THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 12 JUNE 2021



NATION | 4

Filmmaker Aisha Sulthana booked for sedition in Lakshadweep; says she'll 'keep fighting' for native land



Italy and Turkey get ball rolling as Euro 2020

DELHI AGE 16

Films and content have than ever, says Rahul Dev



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Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas celebrates after winning against Germany's Alexander Zverev during their semifinal match of the French Open in Paris on

Friday. ■ Report: Page 8 — AFP

Monsoon likely to hit Delhi June 15, over 12 days early

New Delhi: The southwest monsoon is likely to reach Delhi by June 15, 12 days before its usual date of June 27, IMD officials said on Friday. In 2008, too, the wind system had reached Delhi on June 15, said Kuldeep Srivastava, head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre. "Conditions are favourable for an early onset. It (monsoon) may reach Delhi by June 15 this time," he said. A low pressure area lies over northwest Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move across Odisha, Jharkhand and north Chhattisgarh over the next three to four days, the IMD said. — PTI

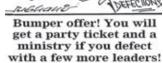
Building collapse: HC orders judicial probe

Mumbai: The Bombay high court has initiated a judicial inquiry into the building collapse incident in Malwani area of Mumbai, which claimed 12 lives. It said that the incident proved that lessness in the municipal wards in Mumbai as well as its adjoining areas. Full report on Page 4

Sushil will remain in custody till June 25

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Friday extended the judicial custody of Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar till June 25 in connection with the alleged brawl at Chhatrasal Stadium in which a wrestler died. He is facing charges of murder, cupable homicide and kidnapping. Full report on Page 2









Min: 27°C **RH:** 49% Rain: Nil

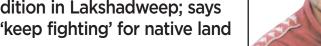
Forecast: Mostly sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana Tithi: Jyestha Shuddha Vidiya till 8.15 pm Star: Ardra till 4.54 pm

Varjyam: Nil **Durmuhurtam:** 5.45 to 7.29 am

Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am **SUNSET TODAY 7.19 PM** SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.22 AM **MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM MOONSET TODAY 9.08 PM**





SPORT 8

starts under Covid cloud

become more competitive

■ Big blow to BJP in Bengal a month after its Assembly poll defeat Mukul Roy & son rejoin TMC; Mamata says more to follow

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JUNE 11

Dealing a severe blow to his party a month after its whitewash in the West Bengal Assembly elections, BJP national vicepresident Mukul Roy along with his son Shubhrangshu Roy quit the party and returned to his Trinamul Congress roots in a grand welcome by its supremo and chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

newly elected Krishnanagar North MLA's defection to the state's ruling TMC, which has reduced the BJP to 74 MLAs in the House, came after he did not get the Leader of the Opposition post which went to Nandigram MLA Suvendu Adhikari. Even a recent call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi inquiring about his ailing wife Krishna failed to stop Mr Roy from maintaining

his distance from the BJP Mr Roy, who had switched to the BJP from the TMC in November 2017 and engineered a series of defections later, visited Trinamul Bhavan, the party's headquarters off Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, from his home in



BJP leader Mukul Roy hugs TMC general secretary Abhisekh Banerjee after he rejoined the party as West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee looks on at TMC Bhavan - PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY in Kolkata on Friday.

Many betrayed our party during the Assembly polls to strengthen the BJP's hands. They will not be taken back... Though more people will come, no gaddar (betrayers) will be allowed...

Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal CM

Salt Lake on Friday afternoon following a confidential discussion with

gratulate him. Our party is already powerful. We have come to power with a landslide victory. a landslide victory. Mukul is an old family member. He never spoke against our party during the polls. It was his personal wish to return to us. Though his post is yet to be decided, he will play an important role like he did

Lashing out at the BJP for its poor treatment of Mr Roy, she claimed: "He was also subjected to threats through the agencies. I feel he got back his mental peace with his return. He was looking ill, which he did not talk about in public. No can continue with the BJP because of its heartlessness and exploitation which does not allow someone to live humanelv. Mukul's comeback has only proved this.

Mr Roy said: "I am feeling great to meet the old boys here after leaving the BJP. Bengal will get back her place. It is Ms Banerjee who will lead the comeback of the state in the national map. I returned home have because I did not want to be in the BJP further, though I will later explain

Yogi meets PM, Nadda amid speculation over split of UP

Talk of Cabinet rejig; fine-tuning caste arithmetic before polls

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

Amid growing speculation of a possible rejig in the BJP-led Uttar Pradesh government, chief minister Yogi Adityanath on met Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president J.P. Nadda. The UP chief minister also called on President Ram Nath Kovind before leaving for Lucknow in the evening. He had met Union home minister Amit Shah on Thursday. BJP allies, Apna Dal's Anupriya Patel and Nishad Party's Sanjay Nishad, had also met Mr Shah.

Crucial Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh are scheduled early next year and the party leadership, it was learnt, discussed various poll related and organisational with Mr Adityanath who has faced criticism over his state's Covid management and has also been asked to fine-tune the caste arithmetic before

the Assembly polls.
There is intense speculation in New Delhi that the Centre might consider the division of Uttar Pradesh, which has the largest number of parliamentary seats, and that the UP CM was consulted



PM Narendra Modi with UP CM Yogi Adityanath during a meeting in New Delhi on Friday.

Bad days have come for UP CM: Akhilesh

Lucknow: In an apparent reference to Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath's New Delhi visit, Samaiwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday said that bad days have come for the chief minister as he has to "wander door-to-door to retain his post". PAGE 3

on this at his meeting with Mr Shah on Thursday. The buzz is that the Centre might consider the division of the state into two parts -

Purvanchal and Harit Pradesh. A similar proposal was pushed by then CM Mayawati in the state Assembly in 2011, but the issue failed to get momentum after the BSP lost power. Yogi Adityanath had, Incidentally, ruled out any plan to split the state in January this

The CM, sources said, discussed his govern-ment's Covid management, in particular steps taken during the second wave with the PM and Mr Nadda among other state related issues. Later, in the evening, Mr Nadda and Mr Shah met the PM. Sources said Mr Nadda,

Pak passes bill to give Jadhav right of appeal, consular access

Islamabad, June 11: The Pakistan government has rushed through the National Assembly a bill to provide the right of appeal to Indian deathprisoner Kulbhushan amidst ruckus and boy-

cott by the Opposition. The Lower House of Parliament passed the ICJ (Review and Re-consideration) Bill, 2020, on Thursday. The bill is aimed at allowing Mr Jadhav to have consular access in line with the International Court of

Justice (ICJ) verdict.

Mr Jadhav, the 51-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April

India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Mr Jadhav and challenging the death sen-

The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhay and also to grant consular access to India without further

Leaders of the G-7 pose for a group photo

overlooking the beach at the Carbis Bay

Hotel in Carbis Bay, St. Ives, Cornwall,

England, on Friday. From left: Canadian

PM Justin Trudeau, European Council



Ms Banerjee on Thursday. The TMC chief, who had already reached there, greeted her most trusted

lieutenant of earlier days

to welcome him back to

her party ceremonially in

the presence of a few selected leaders, includ-

ing her MP nephew and

party general secretary

Abhishek Banerjee. They

held a meeting among

themselves before facing the media. Mr Roy and

Abhishek Banerjee also

hugged each other, bury-

Banerjee

'Mukul is our *Ghorer*

Chhele (son of the family).

He just came back home. He is welcome. We con-

ing their acrimony.

Bharat Biotech will address the shortcomings soon: Officials

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

In a setback to Bharat Biotech, the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has refused to give the company "emergency approval use (EAU)" of its anti-Covid jab, Covaxin. The USFDA has, however, recommended Bharat Biotech's American partner Ocugen to go for the Biologics Licence Application (BLA) or the full approval route with additional data. Ocugen said that this may delay the launch of Covaxin in the

"The company will no longer pursue an Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for Covaxin. The FDA provided feedback to Ocugen regarding the Master File. The company had previously submitted and recommended that Ocugen pursue a BLA submission instead of an EUA application for its vaccine candidate and requested additional information and data," Ocugen said in a state-

In a statement Bharat Biotech said that USFDA



A health worker administers a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to a person at a drive-in vaccination centre at MGM Hospital in Chennai on Friday.

COVID WATCH

ACTIVE CASES IN INDIA IN 24 HOURS

3,403 DEATHS IN A DAY

had earlier communicated that no new Emergency Use Authorisation will be approved for covid vaccines and all applica-tions have to follow the BLA process. The company added that Covaxin

has got EUAs from 14 countries and their application is in process in over 50 countries.

"No vaccine manufactured or developed from India has ever received EAU or full licensure USFDA. approved, it will be a great leap forward for vaccines innovation and manufacturing from India," Bharat Biotech

Officials in the Indian government said Bharat Biotech will address the shortcomings Officials said the Drug Controller General of

Turn to Page 4

case against **Italy marines** as ₹10cr paid PARMOD KUMAR

SC may close

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to close the criminal proceedings against two Italian marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen off the Kerala coast in 2012, after ₹10 crores in compensation for the victims' families was deposited with the court registry. The court will pass orders on June 15.

The two marines, Chief Master Sergeant Massimiliano Latorre and Sergeant Major Salvatore Girone, on board Italianflagged oil tanker MV Enrice Lexie, killed two Kerala fishermen on a vessel in India's exclusive economic zone, suspecting they were sea pirates.

A bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah said it might direct the Kerala high court to oversee the disbursement of the compensation money to the families of the vic-

More on Page 4

Prashant Kishor meets Pawar, sets off political buzz

SONU SHRIVASTAVA MUMBAI, JUNE 11

strategist Prashant Kishor Friday met Nationalist Congress Party supremo Sharad Pawar over lunch at the latter's Silver Oak home in South Mumbai. While the NCP said the meeting was a thanksgiving trip linked to the West Bengal and Tamil

Nadu elections, where Mr Kishor had worked for the TMC and DMK respectively, there is a lot of speculation that the non-Congress Opposition parties may be trying to forge a coalition against the BJP and seeking a credible leader to pitch against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Shiv Sena has been openly proposing Mr Pawar's name as the leader of an Opposition alliance.

Mr Kishor held talks with the NCP chief and party leaders for three and half hours. The meeting between Mr Pawar and Mr Kishore assumes "political significance" as it is believed the NCP chief wants a united forum of Opposition par-



A senior NCP leader. requesting anonymity, said Mr Kishor had apprised the NCP chief about the current political situation with facts and figures. He also offered a suggestion on how to unite the Opposition parties in the country. Apart from the NCP chief, the meeting was also attended by Baramati MP Supriya Sule, Maharashtra NČP chief Jayant Patil and party MLA Rohit Pawar.

Speaking with this newspaper on Friday, Maharashtra minister and NCP national spokesman Nawab Malik said the current political situation in the country was discussed at the meeting. 'A discussion was held over the political situation in the country and

■ Bonhomie as leaders meet in Cornwall ■ Will give nod to 15% global minimum tax on MNCs

G-7 to pledge 1 billion vaccine jabs for world der. Talks were animated,

Carbis Bay (England), June 11: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson greeted world leaders on a wooden boardwalk atop the freshly raked sand of Carbis Bay to open the Group of Seven summit Friday, offering elbow bumps to dignitaries gathering for the first time since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The virus was set to dominate their discussions, with leaders of the wealthy democracies club expected to commit to sharing at least 1 billion vaccine shots with struggling countries.

A commitment from United States President Joe Biden to share 500 million doses and one from Mr Johnson for another 100 million shots set the stage for the G-7 meeting under gray skies in southwest England, where leaders will pivot Friday from their "family photo" by the seaside directly into a session on "Building Back Better From Covid-19."

"We're going to help lead the world out of this pandemic working alongside our global partners," Mr Biden said. The G-7 also includes Canada, France,

THE G-7 LEADERS hope the meeting in the resort of Carbis Bay will also energise the global economy

Germany, Italy and Japan. The leaders hope the meeting in the resort of Carbis Bay will also energise the global economy.

Despite the moody skies, the group walked away their photo as cheerful as children who had just built a sandcastle. Led by Mr Johnson, French President Emmanuel

Macron threw his arm

around Mr Biden's shoul-

their finance ministers. The minimum is meant to stop companies from using tax havens to shift profits and to avoid taxes. It represents a potential

but inaudible.

win for the Biden administration, which has proposed a global minimum tax as a way to pay for infrastructure projects. -AP

On Friday, they are set

to formally embrace a

global minimum tax of at

least 15 per cent on multi-

national corporations, fol-

lowing an agreement

reached a week ago by

More on Page 6





Joe Biden, Japan's PM Yoshihide Suga,

Draghi, French President Emmanuel

Ursula von der Leyen and German

Macron, European Commission chief

British PM Boris Johnson, Italy's PM Mario











Vacate library 'unrightfully occupied': JNU

New Delhi: The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Friday instructed students to vacate the library they have "unrightfully occupied", a day after an FIR was lodged by the varsity against them for alleging breaking into the facility and clashing with the staff there. The varsity had alleged that the students have been occupying the Dr BR Ambedkar Central library. The police had on Thursday said a case has been registered based on the complaint of the varsity. "The students who have unrightfully occupied the reading rooms are advised and instructed to vacate the place immediately. This will facilitate and speed up the reopening and resumption of library services," the varsity said in a statement. It said, "After due deliberations, keeping in line with government orders and the academic interests of the student community, the university administration has

Man arrested for killing brother in Kalkaji

decided to take appropriate

steps to open the Dr BR

Ambedkar Central Library

soon."The statement also

throughout the lockdown,

has "been committed" to

serving the user community.

added that the library,

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man has been arrested by the Delhi Police for allegedly killing his brother. The accused has been identified as Ajay Kumar Sahu, the police said. The incident took place after an altercation broke out between the duo in south Delhi's Kalkaji area, they added. According to the police, a call was received around 1 am on Friday after which the caller identified as Puneet Bhatia took the team to the store room of his where they found the body of Vijay Kumar Sahu (35), accused's brother lying on the floor in a pool of blood while the accused was sitting nearby. The caller stated that Ajay Kumar Sahu killed his brother Vijay Kumar Sahu by hitting a dumbbell on his chest and head, the police said. The body of the victim was shifted to AIIMS hospital, where he was declared brought dead, they added.

UP cop shunted for threatening

Noida: A policeman in Noida was shunted on Friday after he allegedly hurled abuses at a fruit-seller and threatened to issue a challan for not selling him mangoes at a discounted rate, officials said. A departmental inquiry has also been initiated into the case which came to light after a purported video of the incident in Sector 51 under Sector 49 police station limits surfaced on social media. The policeman heard negotiating the price of mangoes while repeatedly hurling abusive words at him. The fruit-seller. Govind Kashyap, pleads with policeman Krishnapal Singh that he got mangoes from the

wholesale market at ₹60.

■ Delhi, 3 other states yet to implement ONORC scheme: Solicitor General

Implement 'one nation, one ration card' scheme: SC

New Delhi, June 11: The Supreme Court on Friday said states and union territories must implement "one nation, one ration card" (ONORC) scheme as it allows migrant workers to get ration at the place of their work in other states as well where their ration cards are not registered.

The top court also took strong note of the delay in development of a software meant to register workers of unorganized sector to create a national database and posed queries to the Centre as to how the benefit of free food grain till November this year under the 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna' would reach to migrant labourers having no ration

A vacation bench comprising justices Ashok Bhushan and M R Shah also reserved its verdict on a fresh application filed by activists - Anjali Harsh Bharadwaj, Mander and Jagdeep Chhokar seeking direc-

New Delhi, June 11: The BJP on Friday alleged

Delhi government is

under the control of "ration mafia" and claimed that its proposal

of home delivery of sub-

sidised grains is yet

Addressing a press conference, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Kejriwal govern-

ment cannot violate the

Food Security Act, and

fair price ration shops

are at its core for the sup-ply of subsidised grains

to the poor as they are

covered under the law's

provisions and are accountable for any

lapse.
If grains are home-

delivered, people will not

get to know how much of

it is going where and how

another "scam".

