THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

**CHENNAI | TUESDAY 29 | JUNE 2021** 

#### **WEATHER**



#### ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Aani 15 Tithi: Panchami Star: Sathayam Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm Yamagandam: 9 am to 10.30 am **PRAYERS** 

Fajar: 4.25 am Luhar: 12.16 pm **Asar:** 3.37 pm Maghrib: 6.38 pm **Isha:** 7.57 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.39 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.46 AM MOONRISE TODAY 10.54 PM** MOONSET TOMORROW 11.44 AM



CASES

(+37.012)(+907)3,03,16,000 3,97,668

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+4.804)

TN: 24,70,678 | 32,388

**WORLD CONFIRMED CASES** 

18,20,53,509 **DEATHS** 39,42,289

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info

#### Indian-American couple, child missing in US building collapse

Houston/London: An Indian-American couple and their oneyear-old child are among more than 150 people who are still missing after the collapse of part of a 12-story residential building in the US state of Florida on Thursday, according to media reports on Monday. Search and rescue teams have been feverishly scouring the site since sho of the beachfront condominium's 136 units fell.

#### Petrol price rise: Case filed against Union min

Muzaffarpur (Bihar): A case was on Monday lodged before a court in this north Bihar town against Union Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan in connection with the spiralling rise in petrol prices. Local resident Tamanna Hashmi filed the case before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Muzaffarpur, alleging that it was a "conspiracy" to sell petrol at high rates across the country though the price of



Our server has been crashing frequently because the virus is mutating!

Sasi supporters to lay siege to houses of ex-AIADMK ministers

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WORLD | 5 **US** attacks Iran-backed forces

FM's ₹1.1 L cr loan guarantee

scheme for Covid-hit sectors



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#### TO HEALTH MIN

## Stalin's advice on vaccine strategy

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JUN 28

Chief Minister M K Stalin has urged the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Harsh Vardhan, to revise the allocation of Covid-19 vaccine doses between the government and private institutions to 90:10 as against the current allocation of 75:25.

In a letter to Vardhan on Monday, the Chief Minister also demanded an evaluation of the vaccine doses allotted to various States so far. in terms of doses per thousand population, and ensure that necessary compensatory allocations were made to States that had been allotted lower number of

Thanking the Union Minister for accepting the State's request to procure the vaccines centrally and issuing them free of cost to all States for vaccinating people above 18 years of age, Stalin said "the availability of vaccines has emerged as the princi-pal constraint in the last few weeks.'

He said his government's continuous efforts to eliminate vaccine hesi-



tancy and transform the vaccination drive into a people's movement had led to the tripling of vaccination during the current month.
"Since our allotment so

far has been one of the lowest among the States in the country in terms of doses per thousand population. I had written to you requesting an allocation of 1 crore doses to correct the inadequate allotment in the past," he recalled.

Stalin said that under the new liberalised vaccination policy the Union Government was buying 75 per cent of the vaccines and the rest were being provided to private hospitals and added that the 25% allocation was grossly higher when compared to the actual vaccinations done by them. **P3** done by them.

### Booster shots to help economy get over the virus effect

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

To stimulate the economy and ease the financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown, finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman on Monday announced eight economic measures amounting to Rs 6.29 lakh crore to provide relief to individuals as well as businesses in the country.

Apart from eight relief measures announced in health and other worst affected sectors, Ms Sitharaman announced a stimulus package for the tourism industry which included five lakh tourist visas to be issued free of charge, once the government resumes issuance. The total financial implication of the scheme will be ₹100 crore.

Briefing the media, Ms Sitharaman said, "We are announcing about eight economic relief measures, of which four are absolutely new and one is specific to health infrastructure. A stimulus package worth ₹6,28,993 crore will be used to sup-

**HEALTH AND TOURISM IN FOCUS IN 8 SCHEMES** 

IN LOAN guarantee scheme of **₹1.1 lakh crore**, health sector will get ₹50,000 crore. Other sectors will receive ₹60,000 crore at a maximum interest rate of 8.25 per cent annually

₹10 LAKH loan to travel agencies and ₹1 lakh loan to tourist guides. Free visas to the first 5 lakh tourists

port the Indian economy in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. For Covidaffected areas, we are announcing ₹1.1 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme, out of which ₹50,000 crore is for the health sector and ₹60,000 crore for other sectors. This credit guarantee scheme will facilitate new lending among the smallest borrowers, including stressed borrowers.'

For the health sector, she said, the maximum loan

amount of ₹100 crore would be given and the maximum interest rate is capped at 7.95 per cent. "For other sectors, the interest rate is capped at 8.25 per cent. The coverage will be changed based on evolving needs," added.

Apart from this, an additional ₹1.5 lakh crore under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) has been announced. This is in addition to the ₹3 lakh crore

announced under the scheme last year. "The new credit guaran-

A NEW SCHEME will

give up to ₹1.25 lakh loan to 25 lakh small

borrowers at lower

interest rates

**EXPORT** 

crore for

merchandise

₹**33,000 crore** to

project exports.

exports and

INSURANCE cover of ₹88,000

tee scheme will give loans to small borrowers through Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) where the maximum loan to individuals will be ₹1.25 lakh at an interest rate below 2 per cent, as prescribed by the RBI. Our focus will be new loans, stressed borrowers except NPAs to be covered and the loan duration of 3 years under the scheme," she said.

also announced job beneextending the irbhar Bharat Atmanirbhar Rozgar Yojana and loan guarantees for Covidaffected sectors such as tourism. For the tourism sector, the finance minister unveiled a new scheme to revive the sector. "Financial support will be extended to more than 11,000 registered tourist guides and travel and tourism stakeholders (TTS). These TTS will receive upto ₹10 lakh loan, while licensed tourist guides will get up to ₹1 lakh loan," Ms Sitharaman said.
"In the tourism scheme,

free tourist visas will be offered to five lakh tourists. This scheme is applicable till March 31, 2022, or till the first five lakh tourist visas get covered, whichever is earlier. One tourist can avail the benefit only once," she

During the briefing, the ministry of finance presentation said that 10.93 million foreign tourists visited Indian in 2019, and spent \$30.098 billion on leisure and business

## **Drones seen in Jammu** day after twin blasts

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, JUNE 28

Army said on Monday that its alert jawans had averted two separate drone activities Kaluchak belt close to the border with Pakistan in the Jammu region, thereby foiling a possible threat in this extremely sensitive military zone.

This comes a day after two bombs believed to have been dropped by one or two drones rocked the high-security technical area of the Jammu Air Force Station.

Two security personnel got minor injuries in these blasts, one of which ripped off the roof of a barracks and the other took place on an open ground on the intervening night of June 26-27.

intervening night of June 27-28 two separate drone

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC

Special Police Officer

(SPO) was shot dead, and

his wife and daughter crit-

ically injured by suspected

militants in Jammu and

Kashmir's southern Pul-

wama district late Sunday

night. The mother-daugh-

ter duo succumbed to their

injuries in hospital later.

Velappanchavadi

activities -- one at 11.45 pm and the second at 2.40 am -- were spotted over the Ratnuchak-Kaluchak military area by alert troops who immediately opened fire at the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or unmanned aircraft systems (UASes). Jammu-based defence

spokesman Lt. Devender Anand said: "Immediately after the drone activities were noticed, a high alert was and Quick Reaction Teams engaged them (drones), following which both flew away." He added: "As a result of the alertness and proactive approach of our jawans, a major threat was thwarted in the area. The security forces are on high alert and the search operation is in

progress. Army sources said its The Army said on the men fired 20-25 rounds at the drones before these

"flew back under the cover of darkness". The drones were suspected to be flying at a height of 1.2 km and were possibly powered by long range batteries.

The sour security grid was on its toes as 14 drone stories reportedly launched from across the Line of Control and the international border with Pakistan lately. The areas where such activity was seen include Jammu, Rajouri, Samba Kathua in J&K.

The reports said one of the drones was hovering over the brigade HQ of an Army unit located in the Kaluchack garrison.

The probe by the Indian Air Force into the disquieting blasts at its overly sensitive airbase in Jammu, with the incident seen as a major security lapse by the authorities, is now rolling.

The local sources said that

the wife and daughter of

the SPO had tried to save

him from the assailants'

The trio was rushed to a

nearby healthcare facility,

where doctors declared

Ahmed brought dead while as his wife and

daughter were shifted to

College Hospital in neigh-

Government

Kashmir terrorists kill cop, family

#### **COURT ORDERS LIVE STREAMING OF CHAR DHAM SHRINES**

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCIES INPUT **NEW DELHI, JUNE 28** 

The Uttarakhand high court on Monday stayed the state Cabinet's decision permitting Char Dham Yatra with a lim-Instead, the high court has ordered live streaming of the Char Dham shrines. The division bench of Chief Justice Chauhan and Justice Alok Verma expressed dissatisfaction on the affidavit filed by the state government with regard to preparedness for the yatra, particularly with regard to the healthcare facilities and status of vaccination in the districts connected

with the Char Dham yatra. India on Monday recorded 46,148 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 979 deaths.

During a meeting of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on Covid-19 on Monday, Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said the country's recovery rate has been steadily increasing.

ct. However, Banoo succ-

umbed to her injuries wit-

hin a few hours, the police

As the condition of the

cop's daughter also deteri-

orated, she was brought to

Srinagar's Sher-i-Kashmir

Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) for spe-

cialised treatment. But she

too died at around 4 am on

Monday, the hospital offi-

suddenly caught fire. The

passenger who was in the back seat was charred

to death beyond recogni-

The driver jumped out in

time and suffered minor

and hospital sources said.

#### Twitter names employee in US as India grievance officer DC CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 28

Twitter on Sunday is reported to have appoint-California-based Jeremy Kessel as the new Grievance Officer for

Technology Rules, 2021, hours after Dharmendra Chatur quit from the post, according to a website report. His appointment, however, may not be in line with new IT rules, which mandate that the Information cer should be a resident of deliberate defiance.

India. Kessel is the Global Legal Policy Director of Twitter. The micro-blog-ging platform is in the midst of a tussle with the government over India's new social media rules. The government has been slamming





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## Passenger burns to death as taxi catches fire

ly serving in the Army. The police said two to

three gunmen barged into

the house of SPO Fayaz Ahmed in Hariparigam village of Awantipora area of Pulwama and resorted

to indiscriminate firing,

resulting into the on-the-

spot death of the police

official and grievously injuring his 45-year-old

wife Raja Banoo and daughter Rafia Jan, 23.

DC CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI, JUNE 28

A passenger was charred to death and the cab driver suffered injuries after the car they were travelling in caught fire on the Koyambedu flyover on Monday. The incident happened when the car was travelling towards the 100

Feet road.
The driver, identified as Sunil Kumar of Mangadu was ferrying a passenger, identified as Arjunan, from



Nungambakkam.

said that when the car came

Police

caught fire on the Koyambedu flvover in Chennai on Monday killing the sole passen-

ger and injuring the driver.

Medical

burns on his back. He was Government to Kilpauk Medical College to a stop due to traffic on the

Hospital. The charred body was sent for post-mortem and Koyambedu police who have registered a case are investigating. The forensic department was called in to



#### SHORT TAKES

#### **Two foreigners steal ₹85,000 from petrol bunk in Pavunjur**

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JUNE 28

A foreigner duo, claiming to be from the USA, escaped with ₹85,000 from a petrol bunk in Pavunjur near Madurantakam by diverting the attention of the supervisor on Monday.
The incident happened at

around 12: 45 pm on Monday, in a petrol bunk on ECR Madurantakam - ECR Junction road belonging to Sasikala Purushothaman, the police said.

The duo reportedly reached the petrol bunk and started a casual conversation with the supervisor. They allegedly told him that they are from the USA and had been employed in

With one of them diverting the supervisor's attention, the other person flicked bundles of cash from the counter. The duo fled the spot immediately and the victim who noticed the counter a few minutes later was shocked to find Rs 85,000

cash missing.
Upon checking the CCTV footage, he found the foreigners had stolen the money. Purushothaman's complaint Anaicut police have launched

a hunt for the suspects.
It must be noted that two foreigners on Sunday, stole Rs 60,000 from a bike showroom in Sriperumbudur. Claiming to be from Greece, they diverted the attention of the owner by buying a t-shirt worth Rs 500 and escaped with the hefty

The police are inquiring if the same persons were involved in both the incidents.

#### **Spl court denies bail** to ex-IL&FS chairman

Chennai, June 28: A special court has denied bail to Ravi Parthasarathy, former Chairman of the bankrupt Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) and arrested by the Economic Offences Wing of state police, for allegedly defrauding investors to the tune of Rs 200

Parthasarathy was refused bail recently by the special court constituted under the Tamil Nadu Protection of Interest of Depositors (in Financial Establishment) Act. Parthasarathy, one of the accused in the case, was arrested on June 9 for various offences under the IPC and the TNPID Act by the Economic Offences wing-II in Guindy and remanded in judicial custody. In his bail application, Partnasaratny stated ne nad resigned as director and nonexecutive chairman of IL&FS and also as a nominee director of other group companies including ITNL in 2018 itself. ITNL is a company engaged in building of toll roads and bridges and as such it is not a financial establishment for the purpose of attracting Section 5 read with section 2(3) of TNPID Act.

The police had no jurisdiction and they had the jurisdiction only with respect to incorporated financial establishments. The petitioner is a senior citizen with multiple health problems, he added. Rejecting the submissions and disposing of other intervening petitions from the affected persons/parties, the special court presiding officer Jothiraman said that the contention of the petitioner that the TNPID Act is not applicable, cannot be entertained. The jail authorities can make available the medical facilities to the accused. Hence, he is not entitled to bail on health grounds. As pointed out by the special public prosecutor, the investigation is in the preliminary stage. "In view of the above circumstances, this court is not inclined to allow the bail petition," the judge said and dismissed it. -PTI

#### PRAYERS WITH SAFETY MEASURES



Devotees at Kapaleeswar temple, Mylapore, have a darshan of the Lord and the

## Temples re-open in TN

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JUNE 28

Temples in Tamil Nadu reopened on Monday as the state government the restrictions.
On June 25, the state gov-

ernment had announced that the Covid-19 lockdown will be extended till 6 am on July 5, with certain relaxation, including reopening all places of worship in the state. Temples in districts such

Chennai, Chengalpattu, Thiruvallur Kancheepuram reopened their doors for devotees,

after 63 days on Monday. In the temple town of Kanchipuram, devotees gathered outside the temples at 6 am and broke coconuts on the first day. The temples were cleaned and sanitized. Even barricades were set up in some



Devotees gather outside a temple in Kanchipuram at 6 am and break coconuts on Monday.

