-RI-02488-June21
21	02284	NZM (Hazrat Nizamuddin)	ERS (Ernakulam)	FSLR	3.9	Saturday	44491	100000	1180	SLR-FSLR-02284-June21
22	05035	DLI (Delhi)	KGM (Kathgodam)	FI	04	Daily	6188	100000	1180	SLR-FI-05035-June21
23	05035	DLI (Delhi)	KGM (Kathgodam)	RI	04	Daily	6188	100000	1180	SLR-RI-05035-June21
24	02034	NDLS (New Delhi)	CNB (Kanpur Central)	FSLR	3.9	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thurs, Fri, Sat	10256	100000	1180	SLR-FSLR-02034-June21
25	04212	NDLS (New Delhi)	AGC (Agra Cantt)	FSLR	3.9	Daily	4914	100000	1180	SLR-FSLR-04212-June21

Interested bidders may please visit official website for e-tendering i.e. www.irps.gov.in for further details and submitting tender.

Important Note-1: Bidders who wish to participate in the E-tendering will have to procure class-3 valid digital security certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act, 2000. Bidders can procure this certificate from any of the certifying authority of Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA) Government of India. Details of certifying authorities can be obtained from www.cca.gov.in. 2. Bidders, who want to participate in this E-tender will be required to register on Indian Railways website www.irps.gov.in has to register, if not registered earlier with www.irps.gov.in through a valid class-3 Digital Security Certificate (DSC), if not registered earlier. All information related to bidder registration and participation in this E-tender is available on the official website of Indian Railways www.irps.gov.in. 3. Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute rights to short terminate these tenders/contracts at any point of time (or for taking any decision regarding the discontinuation/continuation of these tenders/contracts with modified/additional terms and conditions) depending upon the continuation/discontinuation of these special trains or commencement of corresponding regular train services. 4. Kindly carefully read and follow "General Instructions to tenderers and "Terms and Conditions" (including certain new modified instructions/conditions) given in the Tender Document before submitting the **ONLINE BID**.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SHORT TAKES

3 jawans killed in Sikkim road mishap

Gangtok: Three Army jawans were killed and three other soldiers critically injured when a truck they were travelling in fell into a gorge in East Sikkim on Wednesday, the police said. The accident took place at 6th Mile on New Jawahar Lal Nehru Road connecting Gangtok with Tsomgo Lake and Nathula near the India-China border, an officer said. The six jawans of the Kumaon Regiment were travelling towards Gangtok when the driver lost control over the truck and it plunged 600 feet into a gorge, killing the driver and two other soldiers on the spot, he said. The rescue operation was conducted by the Army, BRO, police and locals in the inhospitable terrain amid bad weather and the three survivors were admitted to an Army hospital in Gangtok, from where they were shifted to a medical establishment in Siliguri, the officer added. — PTI

Scheme in J&K for corona-hit families

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday rolled out its Special Assistance Scheme for Covid Mortalities (SASCM) to help out families affected by the coronavirus in the Union Territory. J&K lieutenant-governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha took to Twitter to announce the launch of the social security scheme. "Today Rolled out SASCM social protection scheme to families affected by Covid-19. It is our duty and utmost responsibility to support families, restore livelihoods and ensure stability in their lives," he said. Mr Sinha said the J&K government was committed to support children who have lost their parents to the pandemic. The administration will take all necessary steps for their well-being and education, he added. — PTI

Srijan scam: Assets worth ₹4cr attached

New Delhi: Assets worth ₹4.10 crore have been attached in a money laundering probe linked to the alleged Srijan NGO funds scam of Bihar, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said on Wednesday. The NGO is under the probe scanner of the CBI and the ED after a ₹1,000 crore scam by alleged embezzlement of government funds was reported in 2017. The attached properties include a dozen flats worth ₹3.09 crore located at Bhagalpur and Patna in Bihar and Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, 5 plots and houses valued ₹87 lakh located in Bhagalpur, Deoghar (Jharkhand) and Sitamarhi (Bihar), the central probe agency said in a statement issued here. — PTI

Chaos at vaccine centres in Gujarat due to crowding

Ahmedabad, June 30: Chaotic scenes were witnessed at several Covid-19 inoculation centres in Ahmedabad on Wednesday as people turned up in large numbers to take the jabs amid short supply of vaccines in the Gujarat city. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) struggled to meet its target of vaccinating one lakh people per day due to less number of vaccines supplied to it, officials said. ing one lakh people per day, after the state government launched the facility of spot registration. However, from June 21 to 29, it failed to even cross the 50,000-mark, officials said. As per the vaccination data shared by the AMC, on June 21, 38,311 people were vaccinated in the city. The vaccination figures for the next eight days were 39,541, 41,887, 41,390, 33,355, 27,509, 20,158, 22,506, and 25,289. AMC's medical officer Bhavin Solanki said, "We are getting less supply of vaccines, but we are vaccinating people depending upon the supply, that varies every day. Like yesterday, we received 35,000 doses. Some days we receive 20,000 doses, or even 13,000 doses." A similar situation was witnessed at some centres in Rajkot. People complained of irregularities and lack of a proper system for vaccination due to which they were unable to get inoculated. — PTI

■ If you invoke US copyright act, then be cognisant of Indian laws as well, IT minister tells Twitter Prasad takes on Twitter, calls for accountability



If democracy has to survive misinformation, fake news, colluded material... all these are challenges. I am not in favour of censoring but democracies have to find a common ground as far as these issues are concerned so that these big tech companies do their business, earn good money, good profit but become accountable. This can only happen if you follow law of the land.

— Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union minister

New Delhi, June 30: Calling for accountability of big social media companies, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Wednesday said Twitter invoked a US copyright act to block his account but it should also be cognisant of the law in India where it is operating and earning money.

Speaking at the India Global Forum, the minister said Twitter last week blocked his account for an hour on a complaint made four years ago under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of the US. "If you are going to invoke the... digital copyright act of America then you have to also be cognisant of the copyright rules of India. That is the point. "You cannot say my

whole stand will be regulated by an ex-parte assessment of the US law. For a happy blending of the role of big tech and democracy, a solution has to be found," Mr Prasad said. He said social media companies are free to do business in India but they have to be accountable to the Indian Constitution and laws. Micro-blogging platform Twitter has been at loggerheads with the government over various

complaints from the users or victims.

All significant social media companies, with over 50 lakh user base, will have to appoint a chief compliance officer, a nodal contact person and a grievance officer. All of them have to be resident in India.

Mr Prasad further said the issue of social media in India is around abuse of the rights of victims on those platforms and the companies' accountability.

"If democracy has to survive misinformation, fake news, colluded material... all these are challenges. I am not in favour of censoring but democracies have to find a common ground as far as these issues are concerned so that these big tech companies do their business, earn good money, good profit but become accountable. This can only happen if you follow law of the land," Union minister Prasad said.

Meanwhile, the microblogging platform Twitter on Wednesday said the average daily number of tweets about Covid-19 from India increased by 7X during April-May this year as compared to the February-March period. — PTI

NCW to Twitter: Remove porn content immediately

New Delhi, June 30: The National Commission for Women (NCW) has asked the managing director of Twitter India to remove all pornographic and obscene content from the platform within a week.

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma also wrote to the commissioner of police, Delhi, to investigate the matter and take appropriate legal action.

"The NCW has taken suo motu cognisance of several profiles on Twitter sharing

pornographic content. Ms Sharma has written to Managing Director, Twitter India for immediately removing all such pornographic and obscene content from the platform within a week," the women's panel said in a statement.

Upon receiving a similar complaint earlier, the commission had brought the matter to Twitter's no-tice for immediate action. However, no action was reportedly taken by the platform, the NCW said. — PTI

U'khand govt moves SC over HC order on Char Dham

Dehradun, June 30: The Uttarakhand government on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court, challenging the high court's stay on the Char Dham Yatra. Expressing dissatisfaction over the state government's preparedness to deal with a possible third wave of Covid-19, the Uttarakhand HC on June 28 put a stay on a state Cabinet's decision to open the yatra for residents of Chamoli, Rudrapur and Uttarkashi districts from July 1.

"We have gone to the apex court against the high court's stay on the yatra," Cabinet minister Subodh Uniyal said.

The Cabinet had decided to open the yatra for people from the districts where four famous temples are located on the condition of strict adherence to Covid protocol, including bringing a negative RT-PCR or rapid antigen test report. Claiming that all arrangements had been made for the yatra, Mr Uniyal said the decision was taken by the Cabinet after carefully thinking over all aspects.

Last year, when the yatra was allowed for devotees from all over the country, 70 people visited Gangotri per day, 40 visited Yamunotri, 180 Kedarnath and around 400 turned up daily at Badrinath. "Keeping it in mind, it was decided to open the yatra strictly for locals with a daily cap on the number of devotees," Mr Uniyal said. — PTI

Centre seeks report from WB on fake vaccine drive

New Delhi, June 30: The Union health ministry has asked the West Bengal government to inquire into instances of Covid-19 vaccination camps being organised allegedly by unauthorised people in some areas of Kolkata and submit a report in the next two days.

Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan has written to Hari Krishna Dwivedi, chief secretary of West Bengal, on June 29, seeking a factual report on the matter.

Mr Bhushan referred to a letter written to Union health minister Harsh Vardhan by Suvendu Adhikari, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, on June 25 in which attention has been drawn to instances of Covid-19 vaccination camps being organised allegedly by unauthorised people.

It is also pointed out that in some of these camps, and notably in Kasba locality of the



Porters, flouting distancing norms, wait in a long queue to collect relief materials at Sealdah railway station during the Covid-induced lockdown in Kolkata on Wednesday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

Kolkata Municipal area, none of the beneficiaries have received any vaccination certificates generated from Co-WIN, giving rise to apprehensions about the genuineness of these vaccination camps, Mr Bhushan said in his letter.

He said as per the guidelines, all vaccination sessions for Covid-19 have to be organised through the Co-WIN portal and all vaccinations have to be recorded on

Co-WIN too. Also, vaccination certificates are generated from Co-WIN after the vaccination events are successfully recorded by the vaccinators and these certificates are then given to the beneficiaries in digital or physical form, he said in the letter.

The Centre has also advised states from time to time that vaccination certificates must be issued to beneficiaries. — PTI

Partial curbs in Odisha to be till July 16

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 30

The Odisha government on Wednesday extended the partial lockdown till July 16 as the Covid-19 test positive rate (TPR) hovered around 5 per cent in several districts.

The government, however, attempted to ease restrictions in 20 out of the 30 districts which reported below 5 per cent TPR. In these 20 districts, the government allowed inter-district bus and taxi services and opening of the business establishments for 12 hours — from 6 am to 6 pm.

In 10 coastal districts where the Covid-19 situation is slowly improving but the TPR is above 5 per cent, transport services will remain suspended as before. The government, however, extended the time for movement of the public and business activity by one hour — till 2 pm, instead of the previous deadline of 1 pm.

Stop rallies that defy norms: HC

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, JUNE 30

Taking serious note of a huge political rally over naming of the upcoming airport in Navi Mumbai, the Bombay high court on Wednesday said the Maharashtra government must stop any political rally, which flout Covid protocols amid ongoing pandemic. The court also warned that if the government fails in

preventing such rallies in future then the court will have to step in to stop such rallies.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Gulikarni asked how such rallies, including one held earlier this month over the name of an upcoming airport in neighbouring Navi Mumbai, were allowed when the state government had prohibited

large gatherings to prevent the spread of Covid.

Last week, thousands of people staged a protest in the central business district Belapur area demanding that the under-construction Navi Mumbai international airport be named after late D.B. Patil, a local leader and former MP. The protestors demanded that the airport should not be named after late Shiv Sena

supremo Bal Thackeray.

Referring to the protest rally, the high court said the airport is not ready yet, but people are already organising rallies over its potential name just for political benefits.