Arvind

chief minister

Kejriwal-led

▶ **THE TOP** court also took strong note of the delay in development of a software meant to register workers of unorganized sector to create a national database and posed queries to the Centre as to how the benefit of free food grain till

November this year tions to the Centre and states to ensure food security, cash transfers, transport facilities and other welfare measures for the migrant workers on grounds that they are in dire need for help as the crisis is bigger this

The bench asked the Centre, the petitioner activists and the states to file written notes in the

The application was filed in the pending suo motu case of 2020 on the issue of problems faced by migrant workers due to curbs clamped in country amid a resurgence of Covid-19 cases.

During the hearing, Solicitor General Tushar

New Delhi, June 11:

Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on

Centre of abusing few

state governments instead of supporting them and claimed the

"The Centre does not

have any other job apart

from abusing some state governments. The entire

central government and

BJP are targeting chief

ministers of three-four

states. Sometimes, they

abuse the West Bengal

CM, sometimes Delhi

CM and sometimes they

has

'Bharatiya

accused

Delhi govt under control of 'ration

mafia', doorstep ration a scam: BJP

Centre should support state

become

govts in their initiative: Sisodia

Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said that states like Delhi, West Bengal, Aishwarya Bhati who Chhattisgarh and Assam have not implemented the 'one nation, one ration card" (ONORC) scheme so far.

The counsel for Delhi, however, opposed the submission saying it has been implemented. On being told by the counsel for West Bengal

that there were certain issues with seeding with the Aadhaar numbers, the bench shot back saying, You must implement it. This is for the welfare for migrant workers who can get ration in every

The bench said that it was concerned with as to how those migrant workers, who do not have ration cards, would be able to avail the benefits of welfare schemes.

What about the registration of workers of unorganized sectors. unorganized Why should development of a software take so long. You initiated it perhaps in August, last year and it is still not over, the

Jharkhand CM," he

alleged dur-

ing an online

Manish briefing.

r e c e n t instances where the Supreme Court inter-

vened in matter related

to board exams and oxy-

gen shortage, he claimed

that the Centre only works after the apex court raps it. "They said

oxygen supply was not

done properly by the

knows who was responsi-ble for the mess," Sisodia

but everyone

states

he said, while attacking "One nation one ration

mucn or it might have the Delhi government for card" scheme and not Security Act-covered disappeared on the way, not implementing the connecting its ration programme. — PTI

Sisodia Referring to

was also appearing for the Centre.

The bench asked as to why the Centre still needed some more months for making the software which can help preparing a national data of work-

ers. "Why do you still need three-four months. You are not conducting any survey but you are only creating a module so that data can be fed to your mechanism," it observed.

The mechanism, which is being made, will be robust and this would help authorities in monitoring and supervision of the schemes. Why will it take so many months. You are only preparing a software for creating the national database, the bench observed.

Senior Dushyant Dave, appearing for the activists, said the welfare schemes be must be extended to all those who do not have the ration cards as the problems this

shops with electronic point of sale (EPOS) machine to "evade"

accountability.

"Grains at doorstep is

very much a 'jumla' (rhetoric). The doorstep ration delivery is yet another scam of the

Kejriwal government. It

is now being totally con-

trolled by the ration mafia. Doorstep ration

delivery might look good

on the face of it but it is a

big scam and a fraud on

the people of Delhi,'

With Kejriwal targeting Prime Minister

Narendra Modi-led cen-

tral government for not

approving his dispensa-

tion's home delivery scheme, the senior BJP leader said the chief

minister is free to

scheme outside the Food

Prasad alleged.

launch



People wait in queue at a vaccination centre at Fazilpur Village in Gurgaon on Friday. - PTI

Maximum speed limits revised for all vehicle categories

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

The maximum speed limit set for private cars, taxis and jeep users passing through stretches of national high-ways, Ring Road, Outer Ring Road and IGI airport road is 70/60 kmph, according to the Delhi Traffic police's revised maximum speed limit for dif-

ferent categories of motor vehicles plying on city roads. According to the revised notification by the Delhi Traffic Police, the maximum proad limit set for MI entere speed limit set for M1 category vehicles has been notified as 70/60 kmph for high speed/access controlled roads, including stretches of the national highways passing through Delhi, Noida Toll Road, Saleemgarh bypass road, Barapullah Nallah, Northern Access Road, Central Spine Road, Ring Road, Outer Ring Road, Pusta Road and IGI Airport road.

Passenger vehicles comprising not more than eight seats in addition to driver's seat like cars, Jeeps and cabs fall under the M1 category vehicles, police said.

However, the maximum speed limit set for these M1 category vehicles for all other arterial roads in the areas between Ring Road and Outer Ring Road, beyond Outer Ring Road, inside Ring Road and entire Trans Yamuna area, is 50 Kmph, the traffic police said.

Also, now the maximum speed limit for taxis and cabs is notified at par with private cars on these roads, it said.

According to the Delhi Traffic police, the last revision of speed limits on majority of roads and stretches was undertaken Thereafter in 2017 and 2019, the maximum speed limit for few roads was further revised.

Meenu Choudhary, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), said, "There have been a number of changes and improvements in the road infrastructure in the city in past few years, including construction of flyovers, underpasses, high speed/signal free corridors as well as improvement in vehicle technology. Further, there was a need to make speed limit uniform on Delhi roads as far as possible. Therefore, a revision of the existing speed limits was felt necessary, she said. According to the revised

notification, speed limits for two-wheelers is now separately notified as 50 Kmph on the roads where speed of car is 50 Kmph, and 60 Kmph on roads where it is 70/60 kph. The maximum speed limit for M2 and M3 category vehicles (passenger vehicles comprising nine or more seats in addition to the driver's seat) has also been notified.

The maximum speed limit for M2 and M3 categories vehicles has been notified as 50 kmph on roads where speed of car is 50 kmph, and 60 Kmph on roads where it is 70/60 kph, whereas the maximum speed limits for all types of transport vehicles, excluding M1, M2 and M3 category

4 of family among 5 run over by truck in Najafgarh

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

Five people, including four members of a family, were mowed down by a speeding dumper truck early Friday in south-west Delhi's Najafgarh area, police said. The deceased have been identified as Ashok (30), his wife Kiran (27), his sons Ishant (5) and Dev (2) and one Jawahar Singh (93), they said.

While Ashok and his family were walking on the roadside to take a bus to visit a temple in Gurgaon, Singh was out for his morning walk, the police said. After hitting the victims, the truck crashed into vehicles parked by the roadside, they said.

A CCTV footage of the incident went viral on social media. In the video, the family of four is seen walking on the road near the parked cars. Ashok was carrying his younger son in his arms while his elder son was walking with his mother when the truck mowed them down. Singh and Dev died dur-

ing treatment at the Safdurjung Hospital, he said. The driver, who has been identified as Rajesh (35), was arrested from the spot. Five vehicles parked at the spot were damaged in the accident caused by the truck driver's rash and negligent driving, the police said.

Bank loans: SC declines plea for interest-free moratorium

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

The Supreme Court on Friday declined a plea for interest-free moratorium on the payment of term loans/EMIs for six months on bank loans because of the dislocation of business and economic activities in the wake of the second spell of Covid pandemic.

Telling the PIL petitioner advocate Vishal Tiwari that they were no experts on financial matters or matters relating to policies, a bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice

M.R. Shah said, "These are all policy and financial decisions. We cannot go into policy decisions.'

The court also said that the issues raised by the PIL petitioner advocate have already been dealt with by them in their judgment relating to issues arising from loan moratorium payment

Referring to a report of Centre Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), which had said that around one crore people have lost their jobs and are in a difficult situation, Mr Tiwari told the court

that a large section of the population depends on private jobs for their survival.

He said that the situation arising from the sec-ond spell of the Covid pandemic is worse than the one witnessed last year when the pandemic had hit the world.

Mr Tiwari had sought direction to the Centre to take effective and remedial measures to redress and overcome the financial stress and hardships faced by the borrowers in the wake of the second wave of Covid and the consequent lock-

Postpone ALMS INI CET

separate

exams by 1 month: SC

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

The Supreme Court, on Friday, postponed the All India Institute of Medical Sciences' (AIIMS) INI CET exam, which was to take place on June 16, by one month, permitting it to be conducted any time after the expiry of one month.

The INI CET exam is conducted for graduate doctors for admissions to postgraduate MD and MS courses in leading government medical institutes in the country, including AIIMS, PGI Chandigarh, Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and (JIPMER),

Puducherry, and National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru. "Considering that many of

the candidates intending to appear in the exam are on Covid duty and in remote areas, we are of the opinion that the date, June 16, is arbi-trary. We direct the exam to be postponed by one month, Needless to say, the exam can be held any time after the expiry of one month," said the order passed by a bench comprising Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice M.R. Shah. The order was passed on the petitions by Pulami Mondal and 25 doctors and the Chhattisgarh chapter of Indian Medical Association.



Congress workers ride on horse cart during a protest against petrol price hike in New Delhi on Friday.

Monsoon may reach Delhi by June 15

New Delhi, June 11: The shore trough lies off the southwest monsoon is likely to reach Delhi by June 15, 12 days before its usual date of June 27, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said on Friday. In 2008, too, the wind system had reached Delhi on June 15, said Kuldeep Srivastava, head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre.

'Conditions favourable for an early onset. It (monsoon) may reach Delhi by June 15 this

time," he said. A low pressure area lies over northwest Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move across Odisha, Jharkhand and north Chhattisgarh over the next three to four

days, the IMD said. A trough runs from south Punjab to the centre of this low pressure area. Also, south-westerly winds are prevailing along the west coast and an offwest coast.

These conditions are likely to persist over the next five to six days.

"Under these favourable meteorological conditions, the southwest monsoon is likely to advance over the entire country outside south Rajasthan and Kutch region of Gujarat during the next five-six days," the IMD said.

Srivastava said largely, three factors are considered for declaring the arrival of the monsoon in an area (after it makes onset in Kerala) — widespread rainfall over a large area, prediction of more precipitation over the next three to four days and easterly winds.

In 2013, monsoon covered the entire country by June 16, according to Mahesh Skymet Weather, a private forecast-

Judicial custody of wrestler Sushil extended till June 25 AGE CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

A Delhi court on Friday extended the judicial custody of Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar till June 25 in connection with the alleged brawl at Chhatrasal Stadium in which a young wrestler

Sushil Kumar was produced before metropolitan magistrate Reetika Jain at the end of the nine-days judicial custody. The international wrestler is facing charges of murder, cupable homicide and kidnapping. He, along with his associates, allegedly assaulted Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends at the stadium on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over an alleged property dispute. Dhankar, succumbed to the

injuries later.



Police has alleged Sushil Kumar the main culprit and mastermind of the murder and said that there is electronic evidence wherein he and his associates could be seen beating

Sushil Kumar nabbed on May 23, along with co-accused Ajay Kumar Sehrawat. He has already undergone custodial interrogation of 10 days. A total of 10 people, including Sushil Kumar,

have been arrested so far in connection with the

The Delhi Police Crime Branch has also arrested a close aide of Sushil Kumar. A senior police officer said the accused, identified as Anirudh, was involved in the alleged assault. He was arrested in the national capital on Thursday.

Police have called Kumar the "main culprit and masbehind the termind" alleged murder and said there is electronic evidence in which he and his associates could be seen beating Dhankar with

A video had surfaced on social media purportedly showing Kumar and his associates allegedly hitting a man with sticks. On May 31, police had suspended the arms licenses of Kumar.

Pregnant woman moves HC, seeks Covid jab New Delhi, June 11: A preg-nant woman Friday and disposed of the woman's approached the Delhi High Court seeking direction to

the Centre to include pregnant women in Covid-19 vaccination drive on priority basis. The high court was informed by the Centre's counsel that the government is seized of the issue and will take a decision on the

Noting the statement made by the Centre's counsel, Justice Amit Bansal said no further orders are required

petition. Advocate Vasudha Zutshi, representing the woman, said the petitioner is in advanced stage of pregnancy and desires to get vaccinated on priority basis.

She sought direction to the government to issue a fresh notification to include pregnant women in the vaccination drive on priority basis. Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma and central government standing counsel Anurag Ahluwalia said National Technical

NORTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER DOCUMENT

Advisory Immunization (NTAGI) has issued a notification on May 28 in which various recommendations were made including that all pregnant women visiting antenatal care may be informed about the risks and benefits associated with the Covid-19 vaccines.

A pregnant woman may be offered the available Covid-19 vaccine anytime during the pregnancy, the NTAGI recommendations said.

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o. 196-S/71/2019-20/Tender Notice/TS/FeMn Due on 11.06.2021 Tenders for and on behalf of the President of India are invited by Chief Engineer/TSP, Northern Railway, Headquarters office, aroda House, New Delhi-110001 for manufacture and supply of the following material:-								
 Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Cost of tender document	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Tender value (In Rs.)	Date & Time of opening of tender	Period of completion	
211-2671- 2020-21- NR	Manufacturing & Supply of Ferro Manganese as per Northern Railway Thermit Portion Plant Lucknow's standard specification TPP/FeMn/2020	36.47 MT	NIL	89,520	44,75,598.4	05.07.2021 at 14.30	8 months	

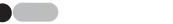
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ED conducts searches

at Nageswara's offices

Hyderabad: Enforcement Directorate officials on Friday conducted searches at some of the offices of Madhucon Group belonging to TRS MP and its Lok Sabha floor leader Nama Nageswara Rao, sources said. The searches are related to alleged fund diversion of Ranchi Expressway Limited, a Madhucon Group company, they said. The earches were conducted at Madhucon offices in Jubilee Hills here and residences of some of the directors. sources said. The Central **Bureau of Investigation** (CBI), in March 2020, booked the promoters of the Ranchi Expressway Ltd, including its CMD K. Srinivasa Rao, for allegedly causing a loss of over tium of banks led by Canara Bank. - PTI

Not leaving Cong,

says Pranab's son

Kolkata: Dispelling rumours Late President Pranab Mukheriee's son. Abhiiit Mukherjee, on Friday made it clear that he is not leaving the Congress unlike his friend Jitin Prasada. Television channels and a few newspapers had reported he would be joining the **Trinamul Congress on Friday** afternoon. "I remain in the Congress and reports that I am joining Trinamul or any other party are not correct," Mukherjee, a former Lok Sabha MP and Congress Campaign Committee chairman during the assembly elections, told PTI over phone. Mr Mukherjee had good relations with Jitin Prasada when they were colleagues in the Congress Parliamentary Party, and the Late President was also

Anticipatory bail of

known to be fond of him and

his father Jitendra Prasada.