Kanchipuram to avoid large gatherings of devo-

However, as per the government rules, archanas and prasads were not offered to the devotees, who had to pray and leave. An official with the HR&CE said that the

helpline 044-28339999 can be used by the devotees between 10 am and 6 pm to log complaints related to temple lands, repair and restoration works or even complaints regarding the running of the temple under the HR&CE depart-

### Vandalur zoo welcomes swamp deer fawns, lion-tailed macaque

Chennai, June 28: The Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), popularly known as the Vandalur zoo, near here, has welcomed the birth of swamp Barasingha fawns, mouse deer fawn and a lion-tailed macaque. These new attractions in the zoo are in addition to the baby chimpanzee born to 23year-old Gowri (Susie), a chimpanzee received from Singapore zoo and Gombe 28, earlier this month.

The Barasingha, also called swamp deer, is a deer species found in the Indian subcontinent. "This species is currently listed under vulnerable status in the International Union Conservation Nature's (IUCN) Red List (of threatened species)," a release from the deputy director of AAZP said on Monday. These swamp deer fawns were born on June 11 and 14, respectively, the release said.

The zoological park has also recorded the birth of a mouse deer fawn on June 9 and with this the present population of mouse deer in the park increased to 13. Also, the park recorded the birth of a Lion-tailed

que infant on 11 and this twoinfant macaque month-old infant is now fairly bonded with the troop. AAZP is a conserva-





tion breeding centre for lion-tailed macaques, the deputy director said and added that all the new-

veterinary

# Normality returns, but raises fears of spread

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR /DC CHENNAI, JUNE 28

A semblance of normality returned to Chennai and the three adjoining districts on Monday as places of worship, most offices, shops, malls and shopping complexes opened under the latest relaxations to

the lockdown regulations. The sudden rush of people into the public sphere in large numbers, however, raised fears of a potential surge in Covid-19 infections since social distancing was given a go by in the hustle and bustle.

Though the day broke with a heavy drizzle and overcast sky, most of the establishments that were poised for re-opening after a long gap of about 50 days started preparing for the redeeming moment by dusting, cleaning and washing their premises ahead of their opening time with staff reporting

With vehicles and pedestrians thronging the roads and pavements and shop-

ping hubs bustling with people it looked as though

hour rush on the roads. Parking spaces along to the Coronavirus threat had been fully eliminated with the jostling crowds going about their business

in gay abandon.
The opening up of public transport led to passengers boarding buses in large numbers – more than the stipulated 50 per cent occupancy - and as the day went by and as the weather cleared, malls and textile shops started drawing good crowds.

Since many of the commercial establishments and private offices had suddenly stopped operations in the wake of the second wave of coronavirus taking a heavy toll in the state, their re-opening was welcomed by many customers waiting to complete much pending work.

Banks and other financial companies too started operating with 100 per cent attendance and the opening of shopping malls saw many offices located in such premises starting their operations, thus bringing back the peak

Parking spaces along the kerbs and elsewhere that remained empty all these days were filled up as the

people returned to their hurried routine urban life, freely moving about in their vehicles with the police too removing all their check points on the roads set up at the onset of the lockdown. Temples threw open their doors to devotees,

who thronged in good numbers, and mosques churches and some resumed their worship after a long gap. Beaches also opened fully, drawing the crowds, particularly the Marina sands and the Besant Nagar beach in Chennai.

Restaurants, however, had to restrict their services to takeaway facilities alone and cinema theatres remained closed, despite museums in all the 27 districts that have reported a decline in the Covid-19 infections opening the

doors for visitors.
Shopping hubs like T Nagar, Purasawalkam and

with people congregating in large numbers to catch up on what they had been

missing all these days. The roads leading to industrial throbbed with activities as in normal times with most of the industries and factories resuming operations, providing work and livelihood to a large number of people depending on their functioning.

Many roadside shops and eateries and poor caterers in such localities too returned from their isolations as the economic activities began with a bang providing employment to their regular cus-

At the state level, the 11 districts that were classified as Type 1 continued to be under strict lockdown norms with most of the activities banned. Those districts are Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Karur, Namakkal, Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapatinam Myladuthurai.

#### Hopes up, cheer missing in Nilgiris

B. RAVICHANDRAN I DC

The Unlock 2.0 from Monday has begun to bring a new lease of life to the hills in Nilgiris. However, the cheer is missing as the tourism sector is still closed in the hills.

The Nilgiris, which witnessed more Covid-19 positive count in May and early June, has been categorised under the 'Corona red zone' along with Coimbato-re and neighbouring dis-tricts. With the govern-ment announcing Unlock 2.0 in the west zone with more relaxations, the Nilg-iris from Monday early morning saw life limping back to normalcy with the movement of private vehiopening of shops, barring textiles and jewellery shops, brisk trade in the bakery and parcel services in the restaurants indicat ing that the hill residents are poised to take the hill economy back on track.

The Unlock 2.0 was particularly happy for those who could not visit the saloon for nearly two months. Almost all the saloons were busy in the hills. Even the tailoring shops too have restarted their trade. However, the continuing ban on bus services, auto rickshaws, private cabs and closure of municipal markets still continue to bring woes to those in the travel industry and those who run shops in the municipal market.

But joy is missing in the hills as the tourism industry, the major revenue earner in the urban limits, is still shut with the 2.0 crippling tourism-based revenue flow to the hills since April second week.

After Unlock 2.0, almost all the saloons were busy in the hills. Even the tailoring shops too have restarted their trade. However, the continuing ban on bus services, auto rickshaws, private cabs and closure of municipal markets still continue to bring woes to those in the travel industry and those who run shops in the municipal market.

#### LAWYERS, HC STAFF



Special vaccination camp arranged for advocates, clerks, court staff and their family members at Madras high court on Monday.

#### HC equates temple idol to child, restores property to Palani temple

Equating an idol to a minor child, the Madras High Court has come to the rescue of the famous Sri Dhandayudhapani temple in Palani by restoring its vast property worth several lakhs of rupees, to the shrine. It is 'trite' in law that the idol of a temple is akin to a minor child and the court is the guardian of a minor child both for person and property, Justice RMT Teekaa Raman said in a recent order. "The court is the guardian of a minor child both for person and property. Likewise, the court is the guardian of properties of the idol of the temple," he

"The court has to protect the properties of the idol like that of a minor child. According to the Hindu mythology, at Palani Lord Palani

Swamy Subramaniya alias Karthick is abode as minor child and hence



(and) the court has to protect the property of the idol as that of a minor child," he said while dismissing a batch of second appeals from certain individuals, who enjoyed the property for generations. Being a guardian of the property of the idol, this court feels that the appellants/defendants were enjoying the property for generations by adopting dubious methods and hence should be evicted,

the judge said. He also directed the commissioner and secre- proceedings.

tary of Hindu Religious Endowment department to give suitable instruc-tions to the executive officer of the temple to take possession of the properdecree within four weeks after, failing which, the Commissioner has to supervise its execution at the earliest. The suit property, a vast tract of land extending to 60.43

Periyakumarapalayam village in Dharapuram in Tirupur district, was given as 'Inam' to the ancestors of the appellants in 1863 by the British government. The judge noted that the defendants were squatting on the temple land for generations through the 'grant' by the British Government followed by settlement proceedings under the Tamil Nadu Inam Abolition Act and in view of the various

## Off-centre

## **Hide and seek drama** by tribes in the Nilgiris

The health department officials who are battling to vaccinate the hesitant primitive tribes in the Nilgiris, especially in Gudalur and Pandalur taluks, encountered a hide and seek drama on Sunday as the tribes of a few remote hamlets adopted a different strategy to avoid taking the Covid-19 vaccine shot by hiding in the deep jungles. The residents of Kundrilkadavu, Erumaikulam, Pythalkadavu and Padikkanvayal tribal hamlets, which are dominated by the Paniyar and Kattunayakan tribal communities, vanished into the nearby jungles before the officials came. The health staff, who knew that the tribes would come out of the woods after sunset, entered the hamlets after nightfall and administered them vaccines. – B. Ravichandran

### A podcast on forgotten herbs

Rood is much bigger than what is on their plate, according to two Chennai-based youngsters Akash and Harish, who have started a podcast to discuss forgotten bases and their plates are the discuss forgotten bases and their plates are the discussions and their plates are the discussions and their plates are the discussions are the discussions are the discussions are the discussions and their plates according to two cast to discuss forgotten herbs, species and their benefits. Harish, a petroleum engineer, and Akash Muralidharan, an architect and food designer, in their podcast 'Chukku Kaapi', talk about herbs and spices that have a lot of medicinal value and the need to experiment with them in daily cook-

In the first episode of Chukku Kaapi, the food designer spoke about galangal (Sitharathai), a medicinal herb used in Asian kitchens. They shared a few tips and tricks on how to include them in cooking. For eg, it can be a simple tea recipe with galangal or how adding galangal in a fish or mutton curry helps avoid the heavy smell and ease digestion. Akash also shared a recipe of dishes using this medicinal herb like Sitharathai Rasam, Mango Sitharathai Ice cream etc. – Sindhiya Samuel

## Shivashankar Baba in CB-CID custody

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JUNE 28

The special court for Monday granted the CB-CID police custody of Shivashankar Baba, the founder of Sushil Hari School, arrested on charges of sexual abuse, for three days.

The Mamallapuram all women police arrested Shivashankar Baba on the charges of sexually harassing the girls at the residential

on the complaints from three victims, the police booked him under IPC sections 354 Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any woman, intending to outrage or knowing it to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty), 363 (Punishment for kidnapping), 365 (kidnaps or abducts any person

with the intent to

cause that person to be

Kelambakkam. Based

confined), Kidnapping, abducting or inducing woman to compel her marriage, etc) and section 8,10,12 and 17 of Pocso Act. He was remanded to judicial custody.The CB-CID police had sought interrogation, however, the court granted only three days. It ordered the police

secretly and wrongful-

to produce the accused before the court on

Take a bow,

Deepika!

#### Stalin allocates ₹100 cr for renovation of temples

DC CORRESPONDENT PERAMBALUR, JUNE

Minister M.K. Stalin has allocated ₹ 100 crore for undertaking renovation

of temples under the HR&CE department,

according to back-ward class welfare minister S.S. Sivasankar.

He made this observation while distributing the Covid relief fund of Rs 4,000 and 15 grocery items to the temple priests and staff at a function held under the leadership of collector P. Srivenkata Priya at Perambalur on

He also distributed marriage assistance to 241 women under the "Thalikku Thangam" scheme to the tune of ₹1.46 crores.

#### **'Vaccine allocation to govt** hospitals must be increased'

From P1

"In Tamil Nadu, 1.43 crore doses have been totally used, out of which private hospitals have used only 6.5 lakh doses, which translates to just 4.5%," the Chief Minister pointed out. "Even in the current month, out of 43.5 lakh doses administered in the State, private institutions have contributed to only 4.5 lakh doses which is just 10%," he

The mismatch between demand and supply in government and private institutions had resulted in a situation where private hospitals in the State had around 7-8 lakh doses with them, which was equivalent to one month's requirement, whereas government institutions were left with just 2 lakh doses which was lesser than their current single day usage, he said.

So, besides demanding that the Centre compensate the State on the less allocation made earlier, Stalin wanted the allocation of vaccines to performing government hospitals to be increased. He said if the allotment of 25% of vaccines to private hospitals was to incentivise manufacturers, by allowing them to sell a portion at comparatively better price, the Union Government's procurement price could be increased to ensure that the blended price under the new policy was the same as the current one.

# Sasi supporters to lay siege to houses of ex-AIADMK ministers

M. ARULOLI I DC THOOTHUKUDI, JUNE 28

A few self-styled AIADMK functionaries in Vilathikulam of Thoothukudi district have resolved to lay siege to the houses of former AIADMK ministers Jeyakumar, Natham Vishwanathan and C.V. Shanmugam for their statements against V.K. Sasikala.

meeting convened on Sunday evening by Roopam K. Velavan, who claimed to be a Thoothukudi North district functionary of the AIADMK, at Vilathikulam decided mobilise the grassroot workers of the AIADMK to bring back

Sasikala into the party and AIADMK. make her the general secretary. The participants, numbering around 15, came down heavily on Jeyakumar, C.V. Shanmugam, Natham Vishwanathan and party's deputy convenor K.P. Munusamy for their statements against Sasikala rejoining AIADMK and leading the party.

Condemning the party bosses, chief coordinator O. Panneerselvam and joint coordinator Edappadi K. Palaniswamy, for expelling party functionaries for talking to Sasikala, Velavan they are waiting for Sasikala to campaign throughout the state to rejuvenate the

However, former minister Kadambur C. Raju, who is the Thoothukudi north district secretary of AIADMK, said that none of the party functionaries in Vilathikulam participated in the meeting on Sunday Adding that Velavan left the party when T.T.V. Dhinakaran launched the AMMK, the AIADMK MLA from Kovilpatti also said, "It is highly ridiculous on the part of Sasikala claiming to become the general secretary of AIADMK, in which she was not even a mem-

Suspecting that Sasikala wanted to create problems within AIADMK in connivance with the DMK, Raju stated that no AIADMK worker would tolerate Sasikala campaigning as an AIADMK leader.

'We have our own leaders, O. Panneerselvam and Edappadi K. Palaniswami, to guide us and if Sasikala wants to emerge as a political leader in the state, she can launch her own party or claim the leadership of the AMMK, if Dhinakaran permits her," added Raju.

But Vilathikulam AIADMK functionaries said that Velavan AIADMK MLA Markendeyan, who is now the DMK MLA from Vilathikulam.

## 14 boxes of IMFL. arrack packets seized

DC CORRESPONDENT NAGAPATTINAM, JUNE 28

near Nagapattinam

The prohibition enforcement wing police (PEW) have seized 14 boxes of IMFL bottles and arrack packets which were being smuggled into Thanjavur from Pondicherry in a car, during a vehicle check near

Nagapattinam on Monday.
Police said the PEW
police led by Inspector
Arokiya Dunix Marry tried
to intercept the car which did not stop. The police gave a hot chase for 10 km and intercepted the car at Thiruchengattankudi near Nagapattinam.

On examination of the car, the police found 14 boxes of IMFL bottles and four bags of arrack pockets and arrested the lone occupant the Parthasarathy Melavanjur who smuggles bottles liquor from

Karaikal Thirukattupalli in Thanjavur district. Further investigation is on.



R. VALAYAPATHY | DC

The authorities of the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital (MGMGH), Tiruchy, have formed an expert committee consisting of ENT, oph-thalmic and dental surgeon, physician, anesthetist, pathologist, and a microbi-ologist to form a management protocol and to create

adequate and medical facility to deal with the mucormycosis patients, according to Dr K. Vanitha, dean of MGMGH. She told newspersons at

Tiruchy on Monday that an exclusive 100-bed ward for Covid patients with mucormycosis was established, including a post-covid ward. She said around 82 mucormycosis patients

nucormycosis patients have been admitted.

#### PWA appeals CM to set up AIIMS at Sengipatti

G. SRINIVASAN | DC THANJAVUR, JUNE 28

The Thanjavur district people's welfare association has appealed to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin to take efforts to get an AIIMS-like institute Sengipatti Thanjavur.