The court asked if holding political rallies for gaining "mileage" was more important than preventing the spread of the coronavirus infection.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Sangeeta Kumari, D/o Shri Prakash Mukhiya, R/o H.No. 242, Gali No. 2, Village Ghondli, New Delhi, Age 16 years, Height 4', Complexion Shallow, Face Round, Built Thin, Wearing Pink colour top and black colour jeans pant has been missing/kidnapped from her house since 18.06.21 at about 06:00 pm. In this regard a case FIR No. 287/21 dated 19.06.21 U/S 363 IPC has been registered at has been registered at PS Krishna Nagar, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
PS: Krishna Nagar,
New Delhi
Ph.: 011-22093224, 7065036023

E-mail ID: c/cbci.gov.in
Tele: 011-23014046, 23015218
Fax: 011-23011334
DP/482/SHD/21

NORTHERN RAILWAY
AUCTION NOTICE

No. SA/WA/TREES/STORE/21-22 **Dated: 29.06.2021**

Auction of Lot No. 1, 11 numbers KM.1537/48 TO 1571/20 (under Lakshar range on Lakshar-Dasari Railway track) Dangerous trees, Lot No. 2, 63 numbers KM.1537/48 TO 1571/20 (Sonali bridge Lakshar in between Railway track to Bhagwanpur chudiyala on railway track Uttarakhand border) under Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Roorkee will be auctioned in the office of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Roorkee. All the interested bidders are invited to participate in this auction.

Auction place: - Office of the Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Roorkee on date-23.07.2021. at 11:00 AM Roorkee.

- All the bidders will deposit cash Rs 100/- in the office of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Roorkee which will not be refunded and shall also deposit Rs 8000/- (Each lot) in favor of Sr. Divisional Finance Manager Northern Railway Moradabad as a Demand Draft of SBI or Other Nationalized Bank.
- All the bidders who will take part in the auction will also have proper knowledge of Auction rules and others allowances.
- Successful bidders will deposit the Demand Draft of SBI or Other Nationalized Bank in favour of Sr. DFM/MB or station earning in cash on same day with following rate:-
 - 10% amount of selling price or minimum amount Rs 25,000/- whichever is maximum on purchase of more than Rs 1,00,000/-
 - Balance amount will be deposited within 10 days including the date of auction.
 - GST @ 18% will be deposited on total cost within 10 days including the date of auction.
- The work should be completed within 60 days including the date of auction.
- Railway has right to close the work any time. In this situation the balance amount will be returned without interest.
- Complete Details of tree with locations will be available in the Divisional Office Moradabad.
- Bidders are requested to quote their rates according to the tree locations.
- Trees will be delivered and handed over in the presence of SSE/works, ISA and RPF.
- If the balance amount is not deposited within 10 days including the date of auction, then initial deposited amount will be forfeited.
- Bidders will not make any Kutchha/Pakka construction in the land of Railway.
- Bid will not be quoted below the base price.
- Demand draft will be deposited in the office of Assistant Divisional Engineer/Northern Railway Roorkee from 09.00 am to 10.30 AM. After that no demand draft will be accepted.

Sr. Divisional Engineer - I
Northern Railway Moradabad

1455/21
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Haryana Government
Resolving disputes
of urban properties

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Mukhyamantri Shehri Nikaye Swamitva Yojana

The land leased out on Tehbazari/Shops/Houses given on rent/lease/licence fee/tehbazari which are in the possession of persons/entities for a period of 20 years or above as on 31.12.2020 shall be Eligible for Granting of Ownership Rights

Occupier will have to pay less than collector rate for the ownership

Parivar Pehchan-Patra holders may visit departmental website for detailed information

www.ulbharyana.gov.in
and
http://ulbshops.ulbharyana.gov.in

Scheme is applicable from 1st July, 2021

Directorate of Urban Local Bodies Haryana
Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana
www.prharyana.gov.in | @DiprHaryana

SHORT TAKES

BMC officer held for duping job aspirants

Mumbai: The Mumbai police has arrested a woman officer of the BMC's education department, her husband and two others for allegedly cheating many job aspirants to the tune of at least ₹2.27 crore by promising jobs to them in various civic departments. The property cell of the Mumbai police's crime branch had received specific information about the job racket and an FIR in this connection was registered at Navghar police station in suburban Mulund, he said. During the investigation, it came to light that the main accused of the racket is a woman and she is posted as an administrative officer in the BMC's education department, he said. Accordingly, the property cell officers launched a search for the woman. However, it was found that she has fled from her residence along with her husband, the official said. — *PTI*

3 militants dead, 2 jawans hurt in J&K

Srinagar: Three unidentified militants have been killed and two Army jawans injured in a fire fight raging in a remote village of Jammu and Kashmir's southern Kulgam district since Wednesday afternoon. Earlier, a soldier was injured in a barrage of gunfire that came from behind scrubs in Daddal village of Sunderbadi belt close to the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district after the security forces on noticing suspicious movement launched an operation in the vulnerable area. The police and Army sources said that fighting broke out in Kulgam's Chimmer village after the security forces mounted a cordon-and-search operation to take on a group of militants hiding there. The exchange of fire was on when reports last came in.

Bengaluru riots' key conspirator held

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested an alleged key conspirator in the riots in Bengaluru in August last year that left four people dead. Thirty-eight-year-old Syed Abbas, a resident of Govindpur, was arrested from Bengaluru, a spokesperson of the agency said. Abbas is the ward president of the SDPI in Nagawara in Bengaluru. He was produced before a special NIA court in Bengaluru which sent him to six-day custody of the agency. Over 3,000 people went on a rampage in Bengaluru on August 11 last year torching the residences of Congress MLA R Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy, his sister Jayanthi over an inflammatory social media post by a relative of the legislator. — *PTI*

More drones seen in Jammu

■ **Continued from Page 1** of five minutes. A day later, the Army averted two separate drone activities in Ratnuchak-Kaluchak belt close to the border with Pakistan in Jammu region and, thereby, as was claimed by it, foiled a possible threat in this extremely sensitive military area. The activity continued on Tuesday when the drone-like objects were seen flying at a couple of places in the same security belt. The Jammu and Kashmir police and Indian Army officials in Jammu had said on Monday that as many as 14 drones were launched reportedly from across the International Border (called Working Boundary by Islamabad) and Line of Control in the recent past. They said that the areas which witnessed the activity include Jammu, Rajouri, Samba and Kathua districts of Indian-administered Kashmir. Six sorties with weapon payloads were found in Samba sector, three to four in Hiranagar sector and two each in Nowshera-Rajouri and Arnia sectors. J&K's director general of police, Dilbagh Singh, said that in the recent past drones have been used to drop weapons and narcotic consignments. He said that the twin blasts at the Jammu Air Force base was a "terror attack" in which IED payloads were dropped using drones. A security alert for all vital installations in the Jammu region as well as Kashmir Valley was issued on Sunday itself.

Maha BJP writes to Shah for CBI probe against Pawar

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, JUNE 30

Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil has written a letter to Union home minister Amit Shah demanding a CBI inquiry against deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and state transport minister Anil Parab over "serious allegations and disclosure of offence" against them in suspended police officer Sachin Vaze case.

Mr Patil said that "blatant abuse of process of law" is being committed in Maharashtra.

"In the light of specific incidence narrated by Sachin Vaze and allegations levelled against Ajit Pawar and transport minister Anil Parab, a detailed enquiry must be conducted by CBI against Mr Pawar, Mr Parab and Darshan Ghodawat," Mr Patil added.

The BJP leader said that the law and order in the state has "collapsed for the obvious reason of political revenge and blatant misuse of political power. The collapse of law and order is deliberately induced to amass wealth by heinous ways adopted for collecting illegal money."

In the letter, Mr Patil alleged that Mr Pawar and Mr Ghodawat had asked arrested Mr Vaze to collect ₹100 crore from illegal gutkha sellers and manufacturers. He also alleged that Mr Parab had asked Mr Vaze to collect ₹2 crore from 50 such contractors," Mr Patil wrote.

"The present memorandum is not initiated or coming out of political agenda but if the disclosure of Mr Vaze is not dealt with according to the law, the law-abiding citizens of state will seriously lose faith in the legal system," he added.



Police personnel detain CPI activists during their Chalo Raj Bhavan protest at Indira Park in Hyderabad on Wednesday against frequent hike in prices of petrol, diesel and essential commodities.

Judges should not be swayed by 'noise' of social media: CJI

New Delhi, June 30: Judiciary cannot be controlled, directly or indirectly, by the legislature or the executive, or else the "rule of law" would become illusory, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana asserted on Wednesday and at the same time cautioned judges against being swayed by social media.

The new media tools that have an enormous amplifying ability are incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad and the real and fake. Therefore, media trials cannot be a guiding factor in deciding cases," the CJI said, adding it is also imperative to start a discourse as to how social media trends can affect the institutions.

CJI Ramana made the observations while delivering the "17th Justice P.D. Desai Memorial Lecture".

"For the judiciary to apply checks on governmental power and action, it has to have complete freedom. The judiciary cannot be controlled, directly or indirectly, by



Judges will have to be mindful of the fact that the noise thus amplified is not necessarily reflective of what is right and what the majority believes

— N.V. Ramana, CJI

the legislature or the executive, or else the rule of law would become illusory.

At the same time, judges should not be swayed by the emotional pitch of public opinion either, which is getting amplified through social media platforms, the CJI said.

He added that the judges have to be mindful of the fact that the noise thus amplified is not necessarily reflective of what is right. It is therefore

extremely vital to function independently and withstand all external aids and pressures.

"While there is a lot of discussion about the pressure from the executive, it is also imperative to start a discourse as to how social media trends can affect the institutions, he added.

Noting the unprecedented crisis being faced by the entire world due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the CJI said, "We necessarily have to pause and ask ourselves as to what extent we have used the 'rule of law' to ensure protection to and welfare of all of our people."

I began to feel that this pandemic might yet be a mere curtain-raiser to much larger crises in the decades to come. Surely we must at least begin the process of analysing what we did right and where we went wrong, he said.

The CJI added that in a democratic country like India, access to justice forms the bedrock of the rule of law and urged all to extend a helping hand to those in need. — *PTI*

Cabinet nod to ₹19,041cr for rural Internet services

Mega project in 16 states will be taken up on PPP mode

New Delhi, June 30: The Cabinet on Wednesday approved public private partnership mode for the rollout of BharatNet project for broadband services in villages in 16 states with viability gap funding of ₹19,041 crore, telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

Mr Prasad said the decision to involve private players was taken after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on August 15, 2020 that around 6 lakh villages in the country will be connected with broadband in 1,000 days.

"The Cabinet has in-principle approved implementation of BharatNet in 16 states in a public private partnership model with total expense of Rs 29,430 crore. The government of India will only spend the viability gap fund of ₹19,041 crore," Mr Prasad said while sharing details of the Cabinet decision.

The 16 states are —

▶ **THE MINISTER** said that access to broadband in rural areas will improve e-governance, tele-medicine, online education and develop entrepreneurship

Kerala, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Mr Prasad said till date, 1.56 lakh out of the 2.5 lakh village panchayats have been connected with broadband.

"The PPP model shall be executed in 16 states of India in 3.61 lakh villages," Mr Prasad said. An official statement said the Cabinet also accorded in-principle approval for extending BharatNet to cover all inhabited villages in the remaining states and union territories.

"The department of telecommunication will

separately work out the modalities for these (remaining) States/UTs," the statement said.

The minister said there will be an agreement of 30 years with private players and the entire project will be divided into nine packages. "No player will get more than four packages," Mr Prasad said.

He said that one package corresponds to a telecom circle area.

"If you calculate the opex and capex of 30 years, then it comes to around ₹95,000 crore if the government of India had executed it. Compared to this, the government is setting up this architecture for viability gap funding of ₹19,041 crore," Mr Prasad said.

The viability gap funding is provided in case an entity faces loss for executing a project. The gap between cost of running a project and actual revenue realisation is provided through viability gap funding. — *PTI*

Dilip back in hospital, pneumonia hits Naseer

M u m b a i , June 30: Just a couple of weeks after being discharged from the hospital, veteran actor Dilip Kumar has been admitted to Hinduja Hospital once again.

Confirming the news, Dr Jaleel Parkar said that Dilip Kumar is currently undergoing treatment. He refused to give any more health updates about the actor.