Azam Khan denied Lucknow: The Lucknow

Bench of the Allahabad High Court on Friday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of Samajwadi Party MP Mohd Azam Khan in connection with appointment of 1,300 engineers, clerks and stenographers at Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam during the previous regime. The recruitment was carried out when Khan was the Urban development minister. Mr Khan is currently undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Lucknow after he tested positive for coronavirus. Passing the order, Justice Rajeev Singh said Khan is already in judicial custody in the case as he was served a warrant on November 19 last year in the Sitapur jail and as such the anticipatory bail plea was not maintainable. The bail plea was moved by Khan's lawyers Kapil Sibal and IB Singh. - PTI

HATE SPEECH: HC PAVES WAY TO GRILL MITHUN

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JUNE 11

The Calcutta High Court has ordered Bollywood actor and BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty to cooperate with the Kolkata Police in connection with a case against him for allegedly making explosive and provocative comments during his party campaign in the West Bengal Assembly Election. The high court also allowed the cops to question Mithun on a virtual mode while relieving him from appearing in person amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The

direction came on a day the BJP received a major organisational setback with the defection of its



national vice Mukul Roy to the ruling

Trinamul Congress. On May 6 a TMC worker lodged a complaint against Mithun at the Maniktala police station in North Kolkata on his comments "Marbo Ekhane Lash Porbe Shoshane (I will hit vou here and the body will fall in the crematorium)" and "Ek Chhobole Chhobi (Just one snakebite will turn one into a photograph)" at the Brigade Parade Ground rally of the BJP on March 7 when

Lucknow, June 11: In an apparent reference to chief minis-Yogi Akhilesh Adityanath's New Delhi

visit, Samajwadi Party Akhilesh Yadav on Friday said that bad days have come for the chief minister as he has to "wander door-to-door to retain his post"

"Such bad days have come for the head of the largest state that he has to wander from door-todoor in Delhi to retain his post," Mr Yadav said

in a tweet in Hindi.
Earlier in the day,
Adityanath had met
Prime Minister
Narendra Modi at his residence. Later, he also met Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president J.

P. Nadda. On Thursday, the chief minister had a meeting with Union home minister Amit Shah.

Adityanath's comes close on the heels of the party holding a series of review meetings in Lucknow, which had fuelled speculation of a ministerial reshuffle in the state.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party chief on Friday also claimed that there is no hope left for the people in the state as the Bharatiya Janata Party government is engaged in 'bandar baant', a Hindi word which suggests that the ruling party only looks after its own

'Bandar baant' refers to a story in which a monkey grabs an entire 'roti' on the pretext of dividing it between two cats. — PTI

Akhilesh says Yogi running door-to-door to retain post

New Delhi, June 11: Modi held deliberations with Home minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda on Friday amid speculation about a reshuffle in the Union Cabinet, an exercise Modi has not undertaken since forming the government for a second time in May 2019.

There is also a growing buzz about the Cabinet expansion in Uttar Pradesh after chief min-ister Yogi Adityanath met the BJP top brass during his two-day visit to the national capital.

Sources, however, added that PM Modi has been meeting Union ministers

in different batches of late, and Mr Nadda has also been present there. Union ministers Ravi Shankar Prasad and Jitendra Singh, besides BJP general secretary (organisation) Santhosh were also part of the deliberations on Friday.

deliberations among the top Bharatiya Janata Party leaders at the prime minister's residence came a day after Shah also met party allies from Uttar Pradesh, including Apna Dal's Anupriya Patel, who was a minister in the first Modi government but was not inducted in the next. There has been no offi-



SOURCES SAID the party leadership may move to take a series of measures to reinvigorate its state organisations and governments, and a reshuffle of the Union Cabinet can be a part of the larger exercise.

Amid reshuffle buzz, PM meets Shah, Nadda

cial word from the party on these deliberations. The BJP has of late been engaged in the review of its organisation and government works in different states. Mr Nadda had also held

a meeting with the party general secretaries where, besides the relief work carried out by the saffron organisation durits performance in the recent Assembly polls was also reviewed.

With the party gearing up for the next round of Assembly polls in five states early next year, including in allimportant Uttar Pradesh, it is expected to take various measures to bolster its social equation.

Of these five states, the BJP is in power in Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur, besides Uttar while Congress is at the helm in

Punjab. Santhosh, who has often been part of the confabulation among the BJP top brass, had recently visited Uttarakhand and Goa besides Uttar Pradesh.

Adityanath, Besides another state leader who had recently met Modi, Shah and Nadda is Suvendu Adhikari, the leader of opposition in West Bengal, a key state in the BJP's political schemes where it suffered a cethealt on Friday as its a setback on Friday as its national_vice_president Mukul Roy joined the Trinamul Congress.

Party leadership may move to take a series of measures to reinvigorate its state organisations and governments, says sources Sources said the party to reinvigorate its state organisations and governments, and a reshuffle of the Union Cabinet can be a part of the larger

Prime minister M Modi's meetings with ministers should be seen in connection with a series of deliberations the party has undertaken at the national and the

state level, they said. Three such meetings of Union ministers with the prime minister have been held so far at the latter's residence, and they have lasted for hours, sources

Sachin Pilot rubbishes talk of him joining BJP

'Doesn't have courage to speak to me': Pilot on Joshi's claim

Jaipur, June 11: A day after a group of Congress MLAs met Sachin Pilot, another party legislator on Friday expressed sup-port for the dissident leader as trouble brewed again in Rajasthan's rul-

ing party.

Mr Pilot, however, brushed aside speculation that he is switching to the BJP, like Jitin Prasada who quit the

Congress two days back. In Dausa, Todabhim MLA P.R. Meena said the party's central leadership should address the issues raised by Pilot, who led a rebellion last year against chief minister Ashok Gehlot.

An All India Congress Committee (AICC) panel formed then to sort out differences between Gehlot and the Pilot camp is yet to come up



Sachin Pilot

with a solution. Also during the day, Congress MLA Hemaram Choudhary, who sent his resignation Speaker Assembly recently, met Pilot at his Jaipur home. Like Meena, he is considered a part of the Pilot faction in the state Congress.

Mr Pilot, who was sacked as the deputy chief minister and the state's Congress chief after his rebellion, dis-

missed suggestions that Bharatiya Janata Party. He rejected a claim made on a television by Bharatiya show Janata Party leader Rita Bahuguna Joshi that she had spoken to him about the possibility. Rita Bahuguna Joshi

said she spoke to Sachin. She might have spoken to Sachin Tendulkar (the cricketer). She doesn't have the courage to speak to me. the Congress leader told reporters in Jaipur during his party's protest over fuel prices. Earlier in the day, he

visited Bhandana village in Dausa where he offered flowers at the memorial to his father and former Union minister Rajesh Pilot on his

■ 'Mukul was an opportunist who belongs to no organisation' Roy's desertion leaves BJP divided

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JUNE 11

The BJP shattered by its national vice president Mukul Roy's exit and his return to the TMC, has become a divided house in West Bengal with blame game between the two camps amid a fierce inter nal revolt since its poll debacle in the state.

section While one slammed the party leadership for inducting a Mir Jafar like Mr Roy without any judgment ahead of the elections, senior leaders alleged their rivals of having "no contribution" while

Krishnanagar North MLA's defection as a 'personal choice. Bishnupur BJP Saumitra Khan alleged, 'We saw Mir Jafar in Bengal before independence. But now we are seeing them in politics. These types of people are never accepted. Had he been Chanakya in politics, he could have succeeded in ensuring victory for his son Shubhrangshu from Bijpur

cannot do anything good. They can only harm. Another party MP, Arjun Singh, claimed that Mr Roy

Assembly seat this time.

But he failed. Mir Jafar

THE BJP has become a divided house in West Bengal with blame game between the two camps amid a fierce internal revolt since its poll debacle in the state

was an "opportunist" who belongs to no organisation. HIS colleague, Anupam Hazra, posted on Facebook, "A pathetic outcome of extra jubilation over one or two leaders during election and sidelining and insulting the efficient through lobbying!!! Now the royal passengers of chartered flights are also missing!!! Still there is

should stop lobbying and engage the efficient leaders who are sidelined!!!" Darjeeling BJP MP Raju

Bista said, "Mukul Roy is a senior and seasoned politician and his joining TMC is reflective of his personal choice. The beauty of democracy is that people are free to choose. But sadly today this freedom choose does not exist in West Bengal. BJP is making space for democracy to foster again in Bengal and as the 2021 elections showed, BJP has grown stronger in the grassroots level in Bengal and this momentum will continue unabated.

Cong, Owaisi fume over birth control advice to Muslims

MANOJ ANAND **GUWAHATI, JUNE 11**

Assam Congress and prominent Muslim leaders have slammed chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for asking a minority community in the state to adopt popula-

tion control measures.

In what was to mark the completion of a month in the office, Mr Sarma on Thursday told reporters that the minority Muslim community should adopt a "decent family plan-ning" policy to bring down poverty and control the social problems like to prevent encroachment and pressure on

land resources.
"He said that if the population explosion Temple Kamakhya (Guwahati) land will one day be encroached upon. This is unbecoming of the chief minister who is expected to be wellversed in the demographic facts of a state he Congress represents, leader Bobbeeta Sharma said

on Friday. In a hard-hitting statement, Ms Sarma who is the spokesperson of the Pradesh Committee Congress cited the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) released in December 2020, which said the total fertility rate (TFR) aeciinea across most Índian states

in the last five years. 'The total fertility rate is defined as the average number of children that would be born to a woman by the time she ends childbearing. A TFR of 2.1 is known as the replacement rate.

eligible, candidates can apply accordingly.

Subject

Posts

TGTs



has a quiet b'day at Delĥi house

Patna, June 11: Bihar father and his political chief minister Nitish Kumar on Friday extended birthday greetings to his arch rival Lalu Prasad, with whom his love hate relationship has been the stuff of legend in contemporary politics. Prasad, the founding president of Rashtriya Janata Dal who enjoyed unmatched mass following in his heydays, turned 74.

"Of course, I extend him my greetings. I always do", replied Kumar with a broad smile when asked by reporters what would he like to say on the birthday of the RJD supremo, whom he had unseated from power more than a decade ago.

hostility Political between the two leaders, which began in mid 1990s and continues till date barring a short-lived alliance in the previous decade, has been highly talked about in the political circles.

When Prasads elder son Tej Pratap Yadav got married in 2018, it was the image of the grooms from his wife.

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adversary in a warm embrace which hogged the limelight. Prasad, who has been

convicted in a number of fodder scam cases, was released from jail recent-ly, though the fresh outbreak of Covid-19 has kept the ailing septuagenarian from being in his home town, in the midst of his doting supporters.

The ailing septuagenarian, who is staying at New Delhi, took part in a quiet celebration, pictures of which shared on social media by his eldest daughter Misa Bharti.

Adored and abhorred in equal measure for his devil may care attitude, Prasad can be seen, in one of the pictures, flanked on either side by wife Rabri Devi, who had succeeded him as the chief minister of Bihar, and Misa besides his grandchildren.

Other pictures show the flamboyant politician, dressed in T-shirt and shorts, cutting the cake and receiving a bouquet

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SC refuses to hear ex-top cop Param Bir Singh's plea

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

The Supreme Court, on Friday, described as "shocking" the former Mumbai police commissioner. Param Bir Singh, saving that he had no confidence

Maharashtra police with which he has been associated for over three decades as IPS officer, as it declined to entertain his plea for the transfer of all the criminal cases registered against him in Maharashtra to the CBI or an independent agency.

Apparently intrigued by Param Bir Singh showing lack of faith in the Maharashtra police in which he grew up to become the top cop of the Mumbai police, the court observed that those living in glass houses should not throw stones on others.

9,000 people in two

blocks of South 24

Parganas district were

evacuated apprehend-

ing large-scale flooding

during Friday's high tide, Sunderbans devel-

Bankim Hazra said.

minister



APPARENTLY INTRIGUED by Param Bir Singh showing lack of faith in the Maharashtra police in which he grew up to become the top cop of the Mumbai police, the court observed that those living in glass houses should not throw stones on others.

Describing as "shocking" Param Bir Singh's plea that he was seeking the transfer of all the criminal cases to the CBI or an independent agency because of his lack of trust in the Maharashtra police, a bench comprising Justice Hemant Gupta Justice

were part of Maharashtra IPS cadre for 30 years and served it. Now you are saying you do not have faith in that system. It is a shocking allega-

Ramasubramanian said,

"It is very surprising. You

tion." At the outset of the hearing, the court told Mr Singh that it can't pass a blanket order in respect of all the FIRs registered against him and asked him to approach the Bombay high court or any

other appropriate forum. Param Bir Singh had moved the top court for transfer of all the criminal cases to the CBI or an independent agency and quashing of the March 17, 2021, order removing him as the police chief of the metropolis.

Dilip Kumar discharged from hospital

discharged from a hospibreathlessness.

He was admitted to suburban Khar-based Hinduja Hospital, a non-

prayers of all of you, Dilip Sahab is going to his home. Your immense love and affection always touches the heart of Sahab," a post on the official Twitter handle of Kumar read. The tweet was shared by the cinema icon's family friend. Faisal Farooqui.

The veteran was diagnosed with bilateral pleural effusion — a build-up of excess fluid between the lavers of the pleura outside the lungs and underwent a successful pleural aspiration proce-

Mumbai, June 11: Acting legend Dilip Kumar was

tal here on Friday, five days after he was hospitalised due to episodes of

Covid facility, on Sunday. "With the blessings and

dure on Wednesday. — PTI PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001

Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813 Contactn No. 96461-18773 Website: www.pspcl.in Kolkata, June 11: Over tion was not very severe TENDER ENQUIRY NO.: QQ- 2317/PO-P in Sagar and Mousuni Chief Purchase Officer/ MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL islands as of now, though flooding was 2nd floor, Multistory Building, The Mall, Patiala, invites E-Tender for reported from some pockets. "We shifted Procurement of 65,000 Nos. Male-Female contact sets for 11KV 400

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relevant subject with min 50% marks Graduation with Psychology/Master Degree in Psychology with 03 years experience in Counselor counseling and guidance. Experienced in working with students. Last date for submission of applications is 27 June 2021 on prescribed form available at school

office/website (www.apssrinagar.co.in). Applicant must submit his/her application duly accompanied with self-attested photocopies of all certificates & bank draft of Rs, 200/- in favour of Army Public School, Srinagar. Subject and computer proficiency test will be conducted for candidates and there after only shortlisted candidates qualifying in written test in merit will be called for the interview telephonically. Please ensure your correct contact no. For further details contact between 10.00 a.m. to 02 p.m. on contact No. 0194-2468224/ 9906347599/8492936337. Sd/- Principal

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06098 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Kochuveli Weekly Special	Ernakulam Town	Ernakulam Jn.	09:35/09:40

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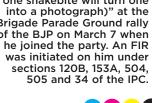


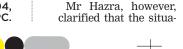




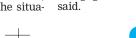


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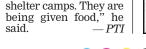
4,200 people from Sagar

Island and over 5,000

people from Mousuni to

Mantri: Over 9K people moved

to safety in South 24 Parganas























Assam CM Sarma meet RSS chief

Nagpur: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh supremo Mohan Bhagwat at the organization's headquarters here on Friday. He had come only to take Bhagwat's blessings after becoming chief minister, he said. This was Mr Sarma's first visit to the RSS headquarters after becoming chief minister of Assam a month ago. He spent more than an hour at the RSS headquarters. Speaking to the media later, the Assam chief minister said his family has old relations with Bhagwat. The meeting was personal and no

Top Maoist killed in Odisha encounter

politics was discussed, Sarma

added. — PTI

Bhubaneswar: A Maoist was on Friday gunned down during a joint combing operation by special operation group jawans and Odisha police at Padampur in Odisha's Bargarh district. The security personnel also seized a cache of arms and ammunition, including an AK-47 rifle, from Jhanj Reserve Forest near Bhanjagunda area, informed state director-general of police Shri Abhay. However, the identity of the slain rebel was yet to be ascertained, the DGP said. According to reports, a group of Left Wing Extremism cadres opened fire on the security personnel when the latter were carrying out a combing operation in Jhanj Reserve Forest. The security personnel retaliated with full force and in the process a cadre in uniform was killed. However, the remaining Maoists managed to escape.