The meeting held here on Monday adopted a resolu-tion and sent it to the chief minister.

R. Rangarajan, president of the association, presided over the meeting. meeting. Balakrishnan, secretary, participated. Jeevakumar, legal adviser,

The speakers said that already an AIIMS-like insti-

tute has been sanctioned for Madurai. Now Mr. Stalin has said that steps will be taken to locate another AIIMS-like institute at Coimbatore.

Sengipatti site has been approved by an expert committee. The site is qualified under various aspects like land, water, connectivity, etc. While Thanjavur medical college is nearby, an airport is available at

"Former chief minister M. Karunanidhi created a central university at Tiruvarur. Like that, his son M.K.Stalin should bring a national medical institute at Sengipatti" the resolution

#### 285 vehicles seized

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, JUNE 28

The Chennai city police,

conducting regular drives against lockdown violators in the city, have seized 285 vehicles on Sunday.

As per the orders from city police commissioner Shankar Jiwal, 153 checkpoints, at the borders of each police station's limit, were set up.

#### return to school in Cuddalore dt OP ARULN I DC CHENNAL JUNE 28

Textbooks distributed, Amma bags

The propaganda politics has kicked up a new storm in Cuddalore district with a section of students of the Government Higher Secondary School at Vriddhachalam getting free school bags having images of former AIADMK supremo and Chief Minister late J. Jayalalithaa and former CM Edappadi K Palaniswami.

The state government has been implementing several welfare schemes for the benefit of school students such as providing nutritious noon meal, textbooks, notebooks, laptop, uniform, footwear, school bag, crayons, colour pencils, geometry box, atlas, woollen sweaters, rain coats, boots, socks, bus pass and bicycles. A sum of Rs 2.174.10 crore was allocated for continuing the welfare schemes for students during

Free backpack bags had been issued to the students from class 1 to 12 from 2012-13 by the Tamil Nadu Textbook and Educational Services Corporation. School



bags are being provided to all students studying in government and aided schools. In 2019-20, 71.87 lakh students benefited

from this scheme. In 2016, these freebies landed in an African country and were sold there for a cheap price. Photos of 'Amma' bags sold in Africa went viral on social media in September 2016. Now, these bags were distributed to students of a school in

Vriddhachalam on Monday. The government had directed the teachers and officials to distribute textbooks to the students. But they were aghast seeing pictures of Jaya and EPS on the

When contacted, officials said instruction was given to the officials to distribute only text books. If 'Amma' bags were distributed to the students, it would be taken back soon.

## **COFFEE-BREAK**

**OUICK CROSSWORD** 

**Your day today** By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



**Aries:** On the professional front you need to remain very patient in your approach. Pay full attention to your family life. You might find it difficult to change your job. aurus: Having a dominating attitude on the



arguments. There are chances of a rise in general expenses. Gemini: A successful investment is likely to bring a bloom in your financial health. Your support and encouragement will keep the

motivation of colleagues alive.

family front will give rise to unnecessary



cer: On the professional front you find it difficult to step into a new organization, as there are a lot of pitfalls in your way. Stay alert to avoid monetary losses.



professional front -keep faith in your ideas even if others call them wrong. You will work for the welfare of your family.

Leo: You will achieve success on the



Virgo: You will enjoy a delightful journey with your spouse and relive romantic memories. Today you are likely to face a tough situation on the professional front. Learn to communicate well.

#### You share your b'day with Upasana Singh is an Indian actress and stand-up comedian. She's known for her hearing and speech imapired role in

the 1997 film Judaai. She played the character of 'Bua' in the TV show Comedy Nights with Kapil.

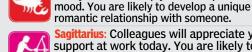
ra: On the work front things don't go in your favour. It will be an enjoyable day at home as you don't have to make any efforts to maintain the harmony. pio: Harmonious atmosphere at

family front will keep you in an upbeat

apricorn: Timely alertness on the

financial front would lay the foundation for a successful investment. Financial

later in the day. Prioritize your sleep.



ngittarius: Colleagues will appreciate your support at work today. You are likely to enjoy cordial relations with other members of the



uarius: Victory in legal affairs will make you happy. Try to work on your self-confidence. There will be a good understanding with family members. Children will make you proud.

gains in business are likely to get momentum



sces: Make the best use of talented professionals in your business. Take the help of spirituality to increase your mental toughness. Leave firearms at home when travelling.

WHEN THE **BREAK IS TESTINGLY** BAD

bridge

ALDER

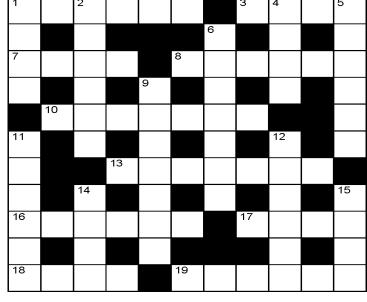
ournament bridge fea-tures two completely dif-ferent forms of the same ne: pairs and teams. In a ent, every trick is vital. You must make as many overtricks as possible. It is no good to guarantee your contract, perhaps with a safety play, if everyone else is winning one trick more than you. This will result in your receiving a bottom score on the board. In a teams game, however,

"safety first" is the order of

the day. You ignore an over-trick if playing for it puts your Today's deal illustrates the different approaches. South is in three no-trump. After a spade lead to the king and ace

South's auction showed some 18-20 points. He upgrad Dealer: South Vulnerable: East-West ed for the good club suit.

In a pairs event, South West North Pass 1♥ Pass 3NT should go for the maximum. leading a club to the king. It



#### Across

1.Fashionable (6) 3. Cast off (4)

7. Slight sprain (4) 8. Fold mark (6)

16. Light (6)

10. Entourage (7) 13. Road surface (7) 17. Adhesive (4)

18. Musical instrument (4)

19. Muscle seizures (6)

#### 1. Seabird (4)

2. Go beyond (6)

4. Practical joke (4)

5. Soak (6) 6. Long dry spell (7) 9. Similes (anag) (7)

11. Billiard table pouch (6)

12. Winding downhill ski race (6) 14. Round handle (4) 15. Optical glass (4)

Across:
1. Cancelled, 6. Panda,
7. Cupid, 9. Rays, 10.
Flayed, 12. Petard, 14.
True, 17. Trunk, 18.
Plain, 19. Metronome.

Down: 2. Annoy, 3. Char, 4. Locale, 5. Empty, 6. Parapet, 8. Dudgeon, 11. Broker, 13. Truce, 15. Realm, 16. Open.

#### **Word Mine** jumble **DBYUD FNOTE**

more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

## **UGATOE** THE BABY BUNNY THAT WAS FINALLY ABLE TO JUMP OVER THE CREEK WAS ---**SBPHIO** Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Jumbles: ONION EAGLE CÚDDLE - END OF THE "RODE

the clubs are breaking 3-2, he will collect at least 10 tricks. In a teams game, though, declarer must consider a bad tricks.) club break. If the suit is 4-1, there is no problem, but what if it is 5-0? That is the only danger -- and there is a safety play available to accommo-date that admittedly remote possibility. At trick two, lead the club nine, planning to play low from the dummy if West

follows. (If West discards

hand, ensuring five club

When top Swedish player P.O. Sundelin was faced with this problem in the 1975 European Championship, it was lucky that he adopted this safety play, as the clubs were

> Feature Syndicate (Asia Features)

#### CALVIN AND HOBBES | Bill Watterson









#### WIZARD OF ID Parker and Hartsd







#### ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman







THAN

**BLONDIE** | Dean Young and John Marshall





I KNOW!

ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe





TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



#### **DIDI EXTENDS LOCKDOWN TILL JULY 15**

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC **KOLKATA, JUNE 28** 

Extending the Covid-19 lockdown till July 15 with an ease of curbs in West Bengal, chief minister Mamata Banerjee broke her silence on the fake vaccine scam on Monday and ruled out her government's link to the racket and its kingpin, Debanjan Deb, in wake of his viral photos with several Trinamul Congress leaders including two state cabinet

On the fresh relaxations, the CM informed that the movement of public transport including intra-state (interdistrict) government and private buses, inland waterways transport, trams, local taxis, cabs and auto-rickshaws will be allowed with passengers not more than 50 per cent of seating capacity at

#### L'DWEEP STAGES **'COCONUT LEAVES' PROTESTS**

Kochi, June 28: Residents of Lakshadweep on Monday staged "coconut leaves and palm" protest across inhabited islands against the administration's order to levy a fine if coconut palm leaves, shells or trunks were found in and around their dwelling places. Holding placards which read

"introduce mulching" and "stop imposing fine", the islanders, under the banner of Save Lakshadweep Forum (SLF), stood in front of a pile of coco-nut leaves in the properties urging the administration to withdraw the "anti-people" order.

In their one-hour long protest, the islanders urged the administration to with-draw the decision to impose fine on them and introduce technology to convert the organic materials from the coconuts as compost — a mixture of ingredients used to fertilise and improve the soil.

"Our demand is that the fine imposed on the people should be withdrawn and a proper waste management system should be implemented. Unless the waste management system is implemented there is no genuine right from the side of administration to collect fine on falling of coconut leaves and other palms in their property," Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal P.P. said.

"Where do the people of islands are expected to do the scientific processing of leaves

and palms," he asked. He said an islander cannot afford to have his own scientific processing unit or incinerator and it is the prime duty of the Lakshadweep administration to provide such a facility.

#### **SC JUNKS PLEA FOR PROBE INTO CONVERSION**

PARMOD KUMAR | DC

The Supreme Court on Mondav refused to entertain a petition seeking setting up of a Special Investigation Team to probe the alleged "forceful" conversion of the Hindus in Nuh district of Haryana.

Dismissing the plea, Chief Justice N.V. Ramana headed a three-judge bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice Hrishikesh Roy said, "This is not a matter for the Supreme Court to take up.'

Sorry, the plea is dismissed," the court said. The petitioners have alleged continuous erosion of life, personal liberty and religious rights of the Hindus in the area by a minority community having a domi-

nating position in the area. Senior lawyer Vikas Singh, appearing for the petitioners, referred to a score of media reports and told the court that two of them had visited the area and also met people including the family of 21-yearold Nikita Tomar, who was shot dead outside her college

in Ballabgarh in October last. One of the murder accused, identified as Tausif, was trying to force the student to marry him. A fast-rack court in Haryana's Faridabad district had sentenced two men to life imprisonment in the murder case. "We do not think we can entertain this petition based on newspaper reports," the

Chief Justice remarked.
The petition, filed by a group of lawyers and a social worker based in Uttar Pradesh, had claimed that the state government, district administration and the police have failed to exercise their powers and so need for a SIT probe, personnel of CBI and NIA under the supervision of a retired top court judge.

#### **U.P. BJP EX-MLA ALLEGES PARTY OUTSOURCING ITS LEADERS**

Ballia (UP), June 28: A former UP BJP MLA and party office-bearer on Monday accused his party of "outsourcing" its leaders while reits. its leaders while reiterating his charge against the Yogi Adityanath gov-ernment of mishandling the Covid crisis.

Within days after claiming at least ten deaths in each village of Uttar Pradesh due to Covid during its second wave, BJP's state Working Committee member Ram Iqbal Singh on Monday upped his claim saying the his claim, saying the Covid death toll in the state could be "over 10

Singh made the assertion while talking to reporters at his residence in Mundera, near

Reacting to Ram Iqbal's statement, BJP's Gorakhpur region president Dharmendra Singh said the party has taken note of his continued anti-government statements and the state leadership will take action against him.
Details of his contro-

versial statements are being collected and being sent to the party

leadership, he added. Earlier on Saturday, former MLA Ram Iqbal Singh had said at least ten people died due to corona infection in every village and this number could be many times more in villages having larger popula-

A large number of people have died in cities too, he added on Monday.

Taking a dig at leaders joining the BJP from other parties, he said, "The BJP has changed with the times and the leaders outsourced by the party have become dominant.

The one who made objectionable state-ments about the Ram temple has become a Cabinet minister in the Yogi government, he

Singh claimed he had raised the issue of corruption in tehsils and police stations in the BJP's State Working Committee meeting on March 15 but there has been no improvement, he said.
The situation has only

worsened since then, he

Singh also accused the state government of favouring a BSP MLA, saying all criminal cases against him have been

BJP'S DHARMENDRA Singh said the party has taken note of his continued anti-government statements and will take action against him.

#### **Prayers at Amarnath**



J&K Lt Gov. Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of the Amarnathji Shrine Board, pays his obeisance at the holy cave shrine of Amarnath. The annual yatra has been cancelled this year due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. "May the divine blessings of Lord Shiva ensure good health and happiness in everyone's life and bless us with the strength to overcome the ongoing health crisis," said the Lt Governor. -P7

## **Punjab crisis: Sidhu to meet** Rahul, Priyanka in Delhi today

Sidhu's utterances against CM have not gone down well with many in the party

**DC CORRESPONDENT** NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

Disgruntled Punjab legislator Navjot Singh Sidhu has been summoned by the Congress high command once again after support for state chief minister Capt. Amarinder Singh appears to have grown within the party. Sidhu has been asked to meet senior leader Rahul Gandhi and AICC general secretary Priyanka secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday. The problem arose in Punjab when Sidhu opened a front against Capt. Amarinder Singh, accusing him with not keeping his promises to

the people of the state.
Sidhu's utterances have
not gone down well with many people in the party. Sidhu had gone on a tirade gainst the Punjab Chief Minister last week in several publications and on the social media.

Punjab Minister was in New Delhi last week, and besides meeting several top leaders, he also met the highpowered committee set up by Congress president Sonia Gandhi to find a solution to the Punjab

## Free electricity in Punjab if AAP wins, says Kejriwal AAP spokesperson and Delhi MLA Raghav Chadheld in February or March

New Delhi, June 28: Ahead of Assembly elections in Punjab next year, Delhi Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday promised free electricity in that state if his Aam Aadmi Party wins the polls.

A day ahead of his visit to Chandigarh, the AAP leader also claimed that women in Puniab are very unhappy with inflation.

"In Delhi we provide 200 units of free electricity to every family. The women are very happy. Women in Punjab are also very unhappy with inflation. The AAP government will also provide free electricity in Punjab. See you tomorrow Chandigarh," Kejriwal tweeted in Punjabi.

been speaking out of turn.

After the meeting, committee member Harish Rawat said Sidhu had keep patience when you are at the top and wait for the right time. You have to

ha said the Punjab Chief Minister's office has denied the party permission to hold a press conference at a pre-decided venue. Chadha said Kejriwal will make a announcement"

Chandigarh on Tuesday.