Meanwhile, veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah has been diagnosed with pneumonia and admitted to a hospital here, actor-wife Ratna Pathak Shah said on Wednesday.

Naseeruddin Shah, 70, was admitted to Khar Hinduja hospital on Tuesday. The actor has a "small patch" of pneumonia in his lungs and is currently undergoing treatment. "Yes (he has a) small patch and all under control," Ratna Pathak Shah said.

Naseeruddin made his on-screen debut with Shyam Benegal's *Nishant* in 1975 and became an influential figure of the parallel cinema in the 70s and 80s. — *PTI*

Sidhu misguided missile: Badal

Aimed at destroying your 'corrupt businesses', retorts Cong MLA

Chandigarh, June 30: Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal on Wednesday described Congress MLA Navjot Singh Sidhu a "misguided missile" that lacks control, drawing a retort from the Amritsar legislator who said his aim is to destroy the Akali leader's "corrupt businesses".

The SAD chief's statement has come amid infighting in the state Congress and on the day Mr Sidhu met his party's national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in New Delhi.

Mr Sidhu is at loggerheads with chief minister Amarinder Singh and has gone public against him in the recent past.

Addressing the media in Amritsar, Mr Badal said Mr Sidhu does not get along with anyone.

After joining the BJP, the persons in the party whom he called as his "mai-baap", he dubbed them as "chor" later, alleged Mr Badal. "Navjot Singh Sidhu is a misguided missile which does not have any control. It can go in any direction and hit anywhere. Maybe it can hit himself," said Badal responding to a question.

"He has crammed five to six dialogues, which he used at every place. By using them, he pleased Sonia Gandhi and with them, he might have earlier pleased (Narendra) Modi sahib," he said.

"Therefore, he is such a misguided man who thinks of giving 'bhashan' and doing acting. Today, Punjab does not need such a person who does acting. Punjab needs a person who can lead the state and take it forward," said Mr Badal.

Responding to Mr Badal's remarks, Mr Sidhu said on Twitter, "Guided and aimed at you to destroy your corrupt businesses. Until your Sukh Vilas built on Punjab's ruins is not turned into a public school & public hospital to serve Punjab's poor; I won't relent!!"

Earlier, Mr Badal also took on Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal over his announcement of giving up to 300 units of free electricity if his party comes to power in the state next year. — *PTI*



Sukhbir Singh Badal

Army's 'wall of kindness' winning hearts

Jammu, June 30: In a novel initiative to reach out to the needy, the Army in Jammu and Kashmir has set up a "wall of kindness" outside their camp adjacent to the advance landing ground (ALG) in the border district of Rajouri.

Two open steel cupboards placed next to each other and packed with eatables, clothes, and shoes the sight not only illustrates the Army's mission to help those in need but has also won the hearts of the local residents.

This is an initiative of the Ace of Spades

Division and the "wall of kindness" is aimed at helping the weaker sections of the society by giving free access to pick up need-based items, Jammu-based Army PRO Lt. Col. Devender Anand told PTI. He said the people have taken it in a very good sense which is evident from the response, both from the donors as well as those who are in need of such articles including daily use food items.

Lt. Col. Anand said the Rotary Club and Rajouri Police are also helping in this noble initiative.

The Army has also put

▶ **THIS IS** an initiative of the Ace of Spades Division and the 'wall of kindness' is aimed at helping the weaker sections of the society by giving free access to pick up need-based items

up messages in different languages including English, Hindi and Urdu seeking support of the philanthropists.

Items which are not useful to you can be a blessing and need for others. You are kindly requested to join hands and donate items which can help the

people who are in need, read the message in English.

Lt. Col. Anand said the Army fills the cupboards every time they get empty.

The move has brought smiles to the faces of people and also encouraged donations. People are coming and donating and those in need are taking items without seeking it from anyone, he said.

He said the "wall of kindness" was put up in an area close to the main market so that people can have free access and the purpose behind helping the needy is served. — *PTI*

BJP men scuffle with farmers

■ **Continued from Page 1** controversial farm laws and to give them a bad name.

Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar, meanwhile, reiterated that the protesting farmers' unions should not be adamant on the repeal of the new farm laws, adding that making it a precondition for talks with the government does not serve any purpose.

Samyukta Kisan Morcha spokesman Jagtar Singh Bajwa claimed that the farmers at the Ghazipur border had asked the district administration and government officials to remove the party workers as they were creating a ruckus on the pretext of a rally. "They misbehaved with the farmers and damaged their own vehicles as

part of a conspiracy. This conspiracy is not going to succeed as such tactics to end the farmers' protest have been used in the past too," Mr Bajwa said.

"We are going to lodge a complaint with the police on today's incident, and if no action is taken, we shall plan our strategy accordingly," he said. "We condemn the ruckus created by the BJP workers," Mr Bajwa said, adding that such tactics won't work as the farmers' stir has been peaceful for the last seven months and will continue to be so in the future.

"An investigation is in progress," the police said. Mr Khattar also said that only a "handful of people" were opposing the farm laws, and that "ordinary farmers are happy".

He added: "Those spearheading the agitation are in reality not farmers. The real farmers have no objection to the farm laws, they are happy." He said those who are opposing the farm laws are doing so for political reasons.

"Their Punjab team is doing so as polls are approaching there. But there are no polls due in our state. Here the agenda is to defame the government. The Congress is also supporting them in doing this," Mr Khattar claimed.

The Haryana CM said the word kisan (farmer) is a sacred one, but some incidents like the alleged sexual exploitation of a West Bengal woman at the Tikri border last month have "prompted people to raise questions".

Ex gratia must: SC

■ **Continued from Page 1** fatalities. The top court also asked the Centre to consider formulating an insurance scheme for cremation workers as proposed by the finance commission. The top court's verdict came on a batch of pleas seeking ex-gratia compensation of Rs four lakh to the dependents of those who died of Covid and formulation of uniform guidelines for issuance of death certificates for Covid fatalities.

A few days ago, the Centre had told the Supreme Court that Rs 4 lakh compensation cannot be paid to all those who died due to Covid-19 as it would exhaust the disaster relief funds. — *Agencies*

India to EU: Accept Covishield, Covaxin

■ **Continued from Page 1** those persons carrying EU Digital Covid Certificate," sources added.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is yet to clear the inclusion of Covishield in the (EU) Covid vaccination passport. Until it is approved, anyone who has been fully vaccinated with Covishield won't be able to travel to Europe during the pandemic.

Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla said on Wednesday said that the European approval for its locally manufactured vaccine is "just a matter of time" and is

expected in about a month.

He said that SII has applied for the inclusion of Covishield through its partner AstraZeneca. "The EMA is absolutely correct in asking us to apply, which we have through AstraZeneca, our partners, a month ago, and that process has to take its time. An approval process even with UK MHRA, WHO took its time and we have applied to the EMA," Mr Poonawalla said at India Global Forum 2021.

On Tuesday, an EU official said that EMA has not received any request for approval of Covishield.

Brazil suspends \$324m jab order

■ **Continued from Page 1** health ministry's import division, said he faced pressure to greenlight the import of Indian pharmaceutical Bharat Biotech's Covaxin vaccine and that there were irregularities in the invoices — particularly a \$45 million upfront payment to a Singapore-based company His brother Luis Miranda, a lawmaker until recently allied with Mr Bolsonaro, also testified.

In March, the brothers brought their concerns to Mr Bolsonaro, who they said promised to send the case to the Federal Police and mentioned the government's leader in Congress's lower house, a top Bolsonaro ally, as being involved.

Precisa Medicamentos is Bharat Biotech's partner

in Brazil, providing assistance, guidance and support with regulatory submissions, licensure, distribution, insurance, conduct of phase III clinical trials, etc.

On February 26, Bharat Biotech Ltd had said it entered into an agreement with the Brazilian government for the supply of 20 million doses of Covaxin during the second and third quarters of 2021.

Earlier, the National Health Surveillance Agency of Brazil- Anvisa, had denied permission to import Covaxin under Emergency Use Authorisation after authorities found that the Indian plant in which the jab was being made did not meet the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) requirements.

However, Anvisa on June 5 gave clearance to the proposal to import Covaxin into the South American country, with some conditions.

The Emergency Use Authorisation for Covaxin was granted by Brazil on June 4.

The pricing of Covaxin has been clearly established between \$15-20 per dose for supplies to governments outside India. The pricing for Brazil has also been indicated at \$15 per dose.

Bharat Biotech and Precisa Medicamentos are conducting a 5000-subject phase III clinical trial in Brazil, which was recently approved by Anvisa. The trial will be conducted by the Albert Einstein Institute, the vaccine maker said. — *Agencies*

J&K police launches verification drive

■ **Continued from Page 1** been installed at the IAF base and more lights on high masts are being set up.

A team of the elite counter-terrorism unit National Security Guard (NSG) visited the IAF base, but it was immediately known what actions it took.

In what was the first instance of Pakistan-based terrorists deploying drones to strike vital installations, two bombs were dropped at the IAF station in the early hours of Sunday, causing minor injuries to two airmen.

The explosions took place around 1.40 am within six minutes of each other. The first blast ripped off the roof of a single-storey building at the technical area of the airport manned by the IAF in Satwari on the outskirts of Jammu. The second one was on the ground. The aerial distance from the Jammu airport to the international border is 14 km.

There were also reports of sighting of unidentified drones over vital military installations during the previous three nights. — *PTI*

THE ASIAN AGE

1 JULY 2021

Courts, not govt, uphold security for daily wagers

The most disturbing scenes India witnessed in recent times were those of lakhs of guest workers walking hundreds of kilometres on their way back to their village homes from the cities when India got into a national lockdown last year. Bereft of their means of sustenance and livelihood, they had little reason to stay back in the cities. With no government aid coming their way either, they took the hardest course of the long walk. Dozens of them died on the way. That the Supreme Court of India fought shy of intervening and offering them help despite pleas completed the picture of governmental apathy then.

The guest workers are lucky this time around, thanks to a resolute intervention by the apex court. As per its direction to the Union government on Tuesday, no guest worker should go hungry after being denied their statutory ration. The government must speed up its own policy of “one nation one ration card” by July 31 so that an Indian citizen covered under the National Food Security Act can purchase his/her share of ration from any shop in the public distribution system anywhere in the country. The court also reminded the government that the right to food is one of the bare necessities of life and that it was an intrinsic part of the right to live with dignity.

Setting the deadline, the court reminded the governments at the Centre and in the states that they have a bounden duty to ensure that none among the estimated 38 crore guest workers goes hungry during the pandemic. It was perhaps for the first time that a bench of the apex court put on record the contributions they have made to the economic development of the country, which could act as a basis for further extending economic and social aid to this class of people.

In the process of reaching succour to one of the most vulnerable sections of society invoking constitutional protection available to every citizen, the court also bared the chinks in the armour of the government of a country which prides itself as the software hub of the world. It took note of the fact that the court’s order in 2018 to complete the work the National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW) portal, which could be a powerful tool to identify and cover all the eligible workers, has not yet been complied fully. The government, on its part, had no compunctions in blaming software problems for the delay. The court now set a new deadline of December 31 this year for the completion of the work.

The intervention of the Supreme Court and several high courts in the country to come to the aid of the citizen, hit hard by the pandemic, is the second best option a democracy can choose. The first one is for the popular government to understand the implications of developments in advance as much as possible and stand by the people. If the executive branch of the government refused to deliver, then the judiciary will have to step in. It is imperative that the government draws the right lessons from such judicial interventions.

Stop trolling Twitter

The IT minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad, has been leading the battle against Twitter, which had temporarily blocked his account while dealing with a copyright complaint against one of his tweets regarding the use of a photograph of A.R. Rahman’s national song. Governments run by the national ruling party have also gotten into the thick of it in registering complaints against wrongful portrayal of the India map on the microblogging platform. The misrepresentation of Ladakh in one such map was subsequently corrected, which is the general norm when such mistakes are committed except if it is done in bad faith by countries inimical to India.