More relaxations from Monday in TN

Chennai: Extending the lockdown till June 21, chief min-ister M.K. Stalin announced a slew of relaxations acros state, more of them in the 27 districts where Covid-19 infections have shown a decline. In the other 11 districts too, a few relaxations like allowing security services and housekeeping staff in apartments and other buildings have been announced. However, in the rest of the State, liquor shops will be open from 10 am to 5 pm and beauty parlors, spas, salons can function from 6 to 5 pm without switching on the air conditioner and not accommodating customers more than per cent of the capacity. The relaxations, announced after reviewing the spread of coronavirus district wise.

PK meets Pawar

■ Continued from Page 1

how to unite the Opposition parties against the BJP," Mr Malik added.

Senior NCP leader and Cabinet minister Chhagan Bhujbal said Prashant Kishor, a successful election strategist, has helped various parties win elections at the Centre and states with his suggestions and strategies. "I don't know the exact reason behind the meeting, but if he comes with a suggestion, Mr Pawar will certainly consider it," he added.

Shiv Sena spokesman Arvind Sawant welcomed the meeting, saying: "At present, polarisa tion is needed in the country. If democracy needs to be preserved, a strong Opposition is needed."

In March 2021, the Shiv Sena had said there was a need to restructure the UPA, and a new alliance should be led by a senior leader like Sharad Pawar as many regional parties are not ready to work under the Congress' leadership. According to the Sena, if the UPA is restructured in this manner, more parties would join the alliance.

Yogi meets Modi

■ Continued from Page 1
Mr Shah and a few other

Union ministers have been meeting the PM almost daily

over Covid related issues.
After meeting the PM, the UP
CM tweeted: "Today, I had the privilege of meeting respected PM Modi and seek his guidance. I wholeheartedly thank him for taking out time from his busy schedule for the meeting and the counsel."

The BJP's Central leadership, it was learnt, had been receiving complaints from a section of party leaders regarding the UP chief minister's style of functioning and the perceived neglect of the Brahmin votebank, which is considered one of the core votebanks of the party.

GST Council to meet today

Tax cut on Covid essentials, black fungus medicine on agenda

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will Saturday chair the meeting of the GST Council, which is expected to decide on tax relief for Covid-19 essentials and black fungus medicine.

The 44th GST Council meeting will be attended by minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur, besides finance ministers states and Union Territories and senior officers from Union gov-ernment and states, the Union finance ministry

tweeted on Friday. The Council will discuss the report of the Group of Ministers, headed by Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, on GST concessions on Covid-19 relief items like medical grade oxygen, pulse oximeters, hand sanitisers and ventilators, among others.



New Delhi, June 11: Protesting farmer unions Friday announced they will organise dharnas at governor houses across the country on June 26 to mark the completion of seven months of their agitation against the three new Central agrimarketing laws.

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of over 40 farmer unions, said they will show black flags during their June 26 protest and send memorandums to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Farmer leader Inderjit Singh of SKM told a press conference that the day will be observed as "Kheti Bachao, Loktantra Bachao Diwas (save farming,

democracy day)".
"We will protest by showing black flags at Raj Bhavans and giving memorandum to the President through the governor of each state, who is the President's representative.

'It (June 26) is also the day when Emergency was declared in 1975 and we will complete seven months of our protest. Along with tarming, democratic rights of the people have also been attacked in this environment of dictatorship. This is an undeclared emergency," Mr Singh said. Thousands of farmers have been camping at Delhi's borders for more than six months now in protest against the three



A health worker administers a dose of the Covid-19 vaccine at a railway hospital in Prayagraj on Friday. -PTI

Besides, GoM also looked into vaccines, drugs and medicines for Covid-19 treatment and testing kits for its detection.

Some state finance ministers in the GoM are understood to have pitched for a rate cut on Covid-19 essentials. UP finance minister

Suresh Kumar Khanna, who is also a member of the GoM, had on Wednesday said the state is in favour of cutting taxes on Covid-19 essentials to facilitate patients, but will accept the decision of the GST Council

The GST Council in its

on tax rates.

previous meeting on May vaccines and medical supplies unchanged after the BJP- and Opposition-ruled states sparred over whether the tax cut benefits will reach the common man. The GoM was set up to recommend rates for Covid-19 essentials.

The Congress party- and Opposition-ruled states have been demanding a reduction in taxes but the central govern-ment felt the move may not result in tangible gains for people. Currently, 5 per cent GST

is levied on domestically manufactured vaccines, while it is 12 per cent for Covid-19 drugs and oxygen

In the meeting on May 28, GST was exempted on import of Amphotericin B, a medicine used for the treatment of black fungus.

HC orders judicial probe into building collapse in Mumbai **SHAHAB ANSARI**

MUMBAI, JUNE 11

Taking a suo motu notice of the collapse of a residential unit in Malad area of Mumbai, in which 12 people lost their lives, the Bombay High Court on Friday ordered a judicial inquiry into the incident. The court also reprimanded the civic body for passing the buck saying the incident happened at Collector's land.

A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni said that a commissioner rank officer will conduct the inquiry and a preliminary report has to be submitted to the court by June 24.

The court pulled up BMC for trying to pass the buck by saying that it was collector's land. The court also said that innocent citizens are dying because there's **IMD** warns of extremely heavy showers in Mumbai region

Mumbai, June Mumbai and neighbouring areas are "very likely to receive extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places on Sunday, the India meteorological department said in a report on Friday evening. It also issued a similar "red alert" for Ratnagiri and Raigad districts in

coastal Maharashtra. A few places in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane may receive heavy rains no will power in civic offi-

cials to resolve the issue. Addressing all the municipal corporations of Metropolitan Region, the court warned and said that one more instance of a building collapse and court will come

11: on Saturday too, it said. Rainfall of more than 204.5 mm in 24 hours is considered as extremely heavy.

'Mumbai, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts are very likely to receive extremely heavy rains at isolated places on Sunday. Raigad and Ratnagiri districts have similar alert for Saturday as well," said the Regional Meteorological Centre of the IMD here.

down heavily on the corporations. It noted that between

May 15 and June 10 this year, four incidents of building collapse were reported in Mumbai and adjoining areas, in which a total of 24 people died.

sedition in Lakshadweep Aisha Sulthana says she will 'keep fighting' for native land

Filmmaker Sulthana, who was booked under sedition charges by Lakshadweep police on June 10, said on Friday that she will "keep fighting" for her native land and her voice will "grow louder" from now on.

June

The Lakshadweep police had on Thursday booked Sulthana on sedition charges on a complaint by a BJP leader that she spread false news about the spread of Covid-19 in the Union Territory during a TV debate.

Kochi,

The complaint was filed by the BJP's Lakshadweep unit president Abdul Khader. "I did not raise my voice for the land just so that I will lose my strength when they attempt to weaken me. From now my voice will only grow louder," she wrote on Facebook.

According to the FIR odged by Kavaratti lodged by Kavaratti police, a case under sections 124 A (sedition) and

Filmmaker booked for

Aisha Sulthana

IPC has been registered against the filmmaker.

"The BJP leader who filed the case hails from Lakshadweep. While he betrays his native land, I will keep fighting for it. It is the betravers who will find themselves alone tomorrow," she said in her

Khader, in his complaint, said that Sulthana, during a debate in a Malayalam TV channel, had alleged that the Central government used biological weapons for the spread of Covid-19 in Lakshadweep.

"Now to the people of Lakshadweep: The sea protects you, and you protect it in return. What the

betrayers have and what we don't is fear," Sulthana said in the post.

The BJP leader, in his complaint, has alleged that Sulthana's was an anti-national act, which tarnished the "patriotic image" of the central government and sought action against her.

The Lakshadweep-based model and actor Sulthana has worked with several Malayalam filmmakers.

An archipelago located the Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep has been witnessing protests by locals over the recent actions and administrative reforms being implemented by island administrator, Praful Khoda Patel.

The residents are seeking repeal of the proposed Lakshadweep Develop-ment Authority Regulation, the Lakshadweep Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation (PASA or the Goondas Act) and the Lakshadweep Preservation Regulation.

IIT-K jumps 34 spots to reach 280th position in QS ranking

Kolkata, June 11: Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) has jumped 34 notches over its previous year's ranking and landed in the 280th position globally in the QS World University Rankings 2022, its director Prof Virendra Kumar Tewari said on Friday.

The result reflected the continuous years of hard work, dedication and perseverance which the institute believes to be the heart and soul of progress, Tewari said.

The London-based Quacquarelli Symonds has released the QS World University Ranking 2022 recently. "I request my colleagues to put more effort and also to look into the aspects where we are

lagging others so as to improve and finally achieve our vision to be in the top 10," the IIT-KGP director said. The parameters that are

taken into consideration for the rankings include academic reputation, employer reputation, citations per faculty, faculty student ratio, international faculty ratio and international students' ratio. Out of 100, IIT-K has

scored 88 in citations per faculty metric and bagged 67th rank across the world in this category, Mr Tewari said.

This year, the world's top 1,300 universities have been featured in the QS Rankings 145 more than in the edition of 2021. — PTI

BRO sets up 2 centres of excellence

AGE CORRESPONDENT **NEW DELHI, JUNE 11**

Defence Rajnath Singh on Friday dedicated to the nation Centres Excellence established by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) at the national capital. These Centres have

been established to achieve excellence in road safety as well as foster growth in the construction of roads, bridges, airfields and tunnels. The Centre of Excellence for Road Safety and Awareness (CoERSA) aims to create awareness about road safety through analysis sharing of road accidents and suggesting methods to save pre-cious lives. The Centre of Excellence for Roads, Bridges, Air Fields and Tunnels (CoERBAT) focuses on institutionalising the knowledge gained over the years in the development of almost 60,000 kilometres of roads, 56,000 metres of bridges, 19 airfields and four tunnels in the eastern and north-western part of the country. The defence minister

appreciated the efforts of BRO in establishing the Centres of Excellence, expressing confidence that they will play a piv-otal role in saving precious lives.

SC agrees to close case against Italian Marines

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to order the dropping of criminal proceedings against allan Marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen off Kerala coast in 2012, after the court was informed that ₹10 crore compensation for the families of victims have been deposited with the court

Referring to the interna-tional arbitral award and the terms of the agree-ment among India, Italy

and the Kerala government, a vacation bench comprising justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah said the case against Massimilano Marines Latorre and Salvatore Girone for the offences would be now pursued by

In February 2012, India had accused the two marines on board the MV Enrica Lexie — an Italian flagged oil tanker killing two Indian fishermen who were on a fishing vessel in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The bench said that they

▶ A VACATION bench comprising justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah said the case against Marines Massimilano Latorre and Salvatore Girone for the offences would be now pursued by Italy there

will pass the order on June 15, 2021.

On the question of disbursement of money to the families of victims, the court indicated that it may ask Kerala high court to deal with it as it can monitor the aspect of dis-

With god's blessings, I reached zenith: CJI

bursement of the compensation to the families of It said that the money deposited with its registry

can be transferred to Kerala high court. During tne nearing solicitor-general Mehta told the court that the money can be deposited in

interest-bearing bank accounts for gradual withdrawal and accrual of adequate interest. Senior Advocate Sohail

Dutta, appearing for Italy, urged the bench to pass an order to quash the criminal proceedings pending against the Marines as per the award of the Hague-International Tribunal on Law of the

Sea.
The Tribunal had on May 21, 2020 ruled that two Marines will face trial in Italy. The Centre had told the

top court in August 2020 that "... the Republic of India has taken a decision to accept and abide by the Award passed by the said Tribunal which would have the bearing on the continuance of present proceedings" before the Supreme Court as well.

Athawale: Sena, BJP can form govt in Maha

Nagpur, June 11: Union minister of state for social justice and empowerment Ramdas Athawale on Friday said here a "Maha Yuti" (grand coalition) government of for-mer allies BJP and Shiv Sena and others can be formed in Maharashtra by sharing the chief minister's post with the Sena for half the term.

"I discussed this issue ith BJP leader with Devendra Fadnavis and it will also be discussed in a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi soon, said the Republican Party of India leader, who is part of the ruling NDA at the Centre.

The issues of Maratha reservation and relief measures in the aftermath of cyclone Tauktae would also be discussed

with the prime minister, he said. Referring to the recent meeting between chief Thackeray and Mr Modi in Delhi, and Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut's comment praising the PM, Mr Athawale said this was the right time to revive the Sena-BJP alliance.

The two parties fell out over the chief minister's post after the 2019 Assembly polls Maharashtra.

Mr Athawale also said that the Navi Mumbai airport should be named after late farmer leader D B Patil who did immense work for the people in the region. It is not necessary to name everything after late (Shiv Sena founder) Balasaheb Thackeray, he

Nagaland notifies formation of panel on Naga political issue

Kohima, June 11: The Nagaland government on Friday notified the constitution of the parliamen-tary committee on the Naga political issue comprising all the 60 members of the assembly and

the two MPs of the state. The panel would discuss matters relating to the issue and play the role of a facilitator in the ongoing peace talks between the central government and

the Naga Political Groups, the notification said. Its core committee is headed by chief minister Neiphiu Rio as the con-

The core committee also has 15 members. It comprises four leaders from the ruling NDPP, five members each from ruling alliance partner BJP and the Opposition NPF and an Independent MLA.

US FDA rejects emergency use approval of Covaxin jab

■ Continued from Page 1 India is satisfied with the Covaxin data and the news from USFDA is not going to impact the vaccination programme in India in any way. "Every country has a dif-

ferent regulatory system.

The scientific framework might be the same but nuances change depending on the context. They have own parameters which we respect. Our regulatory authorities too have separate parameters. I am sure the makers of Covaxin will address the shortcomings pointed out by the USFDA," Dr V.K. Paul, Member-Health, NitiAayog.

The Covaxin is also awaiting approval from the World Health Organisation (WHO) for EAU and as of now it is not part of the vaccines approved for international travel. There have been reports emerging from the US that Indians who went there after taking the shots of Covaxin have been asked to get "re-vaccinated" with the vaccines approved in

India on Friday recorded 91,702 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 3,403 deaths. The Centre will soon start a national level sero survey to understand the spread of Covid-19 in the population during the second wave.

The Bombay high court has asked the Centre to intensify its vaccination drive and look at Kerala and J&K pattern for door-todoor vaccination.

A division bench of Chief

Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni noted that it was unable to under-stand what the Centre's problem was in starting door-to-door vaccination when states such as Kerala and Jammu & Kashmir were already carrying out such drives.

The court was hearing a public interest litigation seeking door-to-door vaccination for senior citizens above the age of 75 and persons who are specially abled. 'We are not able to understand what the Centre's problem was. Why don't you (Union) communicate with these states and if it appeals to you, then you can ask other states also to start the same drive?" the court said, asking the government to

make a "sound decision". Meanwhile, health experts have suggested to the Union health ministry that mass, indiscriminate and incomplete vaccination can trigger emergence of mutant strains. They said there is no need to vaccinate those who have been infected by Covid and instead focus should be on those at higher

risk of infection. Dr V.K. Paul said the Centre will discuss these suggestions. He also said that a team of experts is also examining suggestions to reduce the present gap between two doses of Covishield. The gap was increased from six-eight weeks to 12-14 weeks after some other countries did

at the hill shrine of Sri Venkateswara Swamy in Tirupati on Friday. "With the benign blessings of Lord Venkateswara Swamy, I have reached this apex level in my career," said Justice Ramana. Mukul Roy & son rejoin TMC

party recently.