"@capt\_amarinder's fear of Kejriwal has reached a point where his office has

denied us permission to hold press conference at the pre-decided venue. Nevertheless, @Arv-indKejriwal will make a mega announcement tomorrow in Chandigarh which will send 440 volt current to Captain and his party," Chadha tweeted. Assembly elections in Punjab are scheduled to be

like the timing of his

next year. Dismissing the accusa-

tion, Punjab Chief Minister asked why would the state government stop Kejriwal from holding a press conference when he was allowed to hold a party programme a few days back.

Totally not true. We let Arvind Kejriwal address a rally here just a few days back. So why should we stop him now from holding a press conference? If he wants I'd be happy to arrange his lunch too. Aam Aaami Party just wants to do drama even if it means lying: Amarinder Singh," read a tweet by the Punjab chief minister's media advisor.

statements."

In a bid to solve the Punjab imbroglio, Rahul Gandhi has been meeting be more cautious... I didn't

state, including ministers, MLAs and MPs. Lok Sabha MP Ravneet Singh Bittu said after meeting Gandhi: "Captain Sahib met the committee for three hours. The entire exercise is for poll preparations. Within a week, all issues will be resolved. issues will be resolved. But statements against a sitting Chief Minister are not good and can be easily seen as indiscipline." Several other leaders

also told the high-powered committee that Sidhu's comments against a sitting Chief Minister of the party will only harm the interests of the Congress.

Sources say the Congress high command wants to end the Punjab crisis as soon as possible. As the elections are near, the party should be seen as united instead of fighting rne sources added that there was no question of replacing the Punjab Chief Minister as he has the support of a huge majority of party-

However, state unit chief Sunil Jhakhar is all set to be replaced as there are a lot of reservations about him. He was called to New Delhi last week to meet Rahul Gandhi.

#### **DIGVIJAY FILES COMPLAINT OVER 'TAMPERED' CLUBHOUSE CHAT**

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 28

Congress veteran and former chief minister
Digvijay Singh on
Monday lodged a complaint with the cyber cell
of Madhya Pradesh police here alleging that his chat in the in Clubhouse app, leaked on June 12, was tampered with.

The purported chat in which Singh was heard saying that abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir was a wrong decision by the Centre and there should be a 'relook' at it when Congress returned to power at the Centre, had sparked an uproar landing Congress in an awkward situation.

Talking to reporters here, Singh said he filed the complaint under the Information Technology (IT) Act seeking action against those who 'edited, doctored, shared and distorted' my statement during a Clubhouse session with a motive to

taint my image.
Singh wondered why an 'edited' portion of the chat was leaked and indicated that he was going to send a legal notice to the Clubhouse app for leaking his chat.

The Congress leader further said he has already sent a notice to Twitter for sharing the 'distorted' chat. "FIR should be filed against those who shared and re-tweeted the post", he added.

State cyber cell super-intendent of police Gurkaran Singh said no case has so far been registered in connection with the complaint filed by the Congress leader.

#### **A-G VENUGOPAL GETS ANOTHER EXTENSION**

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

The Centre on Monday extended by another year the term of Attorney General K.K. Venugopal who will turn 90 on September 6. He will continue to serve as Attorney General till June 30, 2022.

Being the oldest serving Attorney General of India, Venugopal was appointed as A-G by the Modi governmenť on July 1, 2017 for a threeyear term.

On the expiry of his initial term last year, Venugopal was given one year extension which ends tomorrow (Inne 20). In view of the (June 30). In view of the fresh extension, he will continue to serve as Attorney General for another year.

Venugopal appointed as A-G after his predecessor senior lawyer Mukul Rohatgi resigned Attorney General citing personal reasons. Venugopal has been a

practicing lawyer for nearly six decades. He was Additional Solicitor General once in late prime minister Morarji Desai's government

He enrolled at the Bar in January 1954 in the then Mysore High Court and thereafter in the Madras High Court. He was designated as senior lawyer by the Supreme Court in 1972.

## SII asks Centre to take up inclusion of Covishield in EU vaccination passport



President Ram Nath Kovind and first lady Savita Kovind at Raj Bhavan in Lucknow on Monday.

## **Prez in Lucknow** on two-day visit

Ram Nath Kovind reached here on Monday by the Presidential Express

Presidential Express Train on a two-day visit. The President, who is currently on a five-day trip to his home state, was received at the Charbagh railway station here around noon by Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, state ministers and a large number of senior officials and people's rep-

resentatives. From the railway station, the president went directly to the Raj Bha-wan where he will spend the next two days. He is scheduled to attend a high tea programme at the Raj Bhawan in the evening with senior judges of the Allahabad High Court,

Justice of India Justice N.V. Ramana will also be present there. On Tuesday, the presi-

dent will lay the foundation stone of Ambedkar Memorial Cultural Centre before flying to Delhi. The state Cabinet last week gave its nod to the transfer of land for the

establishment of the cul-

tural centre. The President had arrived at Kanpur on June 25 on a five-day visit to the

He had been in Kanpur for the past three days during which, besides meeting dignitaries and eminent people, he also paid a visit to his native village Paraunkh in Kanpur Dehat on Sunday and interacted with his old acquaintances. — PTI

#### Pfizer/BioNTech, Serum Institute of India (SII) has requested the Moderna, Vaxzervria by AstraZeneca-Oxford and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen — have been

government to take up the matter of inclusion of Covishield vaccine in the EU Covid-19 Vaccination Passport with the European Union and other countries, citing this will affect students and business travellers and cause severe disruptions to the Indian and global economy. Only four vaccines —

approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and only those vaccinated by these vaccines will be given vaccination passports and will be allowed to travel within the European Union during the pandemic.
"India has a large popu-

lation. However, not including Covishield into the EU Covid-19 Vaccination Passport will not allow Covishield vaccinated people to travel to European countries and this will affect students, business travellers back and forth, and cause severe disruptions to our economy and to the global economy," a source quoted Adar C. Poonawalla, CEO of SII, as having communicated in a letter to external affairs

Poonawalla's letter, director, government and regulatory affairs at SII, Prakash Kumar Singh, has also sought Jaishankar's intervention at the highest level, saying, "It will be in the national interest as well as in the interest of people at large globally if Covishield vaccine included in the EU Covid-19 Vaccination Passport."
— PTI

Sources said referring to

# AIADMK power minister denies irregularities

G BABU JAYAKUMAR & D SEKAR /DC CHENNAI, JUN 26

Electricity Minister in the previous AIADMK government, P Thangamani, said that the alleged loss incurred by Tamil Electricity Board (TNEB), as pointed out in a CAG report, was only due to the government's principle to provide uninterrupted power to the people and not to burden the con-

sumers unduly.

Denying any irregularities in the operations of the TNEB, Thangamani said in a statement on Saturday that it was comout with such adverse reports even when there was no irregularity in it.

He accused the media of exaggerating the remarks in the CAG report, which said that 75 public sector organisations incurred a loss of Rs 20,000 crore. TNEB's loss of Rs 13,176.20 crore had been attributed to power loss, expenses in procurement of power and expenses for workers and not to any irregularity, he

claimed. Pointing out that welfare schemes like free supply of 100 units power to all households and round the clock three phase connection to farmers are there only in the State, Thangamani said, without paying salary, buying coal for thermal stations and purchasing electricity from private companies the people could not be brought out of darkness. Stating that the objec-

tives of the transport and electricity departments were to provide cheap services to the people and not to make profits, he referred to a remark in the report that more freight charges were paid for transporting coal from Chennai to Mettur by not filling up the containers to the full and said that coal had to be rushed whenever

there was a need and what-

be transported.

He also pointed out that the State suffered from power cuts during 2006 to 2011 when the DMK was in power and the 2010 CAG report had pointed out to a loss of several thousands of crores due to purchase of coal at an expensive

rate. Unlike the DMK rule when 171.57 crore loss was reported in 2014 and 2019 due to use of low quality coal, the AIADMK regime never use poor quality coal, Thangamani said that his government was not responsible for the Rs 424.43 crore loss attributed to purchase of power.

When the earlier previous AIADMK government relinquished office in 2006, TNEB's debt was Rs 9,583 crore but the DMK government that came after that not only made the people languish with 10 to 18 hours power cut a day but also added a debt of Rs 36,000 crore, taking it to a grand total of Rs 45,000 crore, he alleged.

While the CAG had not pointed out any irregularities in the AIADMK regime, it had said that there had been mismanagement by the previous DMK government causing heavy losses to the TNEB, running to several thousand of crores, he said.

SHORT TAKES

#### 1 DEAD, 13 HURT **IN TWO CHICAGO SHOOTINGS**

Chicago: Two separate shootings left one person dead and at least 13 others injured on Sunday night in Chicago, police said.

A woman died, and four men and a teenager were wounded when an SUV drove by and shots were fired in the South Shore area just before 9 pm, news outlets reported. The group of six was standing outside when the gunfire erupted. The woman was shot six times and taken to a hospi-tal where she was later pronounced dead, police said. The four men and a 15-year-old boy were taken to hospitals where their conditions were said to be

stable. About two hours later, a separate shooting in the Marquette Park area wounded eight people, Chicago fire officials said. A vehicle collision was also reported nearby in which two people were injured.

It was not immediately clear how the shooting and the crash may be related.

#### **UKRAINE, U.S. BEGIN BLACK SEA DRILLS**

Kiev: Ukraine and the United States launched joint naval Monday in a show of Western

cooperation with Kiev as it faces off with Russia.

The drills come just days after the British navy's HMS
Defender passed near Russian-annoyed Crimea in the Blade annexed Crimea in the Black Sea, with Moscow saying it fired warning shots at the destroyer to ward it off.

The Šea Breeze drills — which have taken place 21 times since 1997 — will involve some 5,000 military personnel from more than 30 countries. The exercises will last two weeks and involve around 30 ships, including the missile destroyer USS Ross.

Ukrainian navy commander Oleksiy Neizhpapa said during an opening ceremony in Odessa that the exercises would send a "powerful message to maintain stability and peace in our region." Russia said it fired warning shots last Wednesday at the HMS Defender after what it said was a violation of its territorial

#### U.S. NORTHWEST, **CANADA RECORD** HIGHEST TEMP.

Ottawa: Swathes of the United States and Canada endured record-setting heat on Sunday, forcing schools and Covid-19 testing centers to close and the postponement of an Olympic athletics qualifying event, with forecasters warning of worse to come.

The village of Lytton in British Columbia broke the record for Canada's all-time high, with a temperature of 46.6 degrees Celsius (116 Fahrenheit), said Environment

And in Eugene, Oregon, a temperature of 43.3 degrees Celsius (110 degrees Fahrenheit) forced organisers to postpone the final day of the US Olympic track and field trials, moving afternoon events to the evening.
On Sunday in Seattle,

Washington state, the tempera ture hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), a record that surprised residents not used to warmer climes.

#### **SWEDISH PM RESIGNS AFTER NO-TRUST VOTE**

Stockholm: Sweden's Prime Stefan Lofven resigned on Monday, one week after he lost a vote of no confidence, leaving it up to the speaker of parliament to begin the search for a replacement.

Lofven could have either called a snap election or resigned following the no-confidence vote last week.

He told a press conference that a snap election was "not what is best for Sweden", pointing to the difficult situation the Covid-19 pandemic posed, coupled with the fact that the next general election — which would go ahead regardless — is

"With that starting point, I have requested the speaker to relieve me as prime minister," Lofven said.

The Social Democrat leader a master of consensus for some, a dull and visionless party man for others — had seven days after the confidence vote to contemplate his options and try and secure a parliamentary majority for a potential reforming of his govern-

## US attacks Iran-backed forces Current vax less

#### Air strike marks Biden admin's second military action in region

Iraq slams air strikes by US

Washington, June 28: The US military, under the direction of President Joe Biden, conducted air strikes on Sunday against what it said were facilities used by Iran-backed militia groups near the border between Iraq and

Syria. Pentagon Secretary John Kirby said that the militias were using the facilities to launch unmanned aerial vehicle attacks against US troops in Iraq. Kirby said the US mili-

tary targeted three operational and weapons storage facilities two in Syria and one in Iraq. He described the air

strikes as defensive, saying they were launched in response to the attacks by Iran-backed

necessary, appropriate, of escalation but also to and deliberate action send a clear and unam

**QATAR-FUNDED** 

**FUEL AGAIN FOR** 

GAZA, SAYS U.N.

**Jerusalem, June 28:** Shipments of Qatarifunded fuel into the Gaza

Strip will resume for the first time since last month's 11-day war

Gaza's militant Hamas

rulers, the UN envoy to the Mideast said on

The move indicates a

return to the informal understandings between

Israel and Hamas in recent years, in which the Islamic militant

group has traded calm

for much-needed aid and

development projects in

the blockaded territory.
The fuel will be delivered
to Gaza's sole power
plant starting Monday,
UN envoy Tor
Wennesland said in a

statement.
The Israeli military body that oversees civil-

ian affairs in Gaza con-

firmed the deliveries

without saying who was

paying for the fuel. The military said permission

for the deliveries was

"conditional on the con-

tinued maintenance of

security stability."
Last month's war was

halted by an informal truce brokered by Egypt.

Hamas nas demanded a

significant easing of the

blockade, while Israel

has vowed to respond

militarily to even minor

attacks from the territo-

ry. The delivery of Qatari

aid is controversial in

Israel, where critics say

it rewards militancy

Qatar has provided hun-

dreds of millions of dol-

lars in recent years to

pay for electricity, help

Hamas cover the salaries

of its civil servants and

provide monthly stipen-

ds to poor families. -AP

between Israel

Sunday.

**HAMAS-RUN** 

on pro-Iran armed groups

Baghdad, June 28: Iraq on Monday condemned overnight US air strikes against Iran-backed armed groups on the Syrian-Iraqi border that killed at least seven fighters and sparked calls for revenge from Iraqi armed

The second such raid on pro-Iran targets since US President Joe Biden took office, described by the Pentagon as "retaliatory", led to fears of a new escalation between Tehran and Washington and came

groups.

The United States took designed to limit the risk

Threatened scribes

despite faltering efforts to revive a key deal over Iran's nuclear programme.

Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi condemned the attack as a "blatant and unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty and Iraqi national security".

reiterates its refusal to be an arena for settling scores," Kadhemi added in a statement, urging all sides to avoid any further escalation. The Hashed, an Iraqi

biguous deterrent mes- the second time the sage, Kirby said.

paramilitary alliance that includes several Iranian proxies and has become the main power broker in Baghdad, said the strikes killed four of its fighters in the Qaim region, some 13 kilome-tres (eight miles) away from the border.

The fighters were sta-

tioned there to prevent jihadists from infiltrating Iraq, the group said, denying that they had taken part in any attacks against US interests or personnel. — AFP

Biden administration has Sunday's strikes mark taken military action in

the region. In February, the US launched airstrikes against facilities in Syria, near the Iraqi border, that it said were used by Iranian-backed militia groups

groups.
The Pentagon said those strikes were retaliation for a rocket attack in Iraq in February that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a US service member and other coalition troops.
At that time, Biden said

Iran should view his deciairstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten US interests or

You can't act with impunity. Be careful, Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send. -AP

## effective against Beta variant: Study **UK DEFENCE MIN.,**

**Boston, June 28:** A study of the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, the virus which cause Covid-19, suggests that current vaccines may be less effective against the Beta variant first identified in South Africa.