What the pattern of action against Twitter suggests is harassment of the platform with a global presence, exacerbated perhaps by Twitter’s reluctance to follow the new Indian IT law by which a grievance officer needs to be residing in India. While social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have accustomed to being treated as service provider “intermediaries” which carry content posted by third parties, they have not shied away from taking editorial decisions. For instance, the banning for life of former US President Donald Trump by Twitter and the filtering of content by Facebook when it came to theories on a possible laboratory source of the Covid virus.

It stands to reason that Twitter must follow the amended Indian law regardless of its problems in adhering to rules in various jurisdictions in which it has a major presence in terms of users. Its services are available to resident Indian citizens and it operates in this country earning revenue and it must be held to account. The government should let its laws rule rather than overreach to the extent that the sum of its actions looks like persecution because a certain segment of people has been offended. Actions taken must be within reason too, unless official India is so offended that it can ban Twitter like Nigeria has done. Ironically, the same people were not averse to using Twitter to further their political aims. The situation has the contours of a Mexican standoff.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani



CPC: Party is the State and State is the Party

Abhijit
Bhattacharyya



The Communist Party of China (CPC), which begins its centenary celebrations on July 1, is vastly different now from the revolutionary force it was at its inception, when its mission was to liberate its homeland from the morass it had sunk into. Today, the CPC has all but forgotten the revolution and transformed itself into the establishment in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Many would say it’s the PRC’s real government — a role into which it has grown for the past 72 years of Communist China’s existence, ever since Mao Zedong’s Red Army swept into power in 1949, overthrowing Chiang Kai-shek’s Kuomintang, relegating them to the island of Taiwan, targeted by Beijing as a “separatist province” but in the eyes of the rest of the world a thriving, flourishing democracy.

All those who regard the CPC as a political party, perhaps the biggest one in the world, miss the point. It is anything but a party, it is just another name for the Chinese State. Just consider this. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA), which has been locked in a standoff with the Indian Army in eastern Ladakh for the past one year and more, is just another wing of the CPC, and supreme authority over the PLA as well as the Chinese Air Force and Navy is wielded by China’s Central Military Commission, which too is subordinate to the party.

When it began its journey 100 years ago, the PLA was not a part of the CPC. It began with six “small groups” from Shanghai, Beijing, Changsha, Wuhan, Guangzhou, and Jinan, holding their first session in Shanghai in July 1921. There is some doubt about the July 1 date, though; according to some the first con-

gress may have been held in mid-July, so the official date of the CPC’s founding is a bit uncertain.

The times were indeed terrible. In the aftermath of the First World War, there were endless political feuds, defeat, capitulation, humiliation, abject poverty, agrarian distress, and a “war of all against all” in China’s hinterland. Into this scenario emerged young Mao Zedong, then just 28, as one constant CPC figure through the worst of times, as the party was endlessly hounded by multiple, powerful rivals, resulting in all-round catastrophe. Understandably, such mindless bloodshed and mounting casualties led to raising one’s own forces from the ragtag, indiscipline, but hardy, inexhaustible source of peasant recruits in the countryside.

Through such trials and tribulations was born the PLA in the mid-1920s, with Mao taking command after considerable friction within. Farmers transformed into fighters under the CPC to “liberate and give political emancipation to the people”, giving birth to Mao’s politico-military doctrine: “The Party commands and controls the gun, not the other way around”. Here were sown the seeds of the CPC assuming control of the PLA and by extension to the future Chinese State.

The *firman* of Mao’s military mind continues till this day: “The basic principle of war is to preserve oneself and destroy the enemy.” (May 1938) Also: “The CPC should pay great attention to the study of military matters.” (November 1938). This politico-military interface ensures that at the slightest provocation, the CPC had absolute right to mobilise and deploy the PLA to crush any situation or what it sees as opposition to its absolute control. This was evident

in the June 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, when the mighty party felt threatened by a small assembly of students and dissenters; it is seen now with the massacre of Uighurs in Xinjiang and the crack-down in Hong Kong. The first CPC-PLA murder, however, took place at Xizang (Tibet) in 1950, where the operations to “cleanse” Buddhist seminaries continued for years, eventually leading to the Dalai Lama’s flight to India in 1959.

In most external matters, though, the CPC-PLA largely operated through deceit, rather than direct force, with the major exceptions of Korea in 1950, India in 1962 and Vietnam in 1979. It is evident for decades that the CPC-PLA holds India in unalloyed contempt, as it is convinced this country’s messy, raucous democracy and its multiple political parties cannot be a match for authoritarian Beijing. For reasons best known to them, some Indians appear determined to ignore this reality.

In several stages since 1949 — with interruptions during the Cultural Revolution and the brief promise of the Deng Xiaoping years — this CPC-PLA monolith has grown today into an oversized, overweight and over-centralised system, which will be overburdened in the foreseeable future as China’s global ambitions takes the world head-on via multi-pronged and multi-forked fangs, through land, air, water and cyberspace.

India got a direct taste of the CPC’s meddling in the late 1960s, after the 1962 war, when poison was injected into our body politic through the Naxalbari movement starting May 1967; and the creation of a brigade of a few thousand young

men (and some women too), known as Naxalites, operating (perhaps unwittingly) as the PLA’s foot soldiers. Most Indians remained in the dark, except those directly affected in eastern and later northeast India.

The CPC-PLA’s tentacles reach into every part of China, and beyond. Not only does the party run every aspect of the military and government, with a cell in every unit, and all appointments and promotions possible only with its approval; its reach extends not just to state-run industrial enterprises but also the private sector — including internationally known technology, telecom and e-commerce giants. These are usually coerced, threatened, blackmailed or else persuaded to do the party’s bidding.

The CPC doesn’t use only Chinese nationals. All Chinese-origin people living overseas might get a call for help, as several cases emerged in the US courts of people with relatives or family ties in China being bullied into spying or working for the CPC-PLA.

For “Mission India”, the CPC-PLA will use every resource, anyone with an Indian visa — from tourist to fraudster, criminal to smuggler; spies to cyber pirates; ocean-going fishermen to journalists; the People’s Bank of China to rail, telecom and highway techies, agricultural advisers to embassy officials, even students. Incidentally, China hasn’t been giving visas to Indians since November 2020.

How long will Indians remain myopic and gullible about the PRC’s real agenda? As our sovereignty is trampled upon and our soldiers get killed at the border, hordes of CPC-PLA lawbreakers go unpunished in India. The government seems to be in a trance. As the CPC marks its centenary and extends the reach of its Belt and Road plans, an economic disaster looms for India and the rest of the world.

The writer is an advocate practising in the Supreme Court. The views expressed are personal.

All Chinese-origin people living overseas might get a call for help, as several cases emerged in the US courts of people with relatives or family ties in China being bullied into spying or working for the CPC-PLA

LETTERS

DON’T TWEAK DATA

Political management may well justify cocooning current and debatable issues from public scrutiny on grounds of overall priority or boost publicity on the lapses of others. But there can be no room for it when it comes to sharing vital facts related to Covid-19. Businesses, big and small, the daily wage earner and the simple family man must be kept abreast of the progress of the pandemic and calibrated measures taken to combat it. The citizen is grounded in reality. He never had hopes of a superman coming to his succour, but only expected sincere and efficient governance. Therefore, stop trying to maintain an image of triumphant and prescient governance at all costs.

R. Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

BOOST KEY SECTORS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, “FM’s stimulus timely but poor need immediate aid” (June 30). The stimulus package to the tune of ₹6.3 lakh crore is not overwhelming. The sudden arrival of the second wave has definitely dealt a body blow to the economy. The recent stimulus focuses on tourism and hospitality whereas many sectors are stagnating. Keeping aside fiscal parameters for the time being, the government should lay stress on growth, liquidity and consumption. As things stand, many sectors risk getting destroyed.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

COOPERATIVE PITCH

THE KARNATAKA Milk Federation (KMF) has set a sterling example by slashing the prices of its products keeping in mind the Covid pandemic induced hardship on the general public. According to the revised tariff, the cost of ghee, butter and skimmed milk powder has been reduced by ₹20 to ₹30 per kg. When prices of petrol, diesel and other essentials have shot through the roof and put the commoner in a quandary, the move by KMF must be lauded and emulated.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Will Centre have to re-hire MTNL & BSNL staffers it laid off earlier?

No one’s willing to bell this cat! The dramatis personae are still largely the same, but a stealthy U-turn was in the works, say those in the know at Sanchar Bhavan. The question that isn’t being asked yet is whether the government acted in haste when in 2019 it chose to give VRS to thousands of employees of BSNL and MTNL. Two years later that decision has come back to haunt the babus in the department of telecommunications (DoT). The two financially troubled state-run telecom companies are currently struggling to remain operational after this rather drastic surgery which did not work.

There is growing desperation in Sanchar Bhavan and murmurs hint at a section of babus who now want to rehire as consultants the very babus who were retired with a golden handshake! It is now up to

the very punctilious telecom secretary Anshu Prakash to take a view on this rather critical call. For now, some sources suggest that it’s caution that’s the leitmotif.

Prakash has directed that no ex-staffer should be rehired until the matter is “examined thoroughly”. But if BSNL and MTNL have to survive he may not have the luxury of too much time. Of course, there are some whispers about how this situation might actually spur the government to hive off its now not so valuable stake in these telecom behemoths of the past and be able to justify it too. That would however be yet another acrimonious debate in the making.

Remember, the government has just announced recently a further restructuring of another state-owned organisation — the Ordnance Factory Board — which is being split into seven corporate

entities despite it having been strategically inviolable for long. Few are likely to question that move as this was an old pending demand of the armed forces.

But at Sanchar Bhavan the issues are different. After all, BSNL and MTNL are a rather different case. Which may partly explain why the telecom ministry is walking on eggshells on this subject.

BAD TIMING FOR EXPANSION OF MOEF, REPRIEVE FOR NATURE Last year when environment minister Prakash Javadekar green-lit the setting up of 19 integrated regional offices of his ministry across the country, his stated aim was that the ministry’s expansion would lead to better coordination and monitoring of the work, without stretching his ministry’s staff. His babus had been complaining apparently that they were under-

staffed and overworked. A rather unusual babu logic for geographic spread.

Months later, the plan is being implemented at a painfully slow pace, which far from improving efficiency has actually led to key proposals piling up, many now found to be still pending. Informed sources say that the ministry has not even managed to fill the staff positions for the newly created regional offices. Given the scramble for jobs of this variety, the only explanation that former staffers can proffer is that the efforts were only half-hearted.

Some new offices in Jaipur, Shimla, Jammu, Kolkata and Gandhinagar have not made even a single appointment so far, after all the initial fanfare! With the plan barely moving, the ministry’s workload has now actually increased. The delay in appointing

new staff has created more work for the old staff officers, who now have been saddled with work of the new offices that were to have been set up. Only half of the around 500 proposals submitted since last year that require the ministry’s approval for projects on forest land are still pending. While this may be a good thing, there’s danger lurking on the edges.

But the bigger question is, whether all this rearrangement was really necessary at a time when the nation is reeling under the Covid pandemic and the economy needs a big lift? Those proposals pending with Javadekar’s babus could have been a big help, some insist, though nature may have unwittingly got a brief reprieve.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipcherian](https://twitter.com/dilipcherian) on Twitter.

SHORT TAKES

TIGRAY FIGHTERS
IN ETHIOPIA SAY
NO TO CEASE-FIRE

Nairobi, June 30: The fighters now retaking parts of Ethiopia's Tigray region will pursue soldiers from neighbouring Eritrea back into their country and chase Ethiopian forces to Addis Ababa if that's what it takes to weaken their military powers, their spokesman said Tuesday, as a conflict that has killed thousands of civilians looked certain to continue.

In an interview, Getachew Reda said that we'll stop at nothing to liberate every square inch of the Tigray region of six million people, nearly eight months after fighting erupted between the Tigray forces and Ethiopian soldiers backed by Eritrea.

WFP WARNS OF
BIBLICAL FAMINE
WITHOUT ACTION

Rome, June 30: The head of the UN's World Food Programme warned Wednesday there could be "unprecedented famine of biblical proportions" in dozens of countries without further action to address food shortages. Speaking at a G20 event on humanitarian aid in Brindisi, Italy, WFP chief David Beasley said world leaders had stepped up last year with funds to help those already struggling when the Coronavirus pandemic hit.