■ Continued from Page 1 in a detailed statement why I returned. No one will stay in the BJP in view of the present situation in the state. I never had any difference of opinion with the TMC. It is the same now and will

Ms Banerjee then announced her stand on

the fate of those who defected to the BJP

ahead of the polls but

wish to return to her

said: "Many betrayed our party during the Assembly polls to strengthen the hands of the BJP. Remember, they will not be taken back. It is our party's decision. There are some hardliners... who followed the footsteps of Mukul previously. They will definitely plan their return also with his comeback. Our party

Chief Justice of India Justice N.V. Ramana, along with his family, offers prayers

Though more people will come, no gaddar (betrayers) will be allowed any more. Do not ask about our ideology. Why is the BJP breaking the party everywhere? We are not doing it. Whatever we are doing is transparent." According to TMC sources, at least three more BJP MLAs are likely to defect to the will take a decision on Trinamul Congress

those who are not bitter.



THE ASIAN AGE

12 JUNE 2021

To stay relevant, Congress must hold inner-party polls

fter repeated electoral setbacks the party has endured in recent years, is there any relevance left for the Congress? Many may think the question redundant, considering how little the party's impact has been on the ground in most parts of the country. And yet, there is another question: "Does India need a viable Opposition?"

This question has not become pressing on account of the government's conspicuous failures to deal with the corona crisis last year and this year, which is pretty much an open and shut case, no matter how much the BJP may try to put a spin on it. Even before the virus struck, the economy stood shaken on account of questionable policies, and the unemployment rate was the highest in 45 years. Shortly thereafter, the Chinese Army marched into territories on India's side of the Line of Actual Control and remains there by and large. The humiliation is stark.

If none of this has quite registered with the public, there has to be a question about the effectiveness of the Opposition. For want of a viable choice, the voter may find themselves stuck in a rut. This hypothesis may be too structured. After

The present-day little confidence. There is a leadership vacuum. Party units do not func-

tion on the ground in they do, they are riven in factions, and cannot hold a coherent line.

all, the electorate is capable of springing a dramatic surprise, as in the election after the Emergency. But for that to happen, there have Congress inspires too ittle confidence. There a leadership vacuum.

On that count the present day Congress

On that count the present day Congress inspires too little confidence. There is a leader-

ship vacuum. Party units do not function on the ground in most states. And where they do, most states. And where they are riven in factions, and cannot hold a coherent line. In any case, the party is lacking a message. Defections are frequent, Jitin Prasada being the most recent. As for even the most swashbuckling of regional parties, these

are not of a mould that can fit the pattern nationwide. As if to attest to this, the ruling BJP's highest political priority appears to be to decimate a Congress whose trace is slowly disappearing. If this is an irony of sorts, it also tells us something about the meaning of brand value. There has been some G-23 messaging after Mr Prasada quit last Wednesday, but most in the G-23 are not even paper tigers. What the Congress needs is a stiff dose

of the sanjeevani of even a haphazard CWC election based on old AICC roles, which in turn would lead on to an immediate election for the party president.

The Gandhi family has meant well and has hewed to the line of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru. The tallest of them is too unwell to carry on even in an interim capacity. The most vital of them, and the most honorable, will not return as party chief. He resigned taking responsibility for a major poll defeat and announced none in his family would fill the slot after him. Which means he has paved the way

for a fresh election for party president.

If this can happen well before the upcoming election in UP, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Goa in early 2022, the Congress can be in the hunt for the laurels, and the political scene can be electrified. Let the Congress disregard the corona restrictions (as it would need to anyway when elections are announced), and go for inner-party

No room for complacency

The second wave of the pandemic Covid-19 has started showing signs of a decline, given that every indicator, from daily case load to number of deaths to test positivity rate, shows a definite pattern. This, however, offers little reason to be complacent what with experts predicting the arrival of a third wave which could be more dangerous and lethal. It is important that the government pull up the socks to take on it, and a truthful and scientific assessment of the first and second waves is key to the successful resistance to the pandemic.

It is in this context that the reports of an upward revision of the death toll in Bihar must be viewed. As per the latest government figures, Bihar has lost 9,375 people to the pandemic against the earlier figure of 5,424. This indicates that the government's figures have gone up by more than 72 per cent after the correction. The government's justification is that it has taken time to collect data from private hospitals, other facilities, in home isolation and of those who died of post-Covid complications. In a way, the government was admitting that

it was formulating its policies and strategies on a wrong database. The Bihar episode should be an eye-opener for all state governments and the Union government. The Union health ministry must ensure that every state we uniform guidelines, formed by the Indian Council of in the collecting data on infection and deaths. It must also ensure that the data from the rural and remote areas are also collected, collated and analysed scientifically so that it gives valuable inputs while preparing for the next wave. The right inputs based on reliable data should help the government plan the ways to augment healthcare infrastructure at places that would seem the next target of the virus.

THE ASIAN AGE

T. VENKATRAM REDDY

Printer & Publisher: K. SUDHAKAR

THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone:

(011) 23211124.

Whished and Printed on behalf of and for

Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.

London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.



'Bombshell Barbara' vs the 'Robed Yogi' of UP

Cuba. Maybe what he did-



Shobhaa's Take

chaste

"appointment"

did the Bewakoof Barb-

mond scorned... After the

scandal broke, Barbara

has been singing like a

canary with a sore throat

Alas, there go her dreams

of becoming a real estate

another false promise

made by Mehul to keep

his lady love interested

while he figured out his

next move — some say to

tycoon in Antigua -

love it that we're a chilled-out country so accepting of dramatic contrasts. I mean that! For centuries, we have absorbed absurdities and carried on like it's no big deal. Last week's headline grabbers couldn't have been more startlingly different! One, a mysterious femme fatale in Antigua, the other a saffron-robed chief minister of our country's most populous state. In both cases, their newsworthiness was hinged around perfect "Bombshell Barbara" is getting her cues so on point (wonder who's tutoring this one!). So is Yogi Adityanath (err... we can guess who his tutor is!). Both protagonists are armed with enough lethal ammo to blow up a few very important reputations. There is a third high-profile player. Harish Salve, who'll attract almost as much

attention in the weeks to

start with Let's "Bombshell Barbara", who's living up to the old chestnut... "Cherchez la femme" ... in the ongoing extradition saga featuring a disreputable and disgraced diamantaire from India — the infamous Mehul Choksi, maternal uncle of an equally "wanted" diamantaire Nirav Modi. The brilliant Harish Salve has his work cut out for him, in a way. He has announced he'll succeed in getting back the fugitive dia-mond merchant either hiding out or being held hostage in Dominica, who ran off with ₹3,500 crores of public money in the PNB scam. Please note, Shri Salve is saying this feat will be achieved in weeks, not months! That's Salve for you — brilliant, mercurial, well-connected, super-confident and successful.

While we hold our

as the tagline goes. But cheap glass. God knows how many high net-worth customers in India have been similarly tricked by Mehul and his breaths for the "Return of the Jewel Thief", the adventurous lady playing understudy Nirav. Funny part is, the cheated ladies a starring role in the high seas action drama in the Caribbean is attracting a can't file charges — those supposedly priceless and rare stones were probably great deal of attention sold minus receipts, to not just from Choksi's wife Preeti, but the media clients eager to park at large. The official "Jab unaccounted money in easy to store $heera\ motis.$ we met" versions keep changing, but when the can visualise these kidnapping story broke, ladies staring glumly at Barbara was khullam their obscene rocks and khulla described as Mehul's girlfriend. Till wondering what to do with the useless baubles. Meanwhile, "Bombshell Barbara" may be busy loyal wife Preeti protested and staunchly denied a romantic liaison, choosselling the rights to her ing to describe Barbara as story to Netflix. This is a family friend who had 'Pirates of the Caribbean", without Johnny tricked her sweet hus-Depp! But with a roly poly Mehul Choksi playing band into accepting a appointment" description). 'dinner Humpty Dumpty. (Preeti's That too, at 5.30 pm (why

On the other side of the not call it "high tea" with news cycle is a diminutive nashta paani?). Between 'ascetic" who is making some badass moves in the wanted man and the bombshell, we expected a Uttar Pradesh. Clearly prepping for the Asstad more action. What was this innocuous, embly elections in 2022. Yogi wants it to be his solo Preeti was talking about? show, not a group exhibibacked by his RSS bosses. describe it as a hot and daring dinner date a and encouraged to assert deux, then we are talking! his individuality more Oh, wait a minute, when emphatically, in order to defuse any argument as to ara discover that she'd been had by Mehul who calls the shots in UP — Modi or Yogi? Political Choksi in more ways watchers believe a new than one? When did she axis is forming, which find out she was just one pitches the Modi-Shah more greedy woman conned by Mehul, who combo against the Gadkari-Yogi *jodi*. If true, she alleges wooed her this could also pave the way for new power strucwith "priceless" diamond trinkets, which turned tures across India and out to be fake! During their "long walks" and "relaxed evenings"? As they say, beware the wrath of a woman diadent the invincibility of

On the other side of the news cycle is a diminutive 'ascetic' who is making some badass moves in Uttar Pradesh. **Clearly prepping** for the Assembly elections in 2022.

those currently holding

the reins at the Centre.

n't figure was the classic honey trap — "The End" trous errors of judgment (all that nonsense about love jihads, anti-Romeo squads), quickly got his to his *pyaar mohabbat*!

Diamonds are forever, act together and took a was peddling firm position against the anti-CAA riots in Muslim dominated areas. But then came the horrifying sight of Covid corpses floating down the rivers of Yogi's vast state of 240 million! Not good! Not good! Satyanaash... But hey, he bounced back swiftly! Fans and supporters are pointing out how he and gullible tamed and tackled the Covid-19 numbers, even managing to beat other states at keeping cases down. The interesting thing is this: that even the

> supporters are now uttering Yogi Adityanath's name in the same breath as Narendra Modi's. Sacrilege! And hello! Nobody is demanding their heads on a platter. They are also insisting Yogi is their guy. The main man. Which means the highest of the high commands is okay with the new narrative and is

hardcore, hard-bitten BJP

in fact encouraging such public talk. Frankly, this is a positive development absolute power corrupts absolutely, as we all know. Throwing in a serious challenger to NaMo at stage (the run-up to Elections 2022) is a smart, shrewd move It means all players will have to work that much harder to win this round. It also signals Yogi's elevation to a more visible, pan-India position, from where he can leverage and consolidate his image before the asli biggie the national elections of 2024. The person who should be watching these developments closely is Mamata Didi, given her prime ministerial ambitions. These two make worthy rivals — both come with their single and-not-ready-to-mingle status: the guy is a Yogi and the lady is a Yogini. Their followers worship

> Instagram handle: @ShobhaaDe; Twitter: @DeShobhaa

them and believe that

they can do no wrong.

The race to the hot seat

has suddenly got hotter!

LETTERS

KNOW YOUR HEROES

Thanks for publishing the editorial titled "Include Northeast in syllabus" (June 10). It is so true that the history curricula in schools and universities omit heroes from this exquisite region. Not a single line is devoted to the gallant Prince Tikendrajit Singh who fought against the British in the Anglo-Manipur war of 1891! Not a single mention of King Tirot Singh who died in Dhaka Jail after being imprisoned there by the British! For the same "crimes", Rani Gaidinliu was arrested in 1932 at 16 and spent her life in jail till India attained Independence. But no effort has been taken to educate our countrymen about her courageous sacrifice.

Kajal Chatterjee

SECRETIVE AS CHINA

IT IS A NO-BRAINER that Bihar had fudged the death toll as the crematoriums and burial grounds across the length and breadth of the country plus bodies floating in the Ganges narrate their own story. But not only ihar all states are guilty reputed international media outlets are eloquent about the under-reporting of deaths. The Centre ought to form an independent agency to ascertain the exact toll of Covid-induced deaths. Otherwise it shall be in the same league as China for being nontransparent.

Deepak Singhal

PRODIGAL'S RETURN

TRINAMUL CONGRESS chief Mamata Banerjee has turned the tables on Narendra Modi's BJP yet again by engendering a reverse defection wave. After nearly four years, her former aide Mukul Roy has returned to his alma mater, along with his son Subhrangshu. Ms Banerjee has predicted that more will follow in his footsteps. Good showing by TMC, but should they be given responsible postings?

Bhagwan Thadani

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

Farrukh Dhondy **Cabbages** & Kings



"Oh Bachchoo what can you write When your inspiration is gone And the day of joy passed into night And like a lone cloud forlorn You drift across an empty sky Propelled by a destined wind And like sinners wondering why And in what depth they have sinned?"

— From **Songs of the Randy Rundis** by Bachchoo

nn Boleyn, one of the wives Henry VIII condemned to be beheaded, was as white as an unburdened cloud or a ceramic sink or... You see, gentle reader, I am trying to get away from the cliché of "driven snow" because I have never understood what drives it. And yet in the now-running Channel 5 television drama, Ann is played by a black actress

Idiosyncratic casting is not new black actors have been cast as Julius Caesar, women as Titus Andronicus and black actors, female so far, as the

three Chekhovian sisters. In the case of Ann, however, no commentator has openly objected but a lot has still been said. The writerdirector of the series and Channel 5 put out a press release saying that their version intended to correct the prevalent view of Ann Boleyn as a manipulative schemer who deserved what she got. Though they didn't say it, what the writer-director who cast the black actress and her black brother in their respective roles probably intended was to win sympathy for Ann as a victim and someone who resists this victimisation, all in tune with the zeitgeist of the Black Lives Matter explosion.

Another seemingly well-informed reviewer pointed out that most historians and three previous depictions of Ann Boleyn in drama and film, characterised her not a manipulative sorceress, but as precisely the victim of capricious power. The Channel 5 drama was pushing against an open door.

The story ends horribly and tragically for Ann and her brother and this cross-racial casting sets out to prove that the privileged white establishment is guilty of racism — gosh! What a revelation — why didn't I think of it thank you, Channel 5!

My own viewing of the series, perhaps in total eccentricity, reminded me at several points of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle and had me wondering whether Oprah Winfrey was about to appear in the role of marriage counsellor.

Integrated or gender-and-colourblind casting has several purposes. It may be that it was introduced in Britain and America under pressure from black actors who complained of not having opportunities and work as there weren't many roles for them to play. As a member in the 1980s of two theatre companies, the Black Theatre Coop (BTC) and the Asian Co-operative Theatre (ACT, geddit?), we were very much in the thick of the clamour for parts for non-white actors. Our solution was not to cast blacks in traditional white roles, but to find and encourage the writing and production of plays about the black and Asian experience, contemporary, international, historical, epic, mythical and even sci-fi and fantastical. That vein of theatre has prospered in part and floundered in part but seems to have established itself firmly in the theatrical space of Britain, moving from the venues and audiences we played in and for, into the terrain of the nation's dramatic establishment. We were the proud and defiant fringe. Now black and Asian drama covers the whole scalp, sometimes scantily as "racial" concession, but also occasionally in rich, dramatic, Rastafarian ringlets.

There was a parallel impulse which prompted racially integrated casting, which was the contention that all the stage is a world, a self-contained world removed from, though portraying the realities of racial and nationalistic tensions.

It was this impulse or determination that caused the maestro Peter Brook to cast any and every nationality and race in his masterful ninehour production of the Mahabharat. Japanese and Caribbean actors played Indian heroes, heroines and gods. Brook's criterion was not race or nationality but something like "the best actor from all the world for the role". Akin to the players of Manchester United not representing the city of Manchester but drawn from anywhere and everywhere.

The Brook impulse was certainly not shared by sections of the Indian population. Inspired by Brook's liberality or, as some would say, liberties with the *Mahabharat*, I wrote a novel called Bombay Duck in which this same impulse — of universally integrated casting — results in tragedy. The book progresses to other instances and narratives to question all our notions of authenticity.
Perhaps Peter Brook would, with

these colour-blind casting eyes, direct Othello with a white female actor playing the principal part? I am almost certain that Channel 5 would not but am a bit doubtful about Britain's National Theatre or indeed the Royal Shakespeare Company, which might very well in the interests of "diversity" overcome the idea that the play depends to a large extent on perceptions of race and gender. When Laurence Olivier, palpably white, played Othello, he blackened his face to dramatise this dimension of the play. Through the last few decades, no choric group of white singers in the West would blacken their faces to represent black and white minstrels. If a white actor blacked up to play Othello there would be mass riots in the streets. But what if one of the established theatres cast a white female actor as Othello without a change into male clothes, skin colour or plummy accent? Interesting. Watch this space.