Present on the surface of SARS-CoV-2, spike proteins enable the virus to attach to and enter our cells, and all current vaccines are directed against them. The study, published in the journal Science on June 24, used cryo-electron microscopy (cryo-EM) to compare the spike protein from the original virus found in China in 2019, with that of the Beta variant, and the Alpha variant first identified in the UK. Cryo-Em is an imaging

technique used to determine the biomolecular structures at near-atomic resolution. The findings led by researchers at Boston Children's Hospital in the US indicate that mutations in the Beta variant, also known as B.1.351, change the shape of the spike surface at certain locations. As a result, neu-tralising antibodies induced by current vac-cines are less able to bind to the Beta virus, which may allow it to evade the immune system even when people are vaccinated. "The mutations make antibodies stimulated by the current vaccine less effective," said Bing Chen, from the division of Molecular Medicine at Boston Children's. The Beta variant is

somewhat resistant to the current vaccines, and we think a booster with the new genetic sequence can be beneficial for protecting against this variant," Chen added. The researchers also found that mutations in the Beta variant make the spike less effective in binding to ACE2 suggesting that this variant is less transmissible than the Alpha variant.

the armed forces tested positive for Covid. Ben Wallace, secretary of defence, and the heads of the Navy, the Royal Air Force and Strategic Command were all ordered to isolate for a 10day period last week, the Telegraph newspaper reported late on Sunday. It added that the head of

**TOP BRASS BEGIN** 

London, June 28: Britain's senior military commanders and the

defence secretary are self isolating after the head of

**SELF-ISOLATION** 

the Army, General Mark Carleton-Smith, also spent the weekend in self-isolation as he awaited the results of a Covid test.

They had all come into close contact with the Chief of the Defence Staff Nick Carter at a summit in Shrivenham in south-ern England on Thursday

### **ITALY BECOMES** MASK-FREE, 'LOW-RISK' ZONE

Rome, June 28: All of Italy became a mask-free, "low-risk" zone for Coronavirus on Monday, marking a dramatic milestone for the first European country to be hit by the global pan-demic in February

In a decree that took effect on Monday, the health ministry for the first time classified each of Italy's 20 regions as "white", signifying low risk, under the country's colour-coded classification system that evaluates Covid-19 risk.



:25.06.2021. Sub: Corrigendum to the Tender Case No. 71/21/1164 scheduled to be procurement of 701 sets of Set of Cubicle HB-1 & HB-2 (Bare) For WAG-9 and WAP-5 Electric Loco Drg. No. 1209.15.143-001 Alt.-11, 1209.15.143-002 Alt-13. Specn. No. CLW/MS/3/047 Alt.12. [1.0] The Tender Opening Date: The due date of opening of tender has been postponed: FROM EXISTING: 25.06.2021: TO BE READ AS: 09.07.2021. [2.0] All other terms and condition will remain unaltered. All concerned are requested to please note.

Dy. Chief Material Manager (System) For & on behalf of PR5-107 the President of India Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

#### Iran yet to finalise on camera deal south Western RAILWAY ® world powers. Tehran

Journalists protest outside the United Nations office in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on Monday,

**Tehran. June 28:** Iran has not made a decision yet about whether to extend an agreement with the UN atomic watchdog over access to surveillance footage at its nuclear sites, the country's foreign min-

istry said on Monday. The remarks by Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh come after a three-month deal between Tehran and international nuclear inspectors to preserve video data at the country's atomic installations

expired last week, following a one-month extension. "No decision, either negative or positive has been made," Khatibzadeh told reporters. "Neither the continuation of the deal nor the erasure (of data). We are in the previous position for the time being.

Iran began limiting the access of UN atomic watchdog inspectors to its nuclear sites earlier this year, part of a pressure campaign on the West over its tattered 2015 nuclear deal with

Russia, China extend 20-yr-old friendship ties

was trying to push European powers to provide relief from oil and sanctions banking imposed three years ago then-President Donald Trump withdrew America from the land-

mark accord. As part of that effort, Iran abandoned the accord's enrichment limits and is now enriching uranium to 60 per cent purity, its highest ever levels, although still short of weapons grade 90 per

In order to limit diplo matic damage amid ongonegotiations Vienna to resurrect the nuclear deal, Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency reached a last-minute February agreement over Tehran's newly imposed limits on inspections.

The move to erase the surveillance footage would steeply escalate tensions, complicating diplomatic efforts to find a path for America to lift sanctions and Iran to

China celebrated Thur-

sday, saying that China is

marking it with "new

achievements in the

country's social-econom-

ic development and on

CPC's centennial by shar-

ing historic documents

with Beijing.

Soviet-Chinese links

TMCC/Yesvantpur. Last date for submission of bids: upto 11:00 hrs. of 26.07.2021 For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in Deputy Chief Engineer/Track Machines/ publishman/prajswrzo21-22 Yesvantpur, Bengaluru

or the following works :
E- Tender Notice No. SWRTMYPR

202122ST04 Dated: 25.06.2021

pneumatic valves as per specification quantity & make mentioned in

E- Tender Notice No. SWRTMYPR

202122ST05 Dated: 25.06.2021

pneumatic cylinders as pe specification, quantity & make

E- Tender Notice No. SWRTMYPR

Recondition of tamping Rs. 1,94,52,659/ tools of tamping machines working in Bengaluru, Mysuru & Hubballi

Divisions (i.e., CSM / Duomatic/ DTE MPT/ Unimat) for 2 years at ZBD

Rs. 19.03.552/

rocurement of

Procurement of

nentioned in schedule.

Name of Works Approx. Value ocurement of Rs. 32,92,731/-

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works:

E- Tender Notice No. 09 UBL 2021 of 21.06.2021 Name of Works Approx. Value Linking of datalogger Rs. 29,94,200/ with COA (Control Office Application)

for reporting train arrival / departure timing at Belagavi, Kulem, Shedbal, & Hosapete (Total 4 stations) over Hubballi Division.

E-Tender Notice No. 10 UBL 2021 of 21.06.2021

Comprehensive annual Rs. 1,16,83,593/maintenance contract for electronic interlocking system of M/s.Kyosan make installed at Ballari, Hubballi east bypass cabin, Hubballi west bypass cabin and Torangallu stations (Total 04 Nos.) for a period of two years over Last date for submission of bids: upto 11:00 hrs. of 19.07.2021

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY 🙊 The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works: E- Tender Notice No. SnT\_KJM\_Yard

Date: 23.06.2021

Name of Works

Krishnarajapuram
Arishnarajapuram
Arishnar Road No. 1, 2 and 'G' line in Bengalun

E-Tender Notice No. SnT\_Maintenance ASTE1\_Sec Dated: 23.06.2021 Signal and Telecom Rs. 2,08,12,864.80/ Maintenance works in sections unde ssistant Divisional Signal & Telecor Engineer /I/ Bengaluru jurisdiction fo years in Bengaluru Divisior SSE/S/Yelahanka, SSE/S/Hindupur SSE/S/Penukonda , SSE/S/Kuniga SSE/T/Kunigal, SSE/T/Yelahanka SSE/T/Hindupur & SSE/T/Head

- Tender Notice No. CTR\_TTR\_ASTE1\_Sec Dated: 23.06.2021

Execution of signaling/ Rs. 1321118/Felecom works to facilitate Engg sanctioned works (CTR, TRR & TFR) over Assistant Divisional Signal 8 Telecom Engineer/I/Bengaluru's jurisdiction of Bengaluru Division.

Last date for submission of bids upto 15:00 hrs. of 14.07.2021

Estate Officer, i/c TANUVAS., Chennal

PUB/85/AAV/PRB/SWR/2021-22 Engineer, Hubballi

#### TAMIL NADU VETERINARY AND ANIMAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY e' - Tender Notice e' - Tender Notice No.01 / E.O / DB / Tender / 2021-2022, dt. 25.06.2021 fice- Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University 'e' tend

by the Estate Officer, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University of tenders (Lump sum) are invited by the Estate Officer, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Madhavaram Milk Colony, Chennai-51 online for item wise rate. Bids are invited from the eligible contractors for the following work. Description of Work Period of of work (including GST) 1 Formation of road in Madras Veterinary College Rs.97.52 58,800/-Six campus at Chennai - 07 (Re-Tender) including

Starting and End date for down loading and uploading tender : 07.07.2021 at 04.00 P.M. and 19.07.2021 at 10.00 A.M. Last date for submission of bid 19.07.2021 by 10.00 A.M 20.07.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

Opening of Tender For notice inviting tenders please log on to: www.tanuvas.ac.in/http://tntenders.gov.in The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website: https://tntenders.gov.in. Subsequent corrigendum/addendum if any shall only be available in website indicated above

DIPR/1868/TENDER/2021

#### rejected the possibility of the international stage' The Russian leader noted worked to uphold a "true forging a military alliaand recalling Soviet supnce, Putin said last fall that the coordination of multilateralism and globport for the Chinese comthat such a prospect can't munists. al iustice. Moscow marked the

leaders of Russia and China on Monday hailed increasingly close ties between their countries and announced the extension of a 20-year-old friendship treaty, a show of unity amid their tensions with the West. Speaking in a video call

with Chinese President Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the treaty

himself as China's most pow-

Zedong, and has eliminated

any limits on his term in

office. China has seen huge

improvements in living stan-

dards over the past four

decades, accompanied by ris-

ing international economic

and political heft. Yet, while

many countries have benefit-

Moscow helped take relations between Moscow Beijing to an "unprecedented height" and would be extended for another five years. foreign policy efforts by Russia and China has played a "stabilising role in global affairs.'

signed in July 2001 in importance of a "strategic cooperation" between Moscow and Beijing in defending their common interests on the global stage. He added that Russia and China have Putin and Xi have devel-

oped strong personal ties Xi in his opening partnership" between the remarks emphasised the two former Communist the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of

be ruled out entirely. During Monday's call, Putin congratulated Xi on

West for influence and

face soaring tensions in

relations with the US and

its allies. While Moscow

and Beijing in the past

**GLOBAL | INFLUENCE CPC seeks control over Chinese nationals who have moved abroad** 

were launched ahead of the

July 1 centenary celebrations

The hydropower station is

located on the Jinsha River,

the upper section of the

the southwestern provinces of

Yangtze River, and straddles

Communist

the ruling

Party of China (CPC)

Yunnan and Sichuan.

Ahead of centenary, China heralds CPC's impact **Beijing, June 28:** China is marking the centenary of its ruling Communist Party this China launches hydropower stn

week by heralding what it Beijing, June 28: China on says is its growing influence Monday launched two units of abroad, along with success in battling corruption at home. a massive hydropower station Party officials on Monday in the country's southwest, heaped praise on President Xi said to be the world's largest, Jinping, who has established which is under construction

and costs about USD 34 bilerful leader since Mao lion. The two units of the Baihetan hydropower station ed from that relationship,

economic sway.

party's international influ-China is also seen eroding ence, appeal and attraction democracy and human rights have continually increased, in nations over which it holds placing it at the forefront of world politics," Guo Yezhou, "The Chinese Communist deputy head of the party's

external liaison department nary celebrations.

China has already built the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River and approved plans to build another massive dam on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet close to Arunachal Pradesh. The dams cost about 220 billion yuan (USD 34 billion), according to media reports.

told reporters at a news conference held at the opening of a media centre for the cente



## Chronicle

## Drone attacks on Jammu carry ominous signals

id India see its first terrorist attack through the use of drones, in the early hours last Sunday, when the technical area of Jammu airport — namely the Air Force Station — saw two explosions go off? The picture is not clear yet. Fortunately, the explosions caused only very minor damage. Fighter planes were parked at a different location, but even Indian Air Force helicopters, in hangars nearby, not were affected. This is a matter of relief.

Had a helicopter been damaged, the consequences by now are likely to have been kinetic, sparking anxieties and fears of a wider military conflagration. It is to be borne in mind that the Air Force Station is barely 14 kilometres from the India-Pakistan border. However, the presumption of drones cannot be ruled out and will remain the working hypothesis until the investigators have had time to examine the episode from every possible angle and rule out the possibility. At any rate, the presumed dropping of two improvised explosive devices from "an aerial platform" does raise the spectre of drones coming into play in the India-Pakistan dynamics even if investigations eventually discount the possibility that drones were indeed used in the Jammu explosions.

In recent years drones — unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) which are barely 20 kilogram in weight and can fit into a small space — have carried deadly military payloads. In September 2019, the Houthi rebels of Yemen attacked oil processing plants in Saudi Arabia, causing an international geo-strategic scare. More recently, in May this year, the Houthis claimed to have dropped bombs just inside the Saudi border using drones. From the Afghan theatre, the Americans were sending out military drones into the tribal areas of Pakistan to target fighers of extrem-

Drones from Pakistan are known to have airdropped cargos of arms and ammunition for use by terrorists inside J&K as well as in Punjab. But the Jammu incident suggests that the authors of the airdropping of explosives near high-value military targets are playing a game of brinkmanship, if they have the sanction of a government. In case the unloading of explosives from the air was done by terrorist elements, then the exercise puts at risk the tenuous calm that obtains in J&K. In that event the political processes under consideration in the Union Territory can potentially be derailed as the security grid is intensified manifold by the government and overt oppression of the populace once again becomes the norm. In that case, the military-to-military agreement of February 25 between the defence establishments of India and Pakistan, which had led to the sincere observance of ceasefire, is likely to come under serious strain.

The June 27 airdropping of explosive devices in Jammu could conceivably be a trial run, with better targeted attempts to follow. At any rate, India would do well to refine its tactics in neutralizing this new technique being used by terrorists or an unfriendly power. When attack drones come into play, putting more troops on the ground and the use of anti-aircraft guns are not the answer. The electromagnetic spectrum warriors will need to step up to neutralise the GPS fittings on the hostile drones. A new dimension in counter-terrorism measures, even warfare, is

### Who spied on UK minister?

TK health secretary, Matt Hancock, had to go. Political authority needs legitimacy and his actions in an extramarital affair in which he was seen hugging an aide in his office were the very epitome of flagrant disregard of normal rules of morality as well as poor timing. In a democracy that prides itself on very old foundations even within a ceremonial monarchy, there can't be one rule for the suffering public and another for privileged

Hancock, who had had the unenviable task of leading the battle against waves of the Coronavirus pandemic, had imposed such severe lockdown restrictions on the British public that they could not even hug their near and dear ones, not even at a funeral, which they were in most cases forbidden to attend anyway. The pressure that was brought upon the "hugging" Tory minister to do the decent thing and hand in his papers was impressive and succeeded despite Prime Minister Boris Johnson being inclined towards keeping him in the job.