"We thought Covid would be in our rearview mirror by the end of 2020, only to see it recycled, with Delta and other variants taking place, devastating particularly low-income and developing nations around the world who have been catastrophically smited by this perfect storm," he said.

SEX ASSAULT:
COSBY CONVICTION
OVERTURNED

Philadelphia, June 30: Pennsylvania's highest court threw out Bill Cosby's sexual assault conviction and opened the way for his immediate release from prison Wednesday in a stunning reversal of fortune for the comedian once known as "America's Dad", ruling that the prosecutor who brought the case was bound by his predecessor's agreement not to charge Cosby.

Cosby, 83, has served more than two years of a three- to 10-year sentence after being found guilty of drugging and violating Temple University sports administrator Andrea Constand in his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004.

Cosby was arrested in 2015, when a district attorney armed with newly unsealed evidence brought charges against him.

ISRAEL, WEST
BANK SETTLERS
REACH DEAL

Jerusalem, June 30: Israel has reached a compromise with Jewish settlers who rapidly established an unauthorised outpost in the occupied West Bank last month, officials and the settlers said Wednesday.

Under the agreement, the settlers will leave by the end of the week. The area will become a closed military zone, but the houses and roads will remain in place.

A survey will be carried out that the settlers say will prove the outpost was not established on land privately owned by Palestinians. That would pave the way authorisation, allowing them to establish a religious school and for some families to return.

The settlers named the outpost Eviatar, after an Israeli killed by a Palestinian in 2013, and say it is home to dozens of families.

PUERTO RICAN,
112, WORLD'S
OLDEST MAN

London, June 30: Emilio Flores Marquez from Puerto Rico has become the world's oldest living man at an age of 112 years and 326 days old, Guinness World Records announced on Wednesday.

Marquez, who was born in Carolina, east of the Puerto Rican capital of San Juan in 1908, was recognised by Guinness and awarded a certificate at his home just a few miles (kilometres) from his birthplace.

Asked about his longevity, Marquez — known as "Don Milo" to his friends — said the secret to his advanced years lay in compassion.

"My dad raised me with love and taught me to love everyone. He always told me and my brothers and sisters to do good, to share everything with others. Besides, Christ lives in me," Guinness quoted him as saying.

Back from Afghanistan



Soldiers of the German armed forces (Bundeswehr) line up in front an Airbus A400M cargo at the military air base in Wunstorf, Germany, on Wednesday. Germany has completed its troop pull-out from Afghanistan, started in May 2021, the defence ministry announced, ending a nearly 20-year deployment there.

— AFP

MIT, Harvard mask can diagnose virus

It has embedded sensors that monitor health workers' exposure to variety of pathogens

Boston, June 30: Researchers at MIT and Harvard University have designed a new mask that can diagnose if the wearer is infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes Covid-19, within 90 minutes.

The mask design, described in the journal *Nature Biotechnology*, has embedded tiny, disposable sensors that can be fitted into other masks, and could also be adapted to detect other viruses. The researchers showed that the sensors could be incorporated into not only masks but also clothing such as lab coats, potentially offering a new way to monitor health care workers' exposure to a variety of pathogens or other threats.

We have demonstrated that we can freeze-dry a broad range of synthetic biology sensors to detect viral or bacterial nucleic acids, as well as toxic chemicals, including nerve toxins," said James Collins, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US. "We envision that this platform could enable next-generation wearable biosensors for first responders, health care personnel, and military personnel," Collins, the senior author of the study, said.

The mask sensors are designed so that they can be activated by the wearer when they are ready to perform the test, and the results are only displayed on the inside of the mask, for the privacy of the user.

As the researchers were finishing up their work on the wearable sensors early in 2020, Covid-19 began spreading around the globe, so they quickly decided to try using their technology to create a diagnostic for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. To produce their diagnostic mask, the researchers embedded freeze-dried sensors into a paper mask.

These freeze-dried components are surrounded by silicone elastomer, the researchers said.

The sensors are placed on the inside of the mask.

— PTI



A traditional Thai statue wears a mask as a campaign for travellers to prevent the spread of Covid-19 at the departure terminal of Suvarnabhumi Airport in Bangkok on Wednesday.

— AFP

No AZ vax for
under 40s: Oz

Canberra, June 30: The Queensland and Western Australia state governments on Wednesday advised people under age 40 not to take the AstraZeneca vaccine because of the risk of a rare blood clotting disorder, despite the Australian government making those shots available to all adults.

The state governments' advice to those under 40 is based on British government guidelines, while the new federal government's position acknowledges the scarcity of the Pfizer vaccine and an urgent need to accelerate a slow national rollout.

The disagreement has stoked confusion as around half Australia's population is locked down in Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales and the Northern Terri-

tory due to new clusters, mostly of the Delta variant, which is thought to be more contagious.

Australians have a choice of only two vaccines and locally manufactured AstraZeneca is more plentiful. Queensland Chief Health Officer Jeannette Young said younger adults should wait for Pfizer to become available, despite only 5% of all Australians being fully vaccinated. With only 42 Coronavirus cases active in Queensland, AstraZeneca was not worth the risk for younger adults, she said.

No, I do not want under 40s to get AstraZeneca because they are at increased risk of getting — it is rare — but they're at increased risk of getting that rare clotting syndrome, Young said.

— AP

Mix AZ, Pfizer
vax for immunity

London, June 30: Alternating doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines generate robust immune response against Covid-19, according to a study led by researchers from the University of Oxford in the UK.

The yet-to-be-published study found that both mixed schedules — Pfizer followed by AstraZeneca, and vice versa — induced high concentrations of antibodies against the SARS-CoV2 spike protein when doses were administered four weeks apart.

The spike protein helps the virus to infect and enter the human cells, and current vaccines are targeted against it. The findings, posted on The Lancet pre-print server on June 25, suggest all possible vaccination schedules involving the AstraZeneca vaccine, known as Covishield in India, and Pfizer preventive could potentially be used against Covid-19.

The study evaluated mix and match combinations of the two vaccines to see to what extent these preventives can be used interchangeably, potentially allowing flexibility in global vaccine roll-out. The researchers enrolled 830 participants, including

463 who were given a second dose at an interval of 28 days. The mean age of the participants was 57.8 years, 45.8 per cent were female, and 25.3 per cent were from ethnic minorities. "The results show that when given at a four-week interval both mixed schedules induce an immune response that is above the threshold set by the standard schedule of the AstraZeneca vaccine," said Professor Matthew Snape, Associate Professor in Paediatrics and Vaccinology at the University of Oxford.

The researchers noted that an AstraZeneca/Pfizer schedule induced higher antibodies and T-cell responses than a Pfizer dose followed by AstraZeneca. Both of these induced higher antibodies than the licensed, and highly effective 'standard' two-dose AstraZeneca schedule, they said.

The highest antibody response was seen after the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech schedule, and the highest T cell response from Oxford-AstraZeneca followed by Pfizer-BioNTech, according to the study.

The T cell response is an essential part of the host immune response to acute virus infection.

— PTI

2nd day record Russia toll

Moscow, June 30: Coronavirus deaths in Russia hit a record for the second day in a row on Wednesday, with the authorities reporting 669 new deaths, the highest daily tally in the pandemic.

The previous record, of 652 new deaths, was registered on Tuesday.

Russia has struggled to cope with a surge in infections and deaths in recent weeks that comes amid rather slow vaccination rates. Russia's state Coronavirus task force record-

ed has been registering over 20,000 new Coronavirus cases and around 600 deaths every day since last Thursday. On Wednesday, 21,042 new contagions were recorded.

Russian officials have blamed the surge, which started in early June, on Russians' lax attitude toward

taking necessary precautions, growing prevalence of more infectious variants and laggard vaccination rates. Although Russia was among the first countries to announce and deploy a Coronavirus vaccine, just over 15 per cent of the population has received at least one shot.

Russia's Coronavirus task force has reported more than 5.5 million confirmed Coronavirus cases in the pandemic and 135,214 deaths.

— AP

Lanka: Don't wear
military uniform

Colombo tells Chinese workers to obey

Colombo, June 30: In an unusual move, Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary has asked the Chinese Embassy here to "educate" a Chinese private company dredging a reservoir in Hambantota, the hometown of the ruling Rajapaksa family, not to wear military-style camouflage uniforms in future.

Raising concerns, the Sri Lankan media recently reported that Chinese personnel wearing uniforms that are very much similar to those worn by soldiers of China's People's Liberation Army, have been seen roaming at a civil operation to dredge and clean the Tissamaharama Wewa in the southern part of the island nation. Taking note of the reports, Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary General (Retd) Kamal Gunaratne queried with the Embassy of the

People's Republic of China in Sri Lanka and urged the mission to "educate the respective employer to refrain its employees from wearing the controversial military-style camouflage uniforms in future."

"The Ministry of Defence also informed the local private company to avoid the recurrence of such action henceforth," it said in a press release on Tuesday. Gunaratne has also directed the Southern Province Senior Deputy Inspector General of Police to thwart any further attempt of such nature, the Ministry of Defence said.

The Chinese embassy has "affirmed" that the said employees are not members of China's People's Liberation Army and it is the respective overseas company's "overall uniform entitled to the staffers", the press release

said. The main Opposition had queried the presence of foreigners working in the Tissamaharama lake conservation wearing clothes similar to the Chinese military uniform.

The Director of Archaeology claimed that his department had not sanctioned the slit cleaning of the lake where these foreigners had been sighted wearing the alleged Chinese military uniforms.

The government spokesman and minister Keheliya Rambukwella on Tuesday said that the police's Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and the military intelligence had investigated the claims and found that the allegations of the Chinese military uniforms were not true. The clothes were similar to those worn by private security agencies in China.

— PTI



Vladimir Putin

PUTIN SAYS U.S.
CRAFT INVOLVED
IN BLACK SEA
INCIDENT

Moscow, June 30: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that a US reconnaissance aircraft was operating in sync with a British destroyer during last week's Black Sea incident in what he described as a "provocation" to test Moscow's response.

Moscow said one of its warships fired warning shots and a warplane dropped bombs in the path of British destroyer Defender on June 23 to force it out of an area near the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014. Britain denied that account, insisted its ship wasn't fired upon and said it was sailing in Ukrainian waters. Asked if the incident could have triggered World War III, Putin said that it was hardly possible even if Russia had sunk the British warship because Western powers knew they couldn't emerge as winners in a global conflict.

Putin said that the US aircraft's apparent mission was to monitor the Russian military's response to the British destroyer.

— AP

MYANMAR
FREES SCRIBES,
ACTIVISTS

Bangkok, June 30: Myanmar's government began releasing about 2,300 prisoners on Wednesday, including activists who were detained for protesting against the military's seizure of power in February and journalists who reported on the protests, officials said. Buses took prisoners out of Yangon's Insein Prison, where friends and families of detainees had waited since morning for the announced releases. It is standard practice to take freed prisoners to the police stations where they were originally booked to complete the processing for their freedom.

Zaw Zaw, head of the Yangon Region's Prison Department, confirmed that more than 720 people were released from the prison, which for decades has been the main facility for political prisoners. Deputy Information Minister Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun had earlier said about 2,300 prisoners would be released nationwide.

— AP

IN LIMBO Britain's govt introduced a settlement plan for the migrant community in 2019

EU citizens may lose legal status to live in UK

London, June 30: Marlies Haselton has called Britain home for more than 30 years. The Dutch national married a Briton, had her children there, and considers herself part and parcel of the UK. Until Britain's divorce from the European Union, she had never given a thought to her immigration status in the UK.

Haselton, 55, is among the millions of Europeans who have freely lived, worked and studied in the UK for decades, but whose rights are no longer automatically granted due to Bre-

xit. Britain's government introduced a settlement plan for the country's large European migrant community in 2019, and the deadline for applications is Wednesday.