All the world's

18 KILLED IN BUS CRASH IN PAKISTAN

Karachi: At least 18 persons were killed and 30 others injured on Friday when an over-speeding passenger bus overturned in Pakistan's Balochistan province, a media report said.

The bus was travelling from Wadh to Dadu when it met with an accident at Khori in Khuzdar district of the province, Geo News reported. Fifteen people were killed on the spot. As soon as the accident was reported, rescue per sonnel rushed to the spot and started rescue operations, the report said.

The injured and deceased were shifted to Teaching Hospital Khuzdar, where three more people died and the death toll rose to 18, it said. The condition of some of the injured is said to be critical. Sources told the channel that the passenger coach lost control and overturned as it was over-speeding.

THREE DEAD AT FLORIDA SUPERMARKET

Royal Palm Beach, Fla.: A man fatally shot a grandmother and her 1-year-old grandson inside a Florida supermarket before killing himself, authorities said, causing dozens to flee the store in panic.

The shooting happened shortly after 11:30 am on Thursday at a Publix located in a strip mall that also houses small shops and restaurants.

Authorities initially said the shooter and the victims may have known each other. A later update from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office said there was no known motive or relationship between the suspect and the victims, but detec-

tives were still investigating.
The sheriff's office identified the suspect as Timothy J. Wall, 55, of Royal Palm Beach.

The names of the grandmother and her grandson won't be released. Their family invoked Marsy's Law, the sheriff's office said, which allows victims of crimes to block information that could be used to locate or harass them or their families from being made public.

INDONESIA DENGUE STUDY OFFERS HOPE

Jakarta: Dengue fever infections dropped dramatically in an Indonesian study where a bacteria was introduced into disease-carrying mosquitoes offering hope in the battle against an illness that sickens millions annually around the

Results of the three-year study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine this week, found that infecting dengue-carrying mosquitoes with a harmless bacteria called Wolbachia led to a 77 percent drop in human cases.

Infections requiring hospitalisation also fell by 86 percent in Wolbachia-treated areas of Yogyakarta, a city on Java island where the experiment was conducted, researchers said. The study was conducted by the World Mosquito Program at Monash University in Australia and Indonesia's Gadiah Mada university.

"The 77 percent figure is honestly quite fantastic for a transmittable disease and we're very grateful with the result," said Adi Utarini, a public-health researcher.

INDIA-KUWAIT SIGN MOU ON RECRUITMENT

Kuwait City: India and Kuwait have signed an MoU that brings Indian domestic workers in the Gulf nation within the ambit of a legal framework that streamlines their recruitment and provides them with the protection of the law.

The MoU was signed on Thursday Ambassador Sibi George and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait Majdi Ahmad Al-Dhafiri in the presence of visiting External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah.

Jaishankar arrived here on his first bilateral visit to the oil-rich Gulf nation early on Thursday, according to a press release issued by the Indian Embassy here. The MoU brings the Indian domestic workers in Kuwait within the ambit of a legal framework that streamlines their recruitment and provides them with the protection of the law.

G7 to donate 1 billion jabs

Leading economies feel joint approach is best to recover from Covid-19

Carbis Bay, June 11: G7 leaders gathered on Friday for their first inperson talks in nearly two years, with an expected pledge to donate one billion Covid vaccine doses to poor countries on the agenda in a show of Western democratic cohe-

The club of leading economies Britain, Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan and United States — say a United States — say a joint approach is the world's best chance for recovering from the global health crisis, and tack-

ling climate change. President Joe Biden has set the tone, ditching Donald Trump's isolationist message of resolve by the G7 and NATO against both Beijing and Moscow, as he heads into his first sit-down with Russian President Vladimir Putin next week in Geneva.

"The driving animating purpose of this G7 sum-mit is to show that democracy can deliver against the biggest challenges we're facing in the world," a senior US administration official said.

Campaigners say the G7's vaccine donations pledge for this year and next — including 500 million US doses — is far too little, too late to end a pandemic that has claimed over 3.7 million lives worldwide.

"If the best G7 leaders can manage is to donate one billion vaccine doses then this summit will have been a failure,' Oxfam said, insisting the world needs 11 billion doses. But the G7 has recognised it needs to rise to competing "vaccine diplomacy" efforts launched by China and Russia, with the Biden administration stressing it expects nothing in return for its donated jabs.

G7 leaders meeting at seaside resort of Carbis Bay in Cornwall, southwest England, are also expected to outline more help for developing nations to build up infrastructure, as a counterpoint to the debt-fuelled spending by China in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The initiative "will embrace a high standards, transparent, climate friendly, non-corrupt mechanism" for investinfrastructure ment in the developing world, the US official said. "It will be an alternative to that which other including countries, China, are offering." Underpinning the US-led



(Left to Right) President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, France's President Emmanuel Macron, President of the European Council Charles Michel, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and Italy's Prime minister Mario Draghi, take part in an EU coordination meeting in advance of the start of the G7 summit in Carbis bay,

CDC LOOKS INTO HEARTBURN AFTER PFIZER VAX

Washington, June 11: US health officials are investigating what appear to be higher than expected reports of heart inflammation in male teens and young adults after they get a second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vac-

It's not clear if the heart inflammation is caused by the shots and the reports still are rare, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. everyone 12 and older to get vaccinated.

As of May 31, the agency had 275 preliminary reports of such inflammation in 16- to 24year-olds, CDC's Dr Tom Shimabukuro told a government vaccine meeting on Thursday.

diplomatic revival, Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson adopted a new "Atlantic Charter" modelled on the pact signed by their World War II predecessors to help build a new world order.

UK says Delta variant 60% more transmissible

Londone, June British government said Friday that the new Delta coronavirus variant is 60 percent more transmissible in households than the variant that forced the country to lock down in

The Delta variant, which first emerged in India, has caused a rise in cases in the UK, prompting questions about whether social distancing restrictions will be lifted as planned from June 21.

New research from Public Health England "suggests that the Delta variant is associated with an approximately 60 percent increased risk of household transmission' compared to the Alpha variant identified in Kent, southeast England.

The Kent variant caused a surge of Covid cases in January leading to a three-month lockdown as nospitais were stretched to near-capacity.

The government ramped up its public vaccination drive in response, and has now given two doses of vaccine to nearly 29 mil-



People dine out in Melbourne's Lygon Street cafe and restaurant strip on Friday as the city eases restrictions after a two-week lockdown.

lion adults and one dose to nearly 41 million.

Daily cases rose to 7,393 on Thursday, a level not seen since February. More than 90 percent of new cases were of the Delta variant, ministers said.

However the number of patients in hospital remains low, at just over 1,000 on Thursday, and Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said most inpatients have not had

The government said this suggested the vaccination programme is mitigating the impact of the Delta variant, urging the public to get both jabs. Jenny Harries, chief executive of the UK

Health Security Agency, said that "two doses provide significantly more protection" against the Delta variant than one. The UK has reported

127.867 deaths from the virus, the worst toll in Europe.

Under the government roadmap, England plans to drop rules on numbers at social gatherings and allow large weddings and reopening of nightclubs

UK digs in over North Ireland in Brexit trade row

Kingdom, June 11: Britain on Friday hit back at President Emmanuel Macron's uncompromising stance on Brexit, in a simmering row over new trading arrangements Northern Ireland.

Macron on Thursday warned London that it was "not serious" to agreements signed last December, just weeks before the UK left the European single market and customs union.

"Nothing is renego-tiable," he said before heading to the G7 leaders summit in Cornwall, southwest England.

But Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab insisted

that Brussels should be more flexible in its approach to Northern Ireland, which shares the UK's only land border with the EU.

Under the so-called Northern Ireland protocol, checks are required on some goods heading to the British province from mainland Britain — England, Scotland and Wales.But that has angered unionist communities who say it has driv-en a wedge between them and the rest of the UK, and blamed it for a resur-

Controls have been sus-

United pended, and London has extended a grace period for checks on deliveries of chilled meat products to the province.

'The change must come from the European Commission side," said Raab. "We are not negotiating or haggling the integrity of the United Kingdom," he told *Sky*

Talks to try to resolve the issue broke up in London without agreement on Wednesday, with Brussels threatening punitive action if London fails to implement the agreement.

The arrangement — to prevent unchecked goods heading into the EU through member state Ireland means Northern Ireland is still part of the European single market.

The row threatened to overshadow the G7 summit, with reports that US President Joe Biden was angered at the potential harm to the 1998 peace deal that brought an end to three decades of violence over British rule in

Northern Ireland. Prime Minister Boris Johnson played down reports of a rift on Thursday, after the pair met for 90 minutes of talks on the eve of the G7

US: China can spark 'crisis' in Indo-Pacific

Washington, June 11:
Describing China as a "pacing challenge" to the US, Defence Secretary Llyod Austin has told American lawmakers that Beijing's "aggressive behaviour" in the Indo-Pacific could spark a "crisis" in the strategically with our allies and partsis" in the strategically vital region.

Responding to questions from members of the Senate Armed Services Committee during a Congressional hearing on the annual budget of the Pentagon, he stressed on having a direct line of communication between the militaries and also between government officials of the two countries. "As we look at some of

the aggressive behaviour that we have witnessed from China in the Indo-Pacific, I'm concerned spark a crisis," Austin activity," he said. — PTI

told the lawmakers on with our allies and partners and also with our adversaries or potential adversaries. So, I think there needs to be a direct line of communication between the military and also between government officials as well," the defence secretary said. Austin described the

US' relationship with China currently as one of competition. "They desire to be the preeminent country on the planet. Their mid to long-term look to compete with us, about something that not only militarily but could happen that could across a spectrum of

PAKISTAN TO GIVE RIGHT OF APPEAL TO KULBHUSHAN

Islamabad, June 11: The Pakistan government has rushed through the National Assembly a bill to provide the right of appeal to Indian deathprisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav amidst ruckus and boy-

cott by the Opposition. The lower house of Parliament passed the ICJ (Review and Re-consideration) Bill, 2020 on

Thursday. The bill is aimed at allowing Jadhav to have consular access in line with International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict. Jadhav, the 51-year-old retired Indian Navy offi-

cer, was sentenced to

death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. India approached the ICJ against Pakistan for of consular access to Jadhav and

challenging the death sentence The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further

The ICJ, in its 2019 verdict, had asked Pakistan to provide a proper forum for appeal against the sentence given to

H1-B visa: USCIS undoes Trump plan

The US' immigration agency has said that it would rescind a 2018 trump-era policy that allowed immigration officers to reject visa applications, including the H1-B, instead of first issuing a notice of intent to deny to the applicants, a decision which will reduce barriers to

"legal immigration". The H-1B visa, popular among Indian IT companies and professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expert-

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens

Washington, June 11: of thousands of employees each year from coun-China. There are other immigrant visas as well which were impacted by the trump-era policy, like the L1, H-2B, J-1, J-2, I, F

> The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said in a statement on Wednesday that it was updating its policies around expedited processing of applications, changing the guidance around Requests for Evidence (RFEs) and Notices of Intent to Deny (NOIDs), and increasing the validity period for certain Employment Authorisation Documents

US nod to 1st Muslim federal judge US Senate has approved the historic nomination of Pakistani-American Zahid Quraishi to the District Court in New Jersey, making him the first Muslim federal judge

in the country's history. The Senate voted 81-16 on Thursday to confirm Quraishi, 46. As many as 34 Republicans joined the Democrats in confirming the first-ever Muslim-American as a federal judge.

Currently, a magistrate judge for the District of New Jersey, Quraishi would now make history when he will be sworn in as the Judge of the US District Court of New Jersey. "Judge Quraishi has devoted his career to serving our country, and his story embodies both the rich diversity of New



Zahid Quraishi America as a place where anything is possible," said Senator Robert Menendez during a speech on the Senate floor before the

confirmation vote.

Menendez is Chairman the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"Zahid Quraishi is a man of integrity, a consummate public servant, and a trailblazer for Asian-Americans Muslim-Americans across this country who dream of the rich diversity of New one day presiding over a Jersey and the promise of court of their own,"

he said.
"We should all draw inspiration from his story because it is a story that could only take place in the United States of America," Menendez said. The US District Court of

New Jersey is one of the busiest in the country, with 46,000 cases pending before it and with judges facing individual caseloads more than triple the national average.

Quraishi was appointed as a US Magistrate Judge for the District of New Jersey in the Trenton Vicinage on June 3, 2019. Quraishi, who is of Pakistani ancestry, is the first Asian-American to serve on the federal bench

in New Jersey. "Judge Quraishi has devoted his career to serv-ing our country, and his story embodies both the Jersey and the promise of America as a place where anything is possible. He was born in New York and grew up in Fanwood, New Jersey with his parents, both immigrants from Pakistan who came to this country to build a better life," Menendez said.

Before his appointment, he was Chair of Riker Danzig's White Collar Criminal Defence and Investigations Group and his firm's first Chief Diversity Officer.

Before joining Quraishi served as an Assistant US Attorney in the District of New Jersey for over five years. He previously represented the United States as an Assistant Chief Counsel and trial attorney with the US Department of Hom-

LUCKY I NUMBER Queen Elizabeth II has met nearly every US Prez since Dwight Eisenhower

Biden 13th US Prez set to meet Queen

London, June 11: Imagine trying to make an impression on someone who's met, well, almost every-

Such is the challenge for President Joe Biden, who is set to sip tea with Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday at Group of Seven leaders' summit in southwestern

England. Biden will be the 13th president to sit with the now-95-year-old monarch. The White House said he previously met the queen

in 1982, when he was a U.S. senator. Before the two meet

again, the leaders are to attend a reception Friday with the queen, her son Prince Charles and his Camilla, and son Prince wife. William and his wife,

The queen has met every American president since Dwight Eisenhower during her nearly 70-year reign, except for Lyndon Johnson, who didn't visit Britain while he was

She was a 25-year-old princess when she came to Washington in 1951 and

stayed with President Harry S. Truman and his family at Blair House, where Truman lived while the White House underwent a major renovation. She met Herbert Hoover in 1957, more than 20 years

after he left office. Her personal ties to U.S. leaders underscore the importance of the United States to the United Kingdom and to the queen.

She came of age during World War II and understands the central role the trans-Atlantic alliance has played in modern British history, said Robert Hardman, author of "Queen of the World," which examines her role representing Britain on the world stage.

"She grew up with that sort of sense of the USA is almost a sort of salvation that came along and rescued Europe in the darkest days of the war," Hardman



Queen Elizabeth II, and former US president Barack Obama attend a state banquet in Buckingham Palace



INDICATO	%	
Sensex	52474.76	0.33
Nifty 50	15799.40	0.39
S&P 500*	4,240.87	0.04
Dollar (₹)	73.06	0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.38	-0.36
Euro (₹)	88.81	0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,530▲441	0.90
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	72.91	0.54
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.006	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.464	0.005
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

Govt holds back release of full April IIP data

The government has held back the release of complete data of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for April, as was done for the same month last year due to the lockdown. By the partial data released by the NSO, industrial production expanded by a whopping 134 per cent year-on-year in April, while it was 22.4 per cent in March. But compared with April 2019 data, industrial growth stood at 0.07 per cent.