Hancock's authority to lead the NHS and decide on health policies and order Covid restrictions had been eroded. But the real issue is who ordered the placing of spy cameras inside Whitehall, the seat of UK government. Was the camera, which was hidden inside a smoke detector, placed there by spy agencies like MI 5 or MI 6 without the authority of the bosses? That brings us back to whether these spy games are being played without the knowledge of the leaders of a democratically elected government.

The thought that Big Brother may be watching everyone all the time, especially in CCTV camera-obsessed Britain which has one of the world's highest density in cameras placed in public places, gains greater currency in the light of l'affaire Hancock involving aide Gina Coldangelo. It is strange that UK authorities are probing how the footage from the CCTV device was leaked to The Sun rather than how a minister's office came to be spied upon like this. The acceptance at this level that secret taping is going on appears ludicrous and it is by no means restricted to the UK.

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Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001

Thirvananthapuram: St Joseph Press Thycaud post, Cotton Hills, Thiruvananthapuram-14, Ph: 0471-2735105/6/7, Fax: 0471-4016112 Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-



## After J&K olive branch, will Pak ties normalise?



K.C. Singh

rime Minister Varendra Modi reaffirmed the absence of "dil ki doori" between his government and 14 Kashmiri mainstream leaders at his first meeting with them after August 2019, when his government had revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and downgraded and divided the state into two Union territories. Questions naturally arise about what lies behind this softening of the Modi government's approach, far removed from the demonising of traditional political parties

over the past two years. While the foreign policy of any democracy gets impacted by its domestic politics, it is more so with this Indian government. After Mr Modi's convincing re-election in 2019, the government decided to pursue its core agenda with vigour. The Jammu and Kashmir decision followed in December by the Citizenship Amendment Act's passage, creating discriminatory, religion-based and nationspecific exceptions for refugees to gain Indian citizenship. In February 2020, US President Donald Trump visited India on a highly calibrated visit to massage his ego. To avoid appearing partisan, such visits are not usually scheduled when the incumbent faces re-election in nine months. Prime Minister Modi had in the preceding years personally cultivated relations with the rulers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, besides of course the United States

Thus, when implementing its majoritarian BJP agenda domestically, the government calculated that Pakistan's protests over J&K's rejig could be contained without too much diplomatic damage. Similarly, the friendly government of Ban-gladesh could be appeased to ensure that it ignored the rhetoric of senior BJP leaders dubbing illegal immigrants as "pests". The US under President Trump was also expected to downplay the issue, as he demonstrated by ignoring the communal incidents in New Delhi on the last day of his visit in February 2020.

However, the US as well as its Gulf allies Saudi Arabia and UAE had been closely watching developments in South Asia. The escalation of tensions after the Pulwama terror attack and India's airstrike on Balakot in Pakistan, followed by Pakistan's retaliatory strike and dogfight resulting in the capture of an IAF pilot, saw the behind-thescenes role played by these three nations. The fact that the Indian pilot was handed back almost immediately, giving a fillip to Mr Modi's popularity just two months before the Lok Sabha election, earned these three nations goodwill and possible leverage in India-Paki-stan affairs. C-Voter polling data found that between January 1 and March 7 the net approval rat-ing of the Modi government rose from 32 per cent to 62 per cent. While some of the bump came after the Budget, the real spike was after Balakot. The popularity of Rahul Gandhi fell from 23.3 per cent to 8.2 per cent, while that of Mr Modi rose from 32.4 per cent to 63.2 per cent. However, the BJP's assessment about the

international reaction to its domestic agenda getting easily manged came up against unforeseen factors. First, the outbreak of Covid-19, beginning soon after Mr Trump's India visit, distracted India and even affected India's image abroad after the poor handling of its second wave. Second, China protested strongly after the J&K changes, claiming that India could not alter the status quo unilateral ly as China was a party to the dispute. Thus, India

should have been alert to Chinese mischief at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), especially as China had quickly managed to contain the epidemic. Instead of showing contri-tion for letting the virus escape and cause a global health and economic crisis, China chose to push its People's Liberation Army at multiple points in Eastern Ladakh up to its claim lines, upsetting the status quo. While it has agreed to a mutual withdrawal in the Pangong Tso and Kailash Hills sectors its intru-Hills sectors, its intru-sions remain in Depsang Plains, Gogra and Hot Springs, etc.

The third unforeseen factor was the defeat of President Donald Trump in November 2020. After Joe Biden assumed the presidency, India realised that his Democratic Party's left wing had evangelistic interest in human rights and freedom of faith and expression. Ironically, two Indian-origin members of Congress, Pramila Jayapal and Ro Khanna, are among the strongest critics of the BJP majoritarian agenda, including its draconian Kashmir policy. President Biden too strongly advocated an alliance of democracies to counter the challenge from the strategic convergence of Russia and China. It was because of this that at the recent Gsummit in Cornwall. four democracies were invited as "guests' Australia, India, South Korea and South Africa.

Critics would say US foreign policy rests on pragmatic considerations, often ignoring its own advocated values of democracy and human rights. However, the times have changed, and Cold War arguments may now be inapplicable, particularly after Mr Trump's attempt at undermining US democracy itself. Moreover, China presents a different challenge from the one

The PM's session with the Kashmiri political leaders is a recognition that the government's Kashmir policy has yielded poor results at home and abroad.

the former Soviet Union held. It posits a hugely successful model resting on restricted political and personal freedoms in exchange for prosperity, material growth and economic security. To challenge its lure, liberal democracies are being compelled to argue the relevance of their own model. Thus, the US and other Western democra-cies cannot ignore the continued debasement of liberal democracy Asia, and certainly in India as they look towards this country as a role model.

The PM's session with the Kashmiri political leaders is a recognition that the government's Kashmir policy has yield-ed poor results at home and abroad. The restoration of Article 370 seems unlikely as its revocation has been a core BJP demand and which has popular support. That leaves delimitation, elections and statehood. Views on their sequencing differ, but the road to statehood is clear. This clears the path for a calibrated resumption of norrelations with Pakistan's Pakistan. Prime Minister

Imran Khan in an interview has sought "civilised relations" with India. He also interestingly argues that even Pakistan doesn't want the Taliban to continue its onslaught in Afghanistan to depose the government as a civil war will only have more refugees streaming into an already economically challenged Pakistan. The national security advisers of India and Pakistan will both be at the coming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting. Hopefully, the Indian government has realised that its Pakistan policy should be delinked from electoral considerations and strategically its Kashmir policy has only deepened Sino Pakistan relations. If Pakistan too realises that terror is a dangerous instrument to wield against India as it begets global condemnation, besides singeing the user. the region might actually stand to gain.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

#### **TRAFFIC DEATH**

It made painful reading that a 50-year-old chairperson of the women's wing of the Kanpur chapter of the IIA, Ms Vandana Mishra (a Covid survivor) died, struck in traffic while being taken to the hospital. It is tragic and pathetic that she was caught in the traffic. The president was in Kanpur at that time and the traffic was halted. VVIP protocol has taken a precious life. Blocking of traffic on a busy road causes immense trouble to ordinary citizens. The old, sick, school children, pregnant women and of course the Aam Aadmi are put to trouble. Why not the VVIPs take a circuitous unscheduled route or go by air and not inconvenience the public. VVIP culture should go lock, stock and barrel.

N. R. Ramachandran, Ooty

#### RAHUL'S COMMENTS OUT-

While the world and organisations like WHO and the UN General Assembly have lauded India for its unrelenting fight against Covid, despite facing many constraints and criticisms of every kind here is the voice of Rahul Gandhi that strikes a discordant note of mockery and abuses of the efforts and achievements of the Government in control-ling, curing and containing Covid. WHO recorded its appreciation of the Government of India for its achievements of vaccinating Indians to protect them from Covid. The UN General Assembly also expressed similar views. It will be better both for Rahul and the party if senior leaders advise him to cultivate the habit of rushing to comment.

Bharadwaj Puthran,

# Aakar Patel

As world keeps growing, India's sinking, going back to the past

ill four years ago, the Indian government would use the phrase "fastest growing economy". Prime Minister Narendra Modi would repeat the phrase "one bright spot in the global economy" to describe the country, and used it last at 8 pm on Tuesday, November 8, 2016, when he gave us the demonetisation speech.

Since then, we have not heard much about the fastest growing bright spot. There is not much talk about the economy and has not been for the past four years. When it looked like India's economy had run into trouble, the boasting paused. Now that it is clear that India's economy has been ruined, we have stopped speaking about it entirely. Of course, just because the government does not speak about something does not mean that the problem does not exist. It does and we must try and understand what has happened to

According to the government data, our economic growth began braking sharply before January 2018. From here, for some reasons which we need

not speculate about today, we fell into a decline which we could not pull out of. For the four quarters of 2018 and for the next four quarters of 2019 and for the first quarter of 2020, we fell. This was before the Covid-19 pandemic and by the time the nationwide lockdown was announced, we had stopped growing completely.

The government did not tell us why our economy had imploded. The PM simply stopped speaking on the subject. On October 14, 2019, the Hindu published a piece written by Parakala Prabhakar, who is finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's husband. Assessing the economy, he wrote: "There is anxiety all over about the economic slowdown in the country. While the government is still in denial mode, data flowing uninterruptedly into the public domain show that sector after sector is staring at a seriously challenging situation. Private consumption has contracted and is at an 18-quarter low of 3.1 per cent; rural consumption is in a deep southward dive and is double the rate of the urban slowdown; the credit offtake by micro and small industries remains stagnant; net exports have shown little or no growth; GDP growth is at a six-year low with the first quarter of FY20 registering just five per cent; and unemployment is at a 45-year-high. The government, however, is yet to show any signs that it has come to grips with what ails the economy. Much less evidence is available to believe that it has a strategic

vision to address the challenges. This was 20 months ago and before the pandemic, and before the recession of 2020 and before the second wave of Covid-19. I received a newsletter from a business daily this week which listed what the position was for the last financial year, which ended a few weeks ago in April. Consumer spending had contracted by nine per cent and investments contracted by more than 10 per cent. Manufacturing, services and construction lost value somewhere in the range of eight per cent. What happened in the last financial year was that we went back to the past. We slowed down, then we stopped growing and then we started going back. The rest of the world kept growing and left us behind. The reason the average Indian is today poorer than the average Bangladeshi is to be found in the last 48 months. By April 2021, manufacturing, trade, transport and communications was down at the same level that it was in 2018. That is three years of growth lost.

Construction has lost two years. The output of core industries such as cement, refineries, steel is the same as it was in March 2017. That is four years India lost while the rest of the world produced more. The sales of passenger vehicles, including cars, have gone back to their 2016 levels. That's a loss of five years. This is not an anomaly. The auto sector has been hammered for many years now and it is clear that the middle class has stopped growing. Twowheeler sales are today at the same point that they were 10 years ago. The sales of commercial vehicles, meaning the trucks that carry around goods, are today below where they were when Narendra Modi first became Prime Minister.

Is this some new data that I am referring to? No, this is publicly available of the sector. If some of us have not known that the situation is this grim, it is purely because it has not featured in a "Mann Ki Baat" yet.

If you don't acknowledge a problem, as Dr Manmohan Singh said about the economy in an interview last year, then you cannot begin to solve it. This is why we will not solve this problem. India's leader has too much pride to admit to us that he has failed us on the economy. His Cabinet of chamchas dare not say it either. His finance minister's husband must write an article in one of India's most reputable newspapers to bring to the notice of the world that we are sunk

The impoverishing of Indians and the wrecking of our economy is happening at the same time when the concentration of our wealth is being skewed towards a few. The two richest men in Asia are not from China, whose economy is six times bigger than India's. They are two Gujarati men who represent the model of "growth" in India.

> The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist













## Chronicle TUESDAY | 29 JUNE 2021 | CHENNA

# quick

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52735.59	-0.36
Nifty 50	15814.70	-0.29
S&P 500*	4,281.34	0.01
Dollar (₹)	73.87	0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18	0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,337▲116	0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.08	-1.44
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.056	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.490	-0.046
* As of 8:30 PM IST		

#### Dr Reddy's Lab launches Covid drug 2-DG

Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) has launched Covid drug 2deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG), developed by the DRDO as an adjunct therapy to treat mild to severe coronavirus infections. Trials revealed the drug will reduce the patient's dependency of supplemental oxygen and ensures his faster recovery by over two days. The company will sell the drug under the brand name 2DG for a retail price of Rs 990 per sachet.

## **Emirates may** resume flights to India from July 7



**Dubai's flag carrier Emirates** may resume its flights from India to Dubai from July 7, over two months after the UAE suspended its operations owing to the surge in coronavirus cases in India, the *Khaleej Times* reported. The airline is awaiting exact travel protocols and guidelines from the government arding the resumption of the flight operations. The airline's website shows seats are available for booking from July 7.

#### Dodla Dairy up 42% on debut, KIMS gains 22%

Hyderabad-based Dodla Dairy and Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) Hospitals listed on the bourses at premiums of 28.50 per cent and 22.3 per cent to the issue price. Dodla Dairy shares opened at Rs 550 against the IPO price of Rs 428 and touched a high of Rs 652. up 52.33 per cent, but closed at Rs 609.90, up 42.5 per cent. KIMS closed at Rs 996.95, gaining 20.84 per cent, against the IPO price of Rs 825.

#### Rohini Nilekani to retire from own foundation

Arghyam Foundation said Rohini Nilekani will retire from the foundation as chairperson and member of the board on Sept. 30 and will be succeeded by Sunita Nadhamuni, a member of the board and head of Digital LifeCare at Dell Giving and Social Innovation. Nilekani had set up Argyham in 2001 as a vehicle for her personal philanthropy. Argyham has been working exclusively on water sector issues since 2005.

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#### ■ Paediatric care gets ₹23,220-cr funds

## **Focus on health** infra for children

NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

Making a proactive move, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday provided Rs 23,220 crore of additional funding for setting up paediatric care/paediatric beds at hospitals to prepare healthcare infrastructure to deal with any emergency in the event of the next Covid wave affecting children.

Experts have warned that a third Covid wave in the country may affect children more than adults.

Announcing a set of measures for reviving the economy battered by the severe second Covid wave, Sitharaman also unveiled a Rs 50,000-crore credit guarantee scheme for setting up of medical or health infra-structure by private hospi-tals in cities other than eight metropolitan cities.