From Thursday, any European migrant who hasn't applied will lose their legal right to work, rent housing and access some hospital treatments or welfare benefits in the UK. They may even be subject to deportation.

Meanwhile, the freedom of movement that over one million Britons have long

enjoyed in EU countries is also ending. Those applying for post-Brexit residency permits in France also face a deadline on Wednesday. Campaigners in the UK are worried that tens or even hundreds of thousands of Europeans may not have applied by the deadline. Many older people who have lived in the UK for decades are not aware they have to apply, and official figures show that only two per cent of applicants were 65 years old or older.

Many parents also don't

realise they have to apply for their children, migrants rights' groups say.

Other vulnerable people, such as an estimated 2,000 children in social care, also risk falling through the cracks and ending up with no legal status.

For Haselton and many others, it's a moment that drives home the impact of Britain's referendum to leave the EU five years ago. Although Haselton successfully received her settled status, meaning she can reside permanently in the UK, she said the

whole process has made her feel insecure about the life she built in Britain.

"I don't feel settled, she said. I'm concerned about the future. I just don't have a safe feeling about growing old here as a foreigner. The sense of home I used to have is gone."

Britain's government says some 5.6 million people, the majority from Poland and Romania, have applied, far more than the initial estimates. While about half were granted settled status, some two million migrants who haven't

lived in the UK long enough were told they have to put in the paperwork again when they have completed five years of residency in the country.

And about 400,000 people are still in limbo because they're waiting to hear a decision, said Lara Parizotto, a campaigner for The3million, a group set up after the Brexit referendum to lobby for the rights of EU citizens in the UK.

These are the people we're hearing from a lot, she said.

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52482.71	-0.13
Nifty 50	15721.50	-0.17
S&P 500*	4,291.65	0.00
Dollar (₹)	74.33	-0.13
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.99	-0.16
Euro (₹)	88.38	0.008
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	45,783*264	0.57
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.16	0.54
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.051	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.441	-0.039

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Import curbs on refined palm oil lifted till Dec. 31

India removed import restrictions on refined palm oil till December 31, a move that could raise availability of the commodity and bring down prices. A notification of the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said, "import policy" of refined bleached deodorised palm oil, and refined bleached deodorised palmolein "is amended from restricted to free with immediate effect and for a period up to December 31, 2021."

Amul raises milk prices by ₹2 per litre across India



Prices of Amul milk will be increased by Rs 2 per litre with effect from July 1 across all brands. R.S. Sodhi, MD, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, said the price was being hiked after a gap of one year and seven months. "The new prices will be applicable on all Amul milk brands like Gold, Taaza, Shakti, T-special, as well on cow and buffalo milk," said Sodhi. He said the price hike became unavoidable.

Forex reserves up \$99.2 bn in FY21: RBI data

The country's foreign exchange reserves in nominal terms, including the valuation effects, increased by \$99.2 billion during the financial year 2020-21, compared to \$64.9 billion in the preceding year, RBI data showed. The valuation gain, reflecting the depreciation of the US dollar against major currencies and increase in gold prices, amounted to \$11.9 billion compared to \$5.4 billion a year ago.

AstraZeneca to help digitise 1,000 clinics

AstraZeneca Pharma India said it has signed an MoU with Bengaluru-based startup Docon Technologies for digitising 1,000 clinics across India. Docon will equip the identified clinics with Electronic Medical Record (EMR) systems, enabling clinicians to access complete patient history. Till now, as a part of the pilot phase, around 200 clinics have been upgraded, with many of them in Tier 1 & 2 towns.

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Fund release conditional under new plan CCEA okays ₹3.03 L cr scheme for discoms

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, JUNE 30

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday approved a five-year, reform-based and result-linked power distribution scheme worth Rs 3.03 lakh crore, for strengthening the systems of utilities to improve their efficiency. The Reform-Based Result-Linked Power Distribution Scheme was announced in the Budget in February this year.

In a briefing post-the CCEA meeting, R. K. Singh, the Union minister for power and new and renewable energy, said, "We have done a lot for power distribution reforms. It needs to be strengthened. Today, the Cabinet has approved the new scheme worth Rs 3.03 lakh crore, including Rs 97,000 crore central outlay."

He said the funds would be given to power distribution companies (discoms) to strengthen their systems. He said, "we need to do back-end strengthening to commensurate with our expansion (of power sector), which is the main objective of this scheme".

He said there is a difference between this scheme and earlier scheme as fund allocation under this scheme is conditional.

Discoms that are in losses cannot get funding under this scheme unless they make plan to reduce the loss trajectory, get it approved by the state and submit that to the Centre.



Under the scheme, the target is to reduce aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) loss to 12 per cent in the next five year, Singh said. Currently, the AT&C losses are at around 21 per cent, the minister added.

On Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman again announced the scheme as part of the stimulus package to boost the economy.

The revamped reforms-based result-linked power distribution scheme will provide financial assistance to discoms for infrastructure creation, up-gradation of system, capacity building and process improvement.

It provides state-specific intervention in place of one size fits all'.

For availing this scheme, the states will have to pre-qualify criteria like publication of audited financial reports, upfront liquidation of state government's dues and subsidy to discoms, and non-creation of additional regulatory assets.

The scheme envisages 25 crore smart meters, 10,000 feeders, four lakh km of low-tension overhead lines planned under the ongoing works under central government schemes.

The central schemes Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY), and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) will be merged.

The total allocation will be Rs 3,03,058 crore, including central government share of Rs 97,631 crore.

The revamped distribution sector scheme would be available till 2025-26.

The scheme has a major focus on improving electricity supply for the farmers and for providing day-time electricity to them through solarisation of agricultural feeders.

This scheme converges with the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Uthhan Mahabhiyan (PM-Kusum) Scheme, which aims to solarise all feeders.

ECONOMY MAY TAKE LONGER TO HIT \$5 TRILLION GOAL: SANYAL



Indore, June 30: India's economy is on the mend after the pandemic-induced shocks but it may take "an additional year or so" to achieve the \$5 trillion-mark, said Sanjeev Sanyal, principal economic advisor to the Union Ministry of Finance, on Wednesday.

The GDP growth rate is expected to be positive in the April-June quarter, he said, speaking to reporters here.

"Of course, disruptions will be there. We had set a target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25. It may take an additional year or so to achieve this," he said.

"But given the shocks we went through (due to the pandemic), it's nothing," said Sanyal, here to attend a programme of the Department of Economics of Devi Ahilya University.

The economy has started to recover rapidly after the second wave of the pandemic subsided, and the GDP growth rate is expected to be positive in the April-June quarter, he said. "If no major damage from the (possible) third wave of the pandemic is seen in the country and vaccination continues at the same pace, then you will see growth in the economy in the next three-four months, he added.—PTI

Four years on, GST is still on road to perfection

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 30

GOVT TO HONOUR 54K GST PAYERS

New Delhi, June 30: The finance ministry on Wednesday said it will issue certificates of appreciation to 54,439 GST payers for timely filing of returns and cash payment of the tax, to mark the fourth anniversary of the tax reform.

More than 66 crore GST returns have been filed so far, the ministry said. More than 88 per cent of these taxpayers are MSMEs, with micro (36 per cent), small (41 per cent) and medium enterprises (11 per cent) involved in the supply of goods and services.

Businesses with a turnover of up to Rs 40 lakh are exempt from GST. Also, those with a

turnover up to Rs 1.5 crore can opt for the composition scheme and pay only 1 per cent tax. For services, businesses with turnover up to Rs 20 lakh are GST-exempt, and those having turnover up to Rs 50 lakh can opt for the composition scheme and pay 6 per cent tax.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in tweet, said, "GST has been a milestone in the economic landscape of India. It has decreased the number of taxes, compliance burden & overall tax burden on common man while significantly increasing transparency, compliance and overall collection.—PTI

not able to rightly get the input tax credit due to the exclusion, continuous increase in taxes by the Centre and the state governments is a major worry for the customers.

GST compensation for the states has become a major Centre-state issue due to the fall of collections in the face of the pandemic. The Centre had agreed to compensate the states if they do not achieve 14 per cent growth in revenues for five years. With the compensation cess, the Centre was managing to compensate the states witnessing a shortfall. However, the pandemic has made things worse and the Centre has to borrow on the behalf of states to

compensate them. While the compensation cess will be charged beyond five years to repay this debt, the states are also asking for compensation beyond five years.

The divergent and conflicting decisions by the advanced ruling authorities in different states are a major concern for taxpayers. The GST Council is planning to constitute an appellate authority over these entities to avoid the confusion.

While GST was meant to lower compliance related complications, the services industry now has to make separate registrations in each state and the rates too are higher compared to pre-GST times.

Curbs on ministries' spending

VRISHTI BENIWAL JUNE 30

The government has cut the spending limits for some of its ministries and departments as the second wave of coronavirus infections strains the country's finances.

"Keeping in view the evolving situation arising out of Covid-19 and anticipated cash position of the government, it is felt essential to regulate" the expenditure plan for the quarter starting July 1, the finance ministry said in an office memorandum on Wednesday.

Overall expenditure of more than 100 departments, including steel,



labour and civil aviation, will be restricted to 20 per cent of the budget estimate for the current financial year.

While processing any applications for easing of norms, priority would be given to increases due to capital expenditure, the

office memo said.

The move comes as the Covid-19 pandemic has set India on track to miss its budget deficit target for a fifth straight year. Increased spending on relief measures, coupled with weak revenues could widen the deficit by as much as one percentage point, according to economists.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday asked some ministries to front-load their capital expenditure as part of revitalising the pandemic-hit economy. She also directed the petroleum and oil ministry to speed up asset sales.—Bloomberg

Firms rush to file earnings reports

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 30

The longest earnings season has come to an end with around 900 companies declaring their fourth quarter and FY21 performance on the last day of the June month.

Due to the second wave of Covid the Securities and Exchange Board of India had provided 45-day extra time to companies till June 30 to declare their Q4

results and 30 days extra time to file their annual results.

Listed companies are required to file their annual results within 60 days from the end of a year.

A market participant said more than 900 companies were scheduled to release their quarterly and FY21 earnings on Wednesday.

Debt reduction was a dominant theme during

the pandemic-hit FY21 as companies tried to reduce their finance cost, evident from the both small and big firms' management commentaries while announcing FY21 earnings. The metal sector, particularly steel manufacturing companies, were able to substantially reduce their debt as they made huge profit due to rising price and even higher demand both domestic and overseas.

BEHAVIOURAL INCENTIVE

Almost 90% staff is now back in Japanese firm's office

Where WFH staff pay office going colleagues

PAVEL ALPEYEV & YUKI FURUKAWA JUNE 30

Disco Corporation, a Japanese maker of semiconductor equipment, has a novel approach to remote work—those who choose to stay home pay the colleagues who brave the commute to show up in the office.

The Tokyo-based company is unusual in that for the past decade it has used an internal currency called "Willi" to create a micro-economy where sales teams pay factory workers to produce goods, who in turn pay engineers to design products. Even office desks, PCs and meeting rooms have a price.

When a sale is made, the coin trickles back through the supply chain. Leftover balances are paid in yen at the end of each quarter as bonuses.

When the pandemic hit, Disco didn't have the option of letting all its employees log in from home. Someone had to show up to keep the factories running. So the company set up a system where those working remotely paid a certain amount of Willi to be divided among the employees who came in.

"Ordering some people to go in while others stay home is unfair," Disco's chief executive officer Kazuma Sekiya said in an interview. "The company



currency offers behavioural incentives and the choice is up to you. That's the power of Willi."

Sekiya, whose grandfather founded Disco in 1937, introduced the system in 2011 taking inspiration from video games. The

company thanks Will for reducing overtime and cutting down on unnecessary meetings. The approach has also had an impact on the bottom line. Disco reported record revenue and profit last fiscal year and boasts some of the highest margins in the industry. Its share price more than tripled in the past five years.

At the start of the pandemic, some 40 per cent of its employees chose to show up in person, earning considerable bonuses, Sekiya said, without giving specific figures. But infections at the company stayed low, totalling in single digits in Japan. Now that almost 90 per cent of its staff is back in the

workplace, the payout has dwindled. Disco employs roughly 5,600 people.