Singh's daughters appointed as DLF directors



DLF boss Rajiv Singh's two daughters, Savitri Devi Singh (36) and Anushka Singh (34), have been appointed on the company's board. In a filing, DLF said the board has "coopted" them as additional directors with immediate effect. Both will be non-executive and non-independent directors. Both hold BSc in Economics degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, DLF said.

US consumer sentiment rebounds in June

US consumer sentiment rebounded in early June as inflation fears subsided and households grew more optimistic about future economic growth and employment. The University of Michigan said its preliminary consumer sentiment index increased to 86.4 in the first half of this month from a final reading of 82.9 in May. The survey's gauge of current economic conditions edged up to a reading of 90.6 from 89.4 in May.

BHEL Q4 loss narrows to ₹1,036 crore

BHEL's consolidated net loss narrowed to Rs 1,036.32 crore in the March 2021 quarter, mainly on the back of higher revenues, compared with a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,532.18 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income rose to Rs 7,245.16 crore from Rs 5,166.64 crore. In the full financial year 2020-21, the PSU's consolidated net loss widened to Rs 2,699.70 crore compared with Rs 1,468.35 crore in 2019-20.

Printed & Published by Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002.

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■Pilot run is part of 'Medicines from the Sky' project

Flipkart to test drone delivery of vaccine, meds in Telangana

NEW DELHI, JUNE 11

Homegrown e-commerce major Flipkart on Friday said it has partnered with the Telangana government to lead a consortium tasked with the development and execution of the drone deliveries of medical supplies to remote areas under the 'Medicines from the

As part of the consor-Bengaluru-based Flipkart will deploy drones and enable deliveries of vaccines and medical sup-

These efforts will be complemented with technologies such as geo mapping,

The Karnataka High Court

on Friday dismissed pleas by e-commerce biggies

Amazon and Flipkart chal-

lenging the probe ordered

by the Competition Comm-

The CCI had ordered a

probe in January 2020

against both Amazon and

Walmart-owned Flipkart

in a complaint filed by the

Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM), representing small businesses. The petitioner

had alleged that the e-com-

merce companies were vio-

lating the competition

laws while selling smart

phones on their platform. The Delhi Vyapar

ission of India (CCI).



remote areas of the state.

thousands of vaccines. The Covid-19 crisis has

pushed the envelope in the

rapid development of scal-

able and robust technologies and the Medicines

Following this, the peti-

However, on Friday CCI

argued that an investiga-

tion by the ED under the

Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (Fema)

does not bar another inves-

tigation by the CCI for vio-

lations of competition law.

It said e-commerce players

were twisting the pendency of an ED investigation

Responding to the court

spokesperson said: "We

will review the judgement carefully and decide on the

next steps.'

Amazon

to ward off CCI's probe.

tioners again approached the court asking it to

vacate the stay order.

Investment laws.

The pilot, to be conducted

routing of shipments and track and trace of location etc, developed by Flipkart over the years in serving millions of customers across the country, a Flipkart statement said.

A combination of these technologies will then be used to conduct 'Beyond Visual Line of Sight'

HC okays CCI probe of e-com biggies

allegations of predatory

pricing, deep discounting,

preferential seller listing,

and exclusive partner-

ation of All-India Traders

(Cait) too had impleaded as

a party to the case. In February, the e-com-

merce players got stay on the probe from the Karnataka High Court,

which found that the ongo-

ing investigation by the Enforcement Directorate

(ED) should be first com-

pleted before the CCI could

initiate a probe. The ED in

2019 had initiated an inves-

tigation against Amazon and Flipkart for alleged

others,

Amazon and

The Confeder-

among

against

of cutting-edge technologies for the safety and wellbeing of the masses," said Rajneesh Kumar, senior and chief corporate affairs officer, Flipkart. The Telangana government has adopted this framework to implement

(BVLOS) deliveries in drones for last-mile delivery and will integrate them into the state's healthcare for over six days, will be tested out for delivering supply chain.

from the Sky project is a testament to that. It is a

decisive step in making use

Jayesh Ranjan, principal secretary (IT and I&C), Government of Telangana said the state has been a pioneer in using technology for improving the lives of the citizens.

FOREX RESERVES CROSS \$600 BN

Mumbai, June 11: The country's exchange reserves crossed the \$600-billion mark for the first time after increasing by \$6.842 billion in the week ended June 4, RBI data showed on Friday.

The reserves surged to a record \$605.008 billion, helped by a rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves.

In the previous week ended May 28, the reserves had swelled by \$5.271 billion to \$598.165 billion. In the reporting week

FCA jumped by \$7.362 billion to \$560.890 billion. Gold reserves declined by \$502 million to \$37.604 billion. -PTI

KIMS Hospitals' ₹2144-crore IPO priced at ₹815-₹825

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 11

Hyderabad-based Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS Hospitals), one of the largest hospital chains in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, announced a Rs 2,144- crore initial public offering (IPO) in the price band of Rs 815 to Rs 825 per equity share of Rs 10 face value.

The public issue opens on June 16 and closes on June 18.

The KIMS Hospitals Group operates nine multi-specialty hospitals under the KIMS Hospitals brand across AP and

Telangana. The hospital chain started with the first hospital, KIMS Nellore, set up in 2000 by cardiologist Bhaskara Rao Bollineni with the vision to create a hospital system for his home state of Andhra Pradesh.

The current network of KIMS hospitals, with total 3,064 beds, are located at Secunderabad, Hydera-bad, Vizag, Nellore, Rajah-mundry, Srikakulam, mundry, Srikakulam, Ongole, Anantapur and Kurnool, catering to the healthcare needs of neighbouring states of Kar-nata-ka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and parts of central India.

The IPO comprises a fresh issue worth Rs 200 crore and an offer for sale of over 23.56 million equity shares by private equity investor General Atlantic Singapore and promoter shareholders-Bhaskara Rao Bollineni Rajyasri Bollineni and Bollineni Ramanaiah Memorial Hospital.

Passenger vehicle sales dip 66% in

Crypto exchange WazirX faces laundering charges

(ED) on Friday said it has issued a show cause notice to the country's largest cryptocurrency exchange for undertaking transactions worth over Rs 2,790 crore in alleged violation of the Exchange Foreign

Management Act (Fema). Mumbai-headquartered WazirX, a domestic crypto currency and bitcoin exchange start-up, is registered under the company name Zanmai Labs Pvt Ltd, incorporated in December 2017.

The notice issued by the central probe agency under various sections of the Fema names the exchange (WazirX), the company and directors Nischal Shetty and Sameer Hanuman Mhatre.

The exchange and its promoters denied any wrongdoing and said they are "in compliance with all applicable laws".

The ED issued a statement saying that it stumbled upon the transactions of the exchange during an ongoing money laundering probe into "Chinese-owned" illegal online betting applications.

The show-cause notice is for transactions worth Rs 2,790.74 crore, the ED

Shetty, also the CEO of the exchange, took to Twitter and said WazirX was yet to receive any show-cause notice from the ED as mentioned in media reports.

"WazirًX is in compliance with all applicable laws. We go beyond our legal obligations by following know your cus-

New Delhi, June 11: The Enforcement Directorate tomer (KYC) and anti money laundering (AML) money laundering (AML) processes and always provided information to law enforcement authorities whenever required," he posted on his handle. He added: "We are able

to trace all users on our platform with official identity information."

In its statement, the ED described in detail its investigation. "It was seen that the accused Chinese nationals had laundered proceeds of crime worth about Rs 57 crore by converting Indian rupee deposits into cryptocurrency tether (USDT) and then transferred it to Binance (exchange registered in Cayman Islands) Wallets based on instructions received from abroad," it

Binance is considered a market leader in this domain and had acquired WazirX in 2019.

"WazirX allows a wide range of transactions with crypto currencies (CC), including their exchange with INR and vice-versa, exchange of CCs, person to person (P2P) transactions and even transfer/receipt of crypto currency held in its pool accounts to wallets of other exchanges, which could be held by foreigners in foreign locations," the ED alleged.

WazirX, it alleged, "does not" collect the requisite documents in clear violation of the basic mandatory anti-money launderand financing of terrorism (CFT) norms and also Fema guidelines.

Nifty-50, Sensex scale new peaks

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

equity market's

benchmark indices, Nifty-50 and Sensex, closed at new all-time highs on Friday, marking the fourth successive weekly close with gains. However, the upward momentum seems to be slowing down with relatively lower daily gains for the indices. The Nifty-50 gained

61.60 points or 39 per cent to close at a new peak of 15,799.35 after touching an intra-day high of 15,835.

The Sensex also closed at a new high of 52,474.76, gaining 174.29 points, and registered a new all-time high of 52,641.53 intra-day.

The market is rallying on a slowed-down momentum, which can be properly visualised with the help of negative divergence in RSI (Relative Strength Index) in daily timeframe," said Nirali Shah, head of equity research, Samco Securities.

The traded volume of derivatives saw a sharp decline by 30-40 per cent. The fall in intraday volumes is primarily attributable to either the new peak margin requirements (became effective from June 1) or the drying

up of investor conviction at current levels. Overall, the market remained range-bound with an upward bias," Shah said in her weekly analysis.

The broader market outeriormea. with Niity MId-cap-50 Index up 2.56 per cent and the Nifty Mid-cap 100 Index up 3.28 per cent.

NSE's India VIX Index dropped 13.04 per cent during the week to 14.10, indicating lower volatility ahead. The market's upward

momentum has sustained on the back of Rs 15,520 crore net buying by the foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in June so far and domestic mutual funds also lending support as shown by the 14month high inflows in equity mutual funds in

May 2021. On Friday domestic institutions were net buyers of equities worth Rs 666.36 crore while the FPIs took a pause with Rs

18.64 crore net purchases. The IT sector emerged a top gainer during the week, with the Nifty IT Index moving up 4.52 per cent while the financials were the laggards, as the Nifty Bank was down 0.69

ASSET QUALITY OF MICRO LOAN **PORTFOLIOS DIP**

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 11

With lockdowns hitting collections, the asset quality of micro loan portfolios is estimated to have deteriorated this month, exceed ing the post-demonetisa tion levels.

A drop in the collection efficiency of NBFC-MFIs owing to Covid-19 curbs will increase asset-quality pressures in the sector and loans in arrears for over 30 days could rise to 14-16 per cent of portfolio in June from a recent low of 6-7 per cent in March, says a Crisil report. This is higher than 11.7 per cent touched in March 2017 in the after-

math of demonetisation. "Pressure on asset quality would be higher (than last year) as borrowers do not have a blanket moratorium this time, while their cash flows have been impacted by the second wave," said Krishnan Sitaraman, senior director and deputy chief ratings

officer, Crisil Ratings. Earlier, Sa-Dhan had reported that overall collections, which had bounced back to pre-Covid levels in March, dropped by 10 to 20 per cent in April-May 2021 as the lockdown was imposed in some of

May amid Covid disruptions: Siam

MICHAEL GONSALVES

Passenger vehicle wholesales— dispatches from factory gates to the dealerships—declined on-month by 66 per cent to 88,045 units in May as compared to April as lockdowns across various states impacted dispatches to dealers, auto industry trade lobby the Society Indian Automobile Manufacturers, or Siam,

said on Friday. Passenger vehicle whole-sales in April stood at 2,61,633 units.

Since both May 2020 and May 2021 were abnormal months because of the Covid-19 situation and lockdowns, comparison of these two months holds no meaning. But a comparison of May 2021 sales with April this year, presents a realistic picture.

Siam said two-wheeler dispatches to dealers dropped by 65 per cent to 3,52,717 units compared with 9,95,097 units in April.

Motorcycle sales declined 56 per cent last month to 2,95,257 units as against 6,67,841 units in

Similarly, scooter sales were down 83 per cent to



50,294 units, from 3,00,462 units in April this year. Three-wheeler declined by 91 per cent to 1,251 units as compared to 13,728 units in April.

Vehicle sales across categories witnessed a decline of 65 per cent to 4,42,013 units last month, as against 12,70,458 units in April this year.
"Most part of May was

under lockdown due to Covid-19 in many states, thus, impacting overall sales and production. Many members had shut down their manufacturing plants to divert oxygen from industrial use for medical purposes," Rajesh Menon, director general at Siam said.

Last month, Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest carmaker despatched 32,903 cars to its dealer partners, down from 1,35,879 units in April. down from

Similarly, Hyundai Motor wholesales last month dropped to 25,001 units compared with 49,002 units in April. Kia India delivered

11,050 units, while Mahindra & Mahindra dispatched 8,004 passenger vehicle units to their respective showrooms last month as compared with 16,111 and 18,285 units respectively, in April for the automakers.

The Federation of Automobile Dealers Automobile Associations, or Fada, said total vehicle retail sales in the country declined by 55 per cent in May due to Covid restrictions to 5,35,855 units compared with 11,85,374 units in April this year.

The passenger vehicle sales dropped by 59 per cent at 85,733 units in May as compared with 2.08.883 units in April this year.

BoM tops PSU banks in loan, deposit

growth

(BoM) has emerged as the top performer among public sector lenders in terms of loan and deposit growth during 2020-21. The lender recorded 13.45 per cent increase in gross advances at Rs 1.07 lakh crore in FY21, as per the published data of BoM.

It was followed by Punjab & Sind Bank, which posted 8.39 per cent growth in advances with aggregate loans at Rs 67,811 crore at the end of March 2021.

In deposit mobilisation, BoM, with nearly 16 per cent growth, was ahead of even the country's largest lender, State Bank of India, which recorded 13.56 per cent rise.

However, in absolute terms SBI's deposit base was 21 times higher at Rs 36.81 lakh crore against Rs 1.74 lakh crore of BoM.

Current account savings account (CASA) for BoM saw 24.47 per cent rise, the highest among the public sector lenders, during the year. As a result, CASA was 54 per cent or Rs 93,945 crore of the total liabili-

ties of the bank. According to the announced quarterly numbers, Central Bank of India achieved the second spot by recording 11.46 per cent growth in CASA at Rs 1.61 lakh crore.

Total business of BoM increased 14.98 per cent to Rs 2.81 lakh crore.

For the full year 2020-21, BoM's standalone net profit jumped nearly 42 per cent to Rs 550.25 crore. In the previous year, the profit was Rs

HASTY I NOD Biogen drug was authorised based on evidence that it can reduce brain plaques

US FDA faces criticism over Alzheimer's drug approval

JULIE STEENHUYSEN & DEENA BEASLEY

In approving the first new Alzheimer's drug in nearly 20 years, the US Food and Drug Administration is taking its biggest risk yet with a strategy that allows new therapies onto the market without strong evidence that they work, regulatory and scientific experts say.

The Biogen Inc drug, Aduhelm, was authorised based on evidence that it can reduce brain plaques, a likely contributor to Alzheimer's, rather than proof that it slows progression of the lethal mind-wasting disease. The FDA has granted so-called "accelerated

approval" in more than 250 instances since 1992, mainly for rare diseases or small patient popula-tions that have had no effective treatments available to them. In these cases, the agency requires that drugmakers conduct additional clinical trials to prove their therapy works, or face withdrawal from the market.

Aduhelm, however, is in a different league in terms of the number of potential patients and cost to the healthcare sys-

In addition, the FDA its decision "by fiat," and

approval ignored the recommendation of its outside advisors, who said Biogen did not provide enough evidence of clinical benefit. Three of the advisory panel's members have resigned in protest since the FDA decision announced

"This decision has shaken the foundations of the scientific process and methods," said Dr. Jason Karlawish, co-director of the Penn Memory Center in Philadelphia. Karlawish ran one of the trial sites for the Biogen

drug. He said the FDA made



to consider whether the drug's ability to remove a type of brain plaques known as beta amyloid would improve outcomes for patients.

"It's a disturbing set of events, scientifically, clinically, politically," Karlawish said.