We are now providing Rs 23,220 crore more, primarily focussing on children and paediatric care. This Rs 23,220 crore will be spent this financial year

"It will also focus on funding of HR augmentation so that medical students, interns, nurses can also be brought in for helping in such emergencies, ICU beds will be made available, oxygen supply at central, district and subdistrict level will be ensured and also making sure that equipments and medicines, tele-consultation and ambulance service... all of that will be taken care of with primary focus on chil-

#### **CENTRE TO PAY PF SHARE TILL MARCH**

New Delhi, June 28: The government extended the Rozgar Yojana, which was launched in October last year to encourage employment generation, by nine months till March

Under the ABRY, the Government of India is crediting for a period of two years both the employees' share (12 per cent of wages) and employers' share (12 per cent of wages) of contri-

bution payable for establishment strength up to 1,000 employees and giving a salary of up to Rs 15,000 a month. In case of establishment strength of more than 1,000 for all those with Rs 15,000 per month salary, only employee's share (12 per cent of wages) is credited by the government to the EPFO. The scheme is being implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organisation.

#### **GUARANTEE ON TRAVEL & TOURISM LOANS**

New Delhi, June 28: Announcing free visas to 5 lakh tourists visiting India this fiscal, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday financial support would be provided to more than 11,000 registered tourist guides and travel & tourism stakeholders. She said the total financial implication of free visa

dren. So paediatric care is the emphasis," Sitharaman said at a press conference.

She said last year a Rs 15,000 crore emergency health systems project was implemented. Using that Rs 15,000 crore, there was a 25-fold increase in Coviddedicated hospitals.

Besides, 7,929 Covid health centres and 9,954 Covid care centres were set would be Rs 100 crore. The scheme would be applicable till March 31, 2022, or till 5 lakh visas are issued, whichever is earlier. Sitharaman said loans

will be provided with 100 per cent guarantee with a limit of Rs 10 lakh for travel & tourism stakeholders and Rs 1 lakh for registered tourist guides. — FC Bureau

up, and oxygen supported beds increased by 7.5 times. There was also an increase in isolation beds and ICU beds by 42-fold and 45-fold, respectively.

"The Rs 15,000 crore which was used till March 2021 aiming at providing additional infrastructure and facilitating Covid care had good response," the minister said.

#### **SAT STAYS SEBI ORDER ON FRANKLIN TEMPLETON**

New Delhi, June 28: The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Monday stayed a Sebi order that haď barred Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) from launching new debt schemes for two years and had asked the fund house to refund a little over Rs 512 crore.

Terming the refund amount "excessive", SAT asked the asset management company to deposit a sum of Rs 250 crore in an escrow account within three weeks.

The appeal was filed against an order passed by the Sebi on June 7, which said Franklin Templeton violated certain provisions of mutual funds norms in relation to the management of the six debt schemes, which are now

Through the order, Franklin Templeton was directed to refund investment management and advisory fees along with interest at the rate of 12 per cent per annum amounting to Rs 512.50 crore.

Further, the firm was prohibited from launching new debt schemes for a period of two years and penalty of Rs 5 crore was levied on it.

In its order on Monday, SAT noted that 21 debt schemes are still being managed by Franklin Templeton and no complaint of these schemes

have come to the fore.
"The mere fact that the appellant (Franklin Templeton) have chosen to wind up síx schemes does not mean that they should be debarred from launching any new schemes," it added.



Indians invest nearly

million traders of these assets in the US and compares with just 2.3 mil-

lion in the UK The growth in India is coming from the 18-35 year old cohort, says the co-founder of India's first cryptocurrency exchange. Latest World Gold Council data indicated Indian adults under age 34 have less appetite for gold than older con-

"They find it far easier to invest in crypto than gold because the process is very simple," said Sandeep Goenka, who co-founded ZebPay and spent years representing the industry in discussions with the government on regulation. "You go online, you can buy crypto, you don't have to verify it, unlike gold. One of the biggest barriers preventing wider adoption is the regulatory uncertainty. Last year, the Supreme Court quashed a 2018 rule banning crypto trading by banking entities, result-

ing in a trading surge. However, authorities show no signs of embracing cryptocurrencies. The nation's central bank says it has "major con-cerns" about the asset class and six months ago the Indian government proposed a ban on trading in digital coinsthough it has been silent

on the topic since.
"I am flying blind," said
Ms Sood. "I have a risktaking appetite, so I'm
willing to take a risk of a ban." It's not the only country where regulators are cracking down. The UK's financial watchdog has just banned Binance Markets Ltd from doing any regulated business in the country.

The official hostility though means many big-ger individual investors are reluctant to speak openly about their holdings. One banker Bloomberg spoke to who invested more than \$1 million into crypto assets said with no clear income said with no clear income tax rules at present he was concerned about the possibility of retrospec-tive tax raids if he was publicly known to be a big-ticket crypto investor.

He's already got contingency plans in place to move his trading to an offshore Singapore bank account if a ban was to be introduced.

To be sure, the value of Indian digital asset holdings remain a sliver of its gold market. Still, the growth is clear, especially in trading-the four biggest crypto exchanges saw daily trading jump to \$102 million from \$10.6 million a year ago, according to CoinGecko. The country's \$40 billion market significantly trails China's \$161 billion, according Chainalysis.

— Bloomberg

## Game streaming startup Loco gets funds from PUBG firm

**SARITHA RAI** 

Loco, an Indian streaming platform for video games, received \$9 million from investors, including South Korean gaming company Krafton Inc in its first fundraising effort to capi talise on the growing popularity of games-based entertainment in the South Asian nation.

Mumbai-based startup was also backed in its seed round by Lumikai Ltd, India's first gaming media fund, Londonbased Hiro Capital and early stage investors including 3one4 Capital and Axilor Ventures.

Loco will use the funds

to upgrade its technology and content, the startup said in an announcement on Monday.

Livestreaming of games has been popularised globally by the likes of Amazon.com Inc's Twitch in the US and DouYu International Holdings Ltd and Huya Inc in China. In India—which has no legacy of gaming on consoles or desktopsthe genre received a boost during the pandemic, as



the hundreds of millions locked indoors turned to their smartphones for entertainment. Krafton's PUBG Mobile, previously distributed in India by Tencent Holdings Ltd, had been among the most popular games in the country before it was banned last vear and is now re-entering the market.

"Cheap data and inexpensive phones brewed a perfect situation in India, creating a completely new category of entertainco-founder Anirudh Pandita said in an interview. "Over 100 million monthly active users in India engage with these games, imagine a 100 million people playing a sport that no one's watching that's what Loco set out to solve for."

Loco Interactive Pte, as the startup is officially called, was founded by Pandita and Ashwin Suresh, who met as engineering undergraduates at the University of urbana Champaign. The duo went on to work on Wall Street before starting Pocket Aces Pvt Ltd, a digital studio creating streaming content to provide an alternative to traditional television entertainment. The gaming startup will be spun off from Pocket Aces with this funding, the statement said

Loco has expanded rapidly in the past year, with monthly active users growing six times and monthly active streamers increasing 10 times. Its competitor YouTube, the startup said.

Loco has a roster of the country's most bestknown streamers playing popular games such as Clash of Clans, FreeFire and Call of Duty Mobile. It also hosts top esports teams. It also hosts top esports teams and their tournaments, though the genre remains a niche in —Bloomberg

## Second wave impact milder: CEA

SUVASHREE GHOSH & RONOJOY MAZUMDAR

The cryptocurrency afi-

cionados' mantra that Bitcoin is equivalent to digital gold is winning

converts among the world's biggest holders of

In India, where house-

holds own more than

25,000 tonnes of gold,

investments in crypto grew from about \$200 mil-

lion to nearly \$40 billion

in the past year, accord-

ing to Chainalysis. That's

despite outright hostility toward the asset class

from the central bank

and a proposed trading

Richi Sood, a 32-year-old entrepreneur is one of those who swerved from

gold to crypto. Since December, she's put in just over Rs 10 lakh---

some of it borrowed from

her father---into Bitcoin, Dogecoin and Ether.

And she's been fortu-

nate with her timing. She cashed out part of her

position when Bitcoin smashed through \$50,000 in February and bought back in after the recent

tumble, allowing her to

fund the overseas expan-

sion of her education

startup Study Mate India. "I'd rather put my

money in crypto than

'Crypto is more transpar-

ent than gold or property

and returns are more in a short period of time."

She's part of a growing

number of Indians--now

totalling more than 15

million--buying and sell-

ing digital coins. That's

catching up with the 23

Ms Sood said.

the precious metal.

**FC BUREAU** HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

The impact of the Covid-19 second wave on the economy was much milder than the first wave because of its shorter duration and the resilience of Indian businesses to adapt to the situation, said India's chief adviser, economic Krishna-murthy Subramanian.

Speaking at a virtual conference organised by FTCCI on Monday, he said, The second wave had impacted the economy in April and May. But it peaked very fast and also declined at the same pace. So it impacted the economy for a much shorter duration. Unlike the first wave when the national lockdown was imposed, restrictions were asynchronous during the second wave and have impacted only 30 per cent

of the economy."
He also observed that the interstate movement of goods was never stopped during the second wave, which allowed companies

to continue functioning.
Though he admitted that small companies were impacted by the pandemic more than larger companies, he said the macroeconomic impact of sec-



K. V. Subramanian

ond-wave would not be large during the current financial year.
Stating the worst is over

for the economy, the CEA said he is cautiously optimistic about the economic growth of the country for the next five to six months and highly optimistic about the growth in the subsequent years.

Subramanian defended the government's decision to boost the economy by increasing capital expenditure rather than revenue expenditure or free-

Explaining the rationale, he said every rupee spent by governments on "freebies" would add only Rs 0.98 to the country's economy as against Rs 4.50 when spent on capital expenditure. Highlighting

reforms in labour, agriculture, financial markets, production-linking incentives for exports, Dr Subramanian exuded con-

fidence that the Indian economy would be one of the top high-growth economies of the decade because of the reforms undertaken by the govern-

Claiming the government's policy is on enabling and empowering private Subramanian said government would meet its target of raising Rs 1.75 lakh crore through disinvestment of public sector companies.

"Remember that of Rs 1.75 lakh crore, a good part of it will be from LIC's IPO (initial public offering). The second is the privati-sation of Bharat Petroleum (BPCL). And these two together can account for a large part of disinvestment target," he

He also rejected concerns about the government crowding out the borrowing space with a higher fiscal deficit. He called the crowding-out concept as an old and incomplete argument. Dr Subramanian said

the government is working with RBI to get Indian government bonds included on the global bond index, which would allow the government to raise money directly from foreign investors.

#### **SKODA PRICES KUSHAQ SUV AT** ₹10.49 LAKH



MICHAEL GONSALVES **PUNE, JUNE 28** 

Skoda, the Czech car maker, on Monday entered the mid-size SUV space by introducing the 'made-in-India for the world' model Kushaq with the starting price of Rs 10.49 lakh at pan India showroom.

The Kushaq is Skoda's determined effort to make a solid mark in the mid-size SUV space that is dominated by Hyundai Creta and Kia Seltos.

'The SUV market in India is growing and we are here for a long haul," Zac Hollis, brand director at Skoda Auto India told FC, adding that bookings for the Kushaq were coming strong. "The new ing strong. "The new Kushaq's design, unclut-tered lines, quality and safety elements are strong to deliver numbers in the competitive market," he said, targeting 60,000 sales annually.

#### **ABU DHABI STARTS USING FACIAL COVID SCANNERS AT MALLS**

**ABBAS AL LAWATI** 

Abu Dhabi has started using facial scanners to detect coronavirus infections at malls and airports from Monday, after a trial of 20,000 people showed "a high degree of effective-

The technology can detect infections by measelectromagnetic waves, which change when the RNA particles of the virus are present in the state-run WAM body, reported. The results showed 93.5 per cent sensitivity, reflecting the accuracy of identifying those infected. The scanner was developed by EDE Research Institute Abu Dhabi, a unit of International Hold-—Bloomberg

### ALGORITHMS | RULE | Machines are often the boss; hiring, rating and firing with no human oversight How does it feel to be sacked by a bot?

SPENCER SOPER

Stephen Normandin spent almost four years racing around Phoenix delivering packages as a contract driver for Amazon.com Inc. Then one day, he received an automated email. The algorithms tracking him had decided he wasn't doing his job

properly.

The 63-year-old Army veteran was stunned. He'd been fired by a machine. Normandin says Amazon punished him for things beyond his control that prevented him from completing his deliveries, such as locked apartment complexes. He said he took the

termination hard and,

priding himself on a strong work ethic, recalled that during his military career he helped cook for refugees at Fort Chaffee in

"Tm an old-school kind of guy, and I give every job 110 per cent," he said. "This really upset me because we're talking about my reputation. They say I didn't do the job when I know damn well I did."

Normandin's experience is a twist on the decadesold prediction that robots will replace workers. At Amazon, machines are often the boss—hiring, rating and firing millions of people with little or no human oversight.

Vietnamese Arkansas.

Amazon became the



world's largest online retailer in part by out-sourcing its sprawling operations to algorithmssets of computer instructions designed to solve specific problems. For years, Amazon has used algorithms to manage the millions of third-party merchants on its online marketplace, drawing com-

plaints that sellers have been booted off after being falsely accused of selling counterfeit goods and jacking up prices.

Increasingly, the company is ceding its humanresources operation to machines as well, using software not only to manage workers in its warehouses but to oversee contract drivers, independent delivery companies and even the performance of its office workers. People familiar with the strategy say CEO Jeff Bezos believes machines make decisions more quickly and accurately than people, reducing costs and giving Amazon a competitive advantage.

Amazon started its gig-

style Flex delivery service in 2015, and the army of contract drivers quickly became a critical part of the company's delivery machine. Typically, Flex drivers handle packages that haven't been loaded on an Amazon van before the driver leaves. They ensure the packages are delivered the same day. They also handle a large number of same-day grocerv deliveries from Amazon's Whole Foods Market chain. Flex drivers helped keep Amazon hum-

But the moment they sign on, Flex drivers discover algorithms are mon-

shuttling packages.

ming during the pandemic

and were only too happy to earn about \$25 an hour

itoring their every move. Did they get to the delivery station when they said they would? Did they complete their route in the prescribed window? Did they leave a package in full view of porch pirates instead of hidden behind a planter as requested? Amazon algorithms scan the gusher of incoming data for performance patterns and decide which drivers get more routes and which are deactivated. Human feedback is rare. occasionally Drivers receive automated emails. but mostly they're left to obsess about their ratings, which include four categories: Fantastic, Great, Fair or At Risk.