The gradual rollout of vaccines globally has fuelled a debate over how to entice workers back to the office. Major corporations from JPMorgan Chase & Co to Morgan Stanley and Uber Technologies Inc have introduced policies to draw back employees with mixed results. Some workers are choosing to leave their jobs instead of braving the return to the office.

"We had to prove to employees that going to work isn't scary," Sekiya said. "Although some felt that it was harsh and several people have quit."

—Bloomberg

XIAOMI RAISES PRICES OF PHONES, SMART TVs

New Delhi, June 30: Xiaomi on Wednesday said it will increase prices of its smartphones and smart TVs by about 3-6 per cent from July 1 in India, as the Chinese tech major faces pressures like shortage of components and higher shipping charges.

A Xiaomi India spokesperson said there have been shortages across the supply chain from last year onwards.

"Due to massive demand-supply mismatch, the majority of components used in smartphones, Smart TV and other electronics gadgets (chipsets, display panels, display driver, back panels, battery, etc) have seen constant upward movement in their prices," the spokesperson added.

This, coupled with an unprecedented increase in shipping charges has had an effect on almost all the technology players, including Xiaomi.

"While we have tried to absorb the increasing costs, some of our products have witnessed a price hike. We also foresee an inevitable increase of 3-6 per cent in prices of our smart TVs from July 1 onwards," the spokesperson noted.

Prices of smartphones are expected to go up by a similar percentage.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Kane reclaims top position in ranking

Dubai: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has reclaimed the number one position in the ICC Test Rankings for batsmen after leading his side to the World Test Championship title in Southampton last week. The 30-year-old's knocks of 49 and 52 not out in the low-scoring final against India helped him move above the 900-point mark and he now enjoys a 10-point lead over Steve Smith (891 rating points). India skipper Virat Kohli remains in fourth position while Rohit Sharma has moved up to the sixth spot. India wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant is seventh. Williamson, who conceded the top spot to Smith two weeks ago, is back in the position he had first grabbed in November 2015 during a series against Australia. — *PTI*

Shamsi gives SA 1-run win over WI

Grenada: Tabraiz Shamsi enhanced his reputation as the top T20 bowler in the international game by inspiring South Africa to a thrilling one-run victory over the West Indies in the third of their five-match series at the National Cricket Stadium in Grenada on Tuesday. Defending another moderate total of 167 for eight after they were put in to bat for the third time in the series, the left-arm wrist spinner bowled his most economical four-over spell in conceding just 13 runs for the important wickets of Evin Lewis and Shimron Hetmyer. — *AFP*

Brief scores: South Africa 167/8 (Quinton de Kock 72, Rassie van der Dussen 32; Obed McCoy 4/22, Dwayne Bravo 3/25) bt West Indies 166/7 (Evin Lewis 27, Nicholas Pooran 26, Andre Russell 25; Tabraiz Shamsi 2/13, Anrich Nortje 2/29).

SL trio dropped from India series

Colombo: Three Sri Lankan cricket players ordered to leave the tour of England on disciplinary grounds will be dropped from a home series against India in July, officials said on Wednesday. Dubbed the "terrible trio" by media, vice captain Kusal Mendis, opener Danushka Gunathilaka and wicket keeper Niroshan Dickwella returned home on Tuesday Sri Lanka Cricket officials said an inquiry into how they left the team's pandemic isolated hotel in England would start after their mandatory two-week quarantine. None will be included in the three ODIs and three T20 games to start July 13. "They are likely to get a minimum one-year suspension if found guilty of several breaches of their contract" an official said. — *AFP*

India women all out for 221 vs Eng

Taunton: India were all out for 221 against England in the second women's ODI here on Wednesday. Captain Mithali Raj top-scored with 59 off 92 balls and stitched a 68-run partnership for the fourth wicket with Harmanpreet Kaur (19) to score the bulk of the runs. Young opener Shafali Verma contributed 44 off 55 balls. For England, pacer Kate Cross was the most successful bowler with impressive figures of 5/34. — *PTI*

Brief Scores: India 221 (Mithali Raj 59, Shafali Verma 44; Kate Cross 5/34) vs England.

Messi's Barca future in doubt

Madrid: Lionel Messi's contract with Barcelona came to an end on Wednesday with no news from the player or the club about his future. The expectation is that the 34-year-old Messi, who is playing with Argentina at the Copa America, will stay at the Catalan club. He reportedly had been close to reaching a deal to extend his contract for two more years. Messi's future has been a mystery since he had his request to leave the club denied at the end of the 2019-20 season. He ended up staying and said he would reconsider his options when this season was over. A lot has changed since he announced he wanted to leave the club. — *AP*

IN NICK OF TIME

Kyrgios beats Humbert for first win in four months

London, June 30: Five-time champion Novak Djokovic overcame a series of falls on Centre Court to reach the Wimbledon third round for the 15th time on Wednesday as Australian firebrand Nick Kyrgios won his first match in four months.

World number one Djokovic, chasing a sixth Wimbledon and record-equaling 20th Grand Slam title, eased to a 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 win over 102nd-ranked Kevin Anderson of South Africa.

However, he slipped and fell on at least five occasions on Centre Court, the day after Serena Williams suffered a tearful, tournament-ending injury due to similar slips.

Djokovic, 34, cruised to victory over the man he defeated in the 2018 final without facing a single break point and committing just six unforced errors. "I have a nice connection with the crowd," said Djokovic.

RESULTS

Men's singles second round: Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Kevin Anderson (RSA) 6-3, 6-3, 6-3. Denis Shapovalov (CAN x10) bt Pablo Andjar (ESP) — walkover. **First round:** Yoshihito Nishioka (JPN) bt John Isner (USA x28) 7-6 (7/5), 2-6, 6-3, 6-7 (3/7). 6-4; Kei Nishikori (JPN) bt Alexei Popyrin (AUS) 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; Gianluca Mager (ITA) bt Juan Ignacio Londero (ARG) 7-6 (7/3), 6-0, 4-6, 6-3; Sam Querrey (USA) bt Pablo Carreo-Busta (ESP x11) 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 7-5. **Women's singles first round:** Coco Vandeweghe (USA) bt Olga Govortsova (BLR) 6-4, 6-2. Katerina Siniakova (CZE) bt Wang Yafan (CHN) 6-1, 6-0. Anastasiya Sevastova (LAT) bt Zarina Diyas (KAZ) 6-4, 6-1. Sorana Cirstea (ROM) bt Samantha Murray (GBR) 6-3, 6-3. Alize Cornet (FRA) bt Bianca Andreescu (CAN x5) 6-2, 6-1; Elina Svitolina (UKR x3) bt Alison Van Uytvanck (BEL) 6-3, 2-6, 6-3; Anastasiya Sevastova (LAT) bt Zarina Diyas (KAZ) 6-4, 6-1; Alia Tomljanovic (AUS) bt Greet Minnen (BEL) 6-2, 7-6 (7/5); Magda Linette (POL) bt Amanda Anisimova (USA) 2-6, 6-3, 6-1; Yulia Putintseva (KAZ) bt Tsvetana Pironkova (BUL) 6-3, 6-1.

"I also seem to be having a really nice connection with the grass. I don't recall falling so much in the first two matches at Wimbledon."

Kyrgios, ranked 60, but a quarter-finalist on debut in 2014, won his first match since the Australian Open in February, defeating French 21st seed Ugo Humbert before declaring: "Not bad for a part-time player".

Kyrgios triumphed 6-4, 4-6, 3-6, 6-1, 9-7 in a match held over from Tuesday evening when the final set was level at 3-3.

"Ugo is an incredible kid and I knew I was a massive underdog," said Kyrgios after firing 23 aces and 51 winners.

Kyrgios also shrugged off an ugly-looking fall in the 13th game of the final set when his right knee buckled beneath him. On Tuesday, he was overheard muttering that Court One was "a joke".

— *AFP*

INJURED & OUT SERENA BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS

London, June 30: American legend Serena Williams's dreams of winning an eighth Wimbledon singles title and equalling Margaret Court's Grand Slam record of 24 ended in tears on Tuesday as further doubt was cast on her future in the sport.

The 39-year-old was leading 3-1 in the first set of her first round match against Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus when she slipped and injured her right leg.

Williams returned from receiving medical attention but called it a day at 3-3 and walked off Centre Court in tears.

"I was heartbroken to have to withdraw today after injuring my right leg," she said in a statement posted late evening

on her Instagram account.

Perhaps tellingly, she waved to all four sides of the court as she left.

However, she gave no indication in the statement of how serious the injury was nor about her future.

It is the first time that Williams has bowed out in the opening round of Wimbledon in 20 appearances.

She had only once previously lost in the first round at any Slam, in the 2012 French Open.

The tears said it all as with the withdrawals of 2019 champion Simona Halep and of Naomi Osaka prior to the tournament the American would have fancied her chances of at last equalling the controversial Court's landmark.

— *AFP*

NATIONAL | SPORTS AWARDS

Ashwin, Chhetri in fray for Ratna

New Delhi, June 30: The BCCI has decided to recommend women's cricket great Mithali Raj and premier spinner R. Ashwin for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, country's highest sporting honour.

For Arjuna Award, the Board will send the names of senior batsman Shikhar Dhawan, who was ignored last year, KL Rahul and pacer Jasprit Bumrah.

"No women cricketer has been nominated for Arjuna. Mithali's name has been recommended for Khel Ratna," a BCCI official said on Wednesday.

Talismanic India captain Sunil Chhetri has been recommended for this year's Khel Ratna by the All India Football Federation.

National women's football team striker Bala Devi, who is currently playing for Rangers in the Scottish Women's Premier League, has been recommended for the coveted Arjuna Award.

"We have recommended

IN RACE FOR RATNA

Mithali Raj (cricket)
R. Ashwin (cricket)
Sunil Chhetri (football)
Bala Devi (football)
Neeraj Chopra (athletics)
Ankur Mittal (shooting)
Anjum Moudgil (shooting)
Sharath Kamal (TT)
Shubhankar Sharma (golf)

Sunil Chhetri for the Khel Ratna and Bala Devi for Arjuna Award," an official source said on condition of anonymity.

Olympic-bound star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has been recommended for the Khel Ratna award by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI).

The 23-year-old Chopra's nomination came after sprinter Dutee Chand was recommended for the same top award by the Odisha government.

— *PTI*

Ukraine spring Artem surprise

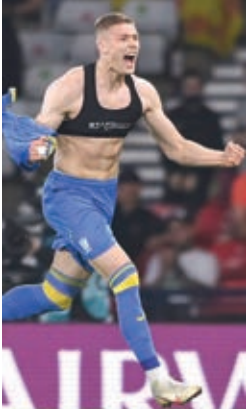
Glasgow, June 30: Artem Dovbyk's header in the 121st minute sent Ukraine through to a Euro 2020 quarter-final clash with England as they beat Sweden 2-1 after extra time in Glasgow on Tuesday.

Ukraine squeezed through to the last 16 despite taking just three points in the group stage, qualifying in part because Sweden beat Poland to top Group E ahead of Spain.

But Andriy Shevchenko's side were determined to show they deserved their place in the knockout phase as Oleksandr Zinchenko fired them into an early lead.

Emil Forsberg's deflected strike brought Sweden level before half-time and the RB Leipzig midfielder twice hit the woodwork in the second half.

However, a red card for Marcus Danielson nine minutes into extra time left Sweden hanging on for penalties until Dovbyk latched onto



Artem Dovbyk of Ukraine celebrates after scoring the winner against Sweden in the Euro Round of 16 match in Glasgow on Tuesday.

— *AP*

Zinchenko's inviting cross to spark wild scenes of celebration among the Ukrainian fans.

Shevchenko said before the game his side had already achieved their objective by making it through the group.