Biogen has said that million Americans with earlystage Alzheimer's will be eligible for the drug, priced at an average of \$56,000 per year, with the federal Medicare insurance programme for seniors likely on the hook for most of the cost.

The FDA approval allows Biogen to sell its product over several years - with forecasts for potential annual sales reaching as high \$10 billion to \$50 billion - until the company completes a required follow-up study.

'Ño amount of unmet need can take the place of sufficient evidence," said

health professor Dr. Caleb Alexander, a member of the FDA advisory panel. The number of Americans living with Alzheimer's is expected to

Johns Hopkins public

more than double to around 13 million by 2050, according to the Alzheimer's Association. according

Biogen research chief Alfred Sandrock said the FDA had painstakingly analysed its clinical trial data over two years before reaching a conclusion.

"I believe they came to the right decision on behalf of the American public," Sandrock said in an interview.

– Reuters

388.58 crore.

Vinesh emerges on top in Poland

Warsaw: Star Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat proved that her preparations for the Tokyo Games were on track by winning the 53kg gold at the Poland Open here on Friday, giving herself some crucial 'mat-time' ahead of the Olympics. It is third title of the season for the 26-year-old Vinesh, who claimed gold medals at the Matteo Pellicone event (March) and Asian Championship (April) earlier. The victory would potentially make Vinesh the top seed at the Tokyo Olympics. Except for her opening bout against 2019 World bronze (50kg) winner Ekaterina Poleshchuk, Vinesh wasn't troubled by any of her other rivals as she conceded only two points en route the top place on the podium. -PT

No ministerial

delegation for Oly

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry on Friday said it has decided against sending its delegation to Tokyo Olympics to accommodate maximum" support staff, including coaches and physios, for the athletes competing in the Summer Games. A total of 100 Indian athletes have so far qualified and another 25 to 35 might make the cut. "The Ministry has decided to depute maximum additional support staff such as coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, to optimize the performance of the athletes," the Ministry said in a statement. -PT

Tokyo undecided

on spectators

Tokyo: The question of allowing any fans into Tokyo Olympic venues is still being debated with a decision unlikely to be announced before the end of the month. This would be just a few weeks before the Olympics are to open on July 23. Fans from abroad have already been banned in what is shaping up as a largely made-for-television Olympics. Tokyo and several prefectures are under a state of emergency until June 20. Infections have slowed recently, but the spread of variants is still a concern that could put pressure on already stressed medical facilities. - AF

Warner, Stoinis opt out of The Hundred

Melbourne: Star Australian opener David Warner and all-rounder Marcus Stoinis have pulled out of the inaugural edition of 'The Hundred' as the England and Wales Cricket Board gears up for more withdrawals in wake of the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic. Warner and Stoinis, who returned home from Covid-ravaged India after the suspension of the IPL, were named in Australia's squads for the limited over tours to the West Indies and Bangladesh.

Ngidi takes five as Windies crumble

Saint Lucia: Lungi Ngidi mowed through the lower half of the West Indies batting order on the way to a five-wicket haul as South Africa routed the home side for 97 on the opening day of the first Test of the twomatch series at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St Lucia on Thursday. The Proteas reached the close of play at 128 for four.

Live on TV

a lead of 31 runs. — AFP

Group Stage: Wales vs Switzerland from 6.30 pm; Denmark vs Finland from 9.30 pm; Belgium vs Russia from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2. HD

TENNIS

French Open: Women's singles final from 6.30 pm; Men's doubles final from 8 pm on Star Sports, Select 1, HD

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru Nationa Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002, and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C - 9, Sector - III. Noida - 201301. Editor - T. Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 57290/94, Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00

per copy.



Belgium players pose after a training session. The Red Devils will face Russia in St. Petersburg on Saturday.

Twitter

Red alert for Russia

Top-ranked Belgium take on Russia in quest for Euro glory

St. Petersburg, June 11: What's being billed by some as the last hurrah for Belgium's "golden generation" begins with two of the team's long-time stalwarts likely to miss their opening match of the European

Championship.
Injury and fitness concerns mean neither Kevin De Bruyne nor Eden Hazard are set to start against Russia on at Same Stadium, Saturday Petersburg Stadium, where the Belgians' World Cup hopes in 2018 died in a loss to France.

They return to the same venue three years later as the world's top-ranked team — they have been in that position since October 2018 — but with doubts about the availability of their two star attacking midfielders, and maybe a bit more.

De Bruyne is probably the least of coach Roberto Martinez's concerns, despite linking up with the squad a week late after fracturing his nose and socket during Manchester City's loss to Chelsea in the Champions League final. The playmaker required a minor operation and is likely to



Wales' Gareth Bale during a training session in Baku on Thursday.

ready to start in Belgium's second game, Denmark Copenhagen on June 17, when he might be wearing a face mask

Hazard's health is slightly less clear-cut, with the winger in far-from-perfect shape after an injury-dis-

HEAD-TO-HEAD

WALES-SWITZERLAND

EURO MEETINGS

1999: Switzerland bt Wales 2-0 in Zurich. 1999: Switzerland bt Wales 2-0 in Wrexham. 2010: Switzerland bt Wales **2011:** Wales bt Switzerland 2-0 in Swansea.

DENMARK-FINLAND Finland: 11. Draw: 10 EURO MEETINGS

1986: Denmark bt Finland 1-0 in Copenhagen. 1987: Denmark bt Finland 1-0

RUSSIA-BELGIUM
Matches: 7. Belgium: 5.

EURO MEETINGS 2019: Belgium bt Russia 3-1 2019: Belgium bt Russia 4-1

- S. PERVEZ QAISER

rupted season with Real Madrid and only being a substitute in Euro 2020 warmup games.

Martinez said Hazard still needed to get "match intensity" so is likely to be on the bench again for the game against Russia, whose chances of an upset win suddenly have improved. Playing in front of a potential 30,000 fans, among the biggest groupstage attendances at the tournament, can only spur on Russia in their fifth straight appearance at the European Championship.

BALE NOT WORRIED ABOUT DROUGHT

Wales captain Gareth Bale said on Friday he was unconcerned about his international drought on the eve of his side's Euro 2020 opener against Switzerland.

Bale, 31, last scored for Wales against Croatia in October 2019 but has created four goals in his previous seven appearances. "It doesn't matter. I've

made assists. I'm still contributing. I'm not worried," he said.

"If the chances arise to score, hopefully I can take them," he added. Bale's side start their

campaign in Azerbaijan on Saturday in the competition that has been delayed by a year due to the coronavirus pandem-

ic. The Real Madrid forward, who spent last season on loan at Tottenham,

has scored 33 goals in 92 international ances since making his debut in 2006 but his goalless run stretches back 11 matches.

Wales coach Robert Page, who will take charge of the side during the tournament as Ryan Giggs is facing trial in England, backed his star player.

FINLAND READY FOR DANISH TEST

Finland goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky didn't sugar coat things when sum-ming up the difference between his team and Denmark at the European Championship.
"They have better play-

ers than us in every posi-tion," Hradecky said bluntly ahead of Finland's major tournament debut at Euro 2020.

the Leverkusen goalkeeper touched upon the one thing that could speak in his team's favor going into Saturday's Group B game in Copenhagen.

"But we have shown before that the sum of all the parts in our puzzle is greater than what people think," he said.

Agencies

Quick passes

Spain vaccinate entire squad

Worried that a coronavirus outbreak could derail their chances at the European Championship, Spain sent in the army on Friday to vaccinate the national team three days before their opening match at the tournament. Medics from Spain's Armed Forces administered the shots at the team's training facility near Madrid. "We have had the privilege and the good fortune that the government decided to vaccinate us," said Spain midfielder Thiago, who was infected with Covid-19 last year. "While this is great news for us, I hope that we don't have any adverse effects before the

Scotland players to take a knee

Scotland's players will take a knee at the European Championship before the game against England in London but will stand ahead of matches in Glasgow against the Czech Republic and Croatia. The England team have been doing the anti-racism gesture since last year. Scotland captain Andy Roberton says "we have collectively decided to again take the knee as a team for the fixture against England at Wembley Stadium." The match will be played on June 18. The gesture has been booed by a section of England fans but the team will continue to take a knee at Euro 2020. England's first game of the tournament will be on Sunday against Croatia.

De Bruyne to miss opener

Kevin De Bruyne has not travelled to St. Petersburg with the Belgium squad for Saturday's European Championship game against Russia. The Manchester City playmaker only linked up with the team on Monday after having a minor operation on the fractured nose and eye socket he sustained during the Champions League final against Chelsea on May 29. Belgium coach Roberto Martinez says De Bruyne hasn't yet trained with the group and was still following an individual programme to "get him back to really being able to move freely."

Martinez says he expects De Bruyne to join full training with the squad when Belgium's players return to the training camp in Tubize after the group game

COPA | AMERICA

Messi, Aguero in Argentina squad

Lionel Messi, Sergio Aguero and Angel Di Maria are headlining the Argentina squad that will head to Brazil for the Copa America, seeking their national team's first major title since 1993.

The list was published on Thursday by South American governing body, CONMEBOL.

Defender Juan Foyth and striker Lucas Ocampos are the most notable absentees from the 28-player squad. despite featuring regularly Lionel Scaloni became head coach in 2018.

when Argentina conceded a last-minute equaliser to Colombia in a World Cup qualifying match earlier this week.

Foyth was involved late

The Villareal defender, a winner of the latest Europa League, lost possession at the edge of the penalty box. Colombia subsequently crossed and then found the back of the net with a header by Miguel Borja.

Sevilla's Ocampos had a lacklustre performance in the 1-1 draw against Chile last week, also in a World Cup qualifier.

ANASTASIA AND

BARBORA SEEK

GRAND SUCCESS

Paris, June 11: Anastasia

Pavlyuchen- kova and Barbora Krejcikova, two

of the most unlikely Grand Slam finalists of

the modern era, meet in

Saturday's French Open

title match at the conclusion of a shock-heavy tournament. World num-

ber 32 Pavlyuchenkova

has reached this stage for

the first time at the 52nd

attempt, 10 years after

making a first Slam quar-

Krejcikova, ranked one place lower, has long been

labelled a doubles special-

ist and this is just her

fifth appearance in a

main draw singles at the

Slams, having never previously got beyond the last 16. However, both

women have capitalised

on a draw where the top seeds fell and just kept

falling.
World number one and

2019 champion Ashleigh

Barty hobbled out in the

Serena Williams was knocked out in the fourth

round, world number two

Naomi Osaka withdrew

after one match while

2018 champion Simona

Halep never even made it to Paris. "The 14-year-old me would tell me 'What took you so long?"," said

29-year-old

long road. I had my own

long special road. Everybody has different

ways. I'm happy I'm in the

Pavlyuchenkova played her first Slam event in 2007. "It's been a

second round.

ter-final in Paris.

NEERAJ WARMS UP WITH A GOLD MEDAL IN LISBON

New Delhi, June 11: Olympic-bound star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra came up with a best effort of 83.18m to win an event in Lisbon, Portugal on Thursday in his first international competition after more than a year. After beginning with 80.71m, Chopra sent the spear to 83.18m in his sixth and final throw to win the javelin event at the Meeting Cidade de Lisboa (Meeting, City of Lisbon).

His second, third and fifth throws were fouls while he recorded 78.50m in his fourth effort under windy conditions at the Lisbon University stadium.

The 23-year-old Indian, who has not taken part in any international event after qualifying for Tokyo Olympics in January last year in South Africa, had reached Lisbon on Sunday. The reigning Asian and Commonwealth Games champion, who has a personal best of 88.07m, was to leave for Europe on Monday last for a training-cum-competition stint but it was delayed by a few days due to visa issues. -PTI

Conway keeps England at bay

Devon Conway's superb start to his New Zealand career continued with an unbeaten fifty on the second day of the second and final Test against England at Edgbaston on Friday.

At tea, New Zealand were 130-1 in reply to England's first-innings 303, a deficit of 173 runs.

Left-handed opener Conway, fresh from his stunning debut 200 in the drawn first Test at Lord's last week, was 78 not out. Meanwhile Will Young, one of a remarkable six

changes to the team, was

unbeaten on 40. The pair had so far added an unbroken 115 after stand-in captain Tom Latham fell lbw to Stuart Broad for six before lunch. Broad's 519th Test wicket saw him draw level with former West Indies fast bowler Courtney Walsh as he moved into joint sixth

in the all-time list. The England paceman then thought he had dis-

Birmingham, June 11: missed Conway for 22 when the South Africaborn batsman edged low to Zak Crawley in the slips. But with on-field umpire

Richard Kettleborough having made a soft signal of 'not out' as he requested a review, replay official Michael Gough felt there was insufficient evidence for him to overturn that call. Young, in for injured New Zealand captain and star batsman Kane Williamson, should cer-tainly have been out for seven when he edged fast bowler Olly Stone.

Root, however, dropped a seemingly comfortable, waist-high, chance at first slip despite getting both hands to the ball. -AFPBrief scores (Day 2, at Tea): England 303 (Rory Burns 81, Dan Lawrence 81 not out, Mark Wood 41; Trent Boult 4/85, Matt Henry 3/78) vs New Zealand 130/1 in 43 overs (Devon Conway (batting) 78, Will Young (batting) 40; Stuart Broad 1/15).

England captain Joe

A Stef closer to Slam dream Paris. June 11: Stefanos

Tsitsipas went from way ahead to suddenly stuck in a five-set struggle against Alexander Zverev at the French Open on Friday before emerging to earn his first berth in a Grand Slam final.

The fifth-seeded Tsitsipas entered with an 0-3 record in major semifi nals and it seemed as if he might let this one slip away, too, until a late surge carried him to the 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-3 victory after more than 3 and a half hours at Court Philippe Chatrier.

On Sunday, Tsitsipas will face 13-time Roland Garros champion Nadal or top-seeded Novak Djokovic for the championship on the red clay.

Tsitsipas regained control of his semifinal on a cloudy afternoon in the late going thanks to a combination of more solid returning by him and a succession of groundstroke unforced from the sixth-seeded Zverev, a 24-year-old from Germany.

The fifth set began with a key service hold after Tsitsipas double-faulted to fall behind love-40. From there, he won five consecutive points, including one with a cross-court forehand passing winner that he celebrated by shaking his racket as the crowd chanted, "Tsi-tsi-pas! Tsi-tsi-pas! Tsi-tsi-

Then Tsitsipas broke to go up 3-1 with plenty of help from Zverev, who double-faulted, then missed a backhand, followed by a forehand and another backhand. Zverev winced and Tsitsipas raised his right

Fifteen minutes later, Tsitsipas earned his first match point, and while he



Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece celebrates a point against Germany's Alexander Zverev during their French Open semifinal at the Roland Garros on Friday. past couple of seasons,

eventually did convert one with an ace.

Tsitsipas will be the first player from Greece in a Grand Slam singles final and youngest man to appear in the title match at the French Open since Nadal won the 2008 championship five days after his 22nd birthday.

And this is not some outascension. of-nowhere Tsitsipas has been buildneeded five of them to close the proceedings, he ing toward this over the

reaching three major semifinals in a row and leading the ATP in total match wins (39 now) and clay-court wins (22) in 2021. Three of his seven career tour-level titles came on clay, including a pair this year — at the Monte Carlo Masters and Lyon.

Zverev's loss makes him 0-10 against members of the Top 10 at Grand Slam

ly confounding statistic when viewed in contrast to his 31-30 mark against such opponents in any other setting. He hadn't faced a seeded

tournaments, an especial-

player en route to the semifinals, including two matches against qualifiers and a quarterfinal victory over 46th-ranked Alejandro Davidovich

Pavlyuchenkova is bidding to become the fourth Russian champion at Roland Garros.

final.

-AFP