- Bloomberg

#### SHORT TAKES

### **BWF cancels India**

& Hyderabad Open

New Delhi: The India Open Super 500 and Hyderabad Open Super 100 tournaments were on Monday cancelled by the Badminton World Federation (BWF), which announced a revamped international calender to salvage the remaining season affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The \$400,000 India Open, which was supposed to be one of the qualifiers for the Tokyo Olympics, was scheduled to be held from May 11 to 16 but was postponed in April due to rising Covid cases in the national capital. The \$1,00,000 Hyderabad Open was slated to be held from August 24 to 29. "A number of tournaments previously classified as postponed from Q1 and Q2 or originally

#### **Lankans banned**

slated for Q3 and Q4 of 2021

have subsequently been can-

celled," BWF said in a

statement. - PTI

for bubble breach

Colombo: Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Monday suspended three players, including batsman Kusal Mendis and wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella, for breaching the bio-bubble during their ongoing tour of England and ordered their immediate return to the country. The two, along with opener Danushka Gunathilaka, were seen roaming the streets of Durham after the final T20 international on Sunday night, which Sri Lanka lost by a massive 89 runs. "Sri Lanka Cricket executive Committee has sus-

pended Kusal Mendis, Danushka Gunathilaka & Niroshan Dickwella for breaching the bio-bubble and they will be immediately recalled to Sri Lanka," SLC secretary Mohan De Silva said. - PT

#### **Deepika reclaims**

world no.1 ranking

Paris: Star Indian archer Deepika Kumari on Monday regained the number one position in global rankings following her hat-trick of gold medals at the World Cup Stage 3 here. The 27-year-old from Ranchi, who had achieved the top spot for the first time in 2012, on Sunday claimed gold medals in three recurve events women's individual, team and mixed pair. "This is going to take Deepika to the number one spot in the world rankings on Monday," World Archery had tweeted on its official handle after Deepika's gold rush.

#### **SA level series against Windies**

St George's (Grenada): South Africa turned the tables on the West Indies in the second match of their T20 series, winning by 16 runs to level the fivematch series at 1-1. Only 24 hours after losing the opening match by eight wickets, an unchanged South Africa lineup produced an improved but still imperfect bowling and fielding performance to restrict the West Indies to 150-9 in reply to their 166-7 on Sunday. — PTI Brief scores: South Africa 166/7 (Reeza Hendricks 42, Temba Bavuma 46; Obed McCoy 3/25) bt West Indies 150/9 (Andre Fletcher 35. Fabian Allen 34: Kagiso Rabada 3/37).

#### **Shot putter Toor** hits a purple patch

Patiala: Olympic-bound shot putter Tajinder Pal Singh Toor continued his impressive form as he produced yet another big throw while winning gold on the fourth and penultimate day of the National Inter-State Athletics Championships here on Monday. Toor, who booked an Olympic ticket on last Monday with a national record throw of 21.49m during the Indian Grand Prix 4 here, came up with a best effort of 21.10m to win the gold in the event.

#### Live on

Round of 16: England vs Germany from 12.30 am (Wednesday)

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# THOR'S THUNDER

### Hazard strikes as Belgium knock Portugal out of Euro

**Belgium** 

(Thorgan Hazard 42)

**Portugal** 

Seville (Spain), June 28: A rocket from Thorgan Hazard knocked reigning champions Portugal out of Euro 2020 on Sunday and earned Belgium a block-buster quarter-final with

Hazard's swerving shot before half-time sealed a 1-0 win for Belgium and settled a scrappy contest in Seville that never really lived up to its billing as the stand-out tie of the

But it could prove a statement victory for Belgium, whose chief concern now will be the fitness of Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard, who both hobbled off injured and will undergo scans on

De Bruyne suffered an ankle injury while coach Roberto Martinez said Hazard's problem was "more of a muscle feel-

Cristiano Ronaldo tested Thibaut Courtois with a dipping free-kick in the first half but the 36-yearold neither broke the international goals record nor added to his five for the tournament.

Raphael Guerreiro went closest to a late equaliser when his shot came back off the post, one of 29 shots Portugal had, six of them on target.

But before the late rally, Belgium were the braver, more fluid team and Martinez hailed his side's fighting spirit to hold on.

'We showed our talent in the first half and in the second half we showed an aspect that wasn't there two or three years ago," said Martinez. "This is what a winning team

For all the superstar names on the pitch, it was Eden Hazard's less heralded brother Thorgan who decisive, Dortmund Borussia winger who Eden once



(from left) Belgium's Axel Witsel, Eden Hazard and Thorgan Hazard celebrate after scoring a goal against Portugal in the round of 16 match at the La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain on Sunday.

said had even more talent than him.

"In these games if you have a chance you have to have a go," Thorgan said. "It went in, with a bit of luck and it was the goal that got us through. It's a dream for me. Eden Hazard started in

Belgium's front three again after playing 90 minutes against Finland on Monday. Portugal's Diogo Dalot came in at right-back for the injured Nelson Semedo.

Hazard skied an early shot over after a neat exchange with Romelu Lukaku while Diogo Jota skewed wide, slipped in down the left by the impressive

The closest Ronaldo came to an all-time record 110th international goal was a dipping free-kick from 30 yards which Courtois parried away.

— AFP

## England, Germany to renew age-old rivalry London, June 28: When Cup. Twenty years later

you train on the Sir Bobby Charlton Pitch, it's hard to escape the burden of past glory. And when Gareth Southgate is your coach, it's even harder for the England players to escape the anguish that can come from playing Germany at a tournament. It was Southgate's penalty miss in a shootout against Germany that prevented England from reaching the European Championship final at the old Wembley

Stadium. There had already been the loss to Germany on penalties at the 1990 World

came more World Cup agony against Germany, laced with the injustice of a wrongly disallowed

No wonder the renewal of the rivalry with Germany on Tuesday in the round of 16 at this year's Euro is rousing so many memories of past meetings in England. But it can seem to be a lopsided rivalry.

There's little sense in Germany about righting any wrongs of the past, despite the still inconclusive debate over whether Geoff Hurst's decisive goal really did cross the Co. lifted the World Cup in 1966 at Wembley.

#### **SWEDISH CHALLENGE FOR UKRAINE**

Shevchenko's Ukraine might be disappointed by the fact that they only reached the knockout phase of the Euro for the first time thanks to good fortune.

But ahead of Tuesday's last-16 game against Sweden, the 44-year-old coach may draw inspirafrom a tion encounter against the same opponents, swansong of his career as



## **UAE to host T20 World Cup**

120 world Cup scheduled to be held in India is being shifted to the UAE owing to the health safety concerns posed by Covid-19, BCCI President Sourav Ganguly said on Monday, ending weeks of speculation surrounding mega-event

We have officially intimated the ICC that the T20 World Cup can be shifted to the United Arab Emirates. The details are being chalked out,' Ganguly said.

October-November.

The decision was taken keeping health safety concerns of all stakeholders in mind," he added.

The BCCI will, however. remain the hosts of the showpiece.

Asked if October 17 has been finalised as the start



date of the tournament, Ganguly said: "We will be able to finalise itinerary details in some days. October 17 start hasn't yet been finalised. Even an ICC spokesper-

son confirmed that the global body is yet to zero in on a final schedule. The ICC, at the start of

the month, had given BCCI a four-week window decide and inform whether India could host intimated the ICC that the T20 World Cup can be shifted to the **United Arab Emirates.** The details are being chalked out.

> - SOURAV **GANGULY** BCCI President

the marquee event considering the Covid-19 situation in the country.

This was after the pandemic forced the post-ponement of IPL, the second part of which is also being held in the UAE in September-October.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah, in a letter to all state units, said that the decision was taken keeping in mind that "safety of players and other stakeimportance..

"Ît was not an easy decision and we mulled over it for months, constantly keeping an eve on Covid situation all along. "However with the sec-

ond wave causing such devastation, the decision ultimately boiled down to the safety and well being of the players and organizers," Shah admitted. "There is nothing more

that we could have wanted than to host this prestigious tournament in India, but it was not to

It was a foregone conclusion that India will find it difficult to host a 16-country tournament across nine cities with so many layers of health security concerns being

# AT COLOMBO

Colombo, June 28: The India white-ball team led by Shikhar Dhawan, featuring as many as six uncapped players, arrived here from Mumbai for their four-week tour which will feature six limited overs games against Sri Lanka, starting July 13.

All-rounder Pandya shared an *Instagram* story captioned: "Touchdown, Sri Lanka, Colombo.'

The Dhawan-led team will play three ODIs and three T20Is in the island nation. The BCCI had named a 20-member squad for the tour that has the senior spin duo of Yuzvendra Chahal. — PTI

# Greek tragedy: Tsitsipas bows out

**London, June 28:** Novak Djokovic overcame an early wobble before getting his bid for a sixth Wimbledon and recordequalling 20th Grand Slam title off to a winning start on Monday and then saw potential semi-final Tsitsipas crash out.

One year after the 2020 tournament was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, champion and world number one Djokovic claimed a 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win over 253rd-ranked Britain's Jack Draper.

Third seed Tsitsipas, however, beaten by Djokovic in the French Open final just two weeks ago, slumped to his third first round defeat in four visits to the tournament. America's

Tiafoe, ranked 57, stunned the Greek star 6-4, 6-4, 6-3. Djokovic, 34, struggled on the slippery Centre Court surface with the roof closed above it due to the rain which had



Frances Tiafoe of the US celebrates after defeating third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas on Day 1 of the Wimbledon on Monday.

courts for five hours. Left-handed Draper. playing just his fifth match on the main tour, saved seven of seven

break points in the opener

delayed play on outside to stun the top seed. But Djokovic soon snuffed out any danger of him becoming only the

third defending champion

to lose in the first round,

by sweeping through the

**RESULTS** 

Men's first round: Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Jack Draper (GBR) 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2; Frances Tiafoe (USA) bt Stefanos Tsitsipas (GREx3) 6-

Women's first round: Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Petra Kvitova (CZE x10) 6-3, 6-4; Lauren Davis (USA) bt Jodie Burrage (GBR) 6-2, 6-1; Madison Keys (USA x23) bt Katie Swan (GBR) 6-3, 6-4; Lesley Kerkhove (NED) bt Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS) 6-3, 6-3; Garbine Muguruza (ESP x11) bt Fiona Ferro (FRA) 6-0, 6-1; Ekaterina Alexandrova (RUS x32) bt Laura Siegemund (GER) 6-1, 6-3; Maria Camila Osorio (COL) bt Anna Kalinskaya (RUS) 1-6, 6-0, 6-4; Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2) bt Monica Niculescu (ROM) 6-1, 6-4.

remainder of the tie.

He finished with an impressive 25 aces and 47 winners as his 19-year-old opponent, who grew up just six miles (9.5km) from the All England Club, wilt-

ed. "I probably had one of the best serving performances that I can recall on surface," Djokovic who fired 25 aces and 47 winners

With the Australian and French Open titles under his belt, the Serb is bidding to become only the third man in history to claim a calendar Grand Slam.

His match was preceded by a standing ovation for Professor Sarah Gilbert, one of the key scientists behind the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine who was a special guest in the Royal Box.

Tiafoe won a second-tier grass court Challenger event in Nottingham this month before making the quarter-finals at Queen's Club. He made that match hardness pay against Tsitsipas, playing only his 16th match on grass. It was the first time in 12 attempts that 23-year-old Tiafoe had beaten a player ranked in the top five.

# CR7 proud of Portugal effort

**Lisbon, June 28:** Captain Belgium and good luck to Cristiano Ronaldo said on all the teams left in. As for Cristiano Ronaldo said on Monday he was "proud" of holders Portugal's efforts despite bowing out of Euro 2020 after the weekend's 1-0 last 16 loss to Belgium.

'We did not get the result we wanted and we leave the competition sooner than expected," the 36year-old Juventus star and five-time Ballon d'or winner admitted as his side failed to match their 2016 exploits. But we are proud of our

showing. We did every-thing we could to retain the title of European champions and this group proved it could still give the Portuguese people much joy," the former Manchester United and Real Madrid attacker posted on social media after Sunday's loss

'Congratulations

stronger," vowed the veteran who at least could console himself with having matched the 109 international goals record of Iran's Ali Daei during the tournament. Ronaldo scored five times

during the competition to take his European Championship tally to a record 14, matching Daei's

achievement with his goal

in the 2-2 group game draw with world champions France. Portugal coach Fernando Santos said his players were crying in the changroom after their

"unfair" defeat. "I think it's an unfair result but they scored and we didn't," said Santos after the game.

#### **ECUADOR HOLD BRAZIL TO ENTER COPA QUARTERS**

Goiania, Brazil, June 28: An Ecuador side fighting to keep their Copa America hopes alive managed to hold a previously perfect Brazil playing without a resting Neymar — to a 1-1 draw Sunday and reach the

Seeking to extend a 10match winning streak, Brazil came out pressuring in Goiania on the group's final match day.

Coach Tite opted to rest Neymar, but the "Selecao" still dominated the first half.
A free kick in the 37th minute set up Eder

Militao, who headed the

ball at a sharp angle into

the top right corner of the net, well clear of

**COPA RESULTS** 

Brazil (Eder Militao 37) Ecuador (Angel Mena 53)

(Andre Carrillo 48)

Ecuador keeper Hernan Galindez's outstretched

**PERU WIN** 

Peru meanwhile defeated Venezuela 1-0 in the other Group B match to send the Covid-decimated "Vinotinto" team packing from the South American championships. -AFP

SHOOTING | WORLD CUP

## (from left) France's Mathilde Lamolle (silver medal). India's Rahi Sarnobat (gold) and Vitalina Batsarashkina of Russia (bronze) on the women's 25M Pistol podium at

the ISSF Shooting World Cup in Osiiek.

## Sarnobat clinches gold in 25m pistol

Osijek, June 28: Olympicbound Rahi Sarnobat dis-played sensational form to clinch the women's 25m pistol gold medal at the ISSF shooting World Cup here on Monday but teen sensation Manu Bhaker ended seventh in the same event. Sarnobat's gold is India's

first in the ongoing edition after the country secured one silver and two bronze medals earlier in the tournament. The 30-year-old Sarnobat

fired a final score of 39 after qualifying second with a total of 591. Her stupendous performance in the final included perfect scores in the third, fourth, fifth and the sixth series.

"After I got assurance about the gold, it was more about technicalities for me in the last few series as I wanted to try out a few things so I was doing that,' she said. "This competition was absolutely not about per-

formance or because I was trying out a few things which I am going to do in the Olympic Games and this is the final competition before that. "It was more about trying out things and finalising every thing before the Olympics for the last time

and that was just that," she Nonetheless, winning a gold here has given Sarnobat the belief that her preparations are on the right track for the

Tokyo Games. "I have to keep working on this up to and after the Olympic as well." -PTI

#### Olympic briefs

#### Japan ups health controls

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga pledged on Monday to strengthen health controls at airports after a Ugandan Olympic team member tested positive for Covid-19 at the town hosting their training camp, triggering concerns that the upcoming games will spread infections. A Ugandan team member, reportedly a coach, tested positive on Saturday at Tokyo's Narita airport and was quarantined there.

#### **USA Basketball reveal roster**

 ${f E}$ xperience mattered to USA Basketball when putting together a roster for the Tokyo Olympics. The Americans formally revealed their roster on Monday, one that will be third-oldest U.S. men's team in Olympic history for the Tokyo Games. The 12-man list includes five players — Kevin Love, Kevin Durant, Jrue Holiday, Damian Lillard and Draymond Green already in their 30s.