"With this performance and commitment, our team has deserved the love of the whole country," said Shevchenko. — *AFP*

EURO QUARTERFINALS		
July 2	Switzerland vs Spain in St Petersburg	9.30 pm
July 3	Belgium vs Italy in Munich	12.30 am
	Czech Republic vs Denmark in Baku	9.30 pm
July 4	England vs Ukraine in Rome	12.30 am

Olympic briefs

Swimmer Srihari qualifies

Indian swimmer Srihari Nataraj officially booked himself a Tokyo Olympics berth on Wednesday after the sport's world governing body Fina approved his 'A' standard qualification time in the men's 100m backstroke time trial at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome. "Srihari Nataraj Olympic qualification time of 53.77 swam in the time trial at the Sette Colli Trophy is affirmed by Fina. SFI had put forward its representation to Fina for this. Srihari joins Sajjan Prakash as India's A qualification entry to Tokyo," the Swimming Federation of India tweeted.

Rohan-Divij miss the cut

In a setback to India's medal chances in the tennis Levent of Tokyo Olympics, Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan have missed the cut for men's doubles, which also rules out the country's presence in the mixed team competition, its best chance for a podium finish. It was expected that with a low combined ranking of 113, Bopanna (38) and left-handed Sharan's (75) entry would depend only on large scale withdrawals. "The ITF has confirmed that Bopanna and Divij could not be entered as a team in the men's doubles team. However, things might change till July 16 (if there are more withdrawals)," an AITA source said.

IOC president to reach Tokyo

IOC President Thomas Bach will arrive in Tokyo on July 8 and spend three days in isolation before holding meetings leading up to the opening of the postponed Tokyo Olympics on July 23, Tokyo organisers and the the International Olympic Committee said Wednesday. Bach is also expected to visit Hiroshima on July 16, at the same time as his vice president and colleague John Coates is to visit Nagasaki. Visiting dignitaries often pay visits to the cities as a reminder of the nuclear attacks by the United States in August 1945 during World War II. Ahead of Bach's visit, Covid-19 cases are rising in Tokyo. On Wednesday, Tokyo reported 714 new cases.

Loew leaves Germany high & dry

London, June 30: Joachim Loew walks away after 15 years in charge of Germany leaving a misfiring side short of confidence and his successor Hansi Flick already under pressure to turn things around before next year's World Cup.

The Germans bowed out of Euro 2020 after a disappointing display in the 2-0 last 16 defeat to England on Tuesday at Wembley, which was Loew's 198th and final game in charge. His record of 124 wins, 40 draws and 34 defeats since 2006 is impressive.

Yet the figures mask the reality of tears in the German dressing room at Wembley following the latest painful defeat as, once again, Germany struggled to finish their chances.

Loew had the high of winning the 2014 World Cup, including the remarkable 7-1 thrashing of hosts Brazil in the semi-finals, but his tenure was tarnished by the low of finishing bottom of the group four years later in Russia, which still haunts the Germans.

"In these 15 years, there were a lot of things that were very positive," Loew insisted at Wembley.


Yet Loew admitted his team had experienced "some problems since 2018" and that there had been "a lot of difficult periods" like the unforgettable 6-0 thrashing by Spain last November, which sparked his decision to step down.

— *AFP*

GILL LIKELY TO MISS ENGLAND TEST SERIES

New Delhi, June 30: Indian opener Shubman Gill could miss the entire five-Test series against England owing to an undisclosed internal injury, which might lead to standby Abhimanyu Easwaran making the main squad. It is still not clear whether Gill's condition warrants a surgery ahead of the series starting August 4. "There is a chance that Shubman could be ruled out of the whole Test tour even though it is still a month away. The injury is serious is what we have come to know," a senior BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity.

It is believed that the Punjab batsman has either sustained a calf muscle injury or hamstring tear which could take considerable time to heal. It is not clear how and when he picked up the injury. As of now, he is supposed to be in England where physio Nitin Patel and strength and conditioning coach Sohumi Desai will monitor his progress. — *PTI*

SPECIAL TRAINS - 2021								
For the convenience of passengers, Northern Railway has decided to run following Special Trains as per schedule given below:-								
Spl. Train No.	Train Name	Station From	Dept. Time	Station to	Arr. Time	Frequency/ Day	Period	
04060	Garibrath Express	Anand Vihar (T)	20:55	Muzaffarpur Jn	18:09	Weekly	Wed	from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04059	Special	Muzaffarpur Jn	15:15	Anand Vihar (T)	12:35		Fri	from 09.07.2021 Till further advice
04062	Taj Superfast Express	New Delhi	06:55	Jhansi Jn	14:00	Daily		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04061	Express Special	Jhansi Jn	15:20	New Delhi	21:35			from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04064	Hazrat Nizamuddin - Bhusaval Jn	Hazrat Nizamuddin	15:05	Bhusaval Jn	15:05	Bi-Weekly	Fri, Sun	from 09.07.2021 Till further advice
04063	Suprefast Express	Bhusaval Jn	06:00	Hazrat Nizamuddin	05:00		Tue, Sun	from 11.07.2021 Till further advice
04080	Gondwana Superfast Express	Hazrat Nizamuddin	15:05	Raigarh	18:00	Except Fri, Sun		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04079	Express Special	Raigarh	03:25	Hazrat Nizamuddin	05:00		Except Tue, Sun	from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04066	Anand Vihar (T) - Haldia Superfast Express	Anand Vihar (T)	20:20	Haldia	19:35	Weekly	Tue	from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04065	Express	Haldia	09:30	Anand Vihar (T)	08:40		Thu	from 08.07.2021 Till further advice
04067	Shane Punjab Superfast Express	New Delhi	06:40	Amritsar	14:15	Daily		from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04068	Special	Amritsar	15:10	New Delhi	22:30			from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04070	Anand Vihar (T) - Jogbani	Anand Vihar (T)	08:10	Jogbani	07:50	Daily		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04069	Superfast Express	Jogbani	20:30	Anand Vihar (T)	20:45			from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04033	Jammu Mail	Delhi Jn	20:05	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra	09:20	Daily		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04034	Express Special	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra	14:05	Delhi Jn	04:30			from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04072	New Delhi- Pondicherry Superfast Express	New Delhi	23:15	Pondicherry	13:15	Weekly	Sun	from 11.07.2021 Till further advice
04071	Superfast	Pondicherry	09:35	New Delhi	00:10		Wed	from 14.07.2021 Till further advice
04074	Garibrath Express	Anand Vihar (T)	20:20	Gaya	09:35	Weekly	Sat	from 10.07.2021 Till further advice
04073	Special	Gaya	19:35	Anand Vihar (T)	08:40		Sun	from 11.07.2021 Till further advice
04077	Delhi Jn - Pathankot Jn Superfast Express	Delhi Jn	08:15	Pathankot Jn	18:20	Except Thu		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04078	Express	Pathankot Jn	07:00	Delhi Jn	16:55		Except Fri	from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04688	Garibrath Express	Amritsar	04:00	Saharsa Jn	11:20	Tri-Weekly	Wed, Sat, Sun	from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04687	Special	Saharsa Jn	14:32	Amritsar	21:00		Mon, Thu, Sun	from 08.07.2021 Till further advice
04690	Garibrath Express	Jammu Tawi	23:20	Kathgodam	13:35	Weekly	Sun	from 11.07.2021 Till further advice
04689	Special	Kathgodam	18:20	Jammu Tawi	09:30		Tue	from 13.07.2021 Till further advice
04692	Amritsar - Hazur Sahib Nanded Superfast Express	Amritsar	14:30	Hazur Sahib Nanded	21:40	Weekly	Mon	from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04691	Express Special	Hazur Sahib Nanded	11:05	Amritsar	18:30		Wed	from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04694	Jammu Tawi - Kanpur Central Superfast Express	Jammu Tawi	17:45	Kanpur Central	12:20	Bi-Weekly	Tue, Thu	from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04693	Express Special	Kanpur Central	14:05	Jammu Tawi	08:40		Wed, Fri	from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04696*	Amritsar - Kochuveli Superfast Express	Amritsar	05:55	Kochuveli	14:30	Weekly	Sun	On 11.07.2021 Till further advice
04695*	Special	Kochuveli	04:50	Amritsar	13:50		Wed	On 14.07.2021 Till further advice
04698	Mourdhaj Superfast Express	Jammu Tawi	17:45	Barauni Jn	22:45	Weekly	Fri	from 09.07.2021 Till further advice
04697	Express Special	Barauni Jn	05:02	Jammu Tawi	11:45		Sun	from 11.07.2021 Till further advice
04656	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra - Ghazipur City Express	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra	05:25	Ghazipur City	06:00	Weekly	Thu	from 15.07.2021 Till further advice
04655	Express Special	Ghazipur City	08:30	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra	12:30		Fri	from 16.07.2021 Till further advice
04684	Amritsar- Lal Kuan Express	Amritsar	05:55	Lal Kuan	20:55	Weekly	Sat	from 10.07.2021 Till further advice
04683	Express Special	Lal Kuan	23:45	Amritsar	15:00		Sat	from 10.07.2021 Till further advice
04624	Patalikot Express	Firozpur Cantt Jn	04:10	Chhindwara Jn	06:30	Daily		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04623	Special	Chhindwara Jn	09:30	Firozpur Cantt Jn	11:25			from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04663	Dehradun - Amritsar Express	Dehradun	19:05	Amritsar	08:15	Daily		from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04664	Express Special	Amritsar	21:40	Dehradun	09:45			from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04681	Intercity Express	New Delhi	14:45	Jalandhar City	23:40	Daily		from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04682	Special	Jalandhar City	04:15	New Delhi	12:45			from 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04666	Intercity Superfast Express	Amritsar	06:15	New Delhi	14:15	Daily		from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04665	Express Special	New Delhi	13:50	Amritsar	21:45			from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04270	Intercity Express	Lucknow	07:00	Varanasi Jn	13:30	Daily		From 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04269	Special	Varanasi Jn	18:15	Lucknow	22:50			From 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04250	Garibrath Express	Anand Vihar (T)	18:15	Varanasi Jn	08:05	Bi-Weekly	Mon, Fri	From 09.07.2021 Till further advice
04249	Special	Varanasi Jn	19:30	Anand Vihar (T)	09:30		Tue, Sun	From 08.07.2021 Till further advice
04314	Bareilly - Lokmanya Tilak (T) Express	Bareilly	11:25	Lokmanya Tilak (T)	16:15	Daily	Sat	From 10.07.2021 Till further advice
04313	Special	Lokmanya Tilak (T)	08:05	Bareilly	15:20		Mon	From 12.07.2021 Till further advice
04560*	Kerala Sampark Kranti Suprefast Express	Chandigarh	09:20	Kochuveli	14:30	Bi-Weekly	Wed, Fri	From 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04559*	Express Special	Kochuveli	04:50	Chandigarh	09:50		Mon, Sat	From 10.07.2021 Till further advice
04561	Intercity Suprefast Express	Chandigarh	06:40	Amritsar Jn	11:30	Daily		From 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04562	Express Special	Amritsar Jn	17:20	Chandigarh	22:05			
04564*	Sampark Kranti Suprefast Express	Chandigarh	02:15	Madgaon	13:00	Bi-Weekly	Mon, Sat	From 05.07.2021 Till further advice
04563*	Special	Madgaon	10:00	Chandigarh	18:10		Tue, Wed	From 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04535	Kalka - Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra Express	Kalka	19:00	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra	05:20	Bi-Weekly	Tue, Fri	from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04536	Special	Shri Mata Vaishino Devi Katra	18:10	Kalka	05:00		Wed, Sat	from 07.07.2021 Till further advice
04534	Harihar Express	Ambala Cant Jn	22:20	Barauni Jn	02:15	Bi-Weekly	Tue, Sat	from 06.07.2021 Till further advice
04533	Express Special	Barauni Jn	05:02	Ambala Cant Jn	08:30		Mon, Thu	from 08.07.2021 Till further advice
04566	Kalka - Sainagar Shirdi Superfast Express	Kalka	17:20	Sainagar Shirdi	18:40	Bi-Weekly	Thu, Sun	from 08.07.2021 Till further advice
04565	Express	Sainagar Shirdi	10:00	Kalka	12:10		Tue, Sat	from 10.07.2021 Till further advice
*Monsoon Timings								
Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.								
For any other information passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in or NTES App.								
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